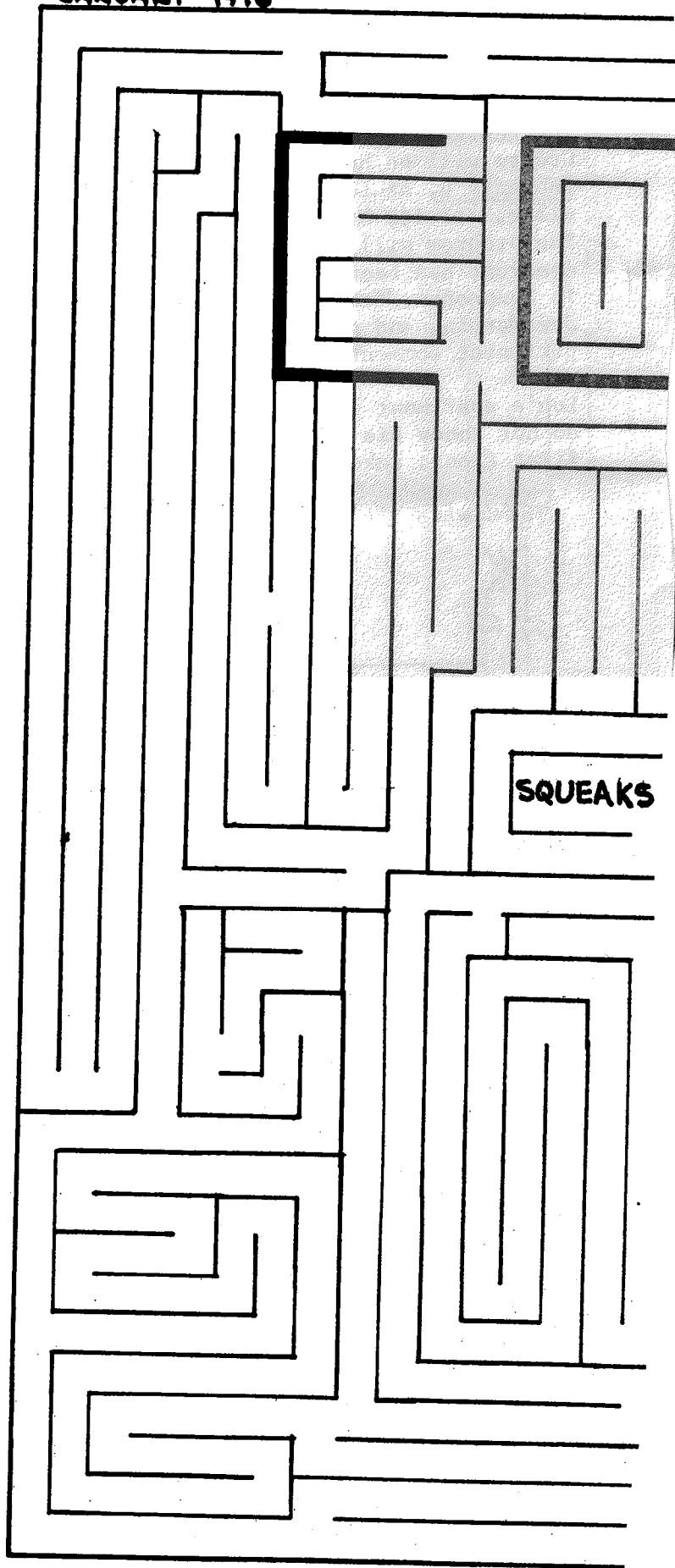


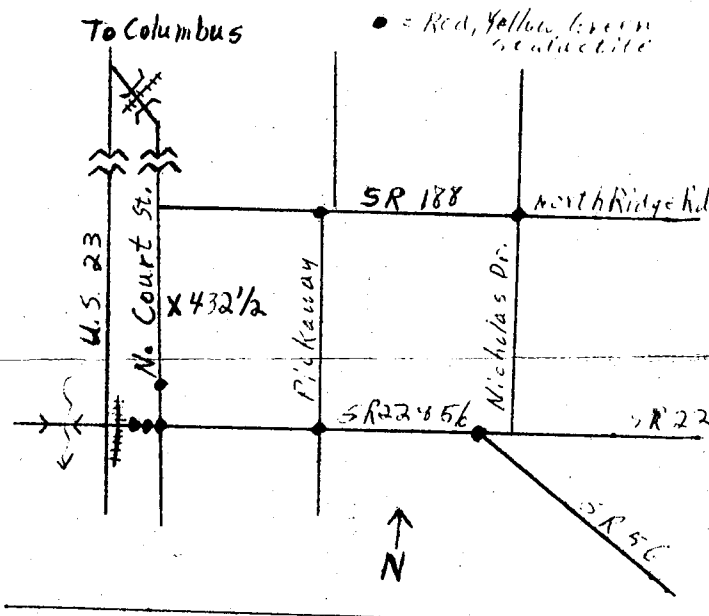
JANUARY 1976



 * MEETING NOTICE *

The February meeting of the Central Ohio Grotto will be held a week early, on Friday, February 6, at Lou Simpson's home in Circleville, 432 1/2 N. Court Street, at 8:00 p.m. The program will be on that fabulous cave everyone has been talking about - Zarathustra's in Tennessee, featuring pictures by Ken Smith, Joe Martin, and possibly Barb Unger, with pertinent comments, etc., by Lou Simpson.

Lou's apartment is on the second floor, so do not annoy his landlord, who lives on the first floor; take the up-lead.



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HAVE YOU PAID YOUR DUES YET ? ? ? ? ?

NEW YEAR'S EXPEDITION TO ZARATHUSTRA'S CAVE

By Lou Simpson

We were more than a little apprehensive about backpacking down the 800-foot gorge this time without a trail. The Knoxville cavers had been taking this route, but without backpacks, and they said it was quite steep. Barb Unger and I arrived first, driving up from Knoxville. When we tried to drive down the gravel road to the usual parking place, we saw two pickup trucks stuck in the mud trying to get up a hill. We managed to back up to the house on the road and obtained permission to park there. About an hour later Bob Wood, Ken Smith, and Joe Martin arrived in Bob's station wagon, followed by Mark Flarida and Jim Hazlitt in Mark's two-wheel drive Travelall. Bob parked at the house also and we all piled into the Travelall for a wild ride to the parking lot. Yes, Mark succeeded where the two trucks had failed. We pushed it out of the way and hoped we could get the car back on the road two days later. We planned to stay in the cave January 1 through January 3.

My pack only weighed around forty pounds because I didn't bring vertical gear, much water (hoping to get some cave water), extra shoes (not needed since we'd not be crossing the flooded Obey River, my sledge hammer, beer, etc. Bob and Ken brought vertical gear, bolts, hammer, ropes, cameras, etc. Jim's sleeping bag was a large folded roll draped over his backpack. About halfway down the gorge we found the tree Bill Deane had marked with blue tape and left the trail to hack our way on down. "You have to go far enough to avoid the first set of cliffs, but not too far so you'll run into the second," Bill had advised. Somehow we managed to find a reasonably gentle slope down to the river. There was no question that this new route was necessary. The roaring flood occupied the bottom of the gorge, providing an uncrossable barrier. How fortunate that the cave is on the same side as the access road. Actually, this part of the gorge has less water than several miles upstream, because when the river first reaches the sandstone-limestone contact, much of it normally sinks. Thus far, Zarathustra's Cave is the largest cave that has been discovered in the area. The sys-

tem which must exist to swallow that mighty river is yet undiscovered.

Rather than camp in the chilly entrance, we carried our gear six hundred feet inside, across a twenty-foot pit, to a somewhat warmer upper level. After a brief snack and rest, we headed for the spacious upper level half a mile into the cave, called Heaven. Zarathustra's Cave, as presently known, consists of at least four main levels, interconnected at many places. The level we camped on is called the Elephant Walk. We followed this level to the climbable connections to the Heaven level at stations M74 and M79. A deep pit with a waterfall intersects Heaven and the Elephant Walk. A lead on the far side of this pit, between the two levels, was to be Bob Wood's main objective. But for this first day we only wanted to look at some unexplored leads near the north end of Heaven. Two deep cracks led to a lower level. Bob climbed down a series of chimneys and found footprints. This was the level below the Elephant Walk. So these connected two levels while skipping the intermediate level. We walked along the huge trunks of that lower level and I recognized various overlooks I had only seen from above. Soon we came to the area of the lower entrance and I knew the way out. The lower entrances are very close to the main entrance. Indeed, we passed them while backpacking in. Between the two entrances is a ledge with a precarious log that we have been using for footholds.

We visited an impressive overlook back inside and Ken decided to try to photograph it on Saturday. There were about a hundred bats in a nearby room, clustered on the ceiling. We moved quickly through this room to avoid disturbing them. After dinner, Barb, Joe, Ken, and I went to the nearby S-survey formation area. Since the water in the rimstone dams was deeper than it was in November, they chose to keep their feet dry and only photographed the first part. Barb and I explored a side lead at S-2 and it seemed to end quickly, but Barb found a narrow chimney and sucked me into climb it.

ZARATHUSTRA'S, (continued)

I nearly stopped before finishing, but it opened up into a walking passage and eventually two large parallel rooms with thirty foot ceilings and a maze of interconnecting overlooks. The walls looked like Swiss cheese, with huge oval holes crisscrossing from one side of the passage to the other. Our cries of "Scoop!" were met with sleepy grunts back at camp.

Friday, January 2, was our big day. Bob, Mark, and Jim began rigging the waterfall pit from the Heaven level. Bob's bolt driver broke during the first bolt. He managed to salvage the bolt by doing something with a piece of coat hanger. I didn't quite understand what that involved. Mark had some pitons and Bob used one of those for a backup. Donning rain pants and a poncho to ward off the waterfall (and evil spirits?), Batman walked down the wall to the shelf twenty feet below. The precautions proved mostly unnecessary, as the spray from the falls was not as severe as expected, even though the flow was much greater than it had been in September and November. Now, Bob had planned to try to step across the fifty foot drop there, but this proved impossible because it was too far. His bolt-driver was broken, so what could he do? "We'll go outside and cut down a tree and make a log bridge!" he exclaimed. So out they went to cut down a four-inch diameter tree with a Swiss Army knife! This took forty minutes. Next, Bob and his suckees dragged the eleven-foot log through the lower level and up the newly discovered direct connection to Heaven. Fortunately, Ken and Joe were around at that point to assist.

Finally Bob and Jim rappelled down to the shelf again and put the slippery log in place. Jim belayed Bob across. Then Bob could see the next obstacle: a twenty-foot pit to cross. So he tried climbing up to a sloping ledge. He considered lassoing a projection. Finally he belayed Jim across the log and crossed the pit by climbing across on belay. At last he was ready to scoop! It immediately ended in fill. The twenty-foot pit didn't go. The main drop is yet unscooped, awaiting a drier season. They reversed their traverses, removed the log, and

took it back outside. I'll bet you thought they'd put it back into the tree. Well, almost. Bob used the log to prop up the precarious other log used to walk to the main entrance.

Joe and Ken photographed this flasco as well as the interesting Chert Passage and various scenes in Heaven, including the Pendant Room. At one point we encountered them shooting along a six hundred foot passage; this should be a good program. The Pendant Room is an alcove with crunchy virgin sand floor and a large triangular ceiling projection.

Barb and I mapped four places, including a resurvey of the northern part of Heaven, where numerous alcoves and side leads and pits needed better definition. The initial survey of Heaven had been done in a hurry and the sketch was not scaled, plotted, or oriented. In a parallel passage we explored and mapped into a breakdown room in which a waterfall was audible. I failed to get to this falls, however, since access between two horizontal breakdown blocks must await hammer and chisel next trip. Funny how I keep finding things to bust into with hammer and chisel. Woody, on the other hand, finds leads that require bolts, ropes and raincoats. Strange.

Barb and I briefly explored a virgin upper level that Bill Deane told us about. I climbed up Frosty's Falls, not named for falling water but for a falling caver, Frosty Miller. Barb found a safer route by voice connection. We only explored a few hundred feet and stopped before a perfectly decent belly-crawl because it was late. To get to this area we had to go through an extremely tight belly-crawl over rimstone.

On Saturday, January 3, Ken and Joe photographed the Saltpeter overlook, Bob and Mark surveyed the new connection between levels, and Barb and I mapped some of our scoop found Thursday. Jim helped either of the other two groups. Finally we were ready for the gruelling climb back to civilization. Actually, it was quite simple. It would be interesting to say

ZARATHUSTRA'S (continued)

that we were totally wiped out, but the fact is that we all drove back to Ohio, something you never do if you're really "Crumped."

Perhaps we'll get an expedition together again for the Presidents' Day weekend, February 14-16. It is truly satisfying to go caving in such a dry cave during such horrible weather.

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NEW SLOAN'S VALLEY CONNECTION

By Louis Simpson

It pays to follow arrows! On December 14, 1975, we discovered a direct connection between the Minton Hollow Big Passage and White Grotto Hill. Dave Socky, Richard Hand, Barb Unger, and I don't claim to have scooped this, only to have brought it to your attention. The northwestern breakdown at the end of the Caramel Passage is the take-off point on the Minton side. Go straight ahead and up, then to the left, going higher or lower as necessary. On the White Grotto side, the route can be found by looking for an obvious rectangular crawlway practically on the established trail down White Grotto Hill just before you finally break out from the edge of the room to the wide level area. Unfortunately, as we went back through the breakdown, I moved a block that was suspended above the route and nearly blocked it. It is still possible to get through, but the route is considerably less obvious now. I intend to remove the block next chance I get. It would still be possible to find the way by the tracks and a few arrows left there by the discoverer.

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KIDD CAVE

By Louis Simpson

Richard Hand, Dave Socky, Barb Unger, and I visited Kidd Cave, Wayne County, KY, December 13, 1975. The 100-foot belly-crawl near the entrance was well endowed with dry leaves, which posed a real fire hazard. The

falls on the lower level was very impressive. We explored the breakdown in the COG Room, noting the presence of leaves along the north edge near a small falls. This suggests either another entrance or some unknown overflow route connecting it to the main stream, because it is apparent that the entire lower level cannot fill with flood water. We dropped rocks into The Abyss, listening in awe for the "whoosh!" The Abyss is a 180 foot shaft, but rocks can be dropped only for sixty feet, since the over-look is 90 feet (by triangulation) from the ceiling and the bottom of the pit is actually 30 feet lower through small holes.

We succeeded in exploring the breakdown room beyond The Abyss by climbing through the unstable breakdown and then pulling it down after we were above it. We had a ladder and a vertical return route was possible, so we could have returned this way if necessary. The upper level didn't go far.

On the bottom level we did a quick survey (25 stations in 30 minutes) of the narrow canyon and visited the bottom of The Abyss. Our combined carbide lamps and Dave's superlight failed to illuminate the ceiling. Kidd Cave is 280 feet deep, but no rigging is required since access to the bottom level is climbable by several small chimneys in the Awesome Chasm. Kidd Cave is nearly a mile long now. Perhaps we'll return just to put it over.

* * * * *

NOTE TO EXCHANGE PUBLICATIONS:

COG Squeaks exchange address has been changed to:

c/o Phyllis Redshaw
Route 1
Amanda, Ohio 43102

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COG EMBLEM PATCHES

Some interest has been expressed in re-ordering the COG patches which were sold out some time ago. In order to determine if enough interest warrants this, please let Phyllis Redshaw know how many you would purchase if they are made available.

* * * * *

HAVE YOU PAID YOUR COG DUES YET ? ? ?

CAVE CREEK SCOOP

By Spelunger

The last scoop in Cave Creek was not really a scoop at all - the connection of 14 miles of cave via Tumbling Rock Room in Goldson's through a 6" air space in the Cloaca of Firestone. Water in the connection passage was well over the head of Al Henning (6'+) and myself (much shorter). Needless to say, the 250' of swimming and the 100' of "ear in the water" and "keeping head above water," while breathing gnats, was, well, unique. The connection was right where several other past explorers said it would be. We can only surmise that with the lake 10' lower in '78, there are other passages which will open up next summer as the only known ways into the Cloaca are via digs opened recently by the COG.

January 2 brought five of us to Hyden's for a hike to the Rock House where Johnny hung tobacco many years ago. We saw the steps hewn out of solid sandstone, a few Indian artifacts, and eventually made our way back to the House. One very large deer was scared up in the Goldson field, and just walked along, observing us as we followed, seeming to know that I wouldn't use my heater on such a critter - only snakes and their kind.

On the way back, Richard Hand and I decided to look at the Cave Creek Sink, while Phil Erisman and Toni looked for their motel and Yellow Canary keys which Phil had lost. Those holy cave clothes! Cave Creek was flowing a tremendous amount of water, 2 feet deep and over 10 feet wide, sinking in swirls into three hundred feet of breakdown against Spring House Ridge.

We found several new holes which had recently opened. Poling in them we found the usual breakdown and leaf chokes. We sat awhile and pondered the longstanding question - Where in the world (Cave Creek) does all that water go?

The Dirty Dozen, under the leadership of Paul Hohweiler, spent many days trying to find Cave Creek - on the inside. Big Paul, as I do, feels that the Great Stream Passage in Hyden's Cave is probably the drain of Tom Clark Hollow. The colume of water is nowhere

close to that of Cave Creek. True, a dye trace would solve that question, but it's never been done. Big Paul feels that Cave Creek sinks, travels under the house and barns, and cuts directly through the hill, only deeper than anything known in Humongous. Even when the Creek completely fills the sink area and overflows into the field, the sink in the field has a large whirlpool.

During times of flood, Hyden's completely fills with water, with water coming out the six Hog Hole entrances, eventually pooling in the Great Sink. Why then does the sink beside the House continue to suck so voraciously? Because of a very large stream passage which is capable of carrying the entire Cave Creek flow? A theory founded on skimpy fact until further evidence is gathered, i.e., a big SCOOP. Which brings us back to Richard and I on that cold rock.

We found a crack near the top of the hill close to the spring house. Richard and I worked for a long time moving, prying and lifting. A 55 gallon drum was at the bottom of the hole, partially filled with rocks, and of course, the ever present wash leaves. This hole, in our estimation, had not been entered before and is much higher and closer to the hill than those previously entered by myself and others. Finally I squeezed in and Richard handed me a light. Surprise! While the rock above appeared to be bedrock, below it was breakdown. Darn. Squeeze. It opened into a passage 7 feet high, going both ways. Right, toward the Creek, it was half-filled with clay. Left, it opened. Crawling over a piece of breakdown, I peered into blackness, the dim light from the flashlight in my teeth not penetrating the depths. Well, enough - back to the house for the cave gear.

Couldn't find my lamp - left it back at the motel. Phil let me use his electric, as he was still looking for his keys. Carolyn Herel's striker wouldn't spark, so I unscrewed the cap and dropped

CAVE CREEK SCOOP (continued)

the flint into the grass. No spares, since I left my repair kit at home. Then it started to rain. (Ed. Note: Sounds like a typical cave trip.)

We hurried to the opening, lit up, and crawled in with anticipation. We rigged the pit using my cable ladder and virgin 3/8". We used the Smith technique to rig - a dozen loops around the rock will hold anything. As we entered the pit, it became immediately apparent that we were in bedrock and not breakdown. As soon as Richard yelled "Off rope," he lit out, saying something about it going. I quickly scampered down and followed, not waiting for Carolyn. Toni remained at the top to relay weather warnings from Phil, who remained on the surface in the rain. (Not really, we found out later. It was raining too hard so he went in the house.) Fifteen feet below the pit level a large, partially breakdown filled passage ran parallel to the hill for 50 feet. Many cracks and holes were puched, but to no avail. There was much evidence of fast-flowing water. One promising lead went down, with a huge rock over it. Richard managed to move the rock. Now that lead is completely blocked.

Frustration! The water was only feet away. We started to climb out, and then a rush of air hitting me in the face made me look. In our eagerness to reach the bottom, we had completely missed the passage in bedrock running straight into the hill. I used the Herel technique to push this passage - send Carolyn in. Carolyn started in over some tricky, shifting breakdown, later returning, having been unable to move a large rock partially blocking the passage. The roaring water finally got to me. No way was I going to enter that passage. We headed out, resolved to return another day.

While Richard started up the ladder, I looked around and asked if anyone had gone down the little hole under the water drip. Receiving an unsure answer, I started down, not minding getting wet, as we were heading out. Halfway down the 20 feet, there was a crawl 7 feet wide, bedrock on one side, breakdown on the other. Down I

went, deeper into the pit. I ducked under a ledge, and there it was.

SCOOP! A stream passage with a foot of roaring water, and best of all, a bedrock ceiling. The rock was limestone white, covered everywhere with scallops. Forward I sprang, not noticing a rock, which bit my foot. I was mentally thankful for the merits of Phil's electric over my carbide lamp as I fell forward into 2 feet of water. Following water in stand-up passage, I soon found where it disappeared into a hole, pushable even now, but not for me with all that water.

With the splashing of cavers as background music, the dry continuing portion of the passage was left for later, and the Brucie technique employed to explore some breakdown (i.e., push the small stuff first). We concluded that this breakdown was part of the upper level. Not pushing very hard, primarily due to the frightful roar of water, we decided to leave, noting a possible increase in flow rate.

Carolyn asked if anyone had looked under a shallow duckunder. I scooted under and before my eyes was a dry bedding plane, 15 feet wide and 4 feet high. Ahead, it Y'd; looking right, a 5 x 2 bedding plane took off. On the left, another of the same size. My electric could penetrate over 75 feet into its depths, from whence air was spewing forth. Too much to check today. Since it had been raining when we entered, and having been over an hour, I decided again to leave, advising my companions as I rushed past them. We exited posthaste.

Is the Great Stream Passage Cave Creek itself? Is there a much larger stream passage somewhere? Are Hyden's and Goldson's Caves a development of drainage patterns from Tom Clark Hollow and not Cave Creek?

Will the efforts of the COG and many others go unresolved? Maybe, just maybe, the survey trip into Cave Creek Cave will resolve the controversy.

* * * * *

DUES ! DUES ! DUES ! DUES ! DUES ! DUES !

This is probably the only organization around that voted NOT to raise its dues this year!!! Where else can you get such a bargain? To take advantage of this incomparable value of membership in such a sterling and economical band of intrepid adventurers, PLUS the inexpressible delight of receiving the COG Squeaks each and every month, just place the insignificant amount of \$2.50 (\$3.50 for family memberships) in some negotiable form in an envelope and mail it to:

Phyllis Redshaw, Secretary-Treasurer
Central Ohio Grotto, N.S.S.
Route 1
Amanda, Ohio 43102

PLEASE BE SURE TO INCLUDE YOUR PROPER ADDRESS, PHONE NUMBER, AND N.S.S. NUMBER (if any). If you are a member of more than one Grotto, please indicate if you wish your N.S.S. representation to be elsewhere.

WHITE WATER RAFT TRIP TO WEST VIRGINIA

Weekend of May 7, 8, 9
return home Sunday.

Camp Friday night, raft Saturday, camp Saturday night,
Cost: \$25 for the raft trip, plus, food, etc.

If you're interested bring your money to the Feb. meeting or mail it now to Phyllis Redshaw (make checks payable to her). If you're interested but not sure, send your money; it's refundable if you cancel more than two weeks prior to the trip.

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