

# FALL BALL '84

SENECA ROCKS, WVA.



VOLUME IV, NUMBER 3  
OCTOBER, 1984

### STATE OF THE GROTTO ADDRESS

The transition from one executive council to the next has been smoothly completed. The new officers are a group of active people who will need your input and support if goals are to be accomplished.

The executive council which you have elected has become increasingly aware of the need for more training sessions--not only vertical training but rescue training as well. It is our goal to increase the competence of our grotto as a rescue-trained organization which is available to be a knowledgeable and active participant in the event of an emergency.

Within the upcoming year, it is my endeavor to promote our club as a dynamically growing organization dedicated to the conservation of caves and to the education of our members regarding caving techniques. I would like to see this happen through an expansion of caving abilities and confidence.

In order to reach these goals, let's go caving! And, hey! Let's be careful down there!

Sincerely,

Nancy J. Gibson  
MUSG # 45  
NSS# TBA

### GROTTO OFFICERS

Chairman ..... Nancy Gibson  
Vice Chairman ..... Lance Smith  
Treasurer ..... Sean Foster  
Secretary/Librarian ..... Ron Fulcher  
Program Coordinator ..... Paul Clifford  
Equipment/Color Code  
Coordinator..... Eddie Good  
Communications & Public  
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Journal Editor ..... Mike Artz

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### "Hey! I'm Going Caving."

As cavers who have heard this many times before there is a new emphasis to the phrase. MUSGer's have been enjoying the challenge and wonders of the underworld, others are experiencing them for the first time. When we reflect upon this experience we all know how absorbing and therapeutic it can be. Problems were few and far between. Whatever was troubling one's mind would stay home so that you can go out and have a spiritual experience.

There was a situation which occurred the other day that prompted me to indulge in a little writing. A friend of a friend called me to get directions for Nutt cave in West Virginia. We talked for a little bit about the usual problems of finding equipment, rides, and people. We also talked briefly about signing out. I told him to call Anna to verbally sign out.

Well time passed, and the next day Ann called. She wanted some information about the person who called her. I thought for a moment and had to reluctantly tell her that I really didn't know anything about them. I then began to ask myself questions such as; Did he know how to use the equipment properly?, How many times had he been caving?, Was he the only one who knew what to do?, Would he understand the passages in Nutt? At that point I was experiencing some anxiety.

The afternoon came and Anna called me for the second time. This time it was after the E.T.R. There are people who would criticize me severely for telling Anna to wait a half an hour to see if they would call. (at this point in the club we were just beginning to extend the E.T.R. Before, the rule of thumb was to wait an hour after the E.T.R. Since this article was written the club has changed policy on the sign-out sheet.)

It was definitely a judgement call. The one and only reason I suggested to wait was because I did not stress the grave importance of communicating to someone where you are and what has happened if you are going to be late. In my mind that was a serious mistake. One that I have learned and need to pass onto other members of the club. It is your responsibility as a member of the caving society to take precautions for other individuals. You need to stress the never ending significance of a sign-out sheet. Not only for your own peace of mind but maybe for the lives of others.



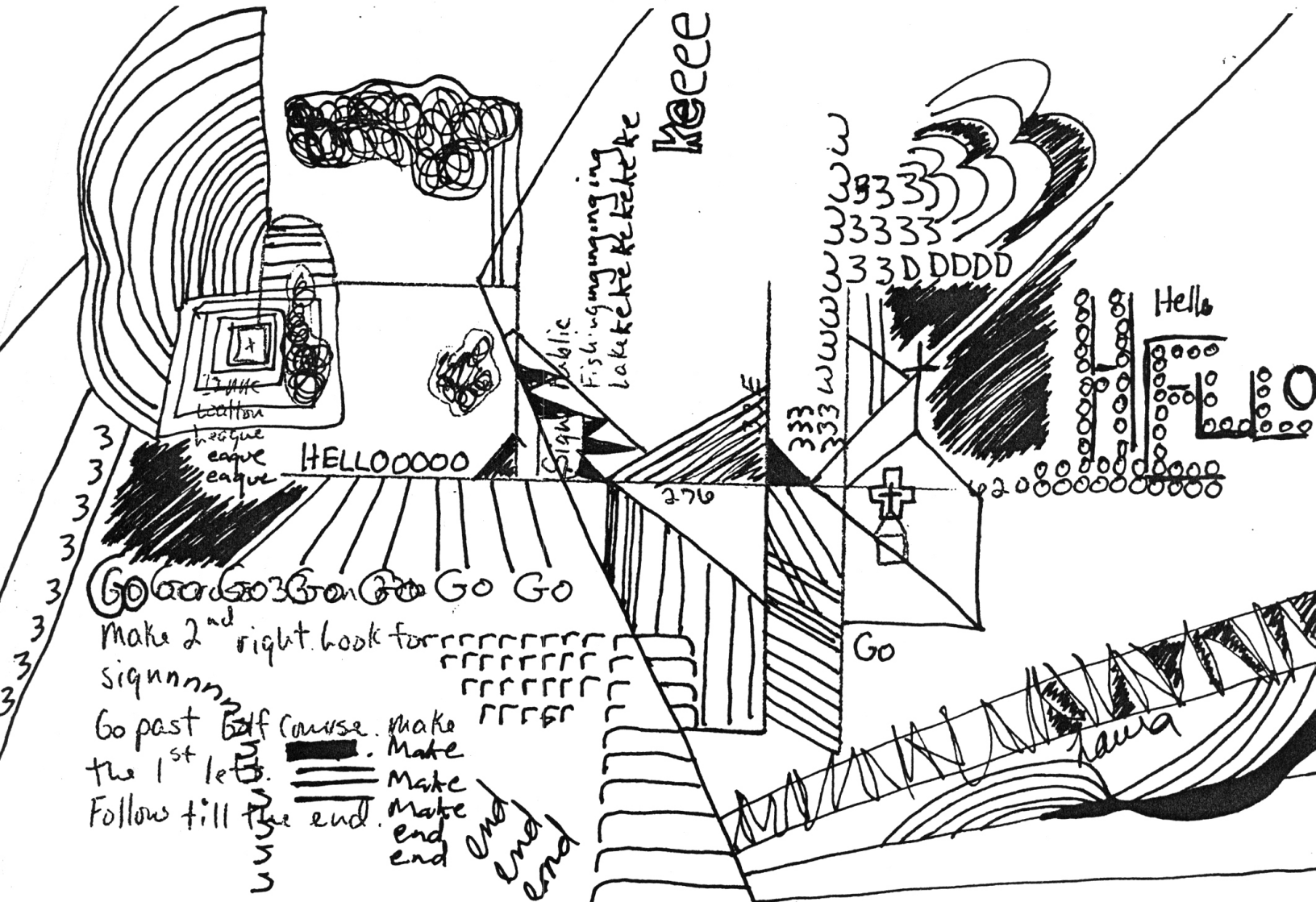


### What Caving Means To Me

Caving is a great way to take a break from chemicals and see parts of the earth that very few other people have seen. It takes a rare type of person to enjoy climbing around the muddy rocks with no other life but bats. Caving is not only fun but also very good exercise for the lungs, arms, and legs. Just be careful not to give your caving pack to people that wimp out of challenging crawlways because you might not see them again until you get back to the car. And they probably will have drank all of the beer that you had waiting there as well.

Never do a climb that you are not positive that you can do. It makes everybody else have a bad time while they wait for you. 3D Maze has very little interesting formations but is full of excellent climbs. A lot of the footholds aren't strong so you can never trust a single foothold with most of your weight.

Scott Martz



## Caving, To Me

I've only gone caving once so far, and it was great. I just moved into this area a few months ago, and some of the people I met are spelunkers. They told me about their caving expeditions and it sounded like something I'd like to do. They also invited me to a cave club meeting at JMU and a few of the cave club parties, which I also enjoyed. One of the parties was banquet, and on that day I did my first cave.

A few friends and I went to Nutt cave, and inside I found a world I've never imagined. A world so fascinating I can't begin to describe in this short tale.

In ending, I just want to say thanks to this special group of people that made this possible for me. I'm sure that caving wouldn't have had the same impact on me if not for these people.

Dave Chilcott

## How To Go Caving For The First Time (The Tale of a Virgin Caver)

There are two theories being entertained currently about how to take someone caving for the first time. The first theory says that you should go gently, taking great not to hurt the virgin (caver). The second theory is more popular to many cavers particularly those who were broken in by it. The second theory maintains that the only way to break in a caver is to go roughly, in the mud with no mercy!

In reality there is little of either extreme but there is a strong leaning to the rough and tumble method. My first cave was Glade, south of Bridgewater, and the experience is still interesting to hear.

Glade is a muddy cave and not knowing any better I went along cheerfully into the mud. Nancy Gibson very nicely helped me find out that mud tastes good and feels even better. There were some nice, small, muddy loops that we crawled around following gleefully.

Afterwards someone mentioned to me that there are actually dry caves and that helped me to like caving better. But once you've had your first taste of mud you never stop coming back for more.

Tom Burkholder

Glade, a simple beginning... I grinned at  
the mud on my hat that night. The  
headlamp had stopped working halfway  
through the cave, but the new  
darkness and the sharing of light  
seemed natural to a novice.

Initiation-  
Glade caught a piece of my heart.  
The earth renewed us.

Nancy Watkins

Mike is a Gumby

There is a guy named Artz  
who spits chaw and farts  
Now, some say he's had carnal knowledge  
of sheep, and  
that he used to go caving and climbing,  
But these days it seems  
he just farts, spits and dreams  
of women, old times and a job.

Jason Burkhardt  
(TRAINEE)

There once was a caver named Anna  
who could always be found at the sauna  
when the iron was hot  
and her body was not  
Bob Carts was usually Anna





## Clothing

As with any outdoor sport, layering is a very important concept to consider when choosing caving clothes. Inevitably you will get wet and the clothes you choose will either keep you warm or cold in that situation. Anything made of cotton just doesn't cut it. It retains no warmth when wet and will literally suck away your body heat. Therefore any clothing worn next to your skin should be composed of a fabric that retains heat when wet. Wool and polypropylene are two such materials. Wool has been around for years but recently polypropylene has made its appearance. Polypro is very comfortable to wear next to the skin and it doesn't itch.

Major body organs are concentrated in the torso and consequently this area needs more warmth. For some people, long underwear will be enough, but the majority of us need to wear a sweater to stay warm. Again, wool is the best choice here; preferably a turtleneck, as much heat is lost through the nape of the neck.

Exterior clothing gets the most exposure to the harsh cave environment and because of this, we are continuously patching our clothes. Coveralls are preferable because there is no opening at the waist to allow dirt in and they are easy to patch. Before you ever wear a pair of pants or coveralls you should sew some type of abrasion and water resistant material on the knees, elbows and derrier as these places are the first to rip out. Also, save yourself some repair time by washing your clothes after a wet cave trip. At least let them dry out immediately after!

I prefer to wear pantyhose (don't laugh, it keeps wet clothes off of the skin), expedition weight polypro underwear, a wool turtleneck sweater and coveralls. The sweater can be stuffed in a pack when I'm moving fast and worn while surveying, etc.

I suggest that you invest in a pair of boots with lug soles. Army combat boots are relatively inexpensive (\$25.00) and last a long time. Wear at least two pair of socks when trying boots on for size as you will probably want to wear 2 pairs while caving. You also will have the room to wear a pair of neoprene socks if you will be wetsuit caving. Boots and socks are important because nothing sucks more than having cold feet except a cold crotch.

If you want to wear gloves (I prefer to!), I suggest spending a couple of bucks on a good pair of leather gloves. They will last longer and give you more protection and warmth than a cheap pair of cotton gloves.

Knee pads are a godsend in tight chimneys and crawls. I never caved without them. The athletic types work well. Rockmaster makes a pair of strap-on, hard rubber knee pads that provide excellent protection. For long stretches of walking they tend to chaff the back of the leg, but can be worn around the calf when not crawling.

Snap and zippers inevitably get clogged with mud and don't function. At least buttons still work when muddy so try to use clothing with buttons on the collar and the wrists.

## Wetsuits

Of all the gear I have worn caving, I think wetsuits are the most finicky. They rip easily, abrade the back of your legs at the knee joint and the underarms, and restrict arm and leg movement. But, a wetsuit will keep you warmer in a cold, wet cave than anything else and rips are easy to patch and the patches are stronger than the neoprene itself.

The principle is that once water gets inside your wetsuit it becomes trapped and warms up to body temperature (or very nearly) thereby creating a warm insulating layer. Long periods of immersion in 40 degree water is very possible.

Wetsuits can be purchased in different thicknesses. 1/8 inch is fine for most wet trips. If you expect to spend a lot of time in water get 1/4 inch or even 3/8 inch. 1/4 inch seems to be the best compromise. You still have quite a bit of insulating value and good freedom of movement. You might as well get neoprene socks or booties (socks are very hard to find but easy to make) and a good pair of neoprene gloves too (quite expensive at \$30 a pair but ooooooh the warmth).

Don't forget that you need a polypro or wool balaclava also. This applies for any type of caving trip. At least 40% of your heat is lost through the head and nape of the neck and when you're wet you especially need that heat.

Whatever clothing you decide to wear, be open-minded and continuously upgrade your gear. Better caving clothes cost money but are well worth the extra warmth and durability.

## Suppliers

Polypro--The Gendarme, Wilderness Voyagers, and any other outdoor store; wool--same, plus you can find good deals at the Salvation Army; Army Combat boots--any hunting store or Army Surplus Store (In our area try Bob's Surplus Store in Broadway); Kneepads--any athletic store; coveralls and gloves--most large clothing or farm oriented stores (try Valley Heritage); wetsuits, booties, gloves, neoprene, patching materials---any diving store.

Mike Artz  
MUSG #10  
NSS 19309

## Lunatics, Manic Depressives, and Wilburs

Once again I prove my madness by returning to Better Forgotten, this time with two VPI cavers Frank Gibson, and Paul Soboleski. At least we had a reason to go; to survey the Vertical Crawl. I wonder why Jason, Meredith and Tom went other than the fact that all the drops were rigged. Maybe they're the insane ones.

On Friday night, February 1, Frank and Paul showed up at Ott Street. We ended up showing each other our favorite slides and talking about our hopes for the cave trip. Frank wanted to do a 24-30 hour trip and survey at least 100

stations. I just wanted to get the Vertical Crawl finished and tie into a hanging survey from the previous weekend. Anyway about 3 a.m. we crashed.

By 3:30 p.m. Saturday afternoon we were all in the cave with full wetsuit attire and provisions for a long trip. It had been sleeting and raining for two days and the cave was a slimey mess. We cruised down to the 100 foot pit and started surveying. In a couple of hours we were at the start of the Vertical Crawl. The 100 foot pit turned out to be only 75 feet and it was carrying a sizeable trickle so we got wet but didn't notice it in our wetsuits. There was so much water spraying that one of our two Bruntons got soaked and wouldn't function. We spent some time drying it and then continued the survey with the other one.

Before long we were halfway down the V.C. Frank was setting point, Paul was reading compass and I was sketching. I knew we were close to a large room that the V.C. pops into but I couldn't tell how close since I was last in the queue. Frank somehow found a hole that I had never seen before and he was trying to stuff his body into it. Unfortunately it wasn't the correct hole. His body coming out of that hole reminds me of a sausage coming out of a sausage grinder. As it turned out, we switched places and we still had about 20 feet to go to the room. We were able to survey out into the room in two shots and only had one more shot to tie into the hanging survey. The second Brunton stopped working but we also had a pair of Suuntos which we used to finish the shot.

We quickly covered the remaining distance to the trunk passage and found a nice dry, sandy ledge on which to eat dinner. I brought a stove and we had hot chocolate and hot pork and beans. After a filling meal we proceeded to fall asleep. It had taken us 10 hours to survey the Vertical Crawl and the 75 foot pit.

Soon we were all wearing garbage bags with our lamps under them and we were very warm. After a couple of hours it was time to exit. The trip out was uneventful except for Paul cussing at one particularly nasty crawlway. We derigged as we went and soon we were peeling off our nasty smelling wetsuits (from pissing in them) in a cold but beautiful Sunday morning.

Our trip turned out to be 18 hours long. We set 21 new stations for 309 surveyed feet, 174 horizontal feet and a depth of 166 feet. Not much for totals but it is the nastiest piece of cave any of us have ever surveyed. The cave was extremely wet and muddy and had a larger than normal amount of water flowing down the pits and Vertical Crawlway. The big stream in the trunk passage was about 2 feet deeper than the previous weekend and we had every reason to believe that the low airspace that has to be negotiated to get into the larger trunk passage would be completely sumped. Needless to say we didn't even bother to check as we already had our hands full. We decided to rename the Vertical Crawl--The Viet Cong Trench. After you've been through it you feel like you've been through a war zone!

Better Forgotten now stands at a surveyed length of 1068.80 feet, horizontal length of 807.27 feet, and a depth of 367.10 feet below the entrance. There is much still to be surveyed, not all of it terribly, nasty and many leads to mop up. So jump in a wetsuit and get insane. Help me, WILBUR!!!!!!

Mike Artz  
MUSG #10 NSS 19309

MUSGeneral Store and Color Code I.D.

As being elected new store manager I have some plans for this business venture. 1st, I'd like to see it offer, prompt, courteous service. I know I had to wait a couple weeks for my hat and light so I'll try to have one week service if it's an urgent order. 2nd, I'd like to see the store inventory enlarge, to keep at hand most often used parts (hats and lights at least)

I will be able to order anything (about) that you might want for caving. I also keep a "Campmoor Catalog" that stocks oodles and oodles of noodles and camping equipment for example: packs, sleeping bags, clothes, polypro, etc., etc. at reasonable prices.

Maybe you have never heard of the color code, but everybody should have a color code!! It's kind of like a S.S.N. for the cave club. If you own equipment and you have your color code on it, you shouldn't be near as likely to lose it. Since anybody can see the colors and say "Ah ha, that's so and so's because that's their color scheme". Selecting a color scheme isn't any harder than naming one of Vickie's cats "asshole", "shit", etc. Simply pick out a scheme that nobody else has claimed yet, and put it on all your equipment. See me for a list of who has what and give me your scheme so I can record it.

In business to serve you (the caver)

Eddie Good (store and color code coord.)

Hi Ho, Hi Ho;  
Go caving in the snow  
with a bottle of beer  
and a kick in the rear  
Hi Ho, Hi Ho;

Hi Ho, Hi Ho;  
This crawlway doesn't go!  
Stuck in a crack  
no turning back  
Hi Ho, Hi Ho.

Hi Ho, Hi Hack  
It's time for starting back  
with a bottle of beer  
and a kick in the rear  
Hi Ho, Hi Hack.

Lance Smith



### What Was Your Best & Worst Caving Trip?

Best and worst caving trips, huh? Tough one. I guess my best trip would have to be my first trip into Butler cave when me, Zach Krasner (now residing in Fairbanks, AK) and Nancy Gibson (our illustrious new MUSG pres.) went during a BCCS weekend back in April 1983.

Nancy and I went on the short, 8 hour trip with some folks from Pennsylvania while Zach went on a longer, 16 hour, very wet trip, which included a nasty belly crawl through a stream called the Frothingslosh. Nancy and I had a great trip--a few tight crawls. Some climbing (no need for ropes though, except for a 30 foot entrance drop), lots of good walking passage and not too much water, cause' Penn State Lake was totally flooded. Also, Nancy carried our cave pack most of the trip. She enjoyed it, though.

My worst trip would have to be a Breathing trip when myself, Ron, Tom Peyton, Anne Durica, and Yvonne and Carl Droms took a break in November of 1983 (along with some folks from D.C.) to do some caving. The trip to the back of the cave was great, but then, totally unexpected, my stupid-air tight army gas mask bag blew up when I opened it. Seems that my dump bag was still giving off acetylene gas in the cave pack. When I opened the bag, the gas rushed out and ignited with my lamp and BOOM!!! Scared the living shit outta me. Plus put a shock into everyone in the party. Leaving the cave was an interesting experience, as sight for me was difficult. Plus I missed my facial hair. First move when I got back to JMU--assault cave pack with deadly ice pick; multiple stab wounds.

And yes, my parents think I'm out of my mind for going caving. I say don't Knock it till you try it!

Craig Snyder  
MUSG #48



From the Signout Sheet

Glade 12-07-84

Eric Misenheimer, Scott, Eric, John. Had a good trip. 3 hrs.

Sites 12-08-84

Mike Artz, Lance Smith, Bob Carts, and Mike Cody. Had a great trip. Beautiful rappel. 4 hrs.

3D Maze 12-12-84

Mike Artz, Lance Smith, Jason Burkhardt, John Bauserman, Carl and Yvonne Droms and junior. Thought we would finish the cave but we didn't. Drank beer anyway!!! 6 hrs.

3D Maze    nodate

Dan Hirsch, Chris Nill, Eddie Good, and Larry Shifflett>  
Great trip (Larry's first). Went all the way--very low  
water--Eddie did great! 2.5 hrs.

Flagpole to Union

Mike Artz, Mark Nissley, et al. Fun mountain bike ride.  
Hubadabadabadabadaba!!!!

## Bike Tour

Mark "Bike Shop" Nissley, Mike Artz, Dan O'Brien, John Eckman, and Coma. Good stuff--cold but alive.

My Cave 01-11-85

Bob Carts, Anna Weimer, Pete Shoen. Anna got sick. We took pics then we all had the shits. 6 hrs.

Bone-Norman 01-12-85

Meredith Hall, Tom Bain. Strange, but we ended up doing Island Ford Cave (Alleghany Co., Va.). 1.5 hrs.

Nutt 01-19-85

Mike and Jaime Reep, Katy Kahle, Anna Weimer, Dave?,  
Kelley Price, Chris Paulsen. 3 hrs.

Shiffletts

01-20-85  
Craig Snyder, Gretchen Blair, Sean Foster, Ron Fulcher.  
We're back. It was cold as shit (old shit!). A real pokey  
trip. 2 hrs.

Hamilton 01-20-85

Lance Smith, Alan Staiman, Blaise Barry, Elizabeth, Paul Clifford, and Gretchen Daly. Gretchen--"Am I really seeing things or is that just me playing with myself?" 6.5 hrs.

Better Forgotten 01-26-85  
Mike Artz, Sean Foster and Lance Smith. A slimy, groady, wet, cold, hungry, slippery, nasty, tiring ordeal. Fuck mud! 12 hours.

Glade 01-26-85  
Joe Dimiceli, Lewis Kozlosky, John Romeo, George McRoberts, Karen Smith, Gretchen Blair. Great! Not a gumby trip. 5 hours.

3D Maze 01-03-85  
Anna Weimer, Tom Burkholder, Paul Clifford, Carl Droms, Scott Martz, Jimmy Wilhelm, R.J. Fletcher, Steve Erlich, BonniJean McGrew. Scott left his pack in there. Good Trip. 2.5 hours.

Better Forgotten 02-02-85  
Meredith Hall, Jason Burkhardt, Tom Bain. No comment! Don't ask. 7.5 hours.

Better Forgotten 02-02-85  
Mike Artz, Frank Gibson, Paul Soboleski (VPI). Fun, Fun, Fun !!! Surveyed the Vertical Crawl. 18 hours.

3D Maze 02-03-85  
Scott Martz, Lance Smith, Lisa Olson and John Murphy. Instruction in Chimneying 101. 2 hrs.

Chestnut Ridge 02-07-85  
Dave Deland and Lance Smith. Found the entrance to a small cave. It doesn't go. Body sled down Chestnut Ridge. .25 hrs.

Goon Rocks 02-09-85  
Tom Burkholder, Ron Fulcher, Dan Hirsch, Scott Roberts, Dave Shantz, Eddie Good, Tom Blair and Meredith Hall. "Ain't goin to convention"---"What do you have against sleeping around?"

Trout 02-09-85  
Tom Donaldson, Bob Donaldson and 2 others. Mud room was silly. 3.5 hours.

This signout sheet represents all the trips our club took since December 7, 1984 and picks up where the last journal left off. As a club we logged 311 manhours underground. Mike Artz had the most hours underground with 40, Lance

Smith was second with 27.25 and Bob Carts third with 10 hours. Everybody else had less than 10 hours. Dave Deland gets the record for logging the fewest hours with 0.25! These totals represent a great improvement over the entire last semester. Let's try to continue this improvement. Set your own personal goals for a certain number of hours underground. Twenty would be a good number to shoot for! Happy caving.

### GRANITE

The last flickering headlamp vanished at a turn in the passage ahead as Stan finished inching down a damp crevice of dark stone and set his relieved feet on the muddy cave floor. His lamp made eerie shadows in the pocked and grooved walls as he stretched and listened to the receding troop, then he swung his pack from front to side and set off after them, the water-gorged mud sucking noisily at his passing boots. He was hardly aware of his isolation, fascinated by the unmarred beauty of the glistening formations all about in this almost unexplored cave.

A stray echo rang back to him: '...would not expect to find this type of karst at such a level in most caves.' Professional, Stan thought, always analyzing and comparing the things he saw to the contents of the textbooks he taught from. Stan believed the evidence of his senses, and was ready to change his mind whenever his expectations proved wrong. Suddenly he stopped. There were no more footprints ahead of him. Turning around, he strained his ears vainly against the darkness for long moments, then set back along his path. His broad fingers searched across the clumped sweater beneath his heavy bush shirt, pulling out a tubular brass whistle borne on a greasy leather cord. He fingered the whistle as he walked.

The path rose slightly and left the mud, and Stan's footprints, behind. The floor was grey and dotted with shallow puddles. Coming to a fork, Stan slowed and then stopped. He was sure that he had come this way; it was the sort of division you don't notice when first passing it. In his lips, the whistle exhausted a long and mournful hoot. He pondered. Finally he strode down the left-hand passage.

After hundreds of twisting, curving, and occasionally crawling feet, he was deposited in a ticklishly familiar circular room. Across it, about 35 feet away, he thought he could make out his tracks in the mud of another passage. A faint muttering became audible in that direction. "Hey, guys, I'm down here!", he shouted, sprinting into the room. He grabbed one handful of mud in each hand as the floor collapsed beneath him.

His buddies heard him cry out as he plunged, but they never heard his impact, because the cave began to fall down about them. They fled, and the last one was carried up unconscious in a sling, a tourniquet hastily fastened above the splintered bones of a leg she would never walk on again.

--continued next issue--  
by Todd Hirsch copyright 1985



SCENES FROM OLD TIMERS

