

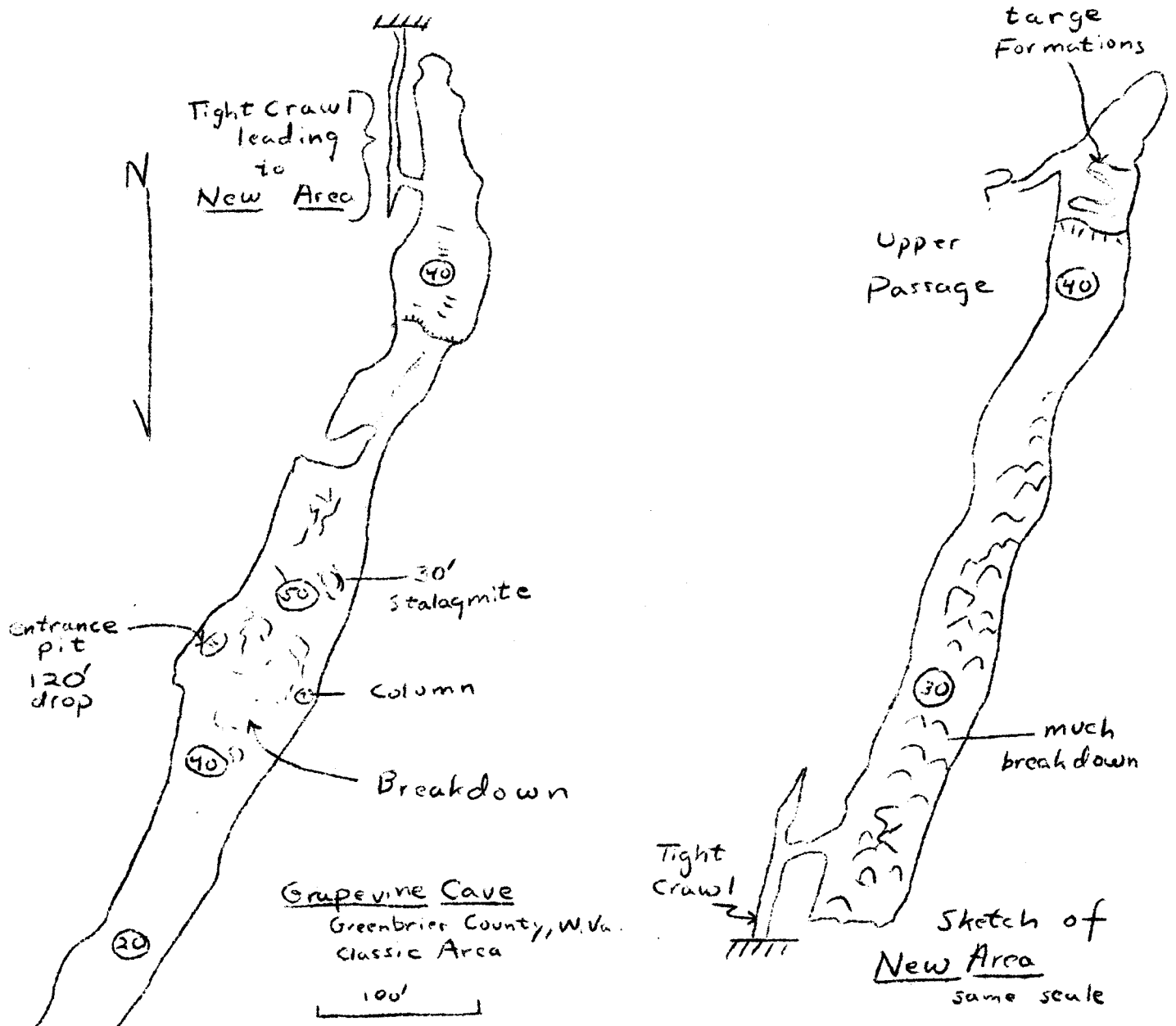


THE ROC CAIRN



RENSSELAER OUTING CLUB, INC. — 15TH ST. LOUNGE, R. P. I., TROY, NEW YORK

Sept 66



WEST VIRGINIA

On Friday afternoon, June 10, Chuck Porter, Bob Froese, and Vic Baker headed toward West Virginia. 2 A.M. found the party sleeping in a drainage ditch next to Interstate 71 in Pennsylvania. By Saturday morning Franklin, West Virginia was reached. The first cave on our agenda was Mystic Cave in Pendleton County. After locating the cave (no easy matter) we found it had been closed on account of vandalism. We finally decided to spend the remainder of the day rock climbing at Seneca Rocks. This turned out to be a wise choice since the weather and the view were beautiful.

On Sunday Grapevine Cave in Greenbriar County was visited. This cave, located 2 or 3 miles north of Lewisburg, was definitely the highlight of the trip. A 120 ft. free rapel brought the party into a tremendous room over 600 feet long and 60 feet high. Beautiful white stalagmites had formed on the breakdown that covered the floor. The largest of these was over 30 feet high. Even more beautiful was the new section of the cave (see sketch on cover).

On Monday we went to visit Breathing Cave near Harrisburg, Virginia. To our surprise we found some leopard skin air mattresses (?) in a large room near the entrance. A little further on we ran into Ernst Kastning and his party from fraternity at RPI. Well, it turned out that Breathing Cave wasn't enough misery for Porter. Tuesday he nefariously schemed to get us all into Carpenter Pit (Swage Area south of Marlinton, West Virginia). By mistake, according to Porter, (by plan, I would say) we went in beyond "Pauls Crawl" to a dome pit complex that none of the party had ever seen described before. This part of the cave had no formations and was about as appealing as 10 miles of the "A" passage in Skull Cave in Albany County, N.Y. (If the reader has not heard of Skull Cave he just hasn't lived). After 8 hours of misery in Carpenter's Pit we finally reached the fresh, clean air. Wednesday found us safely home in Troy, N.Y.

-Vic Baker

A WARD'S-GREGORY'S CAVE TRIP

Shortly after after 1 P M, Sunday, Sept. 18 the Chary-ot headed for familiar territory. Paula Champion, Jim Drake, Steve Karon, and Hank Chary were off on their first cave visit of the new school year. Their destination was the village of Clarksville and Ward's and Gregory's caves.

On the way to the caves Hank tried several times to get lost. All these attempts were, however, thwarted as the Chary-ot know where to go. (?-Ed) Soon the happy group arrived at the cave and started back into dear ol' Mother Earth.

Those on the trip who know these caves were amazed at their dryness. Almost everywhere where water was expected only a puddle (if that) could be found. Happily though, sufficient water was found in one place so that the entire party's spirits were temporarily dampeded.

After a fairly rapid investigation of Gregory's Cave the hearty foursome proceeded into the depths (or at least far reaches) of Ward's Cave. Twice we had to dodge the express train as it came tearing along the tunnel. When the lake at the far end of Ward's was reached Hank commented, "Here's the lake!" Paula then asked, "Where's the water?" Hank made some waves so that she could see where the water was. This was done just in time as Paula was about to walk directly into the lake-(in search of water?).

The return to the surface ended a very enjoyable 2 and a half hrs. in the dark nether world of the Clarksville caves. The party arrived in Troy after 6 P.M. and proceeded to the new multi-use dorms- then to

embarrass Paula, the three fellows took their hard hats with them into the lounge. There a brief refreshment period ensued with the refreshments gratis the friendly neighborhood mechanical cow.

- The Jolly Spelunker (Hank Chary)

PRESENCE OF MIND

When, with my little daughter Blanche,
I climbed the Alps, last summer,
I saw a dreadful avalanche,
About to overcome her;
And, as it swept her down the slope,
I vaguely wondered whether
I would be wise to cut the rope
That held us twain together.

* + +
I must confess I'm glad I did,
But still I miss the child---poor kid!

-Harry Graham

TRIP TO MITCHELL'S CAVE, YOUNG'S CAVE, AND SCHOHARIE CAVERNS

Three caves could not be farther apart in comparison than the three visited by a small group of ROC members (Vic Baker-leader, Pauline Heaton, John Hess, and Greg Paris) Saturday, Sept. 24. Exploring the three caves took most of the day.

Mitchell's Cave, which is entered through a small depression in the ground, is unique in that instead of being formed in limestone it was formed in dolomite by faulting. Thus, it is a relatively deep cave--about 200 ft deep, and many of the rooms are quite narrow--no more than 5 ft wide, and are relatively high (one of the larger rooms was 35 ft high), but not too long. The cave seemed somewhat easy, with only a few narrow "corkscrews", and no major chimneying. Mitchell's was somewhat muddy due to surface seepage down the walls, but dry in comparison to the other caves. At the end, however, there was a small duck-in, through which you had to go to continue the exploration--no one felt too ambitious.

Young's Cave was wetter than Mitchell's. Built, or rather carved, in the traditional limestone, it rarely reaches more than 3 ft in width, and places to stand up in are few. The entrance, a wide-mouthed funnel, gradually leads into a tight squeeze which alone would be no problem. But the 2 inches of water in most of the cave, at 50° F makes the going at first slightly chilly, until you become numb. The unique feature about Young's Cave is the profusion of small brachiopod fossils which cover the ceiling. For anyone who does not like to retrace his steps in a cave, Young's has two entrances, both located near suitable clumps of trees.

Schcharie Caverns, the last one visited Saturday, was the easiest of the three--you could walk upright all the way and it was either paved by boards or there was some of the original walkway covering most of the distance. The uncovered stretch, about 20 ft, had a 3-5 inch covering of mud, which taxed our ability to stay on our feet. Although the cave is rather uninteresting because most of the formations were completely destroyed by blasting in an attempt to commercialize the cave, it has one good point. It has a gigantic 60 ft dome which is the focal point of interest. We could have penetrated farther into the cave but again no one felt ambitious.

As an interesting sidelight, on the way back we discovered that Ella Armstrong Cave had been plugged, though the method could not be determined.

ascertained.

Though it was an interesting day, I was somewhat disappointed-
I only saw one bat- at Mitchell's.

- Gregory Paris



"If you think I'm abominable,
you ought to see my wife!"

FOR SALE

Boots

I have a pair of Henke Mythen boots which do not fit my feet, even after a few uncomfortable trips to break them in. Co-op sells them for \$25.95 and I'm willing to part with them for \$15.00. Size: 9-D. If they fit you, you won't be able to find a better boot for the price.

Dick Andrews, 3 Prospect Ave, Troy 274-5323

2 Man Tent
Floor, mosquito net, poles, etc. \$15.00

Jungle Hammock \$5.00

Ice Ax \$7.00

Ice Pitons \$1.50 @

Vic Baker
1905 7th Ave.
Troy, N.Y.
274-2157

EXPEDITION TO GAGE

On Saturday, Sept. 24, Hank Chary, with the very able assistance of Lee Mitchell, led an introductory caving journey to the depths of Ball's or Gage's Cave. The two fearless leaders were followed by the fearful followers: Paula Champion, Stu Thickman, Bob White, Keith Miller, Jim Eachus, and John Apple.

Hank belayed the happy crew into the hole. The Fox was briefly investigated and afterward the dry passage was followed to the small room just before the Amphitheatre Room. There, a narrow fissure was pursued to its end, then the Amphitheatre Room was entered by either of two passages.

After a relatively satisfactory exploration of the Amphitheatre and a narrow squirm leading from it, the party headed back to the end of the cave. The Broken Room and then the Spring Room were reached and investigated. Hank then proceeded to direct the party, two at a time, into the long crawl to nowhere.

While this narrow passage was being heavily traveled, the two fearless leaders sat about in the Spring Room making small sculptures out of the conveniently located clay. Other small sculptures prompted this little diversion.

As people came out of the crawl passage Hank and Lee directed them into the loop and finally out of the cave.

It was a very successful trip enjoyed by all. Several of the neophyte cavers commented that they'd like to go again.

- The Jolly Spelunker

CHALLENGING NOVICE RUN OF THE BATTEN KILL

At approximately 10 A.M. Sunday, Sept. 25, 8 people left Lounge 15 for a canoe trip on the Batten Kill. The trip was aimed at giving some of the newer members experience in a canoe on moving water. Two runs were made from Bridge 313 to the covered bridge approx. 5 miles downstream. Bob Courtney, who led the first run, used one canoe, two of the freshmen doubled in the 17 footer, and a third member took the remaining 15 foot Grumman. Drill Sgt. Courtney then supervised the loading of the canoes for transportation back to Bridge 313. Bob Froese led the second run which proceeded much the same as the first. No mishap. The six new members then voted to proceed further downstream to the next bridge. There they were to be met by Courtney and Froese. It was the general concensus of opinion that Gulf made a bad map of the area. Nonetheless the rendezvous was made.

Wind made the trip unpleasant in spots. This is the primary trouble, it would seem, with one-in-a-canoe trips. The two members who dumped on the lower run will be pleased to know that I've forgotten their names.

- Bob Froese

CYCLING

Any one interested in engaging in some cycling activities-touring or racing- please contact me either directlt or through any member of the executive committee.

- Bill Skerritt
274-2157