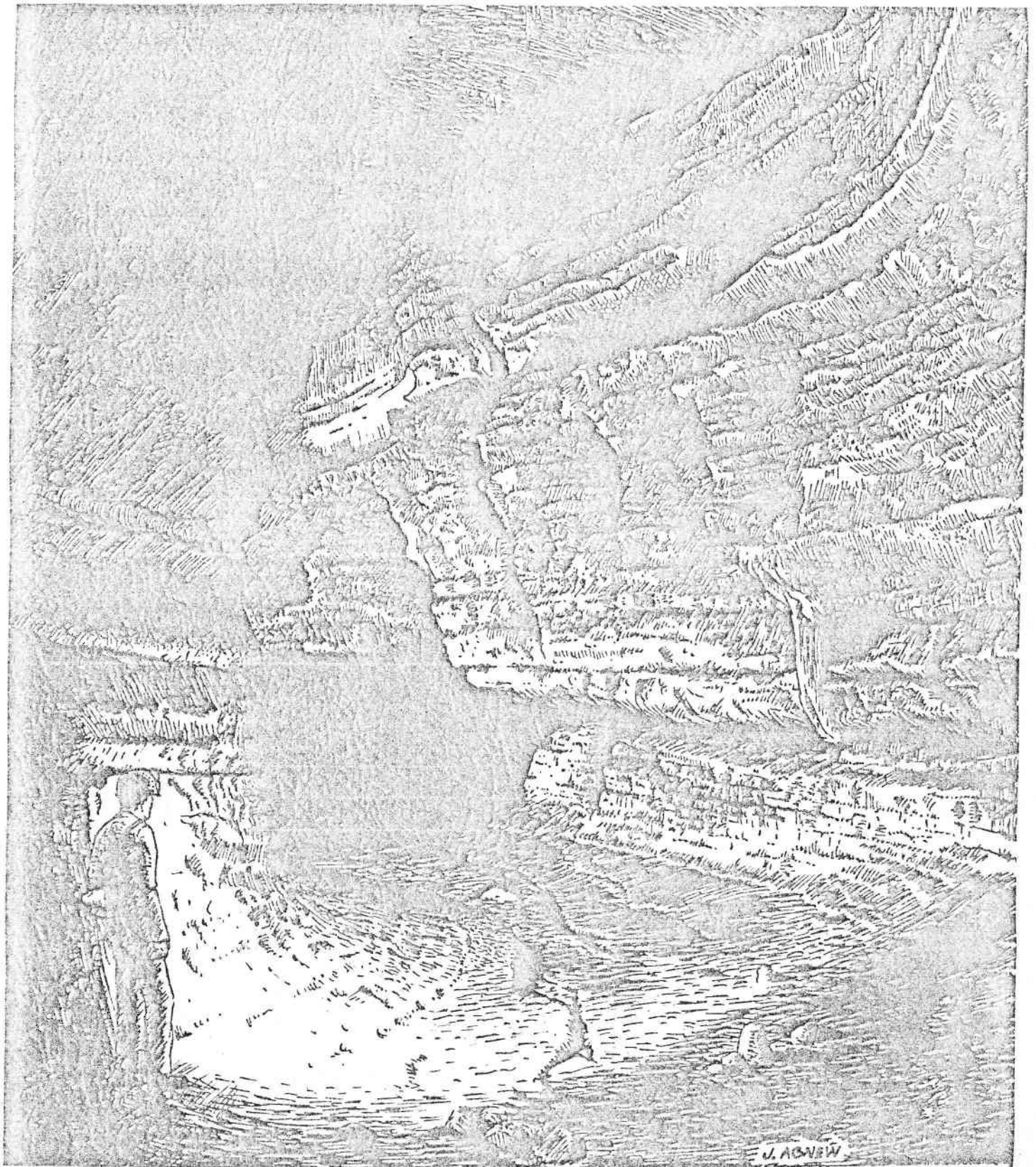


# C.O.G. SQUEAKS



COLUMBUS

I70

N

US RT 33

NOT TO SCALE

REDSHAW MAP  
MEETING JUNE 8

8:00 PM

GOOD PEOPLE

GOOD FUN

GOOD FOOD

PLEASE, NO BEER

SHOULD YOU NEED HELP  
REDSHAW'S PHONE# 614-969-4009

GENDER  
ROAD

CANAL WINCHESTER

LITHOPOLIS  
ROAD

LITHOPOLIS

CEMETARY

CEDARHILL

ROAD

CAREFULL  
DANGEROUS  
INTERSECTION

ST. RT 188

CHURCH

LANCASTER

TO CIRCLEVILLE

REDSHAW'S → \*

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## NOTICES

## NO JULY ISSUE!

Remember, I only promised 10 issues. - Editor.

## MEETING SCHEDULE

JUNE - FRIDAY JUNE 8, 8:00PM

Please note that this has changed since the March issue. June 8th is the correct date.

The June meeting will be hosted by Dean and Phyllis Redshaw in Amanda, Ohio. Their telephone number is 614-969-4009. The map to their home is repeated in this issue. For those who have not been to the Redshaws before, you might wish to call another member and get a ride or follow.

THIS WILL BE A DRY MEETING. Please respect your host and hostess by not bringing beer or other alcoholic beverages. Thank you.

JULY - FRIDAY JUNE 6 THROUGH SUNDAY JUNE 8

## T H I R D A N N U A L S O M E R ( S E T ) F E S T .

The third installment of what is becoming an annual event will be held the weekend following July 4th. Cavers are welcome to come early and spend a week of caving.

While many of you cavers will be arriving July 4th on, the formal activities will be on Friday and Saturday nights. Late Friday a Howdy Party will be the fare. Your host, Paul Unger, will provide the snacks. Saturday evening will be a barbecue. Bring your own meat. Bill Walden will again fix all the other goodies. We might even talk Mrs. Flynn into making some more of her potato salad. After the barbecue the July meeting will be held then a party. The meeting and party may even be held in a newly discovered cave nearby.

Notes from your editor - Paul's cabin is in a dry county surrounded by more dry counties. If you want beer, bring your own supply. Please contact an officer of the club for instructions to get to Paul's cabin.

Activities will be left to the imagination of participants. Trip leaders are solicited for volunteers. Swimming, caving, fishing, hiking, and looking at tornado damage are available activities.

Please call Bill Walden if you plan to attend. Bill's number is 614-268-5865. (Or call Chuck Daehnke, as Bill will be on vacation the last two weeks of June. Chuck's number is 614-263-7011.)

## COG OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN

Chairman: Paul Unger NSS# 13549  
Trips: Rt. 1, Box 282  
West Alexandria, OH 45381  
Phone# 513-839-4258

Vice Chairman: Jim Blankenship NSS# 23298  
Membership: 2777 Shelley Drive  
Trips: Columbus, OH 43207  
Phone# 614-497-0402

Secretary: Nancy Mahoney NSS# 22815  
24 Estates Lane  
Reynoldsburg, OH 43068  
Phone# 614-866-6767

Assistant Secretary: Connie Hand  
39 North Street  
Columbus, OH 43202  
Phone# 614-262-7837

Treasurer: Karen Walden

Squeaks Bill Walden  
 Editor: 223 Fallis Rd.  
 Grotto Columbus, OH 43214  
 Address: Phone# 614-268-5865

## Trips:

Chuck Daehnke  
 664 Wetmor Rd.  
 Columbus, OH 43214  
 Phone# 614-263-7011

Bill Walden is also on the NSS membership committee. He is making membership referrals for the states of Ohio, Michigan, Indiana and Kentucky. Please forward names of any cavers not NSS or Grotto affiliated to Bill so that he may send them a letter and contact the grotto in that region.

From the last Squeaks: From 26 years ago only COG # 76 remains on the COG rolls in 1984. Who is that person? Jake Elberfeld.

## TRIP REPORTS

## WOLF RIVER CAVE

by Jim Blankenship

On May 4, 1984 Dale Harmon and I took off for the cabin. We arrived around 10:00 PM. Paul and his fishing buddy were there, eating that day's catch. I was impressed with the 4.5 pound largemouth bass they caught. NICE FISH!!! With one win, one loss, and one draw each in a (friendly) chess match Dale and I decided to retire.

Mike Erisman wanted to go to Wolfe River with us so Saturday morning the three of us headed south.

We arrived around noon to find the entire entrance flooded with three feet of water. Mike went in the front entrance to meet us at the Towering Inferno. With vertical gear in hand, Dale and I set off to find the pit entrance. After a half hour of searching Dale finally found it.

We rigged up and Dale went down first. Since this was only my second rapplle into a pit (my first was the 128 feet deep Barefoot pit!) I was feeling a little skeptical. I rigged up at one point, didn't like it, and rigged up at another point. I liked it even less so I went back to the first point. With some encouragement from Dale I got over the edge and from there it was a piece of cake. I took it slow and easy and enjoyed the sights. It was about 35 feet to the bottom.

From there we went through a short crawl, a short down climb, a short traverse, and a short chimney (Good Practice!). That led to the big Chimney. It was about two feet wide and fifteen down to a point where it bells out. The tricky part is lowering your legs out of the security of the the chimney, getting your foot on a key foothold. If you slip or miss, it's twenty feet to the bottom of the canyon you were straddling. You then step across with the other foot to a large breakdown boulder and you are clear. Needless to say we negotiated everything OK and headed for the Towering Inferno, where we metup with Mike. Then we set out for the Astrodome.

We went down Hurrendous Trunk, past the waterfall, down Carivourous Corridor, did some wading, and finally arrived at our destination, the Astrodome. I see where it got it's name. It was a large, almost round room 250 feet in diameter, filled with a mountain of breakdown.

We left and headed over to Tremendous Trunk. Mike had never seen the Enchanted Forrest, so Dale took him over to see it while I rested on a comfortable rock in front of the warmth of my carbide light. (See there are nice advantages to going carbide--Editor)

After they returned we decided to head back to the car. Dale wanted to go back up to the pit and asend out and I wanted to go out the front entrance (partly because I wanted to go out a different way I came in and partly because I didn't want to go back up the tricky chimney we came down.) We met back at the car about an hour later and headed back to the cabin.

We are planning a return trip in June or July to photograph the Astrodome and other points of interest in the cave.

## A SECOND VIEWPOINT

### THE WIND ENTRANCE - WOLF RIVER CAVE

by Dale Harmon

On Saturday, May 5th, Jim Blankenship, Mike Erisman and myself drove from Paul's cabin to Wolf River Cave in Tennessee. When we reached the cave we found that the stream entrance had a large amount of water standing in it. Jim and I had brought our vertical gear so we proceeded up the hill to find the pit (Wind) entrance. Mike went in the stream entrance for a proposed meeting at the Towering Inferno.

I eventually found the pit after I had done a fair amount of searching. After I secured my rope-120 feet of Blue Water II-to a nearby tree, Jim rigged up. Since Jim didn't feel real proficient, we both double checked his rigging of the rack to the rope. (This is the best policy whether you are experienced or not. Always have someone check your rig before descending. Editor) Jim then proceeded to commit the most common error of the inexperienced when on rope. Instead of trusting his rappelling equipment, Jim tried to hold himself up using his arm. Needless to say this resulted in a minor fiasco. After Jim got off the rope, I rigged up with my figure 8 and demonstrated how easy a short 30 feet rappel should be. Jim was then able to successfully make the drop.

At this point let me make some comments concerning the figure 8. It is in my opinion the best general purpose rappelling device for the caver who does only a moderate amount of vertical work. Its advantages over the rack are its lightness, size, simplicity, easy of rigging and low cost. The rack is superior in speed on the rope, durability, and adjustability.

After reaching the bottom of the pit we had to rely on my several year old memory to find our way into the cave.

Fortunately my memory was reasonably accurate and after a tight squeeze easier than I remembered. In fact it was as I repeatedly told Jim, a "piece-of-cake".

We met Mike in the Towering Inferno as planned; he had gotten wet to the waist on the way in the stream entrance. Despite this Jim decided to exit by the stream entrance when we had finished the trip. So after we had visited the Astrodome and other parts of the cave we exited. I of course took the "easy" and dry way out. The climb and chimney out were uneventful. The vertical ascent was also uneventful except that my vertical rig had shrunk. (I couldn't possibly have gained weight!)

### BREATHING SINK AND MINTON HOLLOW CAVES

by Len Gibler

On the weekend of May 4, Bill Walden and I, with the respective daughters Katie and Emily, went to do some caving and sightseeing in the countryside around Paul Unger's cabin. This was the first trip down there for Emily and me; although Fred Dickey, Claude Rust (I think) and I poked around a bit in Sloan's about 15 years ago.

We had an easy and good time with the girls-and unhurried family-type excursion. On the business side, Bill and I put in twelve survey stations in the new Breathing Sink entrance. Not many stations, and hardly a long survey, but we did get out of the way some of those most-disagreeable 9' entrance crawlway shots. Our twelve stations encompassed the entrance to the connection area. Lake Cumberland was very high, so we put station 11 in on a pretty high ceiling, and station 12 a couple feet above lake level. We checked out the connection climbs and then headed back out. Bill replotted his sketch on the main map, confirming the trend of Breathing Sink Cave in a roughly east-west axis parallel to the

side of the hill. The rest of the survey will be easier pickin's. (Once the lake is down - Editor)

Sunday, after being missed very narrowly by one or more mean little tornadoes, we drove over to the Minton Hollow entrance to Sloan's Valley. Emily and I were wide-eyed at the grandness of the "small" entrance passages. We checked fossils, fills and-unfortunately-a good deal of litter. We need to go back and bag the latter litter a little later. And, by George, we will!

We found that some of the entrance passages were still housing winter air. A weather station placed in the cave by some thoughtful soul showed early-forties temperatures. Some bats were still obviously in hibernation, while most were already out scarfing up bugs.

Us. We headed home reluctantly as ever.

#### MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND by Bill Walden

Friday evening Karen, Katie and I started south picking Paul Unger up at Pigeon's farm near Wilmington, Ohio. We arrived at Paul's cabin about 1:30 AM whereupon we had a party till 2:30 AM.

The next morning I mowed Paul's lawn and killed his lawnmower. Shame on me. Not much caving was done Saturday. I did take Len Gibler to a shelter cave where he found a couple tools and pottery pieces. One of the tools we speculated was probably for removing nut meats from the shell; however, I found myself cleaning my finger nails with it and on handing it to Katie she did the same. Maybe! not for removing nut meats.

Sunday I planned to lead a nurd trip into Minton or another nice easy big cave; however, during the night, I suffered from a severe pain. I did not cancel the trip but was not overly anxious to lead either. We started out toward middle cave of Minton but my daughter, Katie, did not like the slot so we proceeded to the big passage. Our party included Pat Mahoney, Nancy's husband who had never been in a cave before, newcomers Clovis Dawson along with Carol and their three children, Len and Emily Gibler, Chuck Daehnke, and Katie and I.

The results of the flood three weeks before were obvious everywhere. Water had flowed into the entrance. I estimate the water depth flowing into the main Minton entrance at two feet. The entrance passages are now very muddy with six inches to a foot of organic deposits on the floor. At my old sign warning of sudden flooding in Minton the debris line appeared to be eight feet above the floor. This is in the entrance passage! At Walden's Water passage it appeared that water had come up out of the hole under great pressure as trash were deposited around the hole. (Far end of passage from duck under.) At the still room there was no or little dripping water even though we had had two days of thunderstorms. At the domes near the slot again there was very little dripping water.

Proceeding through the Duckunder and into the passages that lead to the Big Passage we encountered more of interest.

1. At Lost and Found Corner the passage is now a walking passage with the ceiling about eight feet high. The entrance passage coming in is still a hands and knees crawl.
2. No stream at Lost and Found Corner. Again remember that there had been a lot of rain during the previous two days.
3. No waterfall at Little Niagra. Not even dripping water.
4. Dread Pool was twenty feet above normal. Not unusual for this time of year but unusual because no flowing or dripping water was encountered to this point in the cave!

Dread pool was crystal clear and I hoped to catch sight of the blind fish that live there. Unfortunately the pool was a great place for the younger members of the party to throw rocks. No chance!

The bat population appeared to have been reduced by 90% since visiting the cave three

weeks ago. In the first loop of Middle Cave the upper passage had been flooded to near the ceiling and to the ceiling in some areas. Look out for larger insect populations this summer!

My pain was starting up again so I led the party out of the cave. While in the cave there had been a thunder shower. I was glad we did not tarry.

Oh yes, the stream in front of the Minton entrance has a deeper bed now. Watch it when running down the hill.

I prepared a charcoaled hamburgers for the cavers and went to bed. The severe pain returned during the night and I spent another early morning walking up and down the road in front of Paul's cabin. Rather than attempt a trip Monday I drove home.

Tuesday noon I passed a kidney stone and visited my doctor. Still have a stone in the left kidney. It will probably wait for some inopportune time to pass.

My appologies to those who came to be led through some nice caves. I really wasn't up to it.

## MINUTES MAY MEETING

The May 11, 1984 meeting of the COG was held at the home of Bill and Karen Walden. Bill conducted the meeting in the absence of Paul Unger.

The minutes of the April meeting were read and approved.

The treasurer, Karen Walden, reported \$367.37 in the treasury. There are some expenses for the Squeaks but they have not been withdrawn yet.

Squeaks committee: Bill Walden said he owes \$75 for Xerography. He has been using his company's Xerox and will re-imburse them. He also needs new ribbons for his printer. Re-printing articles from old Squeaks was discussed. It was decided that re-printing the old articles was a good idea. Bill also requested more articles for the Squeaks, and Squeaks covers.

Old business: Bill reminded everyone of the upcoming cave rescue seminars. Jake is going to the one in Virginia. It was suggested, again, that other members attend one of the seminars and present a program to the grotto. Bill also reminded everyone of the NSS convention coming up (in June). He and Karen will be going. Writing letters in support of the National Cave Protection Act was discussed again. Len Gibler will get a letter sample to the grotto.

There was no new business discaussed.

Trip reports: Chuck Daehnke told about the non-caving fishing trip he and Paul Unger took in the Cooper Creek area. Dale Harmon and Jim Blankenship told about their trip with Mike Erisman to Wolf river.

Upcoming trips: Dale Harmon and Jake Elberfeld are planning a photography trip to Wolf river the 2nd or 3rd week end in June. They are hoping to get as far as the Enchanted Forest. More on this at the June meeting.

Grotto members are also planning on spending Memorial Day weekend at Paul's cabin. Bill Walden is planning to do some more surveying at Blowing Sink Cave. Conditions permitting, a trip to Minton Hollow is being planned. It was suggested that trip also be a trash pickup trip. There is also a trip planned to Wolf River Cave.

The meeting was then adjourned. The members then enjoyed a very delicious make-it-yourself burrito repast.



6  
Respectfully submitted,  
Nancy Mahoney, Secretary

## APRIL MINUTES

The April 13, 1984 meeting of the COG was held at the home of Dale and Sandy Harmon.

The treasurer's report showed a new balance of \$357.37.

The March 1984 minutes were read and amended as follows: The Squeaks cover material Bill Walden was requesting was graphic art suitable to submit to the Salon of Speleological Photographic Art. (Still not right Minutes should read 1984 Graphic Arts Salon-Editor).

Squeaks Committee: Bill Walden thanked everyone for the good articles they have been submitting for the Squeaks. He also said there are now 24 paid subscriptions for the Squeaks. The mailing list was cut in half this month.

Membership committee: Jim Blankenship introduced Steve Clark, a new member. Jim has also invited other prospective members to the May meeting.

There was no old business.

New Business: Bill Walden announced that he has forms for those wanting to attend the NSS Convention the last week in June. He also has applications for the Old Timers Reunion.

Several upcoming cave rescue seminars were discussed. Len Gibler told about the one being conducted by the NCRS on June 2 and 3. There will also be a very comprehensive seminar May 25 through 28 at Arlington, Virginia on cave rescue techniques given by the Southeast Regional National Cave Rescue. There will be one at Wild Springs National Park at Hot Springs, South Dakota a week before the convention. Contact Bill Walden if interested in attending. It was suggested that some members attend one of these and make a presentation to the Grotto.

Len Gibler suggested forming a conservation committee and writing letters to support the National Cave Protection Act of 1984. After discussion, it was decided to write individual letters rather than using a form letter. Len will submit a letter guide to be published in the Squeaks.

Trip reports: Len Gibler told about the trip he and Emily made to Olentangy Coon Crap Cave.

The meeting was adjourned and everyone enjoyed a weenie roast.

Respectfully submitted,  
Nancy Mahoney

## SUPPORT THE CAVE RESOURCES PROTECTION ACT

submitted by Len Gibler

The NSS has been working for a number of years on developing effective cave protection legislation. The most hopeful law yet proposed is the so-called FEDERAL CAVE RESOURCES ACT OF 1984. I have presumed to excerpt from the editorial appearing in the March 1984 NSS News the following explanation of the bill, and some suggestions for action that should be taken:

### WHAT THE BILL WOULD DO TO PROTECT CAVES

Aimed at wild and undeveloped cave located on federal lands this bill will provide government agencies with the tools necessary to properly protect and manage them. In addition to providing stiff penalties for vandalism, pollution,



and killing spelean life, the law will require that caves be considered, along with other natural resources, in multiple land use decisions.

Consevation in nature, other key items addressed by this law include management directives allowing (or requiring) federal agencies to:

1. Remove nuisance mining claims and withdraw significant caves and related surface areas from mineral exploration and development.
2. Hire, contract or designate volunteers to manage and administer cave management programs.
3. Enter into cave management and administration contracts with volunteer groups and individuals.
4. Withhold cave location information from the public, exempting sensitive caves, contents, life forms and habitats.
5. restrict and regulate cave and surface use to protect sensitive caves, contents, life forms and habitats.
6. Impose safety restrictions when accidents might lead to rescues likely to create damage to caves or otherwise endanger the cave.
7. Place the burden of responsibility for the cost and manpower of protective management for federally-owned wild caves on the caving community by emphasizing the use of volunteers.

Among the other important things we will strive to accomplish through this legislation will be to keep cavers from being managed out of caves on public domain by establishing recreational caving among the primary resource values along with scientific and historical usefulness.

To ensure that agencies aren't inclined to to take a "big Brother" approach to providing for our safety, which could easily lead to a lockout from some of the most challenging caves, we will try to include a clause protecting the federal government and its agents, including volunteer cave managers and administrator, from liability suits arising out of recreational use of any wild caves.

Finally, the Act would help reinforce a number of other laws including those related to Antiquities, Archeology and Rare, Threatened and Endangered Species.

At the point, it is important to remember that we are still working on a final bill and that there may be significant losses, changes, etc. yet to come. We may make compromises to find a sponsor to introduce the bill and to avoid heavy opposition from industrial interests.

While the Conservation Committee is willing to spend a great deal of time and the rest of its budget, working on the bill, there is one extremely important fact that everyone who cares about cave protection must keep in mind: WE WILL FAIL WITHOUT YOUR HELP AND SUPPORT.

Much of what must be done in the name of cave preservation is obvious. Education of newcomers, property owners, and other interested parties regarding the frugality and non-renewability of the spelean world, and to a lesser but never-the-less important extent, its ecosystem is everybodys' clear responsibility. But support for protective legislation is not so obvious, even when informed. For one thing, the difficulty of enforcement of protective laws causes many of us to give up before we have really begun. But this law addresses more than the issues of vandalism and mining: cave management is at issue here, and the more precedent that is set in this direction, the better.

Letter-writing is the most immediate needed support you can give this bill at this time. Your federal legislators are:

Senator John Glenn  
200 N. High St.

Senator Howard Metzenbaum  
121 E. State St.

Columbus, OH 43215

8  
Columbus, OH 43215

Repr. Chalmers P. Wylie  
200 N. High St.  
Columbus, OH 43215

An appropriate letter to one of these gentlemen might go like this:

Dear Senator (Representative);

I would like to lend my support to some legislation that is currently being drafted: The Federal Cave Resources....

Or

Dear Senator (Representative);

I am writing to add my support to some legislation now being drafted. Its final title will be the National Cave Resources Act. This bill is the final product of long deliberation by many of the best informed and most deeply concerned people in the field of speleology.

The protection of caves is not simply an issue of interest to a few, very specialized people. The nation's interests are very much involved in preservation of caves and their far-reaching ecosystem. First, caves are a beautiful and wild heritage: a natural resource of great beauty and wonder. Care for such great providence is only prudent: the American character itself depends upon treating such gifts reverently.

Second, caves support an ecosystem that is both vast and delicate. Interference with spelean ecology has, in some cases had serious effects on agricultural production, forcing unnecessary dependence on harmful chemical insecticides.

Please help us preserve this most important, non-renewable resource.

Sincerely,

John Caver

If you will take the time to do so, writing the following committee chairs is important, too.

Honorable Morris K. Udall, Chairman  
Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Room 1324, Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515 (Ph 202-225-2761)

Honorable James McClure, Chairman  
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources  
U.S. Senate  
Room 3106, Dirksen Building  
Washington, D.C. (Ph 202-224-4971)

Honorable Robert T. Stafford, Chairman  
Committee on Environment & Public Works  
U.S. Senate  
Room 4202, Dirksen Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510 (Ph 202-225-6176)

Honorable John F. Seiberling  
Subcommittee on Public Lands & National Parks  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515 (Ph 202-225-2761)

Honorable Larry Craig  
Committee on Interior & Insular Affairs  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515 (Ph 202-225-2761)

Honorable E. De La Garza, Chairman  
Committee On Agriculture  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Room 1301, Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515 (ph 202-225-2171)

Representative Craig has to this point, been quite cooperative and responsive in helping your Conservation Chairman. In addition to asking his support, say thanks for his support so far.

On behalf of the bats and crickets and the Gods of the underworld, bless you, and you, and you.

Len Gibler

The following article was written by my daughter, Katie, in response to a letter I received from a third grader in Cleveland asking for information on caving. Bill Walden

## C A V E S

by Katie Walden

Caves are formed by water slowly dissolving away the limestone. The water from rain slowly works its way through cracks in the limestone. As it does a small amount of the limestone is dissolved by the water. After many years passages are formed.

Later stalactites and stalagmites are formed by water dripping into the passages. The stalactites hang from the ceiling and the stalagmites grow up from the floor. Sometimes after many years stalagmites and stalactites grow together to form a column.

Many years ago people lived in the entrances of caves. I read a book called TONKA THE CAVE BOY by Ross Hutchins. (This is a fictional story about a stone age family which lived in the entrance of Russell Cave 10,000 years ago. Today the cave is a national monument where the ancient crafts are demonstrated by the park rangers and the archaeological diggings are open to public viewing.-Editor) This is a good book.

In the cave live bats and cave crickets. Cave crickets look like big pink-peach spiders. They don't sing like outdoor crickets. Sometimes there are millions of them. Bats hibernate in the winter. Bats are mammals. They hang from the ceiling. Some of the bats which are hibernating are covered with dew and they don't seem to move. There are all kinds of bats. To cavers they look cute.

I have gone caving a lot with my Dad. I think it is fun especially the climbing part. Sometimes you have to know how to use a rope ladder. You have to wear a hard hat with a light to see. I use an electric light but you can use a carbide light too. You have to wear clothes which you don't mind getting muddy, boots, gloves, and a warm jacket. Sometimes you have to get down on your stomach and crawl to get through a passage. Rooms in the cave can be all sizes--small rooms just big enough to stand in, big rooms as large as a school's playground, or medium rooms just as big as my own room. Rooms can be all shapes--bumpy, rocky, smooth, round, square, skinny or fat.

My Dad and I go to a cabin in the woods. There are lots of caves near the cabin but we usually don't explore those caves. We go to others where Dad and his friends have been mapping. Near the cabin is a rock, steamboat rock, that I like to climb. It is above a big lake (Lake Cumberland). The lake is a very long ways down. Under the rock are a whole bunch of little caves.

Eleven years ago this June issue I began an adventure series in the Squeaks; however, I never finished the story. I think it is about time to do so. Perhaps in part because, as editor, I have to go begging for material. Oh well, I begin at the beginning for those of you who have forgotten and those of you who are new. And, that should take care of all of you!

## CAVE FICTION

## Ed Potter's Journal

by Bill Walden

CHAPTER I  
THE SUCK IN

Early October has always been an excellent time of year for caving in the Lake Cumberland region of Kentucky for two reasons. First, the weather is excellent, not that the weather has any great effect on the cave conditions, but rather it sets a good psychological mood for the caver. The leaves are beginning to turn, the nights are usually cool but not cold. The days are pleasantly warm and dry. One really does not care into what condition (wet, dry, or muddy) he gets in the cave. The lake level is below its normal pool level. Thus, the cavers work hard walking through knee deep mud or even crawling through the slime on their bellies in passages that are normally below lake level.

Ed Potter is almost fanatic in his desire to locate and explore virgin cave. With him, cave exploring is almost a religion; he seems to thrive upon finding previously unexplored passage, no matter how unimpressive, or miserably tight and wet. Ed attempts every likely looking sump or breakdown pile. If there is even a hint of air movement, nothing stops him. Out come his hammer and chisel, plastic sack for his carbide lamp, or floatation belt. Ed is determined to make the cave one of Kentucky's longest.

Ed maintains a very slight figure for his height. Though he is six feet two inches tall he weighs but 155 pounds. He rarely eats his lunch and ordinarily makes breakfast his main meal. In fact he often enjoys chopping up a big lettuce salad to eat with his "morning dinner." A trifle odd, one might think, but highly practical. By making breakfast his main meal, he has sufficient time in the evening to work on cave surveys, write letters (primarily on cave and wilderness conservation), improve or repair caving equipment, prepare lessons for his computer science classes, and study. It is not unusual for one to find his house lights still burning at one or even two o'clock in the morning.

The story of Ed's last cave trip begins on a Monday evening.

"Hello, may I speak with Alfie? Alfie, want to know what we did? Mapped 33 stations in Little John Saturday. Plotted it up that evening. Passes right under the Tipsey room in Otter's Cave. Great possibilities there."

Sunday John went with me to my dig. Guess what! ... Yeah, we got in. ... Walking passage. Followed it for a least 3000 feet. Fantastic! Huge!

"Want to go this weekend?"

Thus, Ed successfully completed one of his suck-ins. He almost always uses this technique to entice other members of his grotto into one of his projects. How could any self-respecting caver resist?

Alfie McBride teaches high school mathematics. Teaching is not really his preferred occupation, but it allows him three months of freedom in the summer as well as extended vacation periods throughout the year. During the Christmas vacation he and his wife, Mildred, will often drive to visit his parents in Vermont who just happen to live adjacent to a ski resort. At Easter time they may plan a backpacking trip through one of the government forests or parks in or near Ohio for the pleasure of seeing the plants just beginning to come to renewed life. This past summer he and Mildred hiked the Appalachian Trail from Virginia to the Great Smokies National Park. On weekends and on minor holidays he and Mildred will often join with Ed Potter, Alex Johnson, or John Harty for a caving trip.

Friday Ed drove his Jeep to Alfie McBride's home. He was most anxious to get going, as illustrated by the fact that he arrived at Alfie's home a full half hour before he knew Alfie would be home from work. Mildred met Ed at the door.

"Hi, Ed. Alfie's not home yet. I don't expect him for another forty five minutes. Traffic always holds him up on Fridays."

"Did he tell you about Little John Cave?"

"No!"

"Well then ..."

Ed proceeded to tell Mildred about his mapping trip to Little John Cave while she fixed the evening meal. By the time Alfie arrived, dinner had been prepared. It was a fine meal consisting of stuffed pork chops, sauerkaut, mashed potatoes, and a huge green salad. Ed didn't even seem to notice. He was interested only in his new cave.

"Entrance is a little tight but I think you'll fit. Get a little muddy crawling in. After all, I dug 16 feet of mud, leaves, and logs to get in. Entrance crawl is about 30 feet, then you come into a wide low room. It's probably been filled in mostly with leaves and other surface crud. After the room you come to the climb. We have to chimney down about 40 or 50 feet. Pretty narrow

and tight with some old rotten logs. Kind of slimy too. But I got out. You just have to keep wiggling upward."

On and on Ed went through dinner and most of the way to the Speleohouse. With Ed's nearly constant chatter about this cave and Little John Cave, the trip went fast for Alfie. He did manage to catch a little nap after they left Long John Silvers at Lexington where they had eaten a snack and Alfie had enjoyed a long draft of beer. Ed had thoughtfully remembered to stop at the carryout by the interchange for some beer.

"Alfie, will you open the gate? And, dammit, don't get your foot caught in the cow grate this time!"

Alfie drowsily got out of the Jeep and thought about some reply but it was useless. He carefully made his way across the pipes in the drive which prevent cows from going out the opening. He thought, "Why does Mr. Burns have both the grate and the gate when one or the other would suffice? Hmmm, remember once at a friend's farm the horse I was riding jumped the grate but wouldn't jump a fence. Wait for me, Ed!"

Ed drove through the gate as if he were not going to wait for Alfie, then stopped, Alfie came running up.

"Ed, I'd like to go over to Sam's Run to check my bats. Do you mind?"

"No, go right ahead."

"Well, I'd like some company."

"Damn, you haven't been caving for a while have you?"

"It's not that, its my project."

"Some project. Counting bats."

"Ok, I'll go by myself."

Alfie's bat project was really just an excuse to visit Sam's Run Cave, which was the first big cave he had visited. It consisted of long spacious Mammoth Cave type passages. Some nine miles had been mapped there, but the backing up of Lake Cumberland into the cave stopped further exploration.

While Alfie walked over to the cave, Ed drove the short distance to the speleohouse, took his cooler inside, emptied the contents into the refrigerator, then took out a beer and poured it slowly into a large pewter tankard. He enjoyed his beer with a good head on it and he particularly enjoyed the aroma of a fine beer. His ears were still ringing from the five hour drive down. He felt like relaxing after the long trip. His throat was just a bit raspy from shouting above the din of the old four

cylinder engine and whine of the mud tires on pavement. After completing the first beer he heard a car in the drive. He looked. It was Alex Johnston's car. Ed watched Alex get out of his car and then walk out of view.

"Come in. Anyone with you?"

"Brought a bunch of scouts with me."

"They're no good! Just a bunch of damn nards!"

"I'll take them to Sam's Run tomorrow and show them around. Sunday they'll be too tired to do anything but sleep and drink beer. Then I can help you with your digging project."

"I got in."

"You did? Great!"

"Walked over 4000 feet."

"Fantastic! Tell me about it."

"Well, after a tight squeeze at the entrance, a short crawl, some chimneying, and another crawl, we came to this walking passage..."

Ed proceeded to tell the story to Alex. With each tankard of beer the cave became more and more fascinating. Not as much to Alex as to Ed. He began to imagin all sorts of great things. He had really made a tremendous discovery. All the credit belonged to Ed. He had worked many Sundays last year digging out debris. Autumn of that year saw some reversals. During the winter he had dug out the fresh leaves which had washed into the pit. He used the spring rains to his advantage after he had rigged some barricades upstream to stop debris. And now after much digging through the summer he had a cave.

The Scouts had brought their camping equipaent into the old farmhouse and had selected a room which appeared suitable to them. They now sat around the stove and listened half interested to Ed. As the cave was growing to perhaps twenty miles in potential length, Alfie burst into the room.

"Telling Al about your dig?"

"Sounds pretty good, doesn't it?"

"Sure does. Alf. I'll have to take a look some time. I'm stuck with this bunch of Scouts this weekend."

"How many Alfie?" asked Ed.

"One hundred five, Ed. I'll think I'll knock off. Good night."

Alfie went upstairs to the little room in front. There he would be least disturbed. Though he could hear Ed talking about some cave in which he had been, Alfie didn't really care. He just wanted a good night's sleep.

## CHAPTER II

### THE CAVE

In the morning Ed was the first to arise. Quietly he readied his equipment. Then he sat down at the kitchen table to work on his map of Little John Cave. As he was considering whether to prepare bacon and eggs or settle for cold cereal with milk, Alfie quietly walked into the kitchen.

"Let's eat at Brown's. It'll save time and we'll get to the cave sooner. Best, we won't have any dishes to do latter. Ok?"

"Sounds good to me. My stuff is in the Jeep. All I have to do is get dressed."

Ed and Alfie drove to the restaurant in silence. They both ordered a double order of French toast with side orders of poached eggs, country ham, and grapefruit. The meal revived Ed somewhat and his talking began again.

"This morning I replotted the area where Little John passes right under the Tippy Room. Remember that hole you said didn't go anywhere? The one right out in the center of the Tippy Room?"

"Sort of."

"Well, its located right over this breakdown pile in Little John."

"Wow! We'll have to go check it out. Be a good idea to use two parties. Don't you think so, Ed?"

"Might help. Right now I'm really more interested in my cave. I had all kinds of wild thoughts about it last night. But, I suppose I was a bit drunk."

"Yeah, you didn't leave much for me. I'd probably like more than one beer tonight."

"Did you bring the survey gear?"

"No, only a Silva and a notebook for making a crude sketch map. I'm only interested in getting a rough idea of the cave. Last time I got the feeling the main bore goes straight into the hill."

"Sorta like Wind Cave in Wayne County?"

"Not so large."

"Oh. Can't wait to see it."

"You will."

"Would be rather neat to connect Little John with Otter's Cave...."

Breakfast continued with idle discussion about the prospect of connecting Little John Cave with Otter's Cave. They paid their bill and drove the short distance to the Billman's farm. There they would ask permission to drive across the farm to Ed's dig at the base of a ridge.

"Good morning, Mr. Billman."

"Mornin', Ed. Goin' to that cave?"

"Yes."

"That's a big ole thing. I was in it 30, 40 years ago. Big entrance then. That was before them loggin' fellows came. Cleared out all them trees. Didn't leave the saplin's. With nothin' left to hold the soil, cave just filled up with silt an' leaves an' the logs they left behind."

"Entrance is just a crawl now, Mr. Billman."

"Well, there's a big room not too far in."

"All filled up now."

"You don't say. We use to go in there as kids. Stay all day in the winter, only warm place outside the house. Kept our sow in there one winter. Had her young-uns at the wrong time. We just left a couple lanterns in there so she'd have some light."

Ed interrupted, "No room there now. We've got a big day ahead of us. We'd like to get started."

"Have fun, boys. Don't get that car stuck."

"We won't. It's four wheel drive." Alfie reassured Jake Billman.

"Now, I was afraid we wouldn't get away. He loves to tell the story about those damn pigs using the cave."

"What happened to them, Ed?"

"Nothing, the Billmans ate them the next winter."

"Oh. Must of had a large family!"

"Guess they didn't eat all of them. Must have sold some

or something."

They arrived at the site of the cave, unloaded their gear, and pulled on their coveralls. In a very short time they were ready and both stood looking down into the pit Ed had dug, largely through his own efforts. Without talking they slid down to the small opening which was exposed and struck their lamps. Ed disappeared through the small hole. Alfie followed. The hole was small and Alfie had to work hard to force his one hundred ninety-five pounds through. Once through, conditions did not improve much. He found it easier to exhale, move a couple feet, rest and inhale, then repeat the process. In due time Alfie caught up with Ed.

"You call this a room?"

"Well, it is wider. I'd guess about 30 feet across. This was probably where the Billaans kept those damn pigs."

"Hard to believe now."

"Yeah."

Ed began to crawl on with Alfie following. The ceiling was arched like a cathedral arch in miniature and the floor was rather like crawling along the edge of a decaying swamp. Knees and elbows sank a couple inches into the damp humus of which the floor was composed. Suddenly Ed paused, then swung his legs down. He worked his way down until he could straighten up a bit.

"This is the climb I told you about. Somewhat nasty, but I managed to get back up the last time. Work your way into the crevice, then spread out a little and let go. You can't go too fast. Just spread out."

Alfie had come up far enough to watch Ed slide downward. He watched with some apprehension as he saw Ed's light become smaller and smaller. The depth seemed to him to be a good deal more than Ed's estimate of forty or fifty feet. Yet a narrow crevice or pit always appears very much deeper than its true depth. Height had always bothered Alfie, but he was almost as determined as Ed to explore a new cave. He swung his legs into the crevice. Perspiration began running down his face in little streamlets. He hesitated as he thought of his wife. "What should happen if I fall? Hell! Ed's right, one can't possibly fall? It's too small. Be hell getting back up though. I'm bigger than Ed. Oh, what the hell. Damn, I wish I had a belay line. Jesus Christ, how will I ever get up?" thought Alfie as he slid down the crevice. The walls were coated with slimy decaying organic material. Old rotting logs were trapped between the sides of the crevice.

Once at the bottom Ed was waiting for him.

"Do you see where we go from here?"

Alfie looked around. The crevice extended back in the direction from which they had come for about ten feet and an other fifteen to twenty feet ahead. The walls extended all the way to the floor with no apparent opening. Examination of the area was difficult due to the closeness of the walls. There was apparently no place to go. After he had looked the place over fairly well, Alfie replied, "No."

"That's what I thought at first too. But then I realized that the water which formed this had to go someplace. So I crawled back and forth through here several times before I stumbled across the answer. See that flat rock between us?"

"Yeah."

"That's it."

Ed shoved the rock toward Alfie, exposing a hole in the floor.

"You mean we go through that!?"

"That's the way."

"Your kidding!"

Ed didn't reply. He put both arms through the hole, then pulled his head and shoulders on through. Then he quickly disappeared, as if the opening in the floor had swallowed him.

"Come on." He called to Alfie.

Alfie maneuvered himself around to the opposite side of the hole. Then he slowly went through in the same fashion as Ed had.

He found himself going head first down into a pit. Plenty of hand holds existed on the walls, so he encountered little difficulty once he had his shoulders through. The pit was about ten feet deep, four feet wide at the top and about ten feet wide at the bottom and perhaps twelve feet long. Again no noticeable leads could be seen at the bottom. Once down, Alfie noticed two not very obvious leads.

"Which way, Ed?" Alfie enquired as he motioned toward the two leads he had spotted.

"Those don't go."

Alfie's face looked very puzzled for he could see no other possibility. "They don't go!?" he echoed.



"Our lead is over here behind me. It's a fairly easy crawl."

The lead wasn't at all obvious. The wall curved down to within inches of the floor and the floor curved up behind the wall.

"Take your hat off and go through like this."

Ed took his helmet off and stretched out on his back. He turned his head sideways and slid under the wall, then up over the turned up portion of the solid rock floor.

"Now comes the rough part. You have to bend your neck down over this curled up portion of the floor and go down. Keep moving so you don't get cramped. You'll come out in a muddy hands and knees crawl where you can turn over."

Once Ed's feet disappeared under the wall, Alfie took his hard hat off, rolled over on to his back, and turned his head to the side. Pushing with his feet he struggled to get under the wall. He had to exhale hard to get his chest under. It didn't help him any that the upturned portion of the floor held his shoulders. His arms were useless as they were under the wall. He could move only by lifting his shoulders with his head. Once he had his head over the lip of the floor he was able to free his arms. Now he had to arch his back, aim his head down and push with his hands. Alfie thought as his legs began to ache that this would be a pushover for a person with double jointed knees. He realized that Ed was right when he said to keep moving. One's legs would surely cramp in this place. Finally Alfie could see the glow of Ed's lamp.

"Here, take my hat!"

"Kind-a-rough, isn't it?" Ed said as he reached up to take Alfie's helmet and lamp.

"Rough isn't the word for it; more like hell!"

Ed gave Alfie a little help getting out of his "hell." Ed had had no one to help and as a result had to put his head into the mud on the floor, and his hair was caked with the slimy stuff.

"Want to rest a spell?"

Alfie just looked at Ed, then sat down on the muddy floor. Looking up the passage he could see that this lead was going to be the type in which the mud tends to suck one's knee pads off so that they would come back up with a plopping sound. After a short rest Alfie was ready to push on ahead.

The general trend of the passage was downward with

occasional places where it would go up a little. In these places the mud would be considerably deeper. The men found themselves in muck up to their elbow. Upon encountering this situation the first time Alfie broke the silence and asked "What happened to this wonderful walking passage you told me about?"

"It's ahead."

"How far?"

"Oh, we have a couple hundred feet more of this and then... Oh, damn! My light went out! Guess I'd better change carbide. Hell of a place though."

Needless to say, this occurrence upset Alfie somewhat, since he was up to his elbows in the muck and seemingly sinking in deeper. But the sinking was more apparent than real because as Ed finished, Alfie had only sunk an additional inch or so into the mire. Alfie didn't renew his question because he was anxious to move on to a better location. They plopped on, resting only twice. The two hundred feet seemed endless in this quagmire passage. Finally the crawl became a small sinuous canyon in which they could almost stand. In some places they could stand because they would sink to their knees in the little canyon. Gradually it became a bit wider and higher until they could stand upright. The difficulty was twofold--the deepening mud and the distance between the walls. As the canyon became wider, arms became of little help. So tiring was the mud that both men grunted as they tried to move their legs, and neither said a word. Finally Ed spoke.

"Here we are."

Alfie struggled to catch up with Ed. He was indeed startled at the sight of blackness. The light from his dimming lamp disappeared into blackness.

"Big, isn't it!"

"Wow!"

Alfie clapped his mud-drenched gloves together and listened to the lingering echo. He clapped again. Then he shouted "hello!" and listened to the resounding "Hello - hello - hello - o - o - o - o - o - o - o - o -"

"Better rest a while before we climb down."

"I have to change carbide. I didn't change when you did, and my lamp's a bit low."

[ TO BE CONTINUED IN AUGUST  
SQUEAKS ]

Remember I only promised 10 issues. Your editor will be