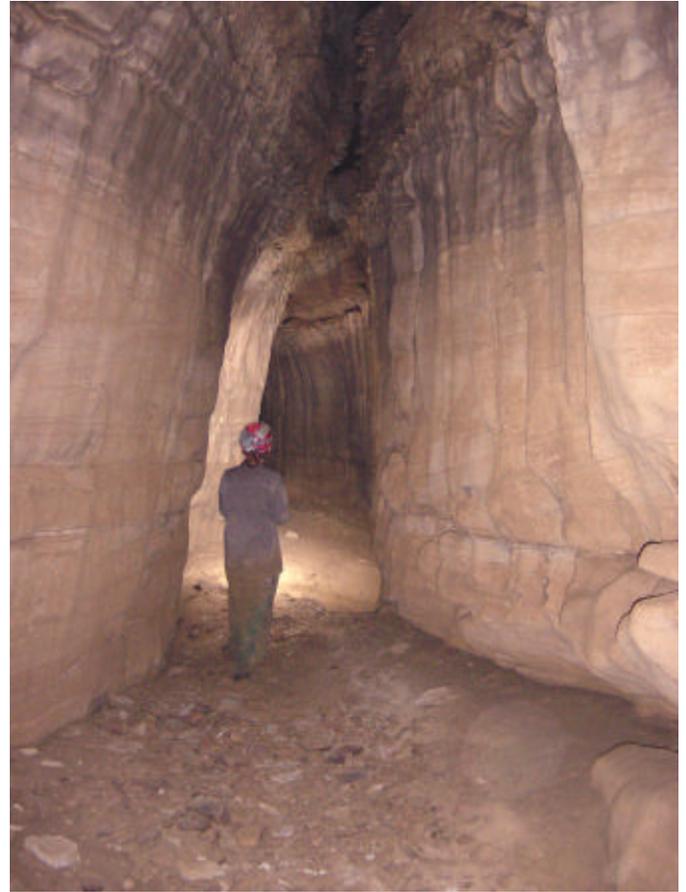




# *C.O.G. SQUEAKS*

September 2003



## THE CENTRAL OHIO GROTTO (COG)

The Central Ohio Grotto (COG) of the National Speleological Society meets at 7:00 p.m. at the Worthington Presbyterian Church the fourth Tuesday of most months. The church is on the northwest corner of the square in Worthington. Parking is available behind the church. Enter the parking lot from the first side street off State Route 161. Please contact a grotto officer to confirm meeting time and place. The December meeting is not held at the church.

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**COG WEB page:** [www.tuningoracle.com/cog](http://www.tuningoracle.com/cog)

**Grotto Membership Dues:  
\$15 per individual or \$20 per family.**

<u>Grotto Officers</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Telephone</u>
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### The C.O.G. Squeaks

The C.O.G. Squeaks is the official newsletter of the Central Ohio Grotto. Articles regarding cave exploration and study, cave trips, cave fiction, cave poetry, cave-related cartoons, cave art or photographs are always welcome. Please note that we have a 35mm film scanner and a flat bed scanner. I can handle negatives up to 4 X 5 inches. So, please send your photos, negatives, or slides for inclusion in the Squeaks. Material may be submitted via mail, e-mail, disk, fax, or even dictation to Bill Walden.

The C.O.G. Squeaks is mailed to dues paying members and to grottos with which the COG exchanges newsletters. The C.O.G. Squeaks is also available by E-mail as an Adobe Acrobat file (PDF) or Word Document. Please notify Bill Walden or Andy Franklin if you would like a file of the Squeaks to reprint. The Squeaks is available as a PDF at:

[www.tuningoracle.com/cog](http://www.tuningoracle.com/cog):

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**The COG Meeting night is the 4th  
Tuesday of the month at 7:00pm.**

## KARST CALENDAR

Sept. 23, 2003	End of summer. Autumn begins and the September COG Meeting at 7 P.M.
Sept. 27, 2003	Lost River Field Trip refer to pages 4 & 5 February 2003
Oct.28, 2003	COG Meeting

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## **5<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL HALLOWEENE ROAST**

Hosted by Jim and Ada Blankenship

DATE: Saturday, October 11, 2003

TIME: Activities will start around 2:00 PM, Barbeque around 5:00 PM

PLACE: Blankenship Residence, 27374 Jackson Road, Circleville

- Activities will include volleyball, horseshoes, ping-pong, bonfire, and, weather permitting, a little astronomical observation. Mars has been very bright these past weeks.
- Directions: Route 23 South to Circleville. Take Route 56 East through Circleville. It is about seven miles to the flashing red light at the intersection of Route 56 and State Route 159. Continue east on Route 56 for another two miles until you come to Jackson Road. Turn left and the house is about ¾ of a mile on the right. You will see a BFR in the front yard that says "Foxtail Hollow". Follow the gravel lane to the house.
- General information: This is technically the fourth halloweenee roast since we cancelled the one in 2001. Last year was a tremendous success; Steve Clark invited Ken Smith and Bob Wood, a pair of legendary COG'ers who hasn't caved or even attended a caving event the last few decades. Along with Bill Walden, Lou Simpson, Charlie Daehnke, and others, we had a story telling, slide showing, laughing good time. Several dozen were in attendance.
- Food and *soft* drinks provided. BYOB
- The Blankenship residence phone is: (740) 474-1040.

# REMEMBERING DAVID PERRY BEITER

Contributors: Charles Gibbs, Harry Goepel, Louis Simpson, and Bill Walden

## Dave Beiter

By Bill Walden

### The Beginning

I don't remember the year for sure but it was before I bought my first International Scout, so it was probably early 1969. Lou Simpson and I had been poking around in the Minton Hollow section of Sloans Valley Cave looking for a possible connection to the Garbage Pit entrance. We were unsuccessful.

When we returned to Lou's infamous white Ford (the Fording Ford is yet another Lou Simpson story) there was a note on the windshield from a Dave Beiter, which suggested that we consider surveying the Cave. We had no idea who Dave Beiter was but the note gave instructions to his house. Dave rented the house from Al Geiser of the Cincinnati Grotto. The grotto had been using it as their Sloans Valley Field house. Now Dave was using it as his "field" house. He also had an apartment in Lexington just off the UK campus.

Al Geiser had produced the most complete map of the Sloans Valley Cave to date but it was just a line map with no detail. Dave wanted to survey the cave more completely and with detail. He explained that he was working toward his Ph.D. in Speleology. I didn't know that such a degree existed but Beiter explained that the University of Kentucky is one of the few colleges that offer an advanced degree in Speleology.

### Innovations

The survey was launched using Silva compasses, Abney levels, and 300-ohm TV antenna wire punched in ½-foot increments. The instruments were Beiter's choice. He once demonstrated at an NSS convention why he used the Silva compass by throwing the compass across the lecture room. It bounced off a desk and crashed to the floor. It still worked and was undamaged by the mistreatment. He then washed it in a sink to demonstrate the Silva was unaffected by water. The antenna wire was used because the only measuring tape available at the time was steel tape. The steel tapes tended to break easily, jam in the case, and cause bad compass readings. Dave further advanced his cause for the TV antenna wire by demonstrating that in a pinch; it could be used for a belay without stretching the wire.

So we all purchased Silva compasses and Abney levels and we carefully drilled holes at ½ - foot intervals on our "TV tape" and marked each 1-foot mark with the distance using a soldering iron to melt the plastic coating. Once the tape was muddy in the cave the marking was clear.

Other Dave Beiter innovations included the pig and Goosh.

A pig consists of two 1 or 1 ½ gallon plastic Clorox bottles with the bottoms cut out. The two bottles are shoved together end to end and length of rope or strapping passes through the two handles to hold the affair together and provide a convenient strap for carrying. The bottles are amazingly durable and can hold a day's supply of carbide, batteries, food, water, and survey instruments.

Cavers began raiding roadside dumps for empty Clorox bottles.

Goosh is Eagle brand sweetened condensed milk that has been submerged in water maintained at close to boiling temperature for a couple hours. The condensed milk turns into a pudding like consistency that is quite good.



**Beiter eating Goosh.**

Photo from the Sloans Valley Slide Series.

### Living with Beiter

Karen and I taught high school in Crooksville, Ohio. During those summers we took courses at the Ohio State University. Ohio State divides the summer term into two sessions – one for the first half of the summer and the second for the second half. We took our classes during the first half only thus leaving the second half of the summer open. That first summer we spent the second half with our tent pitched in Dave's back yard.

Dave was not the neatest person. His chickens were free to roam through the house and he didn't believe in doing dishes. Further he didn't like women.

Karen started doing the dishes and preparing meals. Dave provided the chicken, which gratefully he cleaned for us. The

scenario was something like this, "Want some chicken for dinner?" "Ok." Karen and I replied. Out came the shotgun and boom, boom a couple hens fell to the ground. Dinner.

Not only was his house a mess but also Beiter didn't bath frequently. Karen and I didn't spend much time in the house and we never ventured upstairs.

Anyhow we survived and even enjoyed our ½ summer with Dave and got much surveying done.

Seems that Karen must have had an effect on Dave because shortly thereafter he started dating Josephine Yankauskas and later they were married.

I don't believe that Beiter was ever awarded his Ph.D. and I think he was very bitter about that.

## Post Sloans

Sloans Valley Cave was not the only cave that we surveyed. In Wayne county Kentucky we explored and surveyed Blowing Cave, Wind Cave, Burfield Hollow Cave, Triple-S Cave, and Kidd Cave. Dave was also involved in surveying the Coral System in Pulaski County, Kentucky.

After the Sloans project Dave purchased a farm in Dry Valley located just inside Wayne County near the South Fork of the Cumberland River. The property is just a short distance from what was Paul Unger's place, then Greg Erisman's, and now Darrell and Alice's place on the South Fork of the Cumberland River. The property had a huge cave entrance but one encountered lake water just a short distance inside. [Later this property was purchased by Jay Caplan and his wife. While they owned the property we dug into fairly extensive cave.]

When Lou and I first visited Dave in Dry Valley he was friendly enough but as time went on he began meeting us at his door with a weapon in hand. He never threatened us and I never felt threatened but we eventually stopped calling on him.

Dave started a hippy commune in Dry Valley that lasted for several years and we heard some pretty wild tales about him. The marriage to Josephine did not survive.

Sometime after Paul Unger purchased his property on the South Fork, Beiter disbanded the hippy commune and sold the Dry Valley property. I didn't hear from him for several years.

During the Frankfort, Kentucky NSS convention I led a photography trip to Blowing Cave in Wayne County. Charles Gibbs now owned that cave and several NSS photographers wanted to visit the cave.

Inside the cave we encountered Dave Beiter. I was surprised. He was very amiable. I learned that he was living on 1/2 Fast Road in Wayne County. Later I encountered Dave at other NSS Conventions and at one Lou Simpson re-introduced me to Josephine. I learned that she had remarried.

October of 1997 Greg and Pat Erisman took me to Redmond Creek Cave and to Procrastination Pit both in Wayne county. In Procrastination Pit we found a 100-caliber ammunition can packed with caving supplies. "Beiter's," said one of the Erismans. Apparently Dave had stashed a supply in the cave in case he was stranded. I suppose the supplies are still there.

After I started working on the Redmond Creek Survey, Dave asked if I would take him on a Redmond trip. He explained that the trip would have to be a leisurely trip – one on which we would appreciate the cave. He explained that he had a heart problem and could not longer run through a cave. I indicated that I would take him. I had a dream about taking Dave to Redmond shortly thereafter. In the nightmare we were in the West Canyon and Dave died! Still in the dream I thought of the difficulty of removing his body then it occurred to leave him in his favorite environment.

## The End

July 21, 2003 I got a call from Paul Unger. Paul said that he received word from Charles Gibbs that Dave Beiter died from a heart attack last Wednesday.

Words often used to describe Beiter:

Paranoid  
Bitter  
Cynical  
Survivalist

Dave, you will be remembered and appreciated!

## David P. Beiter, NSS #9523

By Charles Gibbs, NSS #10089

David P. Beiter died at home on July 15, 2003. He died as a result of heart failure. He was buried on his farm at Ritner, Kentucky. He was about 61.

David grew up on a farm in New York State and later moved to Lexington, where he studied geology at the University of Kentucky. He was an active caver, especially during the late 1960's and the 1970's and central to exploring a number of large caves in Pulaski County and Wayne County, Kentucky. In addition, he became involved in the Mother Earth movement during that period and influenced as many as 100 people to buy mountain farmland and move to southern Kentucky. He lived on his own farm and produced much of his own food.

I first met David during a Cleveland Grotto caving trip to Kentucky in 1972. During this trip, I helped David tow his Land Rover to Lexington for repairs. He remembered me for this favor and later called me in Cleveland, requesting that I come to Sunnybrook, Kentucky and purchase Blowing Cave. The owner had closed the cave because he thought that his spring water came from the cave. (a later dye trace showed that the owner was correct). In April of 1972, with a loan from the local bank, I purchased the 40-acre property with Blowing Cave. Two years

later, David helped me purchase another tract of land in Wayne County, which included a large rock shelter. Our family continues to enjoy these remote retreats and they have led us to build our retirement home in nearby Rugby, Tennessee. David had a major impact on our family, by making us cave and landowners.

David was involved in exploration and mapping of many major caves in Pulaski County and Wayne County, Kentucky including: Sloan's valley (25+ miles). Coral Cave System (23+ miles), Triple S Cave (7 miles), Blowing Cave, Wind Cave, Procrastination Pit to name a few. In later years, he spent more time with his farm and less time caving. I last saw David this spring. He came to our cabin near Blowing Cave for a picnic with us followed by a ride in my old Jeep into Dry Hollow and a look over the countryside from the "John Brown Preaching Ground" cliff top. He seemed in good health at that time and did not let on that his heart condition was worsening.

It is hard to say goodbye to an old friend, who has had such a large impact on my family and me.

## David Beiter

By Louis Simpson

It's never good news when you get an email where the subject is a person's name.

I last saw Dave Beiter at the 2001 NSS convention in Mt. Vernon, KY. He had told me previously that he needed a heart transplant. When he told me that, he was giving kids rides on his mule at yet another earlier caving event, a Speleofest probably. His mule was named Louie, after me. That would be a compliment, from Dave.

I first met Dave in the Minton Hollow section of Sloan's Valley Cave System in 1969. He was in the process of mapping the cave and invited everyone to help him. I was just getting started in caving and volunteered to help. So Dave taught me how to map caves.

Dave was difficult to work with sometimes, but we shared a common interest in mapping Sloan's Valley, so I stuck with it. Pigs were invented in the northeast and Dave was from New York State and used a pig. That's how cavers in the Central Ohio Grotto came to use them. Dave had a Land Rover that he drove on rough roads and I liked that so I got a Scout and did the same.

Dave's house in Sloan's Valley had oily machinery and chickens in it. Flies buzzed around on chicken droppings in the house. He kept the windows open to let the flies in so the chickens could eat them, he said, but I know Dave ate insects too. I actually saw him eat cave crickets, with the antennae twitching between his lips, a big smile on his face. I saw him once sit under a bright light to attract insects to his hungry mouth. I guess there are advantages to being that low in the food chain.

Dave didn't bathe very frequently, either. Once he showed up late for one of his papers at an NSS convention and missed the

other one altogether. He sat down next to me after speaking and he didn't smell very good.

At another session on surveying he interrupted a speaker who was talking about surveying with a Brunton by throwing his Silva Ranger compass at him to show how rugged it was. Dave was working on an advanced geology degree at UK in Lexington, but spent most of his time going in caves and mapping. I guess he thought he'd use the cave data in a thesis, but he didn't finish it.

During the week between Christmas and New Years 1970, Dave and I were camped in tents on the abandoned railroad bed near Alpine, KY. Josephine Yankauskas, who was from Philadelphia, had met some Michigan cavers at an NSS event and came down with them that week to cave in Sloan's Valley. When the Michigan cavers left, Jo stayed. Dave had a heater in his tent, so she stayed with Dave. We got started caving later and later in the day each day until we were entering the cave in the evening. Dave and Jo must have had a good time in that tent because she stayed with him in Lexington, Kentucky and they eventually got married and moved to a farm in Wayne County. Much later they divorced and lived on separate mountaintops in Wayne County.

Finally, Jo moved to Illinois and remarried.

Dave continued to live on his land and called it 1/2 Fast Farm. Every five years or so he'd contact people and try to get them to visit him and go caving with him, but those who did show up found he had already lost interest in doing that. Dave was a survivalist and told me once that "when all the little pieces of paper in the world become worthless to buy anything, don't come to my place." He usually answered the door with a gun, and his place was probably booby-trapped, so we stayed away, except Charlie Gibbs, who isn't afraid of anybody.

Once I got together with Dave and Jo to try blasting in a sinkhole. Dave made us hoe his pickles before he would get ready to go to the cave. Dave was riding in the back of my Scout trying to hold onto the blasting caps while I drove through 3-foot deep puddles. Dave said he knew where a lot of caves were located but wanted to keep them secret.

Now his secrets are safe.

## Post Script from Harry Goepel

Lou and Bill,

Even though I never met Dave Beiter, I have heard numerous stories from both of you about Dave over many years. I know he had an impact early on in your caving careers and encouraged you to start mapping Sloans. Now, 35 plus years later, we are still mapping in several caves, Redmond Creek, GGC, Denny's SP, etc. So even though I never met him, he has had an indirect impact on my caving through the two of you. Thanks Dave.

Harry.

# 2003 NSS Convention

By Kevin Toepke

This year's NSS convention in Porterville, California was another good one with its share of confusions, bad directions, and shenanigans.

I met Lee and Amber at the "Bakersfield" airport noon on Saturday. They were both nursing hangovers from the previous night's party at Joel Despain's house. Lee and Amber had some difficulty finding the "Bakersfield" airport because of (1) its small size and (2) the fact that its never called the Bakersfield airport on any sign.

About an hour later we arrived at the Club Shred camp on the Porterville Community College campus and proceeded to set up camp then to go shopping for food and liquid refreshment. Our shopping trip was a little confusing. Our first planned stop was the Wal-Mart 0.6 miles from campus...it turned out to be the local Wal-Mart distribution center! We eventually stopped at about 3 grocery stores, one liquor store and the actual Wal-Mart store before heading back to camp to start the evening's festivities.

As I needed to wake up at 7am in order to make it to the Geo Field Trip on Sunday, I hit the sack fairly early (read 3am). It was obvious that I was suffering from jet lag when I woke up at about 5:30 and couldn't fall back asleep. Katie Schneider, the only other Club Shred member going on the Geo Field trip, had been up since about 4am! Lets all welcome Katie to Club Shred!

The Geo Field trip was to Kings Canyon in Canyon Kings National Park. Once we got to the park the Geo Field trip was very well run. The geology of the area was explained in a way that everyone on the trip could pick up some new information.

Once the Geo Field trip ended and everyone had some grub, the evenings festivities started. I finally hit the sack at 3:30 with only Jason, Lee and Melissa (?) still awake.

Monday morning I attended the Bio-speleology sessions. There were a couple of excellent presentations this year, including one by our Katie Schneider! Katie presented information from her master's thesis on "The Biogeography of the Subterranean Invertebrate Fauna of West Virginia". Here presentation won her the Mitchell Award for best scientific presentation by someone under 25. Congratulations Katie Schneider!

Monday afternoon many Club Shred members were found in the first US Exploration Session to support fellow Club Shred member Jason Gulley who was presenting his experiences Diving the Death Trap System in Pulaski County, Kentucky.

The Howdy Party was fairly well organized with extremely short lines for food, but long lines for the beer (unless you wanted Pabst Blue Ribbon!) As usual, there was a good deal of alcohol consumed and burned off on the dance floor. After beer service ended, the party moved back to Club Shred and the Zoo.

Tuesday morning was US Exploration II. Tuesday afternoon I stole the keys to the minivan and headed to the grocery for additional supplies. I called it a night early (2am) as Wednesday is the day for the Geology and Geography Sessions. The morning sessions were mostly presentations on the caves and karst of San Salvador Island, Bahamas. Our very own Lee Florea was one of the presenters this year. His presentation was on the Sedimentation and porosity enhancement in a breached flank margin cave. The afternoon sessions were more varied, but no less interesting.

This year, the Wednesday Campground Party was held at the same location as the Howdy Party rather than in the campground. The Terminal Siphons, the traditional favorite for the Campground Party, were the band. This year the Terminal Siphons had an alternate lead singer for some songs. Before the band started playing his girlfriend handed out about a dozen pair of ladies panties to be thrown at him. During the chosen song a dozen men and women walked up to stage and tossed the panties onto stage. Both he and the audience loved it!

Granite caves are quite interesting -- not at all like any limestone cave I have ever seen. I'd guess that the initial crack that started the cave was formed by exfoliation of a layer of rock that was subsequently eroded -- makes for an interesting cave -- if you can find it.

The 2nd version of the directions to the parking location was pretty good. The directions from the parking area to the cave were quite lacking, but we eventually did find the cave.

Thursday night the party was fairly quiet, partly because of previous late nights and in preparation for the final Friday night bash. But many Club Shred members did wind up staying up well past 3am.

Friday morning, at John Mylroie's insistence, I attended the GIS and Digital Mapping Symposium. There was an excellent presentation on the use of GIS in mapping karst in the area of the Somerset Northern Bypass route for I-66.

Shortly after lunch the Friday night festivities started and continued through the banquet where our newest member Katie won the Mitchell Award. Congratulations again and good luck on your PhD work. The party continued through the night with the last people knocking off sometime after sunrise.

Club Shred has a large canopy! Thanks to Matt Reese who bid on the canopy. Much of Saturday morning was spent packing and lashing the canopy to the top of Matt's Land Cruiser. It will eventually be sent east and the cost will be shared. Look for it at future Club Shred invasions!

The original plans for Saturday were to grab some altitude, but with the delays from packing and loading the canopy we got a

late start. For lunch we had our final meal at El Tapatio a fantastic little Mexican restaurant in the heart of Porterville. After lunch, Matt and Peggy headed their own way in Matt's truck and Eric and Janeen headed off with Dale Andreatta in tow. Lee, Jason, Amber, Kristin and myself headed south to the Kern river valley to wrap up things for the week. Kristin, Lee, and myself hiked up to another granite cave while Dale, Jason and Amber headed into town to get dinner. It looked quite different from the one I saw on Thursday. After caving and shopping, we all met at a hot spring on the way to the campground (Dale's new favorite hot spring!) After dinner Dale left to make the long drive to the airport.

Saturday morning we rose early and made our way to the airports.

As soon as I get my camera back (I had left it in the minivan) I'll post pictures to the net and send out the link. If you have any pictures you'd like to have posted or if you want a CD of the pictures send me an email at [kevin@tuningoracle.com](mailto:kevin@tuningoracle.com) and we'll work out the details!

## Meeting minutes from August 26, 2003

By Dale Andreatta

10 people attended

No one present to run the meeting, it was held in discussion format.

Brief discussion of where the Christmas party will be held, any offers?

Past trips: At Wormfest, Lacie caved at Wolf River and won the coloring contest, Bruce W. went to Triple-S.

Dale and Joe Gibson dug at Peter Cave, didn't accomplish much. A couple people present went with Bill Walden and discovered a high connection between East and West Canyons in Redmond Creek.

Dale, Kevin Toepke, and Don Conover were at the Porterville Convention.

Future trips: Labor Day weekend, Lacie will go to Missouri, a trip will go to Grayson-Gunnar, and there is OTR.

The weekend of 9/12 is Caver Appreciation Weekend at GSP, and Eric Weaver and Janine Sharpshair get married (to each other) at GSP on Saturday evening. Caving is likely.

Weekend of 9/20 is a low-key easy trip to Wells Cave with Kevin and his brother.

Weekend of 9/27 is Lee Florea et. al. birthday bash with caving likely.

Program: Further discussion of Guatemala by Lacie.

Next meeting September 23.

## Camp's Gulf : Trapped by the creek or Spelunkers out/cavers in.

By Brenda Frost Mitchel # 48171

Recently I've ran into a lot of my old caving friends at different events. They have all ask what happened to me. Some of them knew I had been caving in TN. For the past couple of years, others didn't because I had stopped writing trip reports. The Black House Mountain Gang took me under their wing, and fortunately didn't give up on me when my self-confidence was suffering from life's unexpected events. I have gone into a different cave every month, and marveled at its beauty. I've been very lucky to have gone 8 of the last 11 weekends, thanks to my new caving partner Patrick. I hope to continue at that pace, it suits me very well. I found the trip I'm writing about particularly interesting. This is how the story goes. When Patrick called, and told me about a trip to Camp's Gulf I immediately said I was interested. Also going was Paul Unger, Charles Gibbs, and a

photographer named Sean Roberts. We would help carry Sean's equipment, and get to see this incredible cave. Any excuse to go caving was all I needed. My car is less reliable than it was a year ago. Since I couldn't carpool, Patrick drove from Bronston to get me at 4. I was ready, we loaded the truck, and left town. Conversation during the drive back consisted of past caving adventures we've shared during our two-month relationship. Our most memorable being dropping Dripstone Crypt [137] with Harry, Buddy, and Shawn. It's one of the prettiest caves I've seen. Stories of Camp's Gulf kept surfacing; we were both excited to see just how true they were.

It's up at 5:30 to get ready for the drive to Charles's house in

TN. There we had breakfast prepared by his wife Lavonne. I met Sean, his wife Rebecca and their son. Rebecca was recuperating from a broken heel, and could not cave with us that day. The equipment Sean displayed amazed me. He divided up the workload for each of us. I blatantly stated I did not want to carry the case of bulbs, or camera, or flashes. Just a simple tripod would be fine with me.

Patrick and I were in his truck, with the others in Charles's van. It began to rain, so I had to nap during the hour and half drive to the cave. Patrick does a lot of driving, doesn't he? I awoke when we stopped at McDonalds for brunch, and coffee. We arrived at the dirt road that leads to the cave. it was decided that we should drive as far back as possible, cavers love it when we can get that close to the cave entrance.

The mountains were beautiful, and the cave entrance even more beautiful. After climbing the 150 feet of break down, we're in the caves first big room. I couldn't believe it, I was overwhelmed by the magnitude. I've never seen such a huge cave room in 7 years.

Sean led us to the Rotunda room, and took pictures. When the flashes go off, it's incredible to see, even if for a second how big the rooms really are. Now we come to the 350 feet of breakdown to climb. Sean is leading the way, with Paul and Charles behind. I heard Sean talking to some guys. When Patrick and I reached the top, I couldn't believe what I was seeing.

There they were, three spelunkers. I wished I had my camera -- three guys with no helmets, and a small light around their head. One guy, who was wearing a fanny pack, also was wearing shorts. The three of them were also missing kneepads. I can't really comment on that, because we weren't either. They were lost, first thing to come out of their mouths. After Sean directed them to the next room, we watched their lights grow smaller, and smaller.

Sean placed each guy at a different place in Echo Hall with radios, and the one-time use flash bulbs. I climbed down some breakdown on the other side to explore. At first I thought I must be closer to the waterfalls, then I realized they were running stronger. I climbed back up, and went to Charles. He also noticed how strong they were running. After the pictures were taken, and the guys came over, it was a matter of discussion. We knew we would never flood in a cave of that size, and that we would leave in a couple of hours. Sean took pictures of the Rotunda room, then to Expo Hall for pictures. I didn't think I would be able to climb another piece of breakdown. We had entered the cave at 1:30, and now at 10:30 we were leaving.

I had commented on how pretty the creek bed was when we were hiking to the cave. I started across it, but the water was up to my knees, and the current very strong. I held onto a tree to stand up. Paul escorted me across, but I still went down at the other side. I was finding this all very exciting until someone mentioned

crossing the same creek on the way out further down the road. Pat, Sean, and I drove in the pick up about a quarter of a mile to check out the creek. Sean walked out in it, and the water was up to his thigh. He then hiked all the way out to the main road to call home on his cell phone. Then in turn hiked all the way back, passing us to return to the van. We were communicating by radio. It was decided that we would wait for 3 hours, and talk again. That was fine by me. Patrick and I had a bottle of wine, rum, and some beer. What could have been better? It's a shame we didn't have any moonlight. Patrick slept sitting up in the seat; I curled up on the seat with my head in his lap. I couldn't get comfortable to save my life, plus I kept waking up freezing.

At five thirty we awoke with Paul on the radio, and the sound of rain. The creek had gone down quite a bit by then. Patrick decided to try, and cross. He made it to the other side, behind us came the van. Before the van crossed, a plan of action had to be put in place. They needed rope or webbing. Three things this girl always caves with is the catholic girl cave kit, which consist of a rosary, and prayer card of St. Benedict, 25 feet of webbing, and my trusty peanut butter sandwiches. So I offered up my webbing, but not my last peanut butter sandwich. The webbing was tied to the van; it starts across, and dies just at the edge of the other side. Patrick backs up, the webbing is tied, Sean, and Paul are pushing while Patrick pulls Charles across. I'm thinking of a cup of coffee all the while. We make it to the clearing, where the spelunkers had parked earlier in the day. The van still won't start, and there are no tools. This is no good. 5 of us cram into Patrick's small size truck. The two in the back, are sitting facing each other like sardines, while my legs are straddled the gear shift, we take off to find a tow truck, and coffee. We arrive at McDonalds, walk up to the door, I grab the handle, and the electricity goes off. Our appearance warranted free coffee. Charles had forgotten to bring a change of clothes, and me without my make up. Finally, the power is restored, and we eat. It was the best fast food I can remember. Charles had to wipe the brown mud up from the seat after he stood up.

As we're piling back into the truck, and a blonde comes over and asks me if we were going caving. I guess we were pretty obvious.

I always find it interesting when there are 5 surveyors in the truck, and we can't decide where 62 or 70 is, or exactly where to turn. I guess that big breakfast made me sleepy, so I napped once again on the way to Charles's house. Paul told everyone his thoughts on a caver's retirement community around a lake with a commissary, it's definitely a planned community like D.C. .We were invited in to shower, but declined, we still had to drive to Patrick's, pack, and drive back to Cincinnati.

The pictures are going to be on the Florida web site soon. What a long cave trip. The best part was meeting Charles, Lavonne, Rebecca, and Sean. We plan on caving together again, and I hope we do.