PHOLEOS

WITTENBERG UNIVERSITY

SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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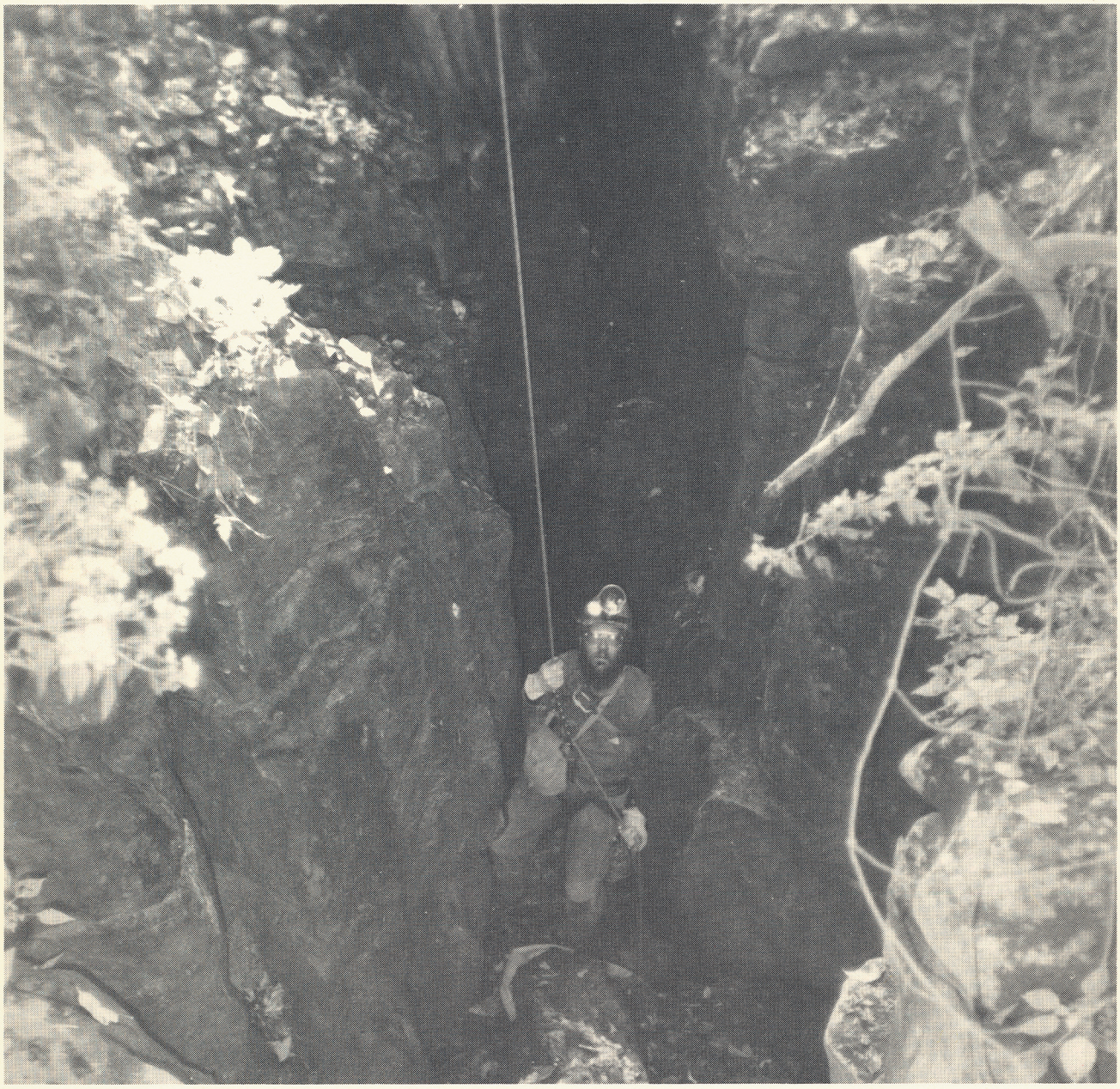

THE WITTENBERG UNIVERSITY SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

The Wittenberg University Speleological Society is a chartered internal organization of the National Speleological Society, Inc. The Grotto received its charter in April 1980 and is dedicated to the advancement of speleology, to cave conservation and preservation, and to the safety of all persons entering the spelean domain.

PHOLEOS

THE WITTENBERG UNIVERSITY SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Volume 7, Number 1 16 December 1986

GROTTO ADDRESS

c/o H.H. Hobbs III
Department of Biology
P.O. Box 720
Wittenberg University
Springfield, Ohio 45501
(513) 327-6484

SUBSCRIPTION RATE

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EXCHANGES
Exchanges with other grottos and caving groups are encouraged. Please mail to Grotto address.

MEETINGS

Wedensday evening, 7:00 p.m., Room 206, Science Building, Wittenberg University Springfield, Ohio.

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Springfield, Ohio 45501

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312 Ferncliff Hall
Springfield, Ohio 45504

TREASURER
Therese Herp
22 E. Cassilly
Springfield, Ohio 45504

EDITOR
Martin R. Trent
805 Tower Hall
Springfield, Ohio 45504

ASSISTANT EDITOR
Patrick McCarthy
222 Ferncliff Hall
Wittenberg University
Springfield, Ohio 45504

COVER PHOTO:
Entrance to Kerns Pit
Lawrence County, Indiana
Photograph by H. H. Hobbs III

EDITOR'S NOTE

Martin R. Trent

Welcome to Pholeos. This issue is packed full of interesting goodies pertaining to caves and caving. In addition to the usual cave reports and essays, there is a comic strip by our resident cartoonist and an essay from one of the youngest members of Wittenberg University Speleological Society. I hope that this issue is both interesting and entertaining. If you, the reader, have any questions, comments, or suggestions, feel free to write.

As for club news, we are hoping to be well represented at the annual Crawl-a-thon taking place the last weekend in January at Carter Caves in Kentucky. This always has been a great weekend for meeting other cavers and seeing some very interesting caves. The club is also working on the exploration and mapping of some caves in the Carter Cave region. Some of these caves promise to be quite large. We will keep you up to date on our progress in following issues of Pholeos.

As for the Ohio Cave Bill (S396), it went to committee in November and was layed to the wayside. The bill has not been scheduled to be seen again, but we are doing everything in our power to make sure that the bill goes up for Ohio Senate vote. If you are a resident of Ohio, right to your Ohio Senate representative and let him know that this bill is important. Any help would be greatly appreciated.

Support of the Trout Cave Decision

[The following passage is not meant to resurrect any previous arguments. It is simply a reprint of a supportive letter sent to the National Speleological Society from the Sixteenth Annual North American Symposium on Bat Research.]

We, the undersigned participants in the Sixteenth Annual North American Symposium on Bat Research, commend the National Speleological Society on its efforts to help in the recovery of the endangered Indiana bat. We support your decision to close Trout Cave during the winter for at least six years, thus providing some opportunity for the Indiana bat to resume use of an historically important hibernaculum.

Although decline in cave-dwelling bat populations is highly correlated with increased human disturbance, data on exact habitat requirements are still needed. Your experiment offers an important opportunity to document the effect of cave closure on bat populations. We thus encourage you to take all necessary measures to insure the closure is effective and to utilize the skills of qualified bat biologists for monitoring populations.

WANTED: BACKYARD HOUSING FOR BATS

by

Erik Eckholm

[This article has been reprinted from a late September, 1986 issue of The New York Times.]

So far, the effort to safeguard bats has been a lonely one. Now a conservation group, eager for new allies, has settled on an idea that worked well enough for birds: backyard bat houses.

A resident colony of bats can be educational and esthetically pleasing and what's more, it keeps down the mosquitoes, maintains Merlin D. Tuttle, a biologist and president of Bat Conservation International. The group is marketing bat houses, large wooden boxes with an open bottom and inner crevices for sleepy bats.

Bats, the group asserts, are under-appreciated and unfairly maligned. One good reason for backyard houses is to make up for the steady loss of natural roosting areas -- the cave walls, hollow trees, abandoned buildings and belfries where bats like to hang. Because of both the inadvertant shrinkage of their habitat and deliberate persecution, several of the nation's 40-odd bat species are n jeopardy, and many more are in decline, scientists say.

But an even stronger reason for marketing bat houses, Dr. Tuttle said, is to counter the mythology of bats as creepy, rabid nuisances. In truth, bats

are "gentle, clean and intelligent animals," he said. "Bats have the misfortune of being mostly shy and active only at night, and as a result they're misunderstood, feared and persecuted."

Having bats around is actually a plus, scientists argue. They are the chief consumers of night-flying insects, and a single gray bat can consume up to 3,000 bugs a night. In the tropics, many bat species play crucial roles in dispersing the seeds of fruit trees and pollinating trees and bushes.

With their superlative sonar and good vision, more bats in the yard "certainly won't get into anyone's hair," Dr. Tuttle said. Anyway, "they're no more susceptible to rabies than many other animals," he said, and "they rarely become aggressive even when rabid."

Dr. Tuttle said that bats had caused only 10 cases of rabies in people in North America in the entire 40 years that records have been kept. The few species of vampire bats are confined to Latin America.

Photographs of ugly, snarling bats are grossly unfair, according to a pamphlet distributed by the conservationists. Often, it seems, photographers irritate the gentle animals until they scowl for the camera.

"True, some bats have funny noses, but by and large, bats are extraordinarily beautiful little creatures," the pamphlet states.

The bat houses have movable inner slats so that homeowners can create suitably sized compartments for local species. The open bottom prevents occupation by birds or squirrels and allows curious people to watch the bats as they slumber. It also means that the droppings will help fertilize the garden. (Placement on a porch is not recommended.)

Bats live almost everywhere but are most prevalent, experts say, near streams, lakes or marshes, where insects are most abundant.

Profits from sale of the houses will go to Bat Conservation International. Purchasers also receive a booklet on the merits of bats, and this, the promoters observe, "will help you explain to your spouse why you bought the house." The houses cost $29.95 plus $2.75 for shipping from Bat Conservation International, c/o Brackenridge Field Laboratory, University of Texas, Austin, Tex. 78712.

SOMETHING DEEPER

by

Martin R. Trent

Entering the cave, my senses were bombarded by new and strange stimuli. My eyes beheld strange sights bathed in the subdued light of my carbide lamp. Extinguishing the lamp, I experienced an absolutely impenetrable darkness. I felt the cool, wet smoothness of the walls against my arms and legs. My ears were filled with the vast echoing of dripping water and the high pitched chirping of the bats. I could smell and almost taste the wet mud and limestone.

Although I could rationally explain all the things my senses perceived, I still was filled with a feeling of mystery. Somehow there was more to the cave than just bats, water, and limestone formations. There was hidden within this hole in the ground a sense of the sacred.

As I was sitting in my room after the expedition, I realized that my feelings were not unique. Through the ages, caves have played a major role in the religious traditions of many cultures.

In the Jewish tradition, the Old Testament often mentions caves as shelters and tombs for prophets and other important early Jewish figures. Abraham buried his wife Sarah in a cave. When Jezebel was killing the prophets of the Lord, Obadiah took one hundred prophets and hid them by fifties in a cave. In addition, Lot found shelter in a cave after fleeing from Sodom and Gomorrah, cities God was destroying. Sodom and Gomorrah were being destroyed because of the wickedness and sin prevalent in the cities. Lot fled from the profane world of Sodom and Gomorrah to the sacred haven of a cave.

Caves also play a very important role in the Christian tradition. Jesus, the Christian savior, was born of the Virgin Mary. Mary is often depicted in a grotto. This grotto can be interpreted as a womb related to the birth of Jesus. In addition Jesus, after his crucifixion, was entombed in a cave. A woman went to the cave three days later and was dismayed to find that the stone covering the entrance to the cave and the body of Jesus were missing. An angel appeared, comforted the woman, and explained that Jesus had been resurrected to sit as the savior of mankind at the right hand of God. The "light of the world" had come out of the darkness of a cave.

The Shinto tradition of Japan mentions the spiritual essence of caves in its creation story. The story presents Amaterasu, the diety of the sun, secluding herself in a celestial cave. The earth and heavens were cast into total darkness. The other Shinto dieties were highly distressed and held a festival outside of the cave in the hope that Amaterasu would be lured out by the festivities. One of the dieties, Okame, performed a beautiful dance which succeeded in persuading Amaterasu out of her cave. Light was returned to the earth and heaven. As in the Christian tradition, the light of the world came from the darkness of a cave.

In Buddhism caves also play a significant role. In one instance a Hindu god, Brahma, visited Shakyamuni Buddha. Offering Buddha a flower, Brahma asked to be taught the Law. Buddha took the flower and silently turned it in his fingers. All of the onlookers were baffled, but at the nearby Cockleg Cave, Shakyamuni Buddha's disciple, Kashyapa, smiled in recognition. Kashyapa gained an important religious insight in the confines of a cave.

I could mention many more examples of the spirituality of caves, but because of limited time and space, I will refrain. The point is that if you ever enter a cave and feel something much deeper than just adventure and intellectual interest, you can be well assured that you are not alone. You need only explore the histories of religions to find evidence of the link between caves and the sacred.

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IT'S A SMALL WORLD AFTERALL

by Mary Insana

Here it is 1986 and we live in a computer oriented society. There's no way that something living 10,000 to 20,000 years ago could still be living today. Can there?

Yes. In her article, "Living Fossils Of Devil's Hole", Deirdre McNulty tells the world of a species which originated in the Pleistocene Era and is still living today. These unique and hardy creatures are Cyprinodon, commonly called pupfish. They live in places you and I wouldn't think anything could survive in -- let alone for ten-thousand years.

Some pupfish live in underground aquifers in Death Valley. At one time Death Valley was covered by a larger 175 mile, 600 foot deep Lake Manly. When the climate warmed, the lake evaporated and today what remains is a desert. But these pupfish have defied time and environmental conditions to continue to flourish by living underground. The pupfish live in areas called Devils Hole, Salt Creek, and Cottonball Marsh. All are protected by the Death Valley National Monument, but the Devils Hole pupfish is still an endangered species.

The pupfish themselves are tiny animals about two inches in length. Like their vertebrate relatives, the male pupfish come in a colorful array of royal blue and violet. The females resign themselves to being a dull yellow-brown. The Devils Hole pupfish are distinguishable because they don't have pelvic fins as other species do, and their head is large in proportion to their body. Because of these characteristics, scientists believe the pupfish population fluctuates between 150 and 600.

The lives of the Devils Hole pupfish are in danger because the land under which they live is desirable for development. If this happens, the underground aquifers would dry out and the fish would perish. In 1976, the Supreme Court ruled in favor of the fish, stating the water they live in must be maintained at a designated level safe for the pupfish. As a precaution against any development that would take place as well as against a natural disaster, some of the pupfish population has been transferred to two refugiums where, to this date, only two fish have been spawned and raised.

Efforts continue to protect the Devils Hole pupfish as well as those in Salt Creek and Cottonball Marsh. Scientists will continue to study these interesting creatures for they are our key to the past.

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A DESCRIPTION OF ADDITIONAL LILLIPUTIAN CAVES FORMED IN OHIO DOLOMITES AND LIMESTONES

by

H. H. Hobbs III, Naomi D. Mitchell, and Todd L. Zimmerman

During the summer of 1986, efforts were made to locate and survey caves in Adams, Brown, Erie, Highland, Pike, and Seneca counties in Ohio. By no means was this an exhaustive search and much surface as well as subsurface exploration remains in Ohio. Although the caves described below are small, they are significant karst features within the state.

This study represents the continuation of a multi-year effort to locate, survey, and describe the karst features of Ohio. Much work, in virtually all parts of the state, is needed and the reader is urged to spend time occasionally in Ohio and help in this project. Reception of any information concerning the location of caves, sinkholes, springs, swallowholes, etc. would be greatly appreciated.

ADAMS COUNTY CAVE

Liverwurst Cave (Figure 1) is a classic Lilliputian cave with a trickle of water running through it. A solution cave, it is apparent that though the water has dissolved away the Silurian dolomite and widened a vertical fracture in the rock, forming the cave.

The entrance to the cave, which extends a short way (6.5m THC) into the side of a small cliff under St. Rte. 781, overlooks Turkey Creek which is approximately 3m below the cave. There is loose, wet rock and mud extending from the mouth of the cave to the creek. Liverwort covers much of the rock at the cave entrance and moss and algae extend back into the cave. The spider Meta menardi as well as a few other organisms live in this cave. Visibility extends back into the cliff for approximately 9m but at 6m the walls pinch together to prevent further travel.

BROWN COUNTY CAVES

Charlie-Charlie Cave (Figure 2) is a very small (5m THC) "cave" developed in thinly bedded, shaly, fossil-rich

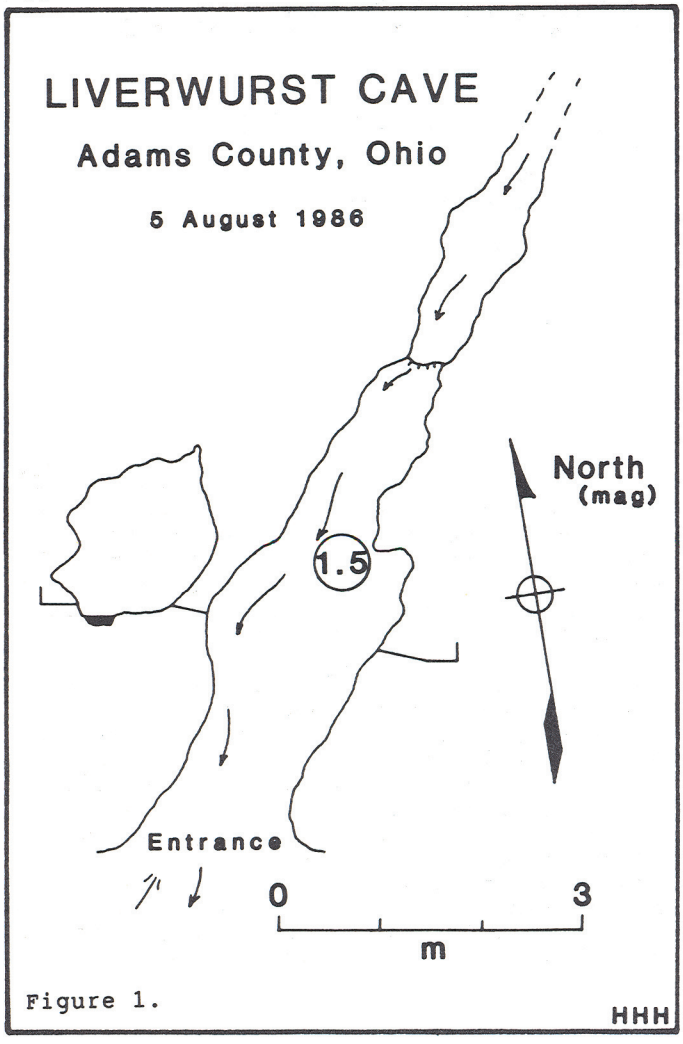

Figure 1.

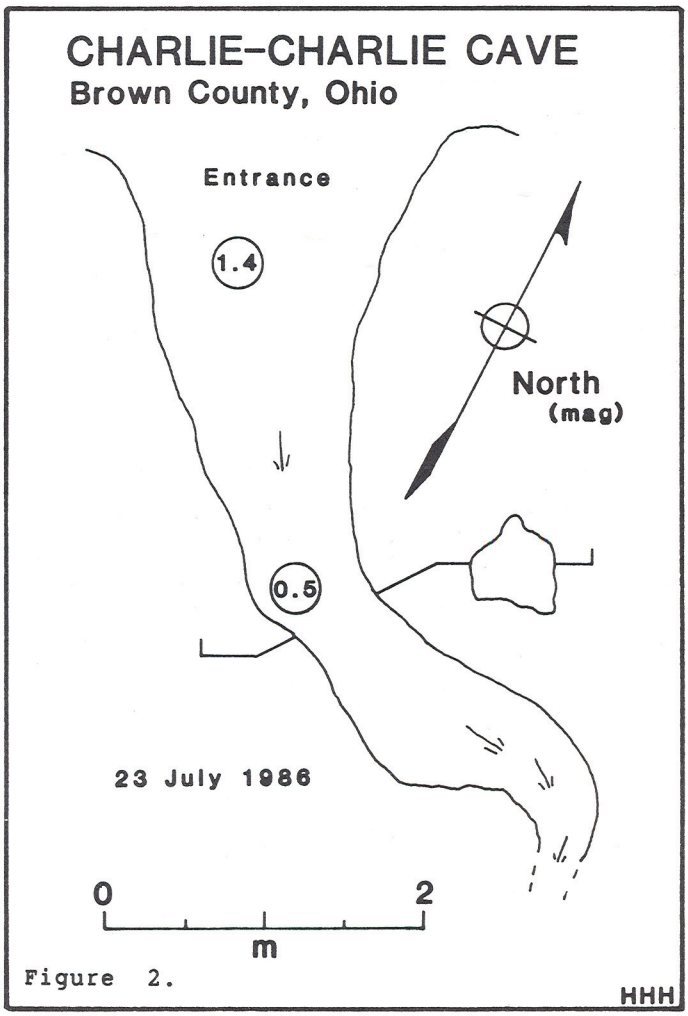

Figure 2.

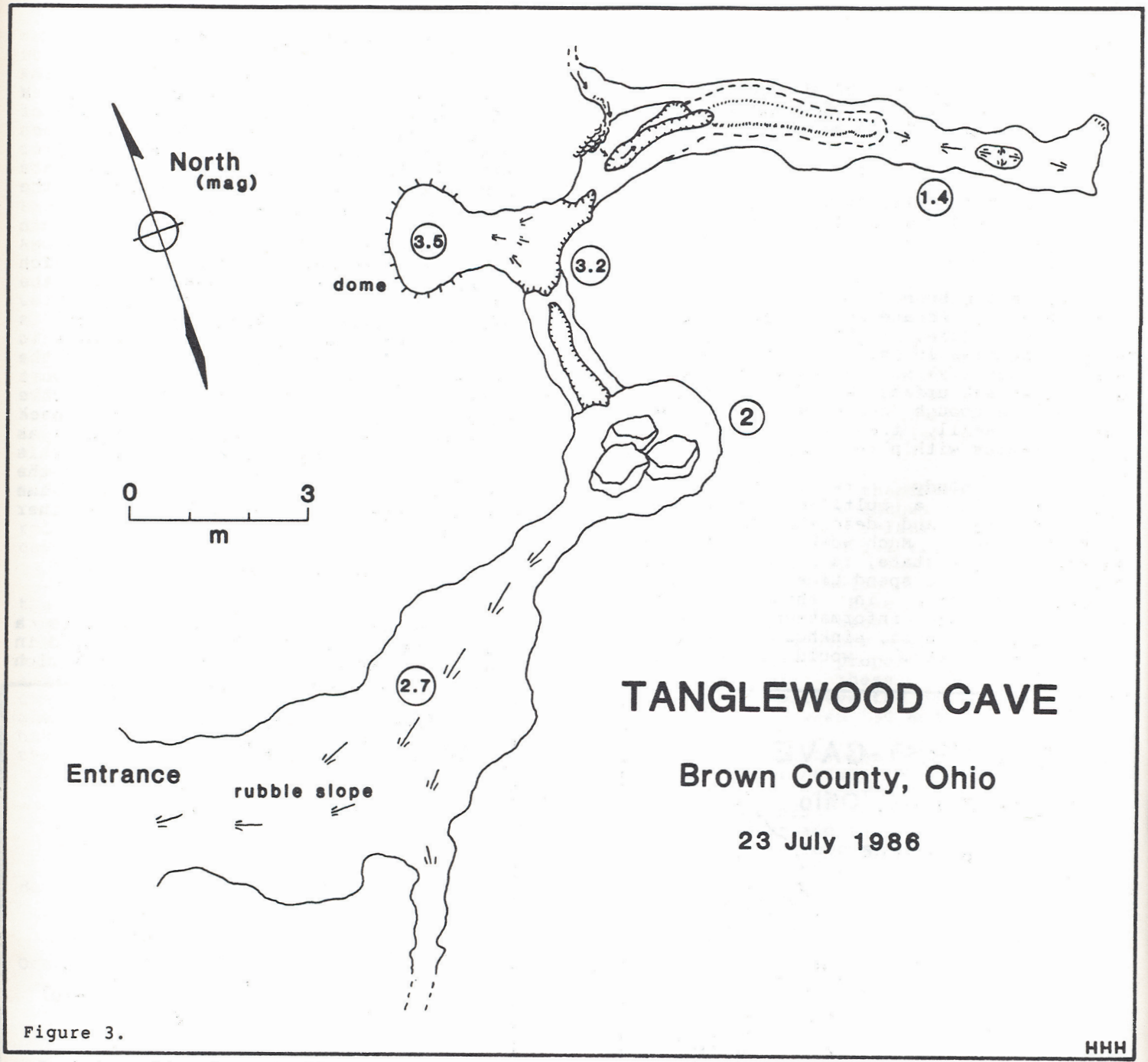

Figure 3.

Ordovician limestone on the south bank of Straight Creek. The entrance is 2.3m wide and only 1.4m high. The passage trends gently upward in a southeasterly direction until it becomes too low for further progress. Since the cave is situated in close proximity to Straight Creek, undoubtedly the entrance to the cave occasionally becomes inundated with flood waters.

Tanglewood (Bumbaugh's) Cave (Figure 3) is also developed in Ordovician limestone in southcentral Brown County. The entrance to this multi-level cave is located in a small sinkhole (3m wide, 4m long, 2m deep). The wooded sink trends downward easterly toward the entrance, an opening approximately 2m wide and 1m high. The talus-covered floor slopes into the entrance room, the highest point of the ceiling being nearly 3m above the rocky substrate. A small tube heads south from the room for several meters before becoming too small for further progress. The entrance room narrows and continues to the east as a corridor for several meters. Here a small, circular, 2m high "room," floored with breakdown is encountered. A narrow passage slopes downward from the north side of this room and leads to the second level of the cave. By chimneying downward for approximately 3m one is in a small passage that connects to a dome to the west and also continues as a crawlway to the east. The crawl passage is

actually a two-level slot, the upper level merely a continuation of the upper cave. The lower level crawlway extends for 5.5m before ending in a fine-grain sediment fill and a small active flowstone speleothem is encountered on the north wall. The upper level crawl extends about 9m prior to its termination and has an opening in its floor, overlooking the lower passage.

Much vertebrate scat was found in the cave on 23 July 1986; there is no indication that the cave is often visited by man.

ERIE COUNTY CAVES

Black Crystal Cave (Figure 4) is a gently down-sloping cave (10m THC) developed in Columbus limestone and decorated with colorful broken glass and aluminum cans. Located so close to a KOA campground near Sandusky and having a shallow, airy constenance, makes it a perfect "party spot." Despite man's efforts, the truly decorative feature of the cave is the black crystal found there. There are no branches off the main passage, only large rocks and rubble covering the floor. This is a classic example of how natural resources should not be treated.

Crystal Rock Cave (Figure 5) is also formed in the Columbus limestone of Erie County. It is one of two Crystal Rock Caves which were once commercial. Entrance is gained by descending a flight of stairs to a gated doorway. At the time of mapping the gate had been broken by vandals.

To the left (north) of the doorway the cave extends for 17m as a low crawl. Eight meters along the passage one finds an upward sloping cavity to the west and an opening to the east which leads into a tight crawlway paralleling the main passage for 5.5m. Raccoon droppings abound in this area and the remains of a leghold trap were found in the western cavity.

Across from the doorway is an opening to a lower level room. The room is 8m wide and 7m deep with a height of approximately 1m. The back half of the room is floored by a large slab of breakdown with openings leading underneath. Below the slab there is a pool of water with exposed rock around most of its perimeter. It is possible to belly-crawl around the edge of the pool from one opening to another.

To the south of the gated doorway is the section of cave which was once commercialized. The passage trail extends for 14m to a cement covered exit, obviously functional at some former time. As one walks along the trail, remains of wiring and lights can be seen extending back into the dark. One can walk upright along the trail and the sides of the cave

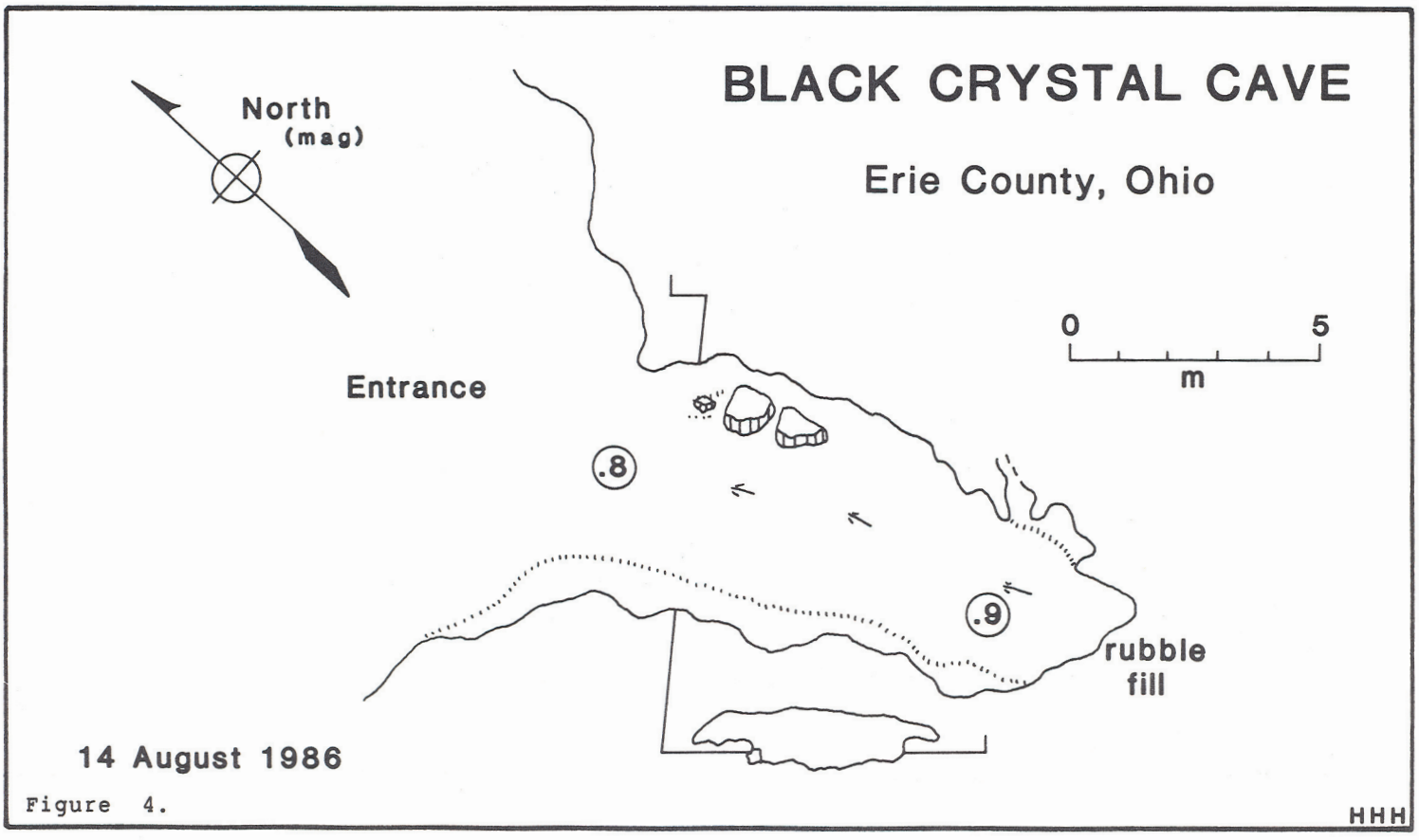

Figure 4.

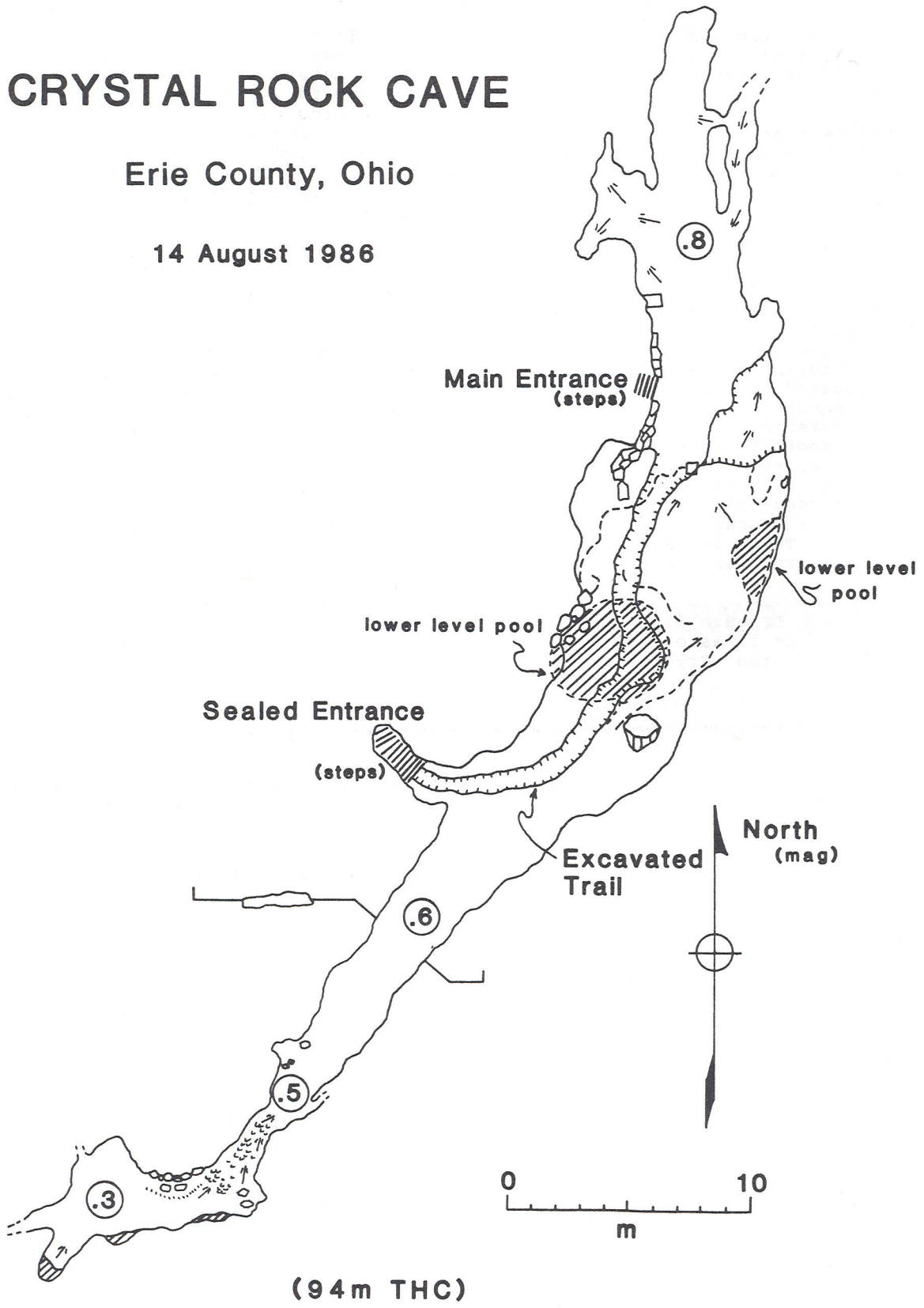
CRYSTAL ROCK CAVE
Erie County, Ohio
14 August 1986
.8
Main Entrance
(steps)
lower level
pool
lower level pool
Sealed Entrance
(steps)
North
(mag)
Excavated
Trail
.6
.5
.3
0
10
m
(94m THC)

Figure 5.

HHH

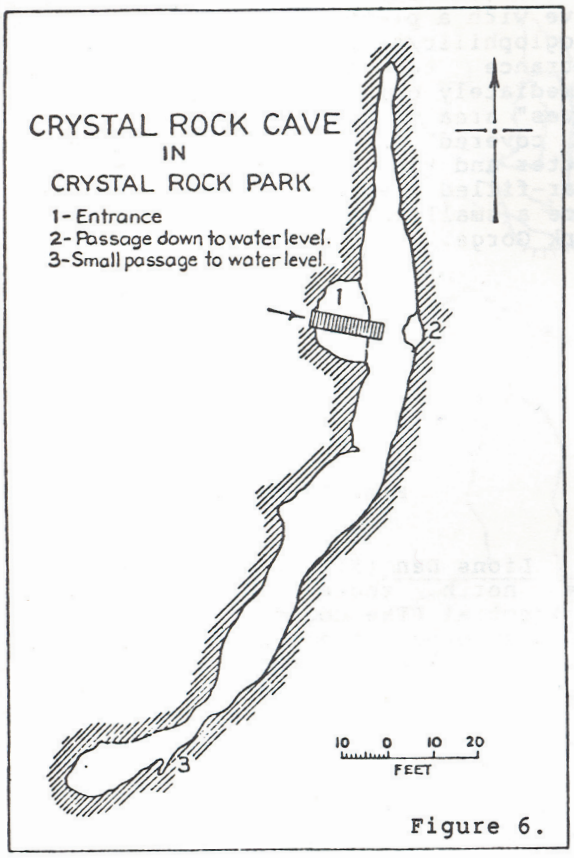

Figure 6.

extend as shelves at about waist level which then pinch together in a horizontal manner. One side shelf extends to the southeast and does not pinch out immediately but becomes a low crawl over sharp cobble for 14m until it turns to the right for another 3.7m. Along the flat crawl there is an opening to the left which, if followed, extends into a tight, almost vertical tube covered by flowstone. This steeply sloping tube leads to a lower level which is only large enough for one or two people to occupy at one time. Water can be seen in two places at this level and a partially decomposed raccoon was found in this part of the cave.

White (1926:86,87) described this cave and indicated that, "The entrance was originally a sinkhole, which has been blasted out to make a larger opening." In addition, he presented a map (see Figure 6) and stated that, "The cave is visited by hundreds during the summer season, and a charge of ten cents for admission is made."

Dead Cat Cave (Figure 7) is located in the same vicinity as Crystal Rock Cave. The entrance to this small (5m THC) karst feature is almost directly above the cement covered exit of the other cave. To reach Dead Cat Cave one must climb up a stone wall which is about 1.5m high. The cave is a hands-and-knees crawl for the first 2.8m. At this point on the 14th of August 1986 the partially mumified remains of a cat were encountered and had to be removed; additionally the underlying soil and rocks had to be dug out to allow passage. The cave continues for about 2m past this point, opening into a larger space in which a small person may turn around.

Fox Cave (Figure 8) is even less impressive than, and is located to the west of, Dead Cat Cave. This is a small cave (7m THC), having a rubble covered floor and hardly warrants the distinction of "cave."

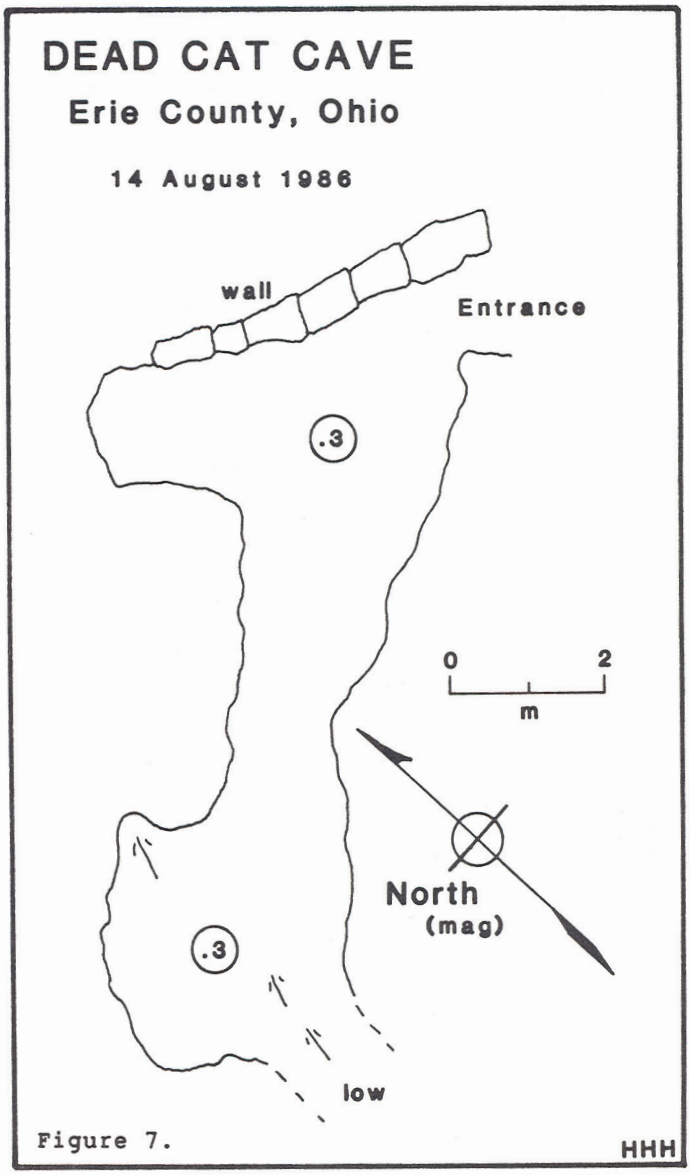

Figure 7.

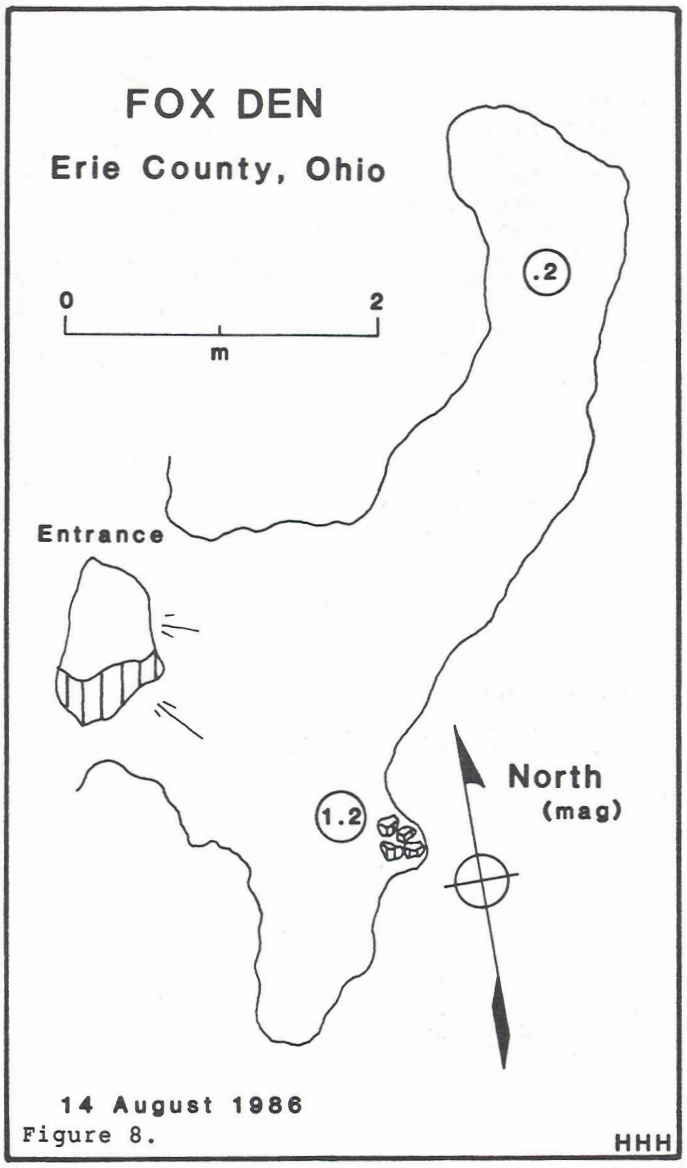

Figure 8.

HIGHLAND COUNTY CAVES

Giant Cricket Cavern (Figure 9) is found in the west side of a small hanging valley, a karst feature which overlooks Rocky Fork Gorge in the "Seven Caves" region. The cave (9.5m THC) begins with a short upward slope to a passage which opens into a domed area. A small side branch leads off southward for a few meters and another passage slopes downward in a westward direction. The latter of these has an even smaller, low, wide area that was once connected as one passage, now filled with rubble. Many organisms were found here, especially the cricket (Ceuthophilus sp.) in the dome, and fly larvae near the entrance.

Spider Cave (Figure 10) is a very small (7m THC), low, wide, downsloping cave with a plethora of spiders and other troglophilic/trogloxenic organisms. The entrance to the cave is located immediately off a paved path in the "Seven Caves" area of Highland County. The floor is covered with very dry humus and leaf litter and the cave appears to be the near-filled remnant passage of what was once a small cave contiguous with Rocky Fork Gorge.

PIKE COUNTY CAVE

Lions Den (Figure 11) is located on the north shore of Cave Lake in westcentral Pike County. The entrance is a conspicuous opening in the dolomite bluff overlooking the beach on the opposite side of the lake. The cave extends for 3m at a height of 1m before the passage with its steeply rising mud-packed floor leads upward into a soil-lined dome. This dome is lined with numerous roots, lending an erie aura to the cave. No organisms were observed within, but a multitude of ant lion depressions were noted at the base of the cliff around the entrance, hence the name of the cave.

SENECA COUNTY CAVE

Bell Cave (Figure 12), at an elevation of approximately 249m (800 feet), has an impressive 11m wide entrance found in an area of exposed bedrock surrounded by a small wooded strip of land situated in an otherwise open field. The cave has a steeply sloping gradient with two passages leading from the entrance area. Several large blocks of breakdown make up the floor. The passage off to the left (E) leads downward into a small room with two small tunnels leading off in opposite directions. The floor of the room is muddy, suggesting occasional water seepage. The passage to the right (W) is entered through a small (1m x .5m) opening and is a low, wide (4m) room. A small vertical crack at the southwest end of the room is enterable but constricts to prevent further progress.

An old bucket and cans were scattered around the large entrance section of the cave. In addition to the moth (Scoliopterix labitrix) living in the cave, fossil corals can be seen in the bedrock.

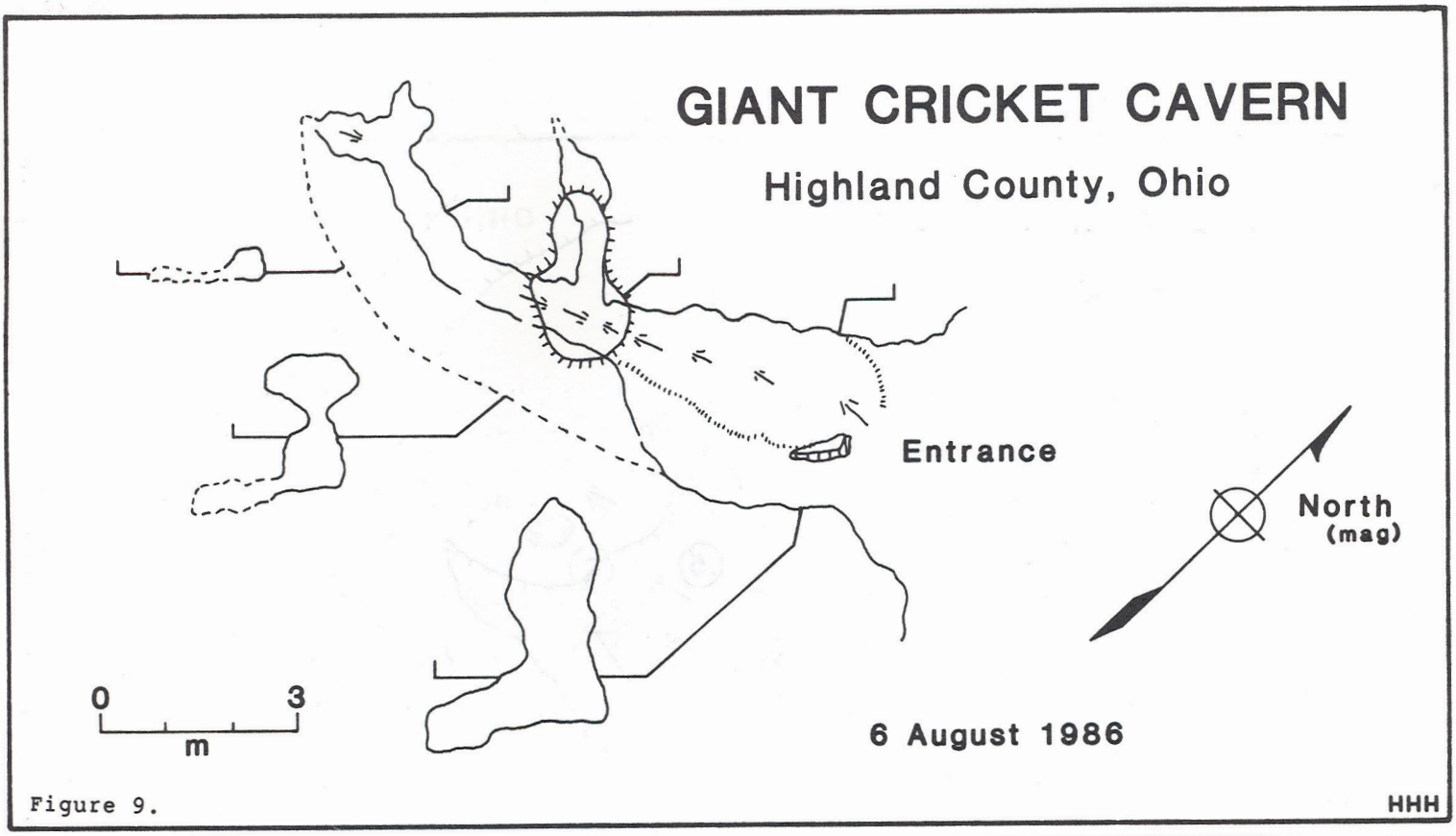

Figure 9.

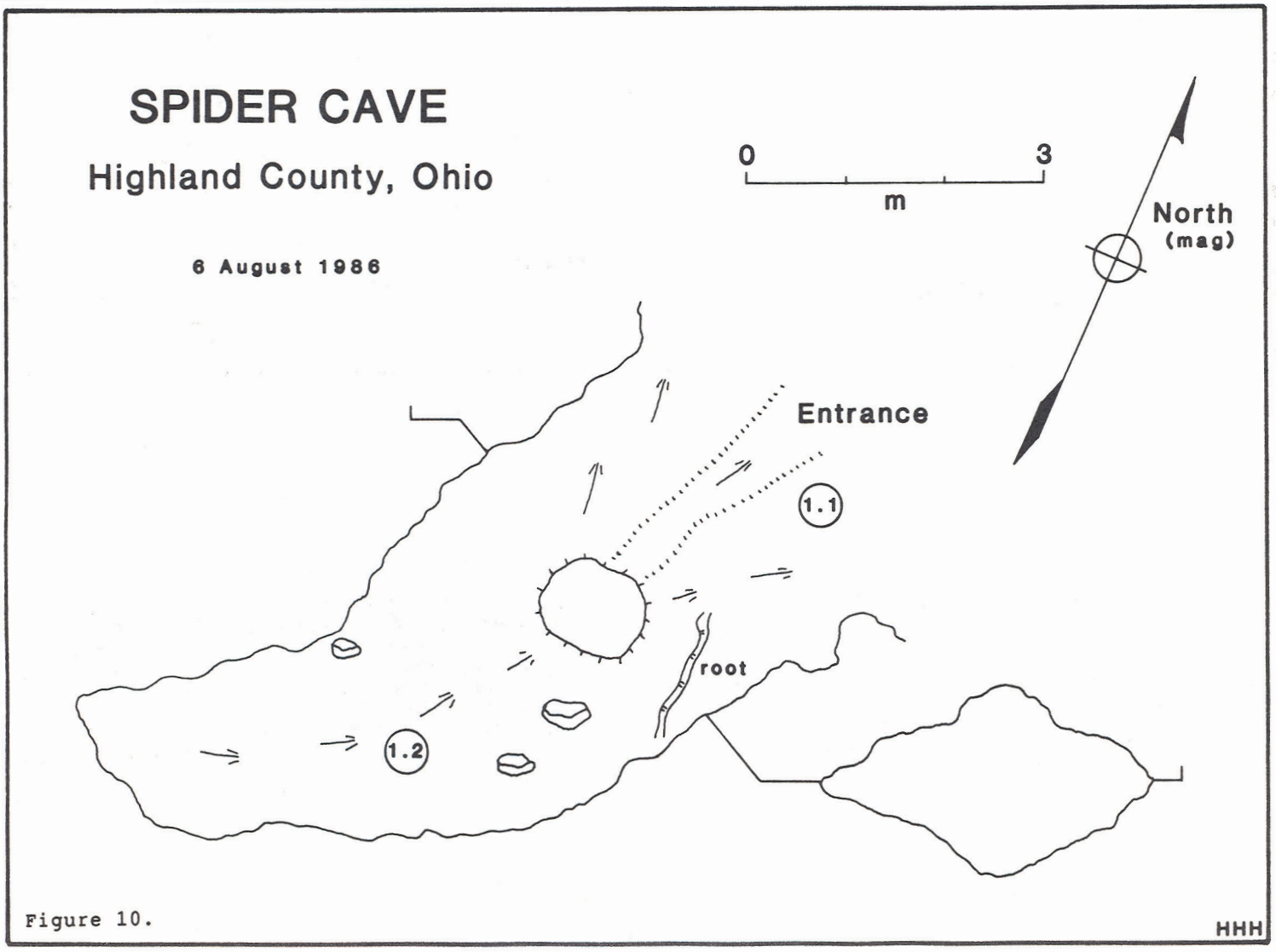

Figure 10.

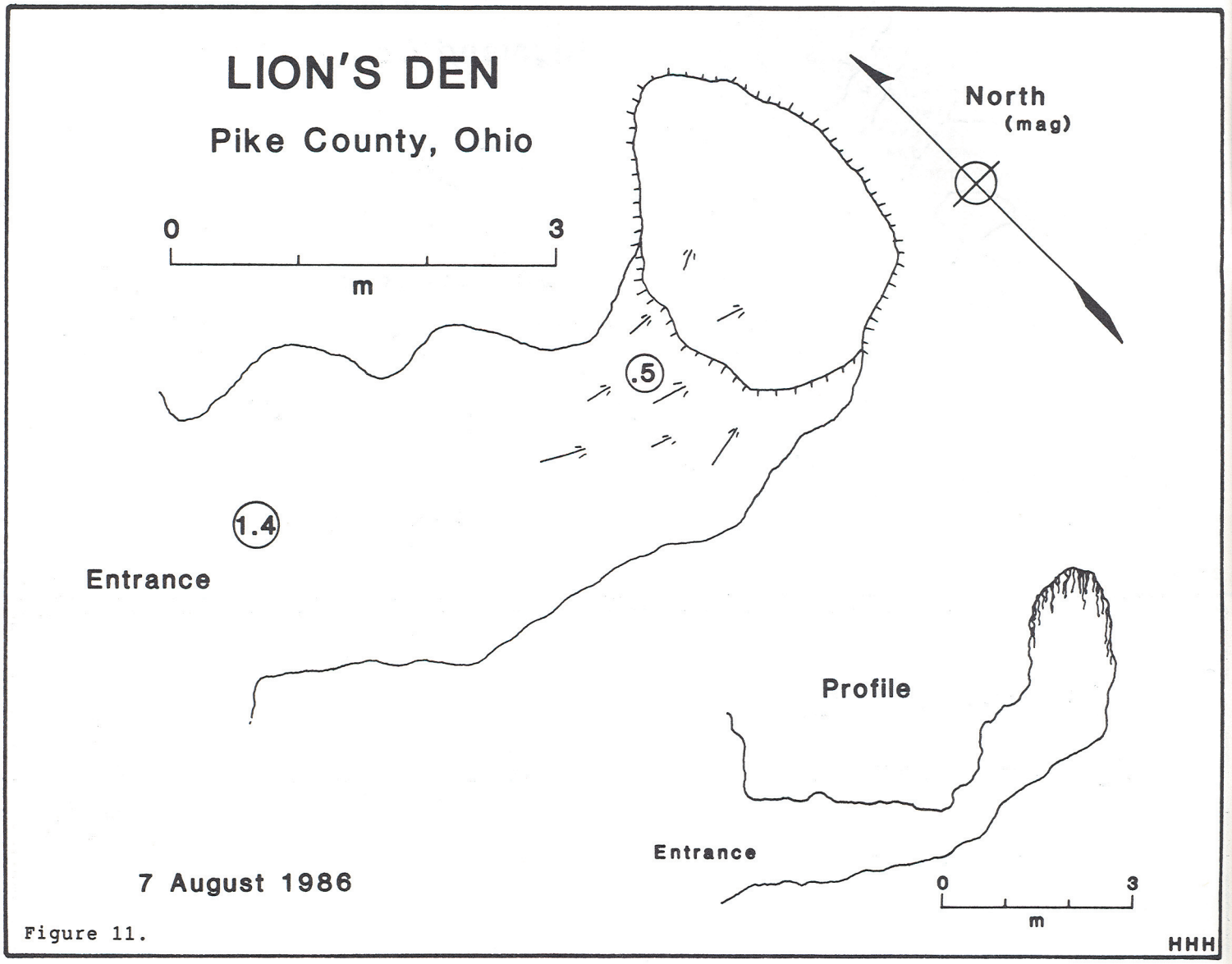

Figure 11.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to thank Richard Bell, owner of Seneca Caverns, for a most interesting and informative day of discussion and field excursion in early August. His nephew, Dale Wing, was helpful in taking us to, as well as helping in the survey of, Bell Cave which we are pleased to name in honor of Richard Bell. Appreciation is also extended to Jim Norrocky for his assistance in locating the "Crystal Caves" in Erie County. A word of thanks is given to Eddie Weeks for taking us to the entrances

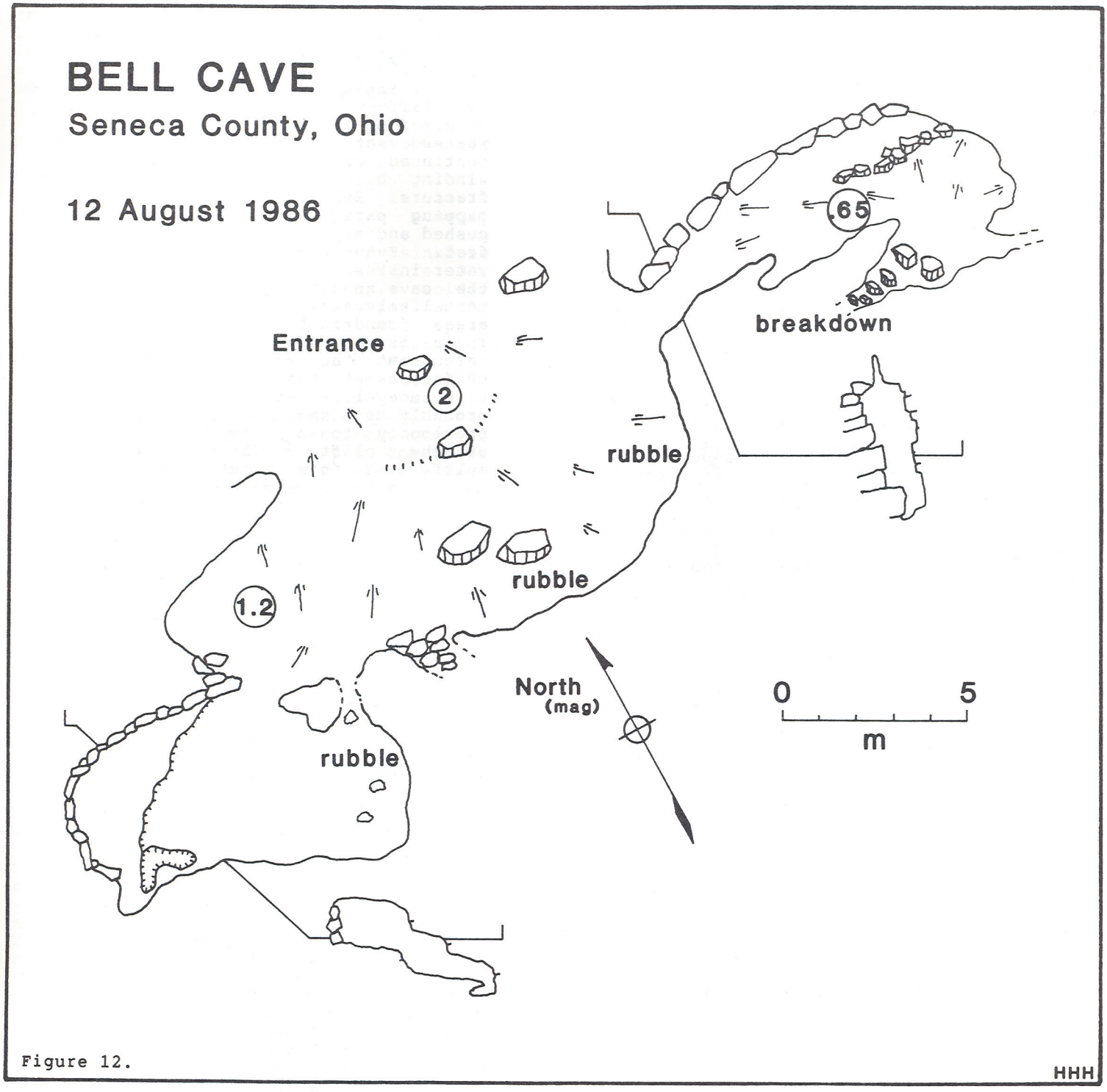

Figure 12.

of Charlie-Charlie and Tanglewood caves. Both William Simpson of Cincinnati and Nathan Pfeffer of Ripley were helpful in the survey of Brown County caves. Funds for this study were made available through a grant from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Natural Areas and Preserves and from a Faculty Research Grant, Wittenberg University.

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MORE JOURNEYS TO CARTER:
Some Questions Answered but More Remain

by Robert W. Klapthor

This past August and September found us making several trips south to Carter Caves State Park in Kentucky. We continued our explorations from last spring and finished the mapping of Bat Cave just before it was closed for the year. Additional mapping was completed on X-Cave Annex which runs under X-Cave and soaks you up to your shoulders as you hike through this stream cave, plus on four other new caves that we had discovered last spring. Maps for these caves should appear in our next issue of Pholeos.

We dropped and mapped three new pits around Smoky Lake. Alpha Pit is special to me for two reasons; it not only was a virgin 52 foot pit I found last spring near Shangri-La Arch, but it also was the first ever pit for my son Jason. It proved to be a very pretty pit leading to the bottom of a debris choked crevice that pinches off in both directions. This crevice appears to head in a general line with several small nearby sinkholes and to line up with a very interesting small cave, Dead Air Cave, that is entered from the base of the cliffs above the lake and that follows the base of a fracture. Alpha Pit made a great first pit for Jason as it was straightforward, pretty, and dry.

The other two new pits were on the south side of the lake lying below the sandstone contact above the two most prominent hanging valleys seen from the lake. The pit from last February that we were unable to find is located about halfway between these two pits, maybe we'll find it this winter. The nicest pit was Surprise Dome Pit which is found across from the boathouse. This 70 foot deep double pit leads at the bottom to a spectacular 65 foot high dome. Oddly enough, the remains of a campfire were found at the bottom of the dome. While our rather large group of cavers were finishing their pitting and mapping, I walked on down the lake to above the spillway to visit Disappointment Pit which Horton and I thought looked very hopeful of leading to more cave. Maybe it does if you can squeeze through a six inch wide crevice in solid limestone. Even little Stevey couldn't fit through this crack. Not only were we unable to get anywhere, but this pit had no passable dark zone and an easily climable exit route.

Now the cave that proved to be the intriguing surprise was Dead Air Cave. I first visited this cave in February, went in it about 50 feet and finding only bugs and seemingly dead air, exited to continue my cliff walk. Later on in August I returned to it right at the end of a weekend at Carter and found that it continued as a mud-floored crawlway winding back and forth at the bottom of a fracture. Being solo I returned with a mapping party two weeks later and we pushed and mapped the cave for about 500 feet. Even though we found no running water in the cave, the back 400 feet of the cave apparently floods with the water most likely exiting via a number of sump areas found in the floor of the crawlway. There is a very noticeable air flow throughout the cave, except for the first 60 feet as at this point the air flows up a chimney-like opening in the fracture probably to a small debris choked hole I previously found from above near the top of the cliff. There is a small multi-level room about 350 feet inside containing a variety of rat leftovers in the topmost room plus several crawls leading off from the room. The major crawl continues another 150 feet to a flowstone blockage. There are three crawls going on that all need digging to be traversed plus some animal tracks were found in this rear section. The airflow is still quite noticeable especially in the super rocky crawl under the flowstone barrier. I previously observed some small animal holes in a small sinkhole about halfway between Alpha Pit and the cleft in the ridge below Shangri-La Arch which could connect to the apparent drainage below Dead Air Cave. This is certainly one very intriguing crawlway cave!

On the late August trip we continued our cliff walking along Tygarts Creek working from Natural Tunnel Cave on north to Wet Crevice Cave which I briefly described (it was the unnamed cave with the water and flowstone blockages) in the previous issue of Pholeos. We found a number of crawlway caves that continued and need to be pushed, one of which goes 1000+ feet, plus the mystery pit/deep crevice on the old man's farm (now known as Old Man's Cave) and another natural bridge that we found at the top of the cliffs at the end of the major hanging valley between Natural Tunnel Cave valley and Wet Crevice Cave valley. This survey stopped when we reached the continuation of my previous survey working south from Wet Crevice Cave. During my earlier survey I found and visited a cave at the end of a hanging valley that reminded me of what a young version of Wet Crevice Cave would likely have been like. This cave very closely matches the description of the cave the old man walked through when he was young, hence the name Walk

Thru Cave. I walked and duckwalked through this cave for about 1200 feet until I reached a silt and gravel filled crawl under flowstone. At this point I was probably very close to any of several debris filled sinkholes that I found in the hanging valley above the cave. About 150 feet inside, the passageway is partially blocked with some stonework that has a hole broken in it.

Old Man's Cave proved not to be a pit, but instead to be a steeply downcutting stream crevice type cave draining a somewhat "hidden" sinkhole valley. The entrance is walkable but would often contain a deep, rapidly flowing stream. At these times you would have to straddle the ledges at the top of the crevice which within 150 feet puts you 40 feet above the stream. With the exception of the naturally exaggerated height this fits the cave description by the old men plus it is located where either of the two sets of directions was given to it lead. This crevice continues downcutting, even though less steeply, for about a quarter mile to where it is choked with logs and mud. It is generally heading towards Annex and Natural Tunnel Caves but only a dye test will find out for sure. We also obtained directions to a mustery pit near here plus we still have to have one of the local cavers who has been under Tygarts show us one of the entrances to this oft-rumored system.

Last, but not least, while we were introducing several Grotto members to the pleasures of Wet Crevice Cave and mapping the first 500 feet, Howard and Charles continued work on digging in the biggest sinkhole upvalley from the entrance. We still haven't made a connection but hope springs eternal in the hearts of cavers. Maybe this year will prove the charm.

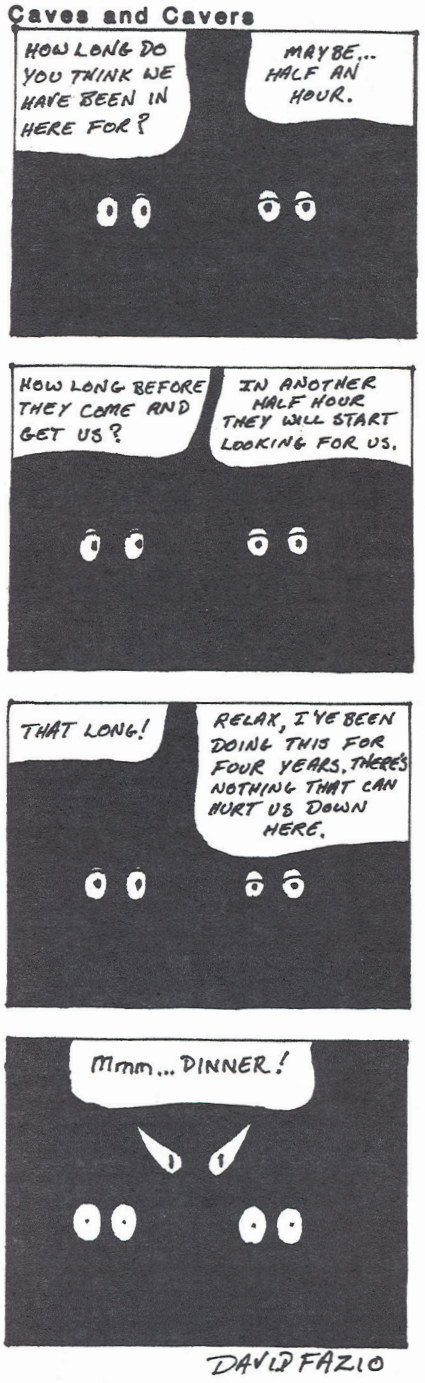
FIRST CAVE

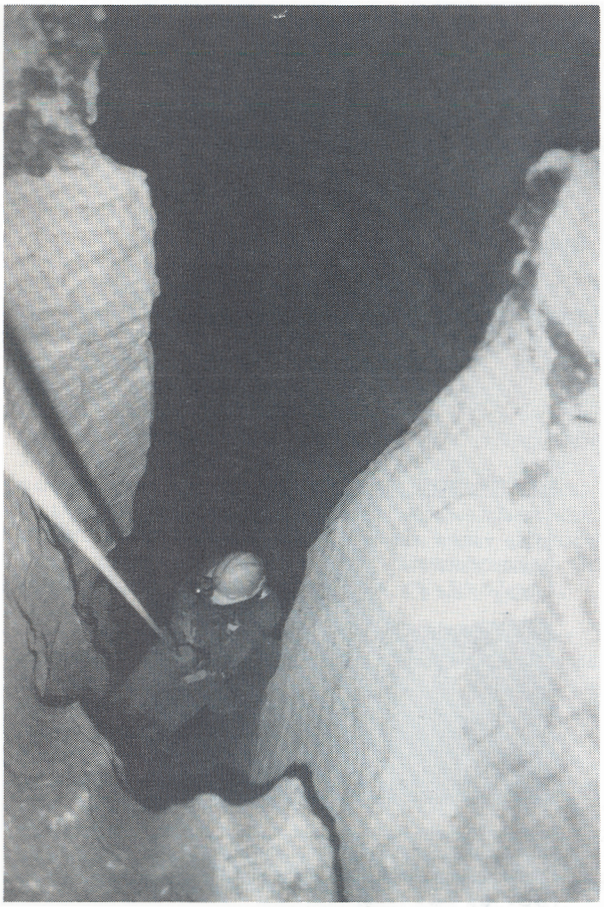
[This article has been written by a young member of W.U.S.S., thirteen year old, Steve Kronk.]

My first cave was Cave of the Winds in Colorado, I was six months old when we went. My mom and dad went too. They have a picture of me and them and a bunch of other people at the entrance of the cave. After that I went to a number of commercial caves mostly in Kentucky, Indiana, West Virginia, etc. Then came the first W.U.S.S. meeting. I missed the first meeting and got mad at my dad, but made the second one and liked it. Then I started wild caving. I've been to several wild caves. My next big thing is rappelling.

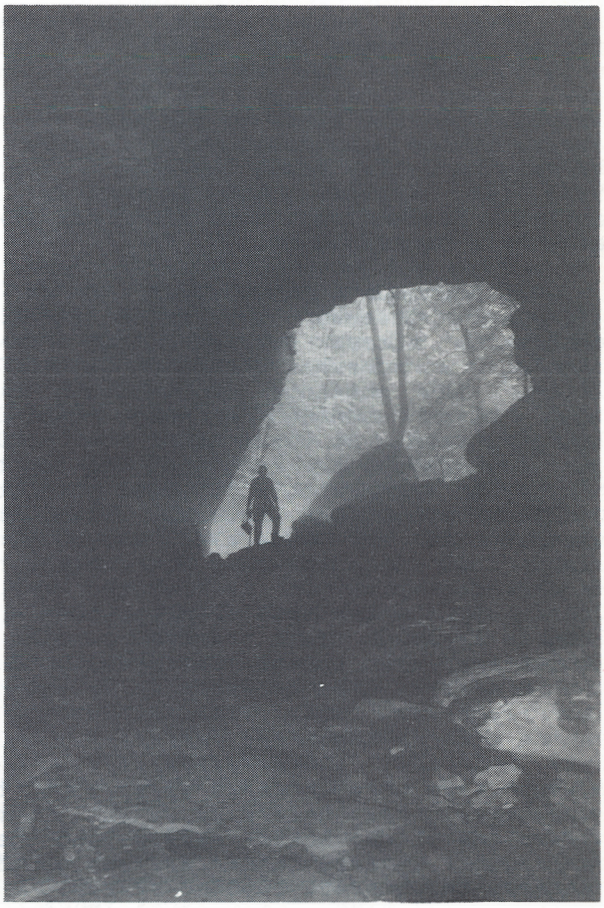
Bye

"See ya in a cave or pit!"





Alpha Pit Carter Co., Kentucky



Bat Cave Carter Co., Kentucky

Crystal Rock Cave
Erie Co., Ohio

Wet Crevice Cave
Carter County., Kentucky