

Underwater Speleology

Journal of the Cave Diving Section of the National Speleological Society



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Hells Bells

Cave Supervisor Report

**Ichetucknee Springs Graffiti
Removal Project**

Eagles Nest Sign

*Volume 41 Number 2
April/May/June 2014*

2014 NSS-CDS WORKSHOP

MAY 23 - 25, 2014 • LAKE CITY, FLORIDA

Join cave diving professionals and enthusiasts for the 2014 NSS-CDS Workshop in Lake City, Florida. This year's theme of **Guidelines Around The World** will feature expert presentations on cave systems from around the world. Additional topics from experts in their respective fields will include physiology, medicine, exploration, training, and conservation.

We have an incredible lineup of speakers for the event including some of the leading experts in their fields:

- **Lamar Hires**, History and Evolution of NSS-CDS
- **Richard Walker**, M.D., Hyperbaric Medicine
- **Joe Dituri**, Recompression
- **Tom Mount**, Ph.D., Underwater Survival
- **Amelia Charles**, Ph.D., Biophysiology of Underwater Survival
- **Carl Griffing, Matt Turner**, Water Explorers of Texas
- **Ken Hill, Lamar Hires, John Jones**, Role of the IUCRR

We'll also have a great lineup of international speakers:

- **Denis Bourret** - Cave diving and exploration in the Dominican Republic
- **Por Parasu Komaradat** - Cave diving and exploration in Thailand. The newly discovered caves of Thailand include sunken limestone caves, sea caves, and deep sinkholes reaching depths of nearly 800 ft.
- **Paul Heinerth** - Cave diving in Australia
- **Eduardo Macedo** - Cave diving in Brazil. The information in this presentation will include the details of legislation and tourism involved with cave diving in Brazil. Maps and photos of the different systems unique to the country will be discussed, along with information on the use of old gold mines as an alternative to training local cave divers.

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**Underwater Speleology
Volume 41 Number 2
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Cover Photo: Hells Bells
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uwseditor@nsscds.org.

For rates and ad sizes please go to www.nsscds.org

Underwater Speleology (UWS) is printed quarterly (four times yearly) by the NSS-CDS, 295 NW Commons Loop, Suite 115-317, Lake City, Florida 32055.

UWS is a membership benefit. Information on membership fees and registration can be found at www.nsscds.org.

Please send address changes to NSS-CDS, 295 NW Commons Loop, Suite 115-317, Lake City, Florida 32055.

Please submit letters and articles to UWS EDITOR, 295 NW Commons Loop, Suite 115-317, Lake City, Florida 32055.

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Editor's Notes

90% of the putts that are short don't go in.
~Yogi Berra~

Maybe he was confused and maybe he knew more than he let on. Sometimes things happen no matter what.... good and not so good.

It is unfortunate that we are losing our Midwest columnist, Chris Hill. Not so good. He will be missed. But I would like to thank him for arranging for another columnist to take his place, Jennifer Idol. This is good!

Jennifer is an underwater photographer and travels and dives the Midwest region quite often. I look forward to her columns and perspective on diving the Midwest. Welcome Jennifer!

Our Cave Supervisor Program is still in the fledgling stages but is making progress. This is good. See page 13 for a write-up from a cavern student who has taken advantage of the program.

The Section has had its not so good things so far this year, including the on-going drain of the School Sink law suit. But it also has its good things happening with the progress in keeping Eagles Nest open to cave diving, a clean-up at School Sink and the new Education Committee projects just to name a few. There is a little on all of the above included in this issue.

Whether you agree or disagree with any or all of what is going on, I challenge you to get involved. Join a committee or write an article (this is my personal favorite, but I may be a little biased).

We have some new t-shirt designs available in the CDS store (and they will be available at the workshop) and a great line-up of speakers at the upcoming 2014 Workshop. Come out and join us.

To paraphrase Yogi, "90% of the time things happen and the other half of the time they don't". Become involved and make things happen.

Dive safe,

Cheryl

There are several topics which I suspect would be of interest to the membership so I will attempt to briefly address them here.

The School Sink lawsuit defense is progressing as well as something of that nature can progress, albeit, it is a huge drain on our time and resources. Our attorney, John Guyton, has been doing a great job representing us and hopefully, he will be able to end this shortly. BoD member Sylvester Muller and former BoD member Ken Hill, who has agreed to act as my liaison to John Guyton, have been immensely helpful in this. Thank you Ken and TJ.

In the interim, since legal defense is always quite expensive, at our April 12, 2014 Board of Directors meeting, the BoD unanimously voted to set up a legal defense fund. Hopefully, this will help defray some of the expenses incurred here so our normal operations are not impacted. BoD member Tony Flaris has agreed to make this happen. Thank you Tony.

On another note, the best defense is a good offense. In an effort to be proactive, your BoD is currently reviewing a plan to place our properties in conservation easements. For those who do not know, conservation easements help protect properties from lawsuits by limiting their use. Typically, the properties are held by a conservancy or in a trust so the NSS-CDS no longer owns them, making us a far less attractive target.

On a positive note, the CDS has collaborated with the NACD and the IUCRR as part of an effort to keep Eagle's Nest Cave open for diving. BoD member Sylvester "TJ" Muller has been our representative with a group lead by Mike Poucher in speaking with the FWC re this matter and their efforts have been successful. A special thank you goes to Mike Poucher for spearheading this.

On a less pleasant note, the update/rewrite of the Cave Book has been shelved. The materials donated and any records pertaining to this are allegedly in the possession of Gene Melton and Jeff Bozanic, both of whom assured us the documents would be turned in for archiving. This has not happened. If any of the original contributors wish to see this project be reinstated please send your manuscripts to our Publications Committee Chair, Cheryl Doran for archiving and inclusion should the project be reborn in the future.

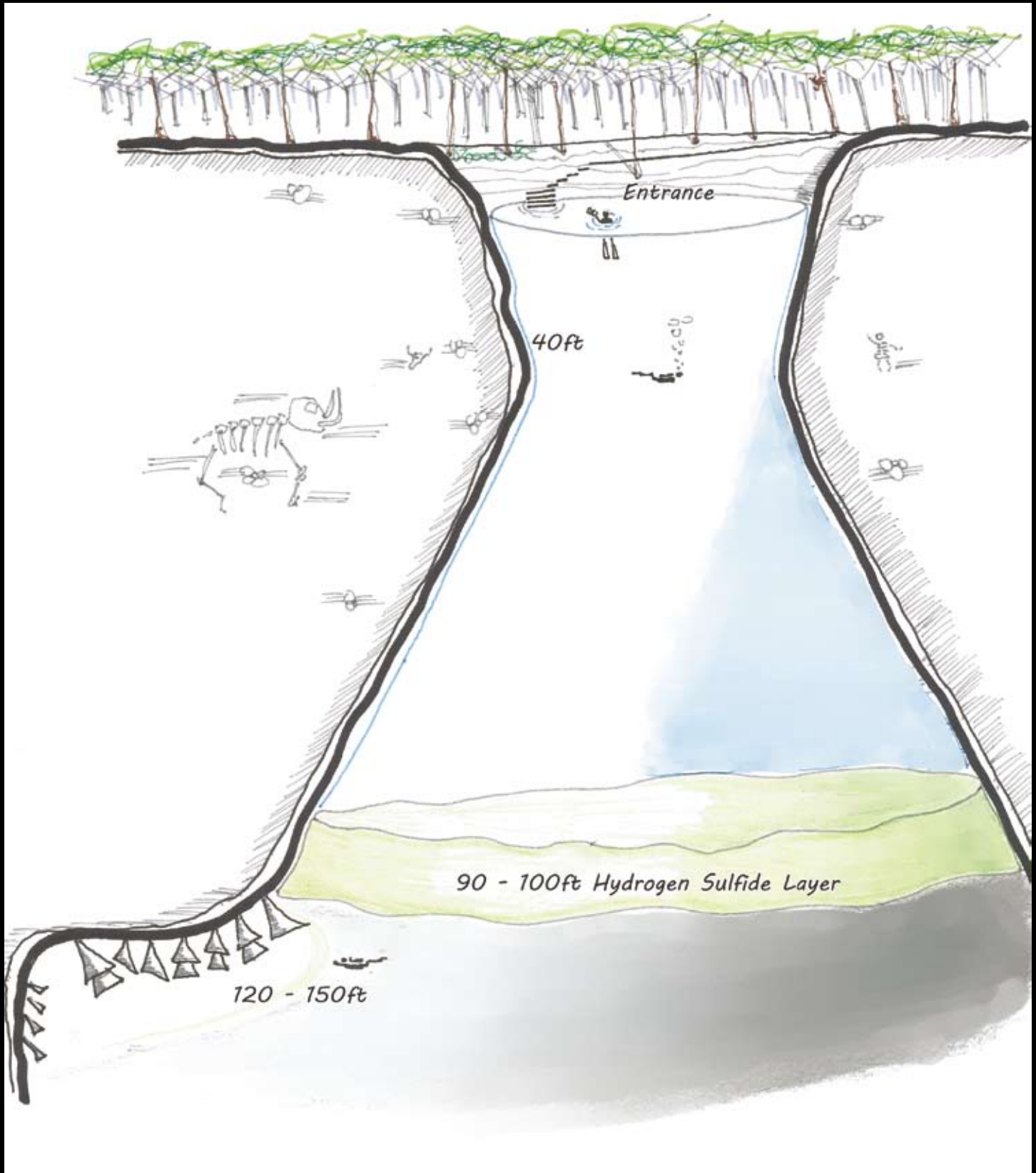
The Cave Diver Supervisor program is once again under attack by those members who wish to use internet forums and records requests as a tool for harassment of the BoD. This type of thing robs the rest of the membership because the more time your BoD has to waste addressing nonsense, the less time it has to devote to constructive things. If you are not happy with the Cave Dive Supervisor Program, don't use it.

Finally, elections are nearing an end so please send in your vote for the person(s) whom you think are best suited to represent you. Member participation is critical to the success of the organization. Also, if you are able, please attend the CDS's premier event of the year, our Annual Workshop, held on May 23-25, 2014 in Lake City, Florida. Connect with old friends and make new ones while attending informative lectures.

Respectfully submitted,

Joe Citelli,
Chairman, NSSCDS

HELLS BELLS



Hells Bells, in Quinta Roo, Mexico, may be the most impressive cave formations I have ever seen in my twenty years of cave diving.

To get there you will need to travel to Puerto Morelos. South of this town is a large gate and road with a sign SELVATICA.

Take this road and follow the signs to KIn Ha Cenotes. After approximately 8 kilometers you will arrive at an entry where you have to pay a fee and then follow the road to the cenote ZAPOTE.

There is a ladder here, so it is not difficult to get your cylinders to the water.

Once below the surface, be prepared for an incredible dive with the most unique formations.

There has been much discussion among Mexico's geologists about them, but scientists studying these formations have yet to explain how they were created.

They are.....Hells Bells.



You begin the dive by descending vertically and laying your guideline as you move along. At approximately 40 feet, the vertical passage narrows to the width of about three divers and then begins opening up again until, at approximately 100 feet, it opens into a huge gallery.

As you continue downward, you pass through a dense hydrogen sulfide layer. Below this layer appears a huge, magnificent ceiling. All around you the walls are decorated with the most amazing speleothemes. Stranges formations; totally different from any we have ever seen!

Have your line in the ceiling of the cavern and know where is at all times. It will ealily be lost in the haze of visibility in the hydrogen sulfide. The maximum depth is around 170 feet and most of the formations are between 120 feet and 150 feet.





Ginnie Springs

Photographer: Guy Bryant

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This dive is best made with trimix or nitrox to get the most bottom time. If you do this dive in sidemount you need to be prepared to taste the hydrogen sulfide when you switch your regulators; and we can tell you it is not nice.!!

We used nitrox for our dive here; 32% for our bottom mix and 50% for our deco and had plenty of time to explore these magnificent formations.

The Rango Extendido team was very impressed by this cave and took lots of video and photos for the documentary MEXICO UNDERWATER, which will have an important part in conservation of Mexico's caves.

NSS-CDS Cave SUPERVISOR PROGRAM

If you have any questions regarding the Cave Supervisor Program or are interested in becoming an NSS-CDS Cave Supervisor, please contact the Training Director:

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NSS-CDS Cave SUPERVISOR PROGRAM

By: Karen Dealy

The NSS-CDS Cave Supervisor Program works at all levels of cave diving experience. Below is a report from a cavern diver candidate on their experience with the program.

I was at Amigos Dive Center one Saturday evening in March; I had just spent the day alone in the Ginnie Springs ballroom practicing skills – buoyancy, trim, valve drills, mask clearing, propulsion techniques, and tie-offs. It was the first day of many that I planned on spending, alone, practicing skills, looking for signs of improvement. I was frustrated with myself: I had tried to take a cavern course the weekend before, and had not made it past the first day. “You need more time in the water.” I knew I wasn’t ready, and I was embarrassed. I had given myself a deadline and I was determined to get there.

That Saturday evening I was at Amigos with two friends (cave divers), and in between talking to Wayne and filling our tanks, we met Tony Flaris. I spoke with Tony for a while and learned his role with the NSS. I told him that I’m working toward cavern certification and that I need a lot of work. He offered to meet me at Ginnie some weekend to help me with skills. Not knowing anything about the NSS-CDS mentor program, I thanked him and smiled politely, not expecting anything to come of the offer.

A few weeks later – Easter weekend – I was planning to dive alone again; I mentioned to Tony that I’d be in the area, and he offered to meet me on Friday to work with me. I drove from St. Petersburg, he from Jacksonville, and we met again at Amigos in the morning. After spending some time talking to Wayne and Jeff, filling our tanks, and checking our equipment, he asked me what I wanted to work on that day. “This is very informal; just let me know what you want to do. I’m here for you.” “I need help with the reel,” I said immediately. I hesitated, and then mumbled something about needing to work on mask-off drills (which I was not looking forward to doing).

We spent some time doing land drills at Amigos: tie-offs around tanks, placement around boxes. He showed me the basics, he taught me some tricks. He took time to explain what he was doing, and his explanations were helpful. He would show me a skill, explain how he did it, explain why he did it that way, and then tell me that nothing is set in stone – This is what works for me, but you might find something else that works better for you.

We went to the ballroom at Ginnie Springs, immediately getting into our dry suits to keep from getting drenched by the rain, and as we assembled our gear we made our plans. For the rest of the day we did reel work,

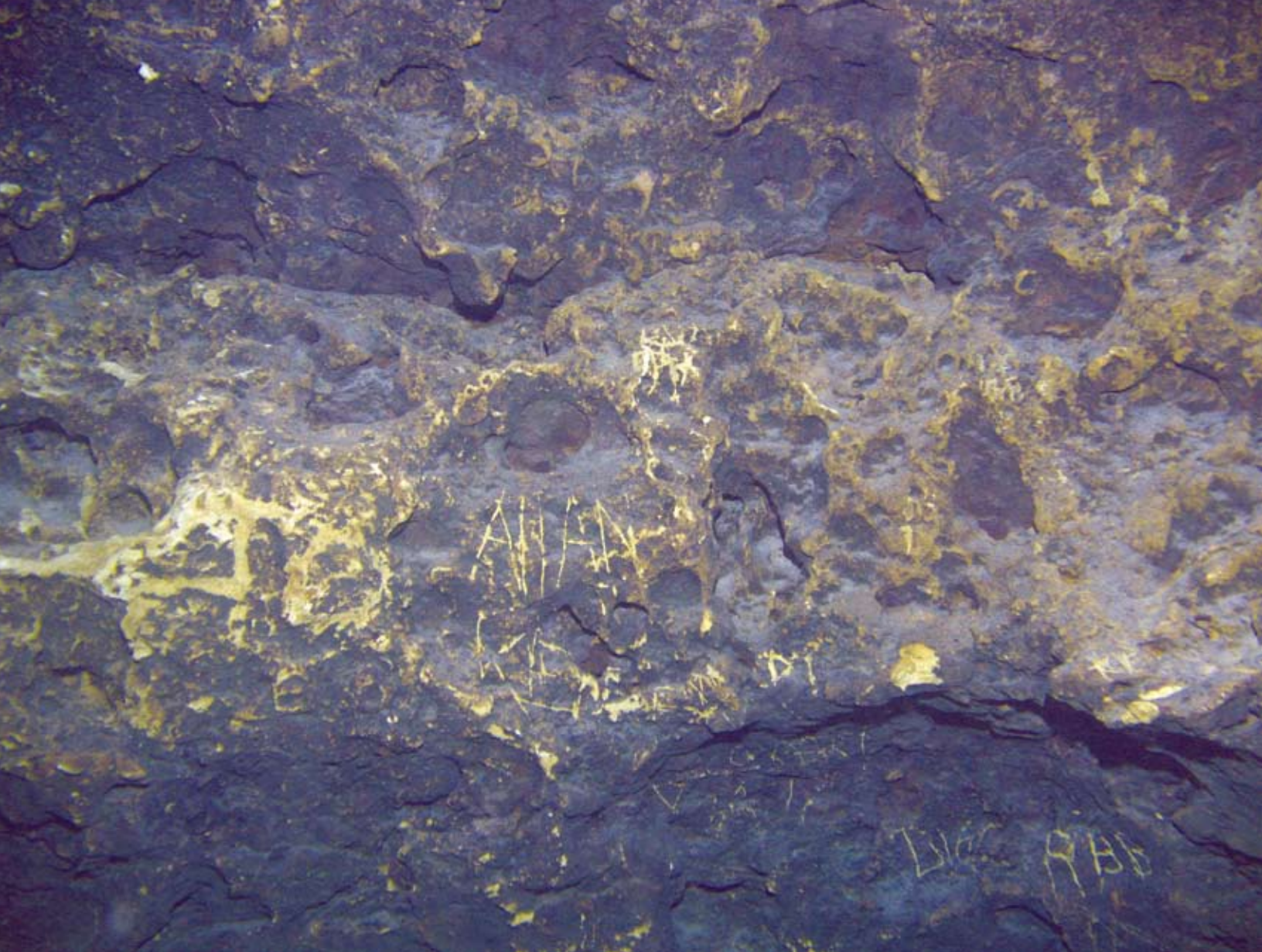
he gave me tips on trim and buoyancy, he showed me different propulsion techniques ... and we went through the dreaded mask-off swims. After every drill, we would surface and discuss what I had done right, what I had done wrong, and how I could try things differently. His first question upon rising was always, “What did you think?” I had a hard time answering the question because by the time I surfaced each time I had already begun beating myself up over what I had done wrong, but Tony saw that I was doing this and he stopped me. He would always begin our briefing by telling me what I had done well. I’m a teacher and I know this trick (“Always start with something positive...”) and I hated that he was having to use it on me, but it worked. He stopped me from critiquing myself into a hole; he kept me in the game. Whoever said that teachers make horrible students was probably talking about a teacher who tried to become a cave diver.

The idea of a formal mentoring program is strange to me... not the theory behind it, but the role that I am taking in it. I’m much more accustomed to being the teacher than being the student, and I’m not used to having people watch me do something that I’m not good at. The day turned into an unexpected lesson in humility. I think that those hours with Tony forced me to see that I do have a lot to learn, that this is going to be a difficult and slow process, but that I can get there if I want to. It made me accept (through clenched teeth) that technical diving is not something that I’m naturally good at... but that doesn’t mean that I can’t become good at it. I just need to put in the time.

Two days later I was back at home in St Petersburg, sitting on my sofa with a cup of coffee and my primary reel, and thinking about the dives. With some distance – and out of the water – I had a better perspective of my performance. In the water I’d been overwhelmed by how much I couldn’t do and how much I’d done wrong, but looking back I realized the value of the experience.

Any time spent underwater is helpful and informative, and having someone there to give feedback and guidance is invaluable. I started to assemble a plan for when and how I’d continue working toward my goals. I know I’ll get there, and I’ve extended my deadline.

Thanks, Tony.



Ichetucknee Springs Graffiti Removal Project

By: Kelly Jessop

Blue Hole at Ichetucknee Springs, also known as Jug Hole, is a unique cave system that has large rooms separated by small restrictions. This cave system is located at Ichetucknee Springs State Park, which is a crown jewel in the state park system. Before this became a state park, it was visited by divers that explored its depths but some left semi-permanent reminders of their visit with graffiti on the walls of the cavern. Some of this graffiti had dates going back into the 70s.

The park engaged the North Florida Springs Alliance about performing the removal of the graffiti. This pre-

sented a challenge because there is no existing documentation on performing this task and also preventing damage in the process.

We broke the task into several steps. First, we did some photo documentation of all the graffiti on the walls and had a chance to examine the extent of the graffiti.

The next phase was to determine the appropriate tools to remove the graffiti. We had some that was very superficial and then some that had very deep gouges.



We picked a 3 foot by 3 foot test area and used nylon scrub brushes with different bristle stiffnesses as well as a wire brush. Each instrument was tested for its ability to remove the graffiti at certain depths into the limerock, but making sure that it didn't cause too much wear.

This test strip, after being cleaned, was photographed and then photographed again after three months to see if it developed a "patina".

Once everyone examined the test area, we were given the green light to complete that task.

We had three divers working on graffiti removal and another diver performing as a safety diver to observe and provide assistance.

The dive took nearly two hours, but we completely removed the graffiti.



Thank you to Mike Stine, Bonnie Stine, Bobby Franklin, Xenia Mountroudou, Jim Womble and Kelly Jessop.

OFF to the Side.....

By Rob Neto

Exit Stage Horizontal

Streamlining a stage cylinder has been a somewhat popular topic for years. Several old threads can be found on the internet forums discussing Luxfer cylinders versus Catalina cylinders for use as stage cylinders. The preference was for Luxfer cylinders because they were more positively buoyant and as the gas volume decreased the bottom of the cylinder would rise up and become more streamlined along the diver's torso.

Sidemount divers started looking for more optimal ways to carry stage cylinders several years ago. While many were carrying them the same way as backmount divers, the sidemount cylinder didn't allow for the stage cylinder

they still did the same thing as the Luxfers.

There are a few options that have been adopted to counteract this. Some sidemount divers will only carry their stage cylinders on top during the front end of the dive. They'll breathe the cylinder down to drop pressure, drop the cylinder on the line, and continue their dive. On the return, they will clip the cylinder underneath so it floats up against them and stays more streamlined. While this does work to make the cylinder more streamlined, the rigging used to mount the cylinder above is not ideal for mounting the cylinder below. The diver also needs to adjust position in the water column to compensate for the additional clearance now needed below rather than above.

Another option is to not breathe the stage cylinder during the exit. By doing this more gas pressure is kept in the stage cylinder thus making it more negatively buoyant and keeping a lower profile. The issue with this method is aluminum cylinders tend to begin rising at about 2500 psi and most divers will breathe their stage cylinders down to at least 2000 psi. Another issue is that some schools of thought hold that the stage cylinder should be breathed down first, so if there is a gas problem the cylinder can be left behind so the diver can be more streamlined and efficient in exiting.

A third option is to place a small weight near the bottom of the cylinder to keep it from rising. Aluminum 80 cylinders are slightly more than four pounds positive when empty. This means that two to three pounds will be enough to keep the cylinder lying flat as long as it isn't breathed lower than 1000 psi. The issue with this is placing a weight on a cylinder that will be left on the line for part of the dive is unnecessary weight as far as the neutral buoyancy of the diver.

A fourth option that has been taking hold recently is a different type of rigging that holds the stage cylinder down against the diver no matter how light it gets. The top of



to ride as streamlined as was desired. Experimenting with mounting stage cylinders on top so they nestled in the crevice created by the torso and sidemount cylinder became the focus. This method works out well when the cylinder is full but as the gas pressure is breathed down, the bottom of the cylinder starts to rise up and gives the diver a much higher profile than even a backmount diver. So while most divers who converted from backmount to sidemount owned Luxfer stage cylinders, the desired floatation of those cylinders was no longer so desirable. Trading out the cylinders for Catalinas wasn't the answer though because even though they weren't as positive,



the cylinder gets attached to the chest D-ring of the side-mount rig just like with all the other methods. The bolt snap on the neck of the cylinder must be attached using a short piece of shock cord to keep the valve end close to the back of the shoulder. The bolt snap near the bottom of the cylinder is attached to a long piece of shock cord and held in place by a worm gear hose clamp. Ideally, this bolt snap should be one of the large clips because the heaviness of the clip will help you attach the cylinder in place. The position of the hose clamp along the body of the cylinder will depend on the height of the diver, but eight inches from the bottom is a good place to start. The length of the shock cord will depend on the girth of the torso.

To clip the cylinder on, the best position is to be in the water in horizontal trim so that gravity can assist. Attach the neck clip to the chest D-ring first. Then push the cylinder around and on top of the sidemount cylinder and slide the large bolt snap down between your sidemount cylinder and your hip so it is on the far side of the side-mount cylinder attachment. This will help hold the stage cylinder in place and is also the reason the position of the hose clamp depends on how tall you are. Reach under and grab the clip with the opposite hand and pull it across your waist, clipping it to a D-ring that is positioned on your waist strap just on the opposite side of the waist buckle. It's necessary to clip it on the opposite side so the shock

cord can have some leverage in pulling the stage cylinder down and into your torso.

Removing the cylinder is done by reversing the steps.



Unclip the bolt snap from the waist D-ring and let the cylinder roll around your sidemount cylinder so it is below you. Then unclip the bolt snap from the chest D-ring. I usually clip the bottom bolt snap to the top bolt snap

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Continued from page 17

before clipping the cylinder to the line so I don't have the large bolt snap hanging several inches from the cylinder.

This rigging method will keep the cylinder flat against you during the entire dive regardless of how low the volume in the cylinder gets. It will also push the side mount cylinder on that side down slightly, but your overall profile will be much more streamlined. It really doesn't matter whether your stage cylinder protrudes more on top or your sidemount cylinder protrudes more below, the bottom to top clearance needed will still be the same. And having the two cylinders slightly lower, thus more centered along your torso, will decrease any listing that might occur from having a stage cylinder on one side.

Regardless which method you choose to use, the goal is to be as streamlined as possible and to be as safe as possible. If you choose to top mount your sidemount cylinders, make sure you visually verify the markings on the cylinder and trace the hose from the 1st stage to the 2nd stage so you know you're breathing the proper gas for your depth.

School Sink is Closed

Pending review of the Management Plan by the BOD, School Sink is **closed to all diving.**

More information will be available regarding any decision made at the May 2014 NSS-CDS Workshop.

Cave Education Power Point

NSS-CDS Membership input is being sought regarding the development of a Power Point presentation on cave diving and or conservation.

This presentation will be available for community outreach and education through the NSS-CDS.

Steve Mann is Chairman of the Educational Outreach Committee and spearheading this project. If you have any suggestions or can help with this project, please contact Steve at: whodunit68@gmail.com

New Store Items

New T-shirt designs are available in the NSS-CDS Store.

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Skills, Tips & Techniques

By George Gawinowski

Starting Off On The Right Foot Get Yourself Together Before Entering The Cave

Try to recall the circumstances surrounding a situation in which you should not have been diving on one particular day. Maybe you woke up and your day got off on the “wrong foot”, you were late meeting with your buddies, waited an hour to get fills, rushed to get in the water or your first stages were leaking... Anything.

Rushing and unplanned circumstances impact your dive. It will probably take a few minutes to get your buoyancy and breathing right.

With some preparation, we can minimize the circumstances that could create stress and an uncomfortable scenario before a dive. We should be 100% ready physically, mentally and equipment wise before entering the cavern area, otherwise we should call the dive. It is our responsibility as cave divers to get ourselves together before entering the cave.

Our Responsibility

While being conscious of our responsibilities, our physical condition, our degree of implication and positioning ourselves in comparison to the external parameters and all the components of a situation, we will increase our chances to act well. We will also decrease the risks of bad appreciation or unconsciousness of the course of events. We will know that something should be done, if we will dive today or cancel, if this buddy is “OK” or if diving with them represents a risk, etc. Ordinary capacities of analysis are largely sufficient to comprehend such situations; it is only a matter of attention and broadmindedness.

When you jump in the water you have a responsibility

for your buddy, and your buddy is also responsible for you; even if both of you are self-sufficient divers. Solo dives and buddy dives cannot be mixed together. When you dive with someone you have to act as a team member. A team member is someone who is going to follow the dive plan for the dive; follow it even in the case of an emergency, and in an emergency assist their buddy. Too often people dive together but try to avoid responsibility and this is why most of the time there is no clear dive plan established, so that anything can happen and nobody is “held” responsible.

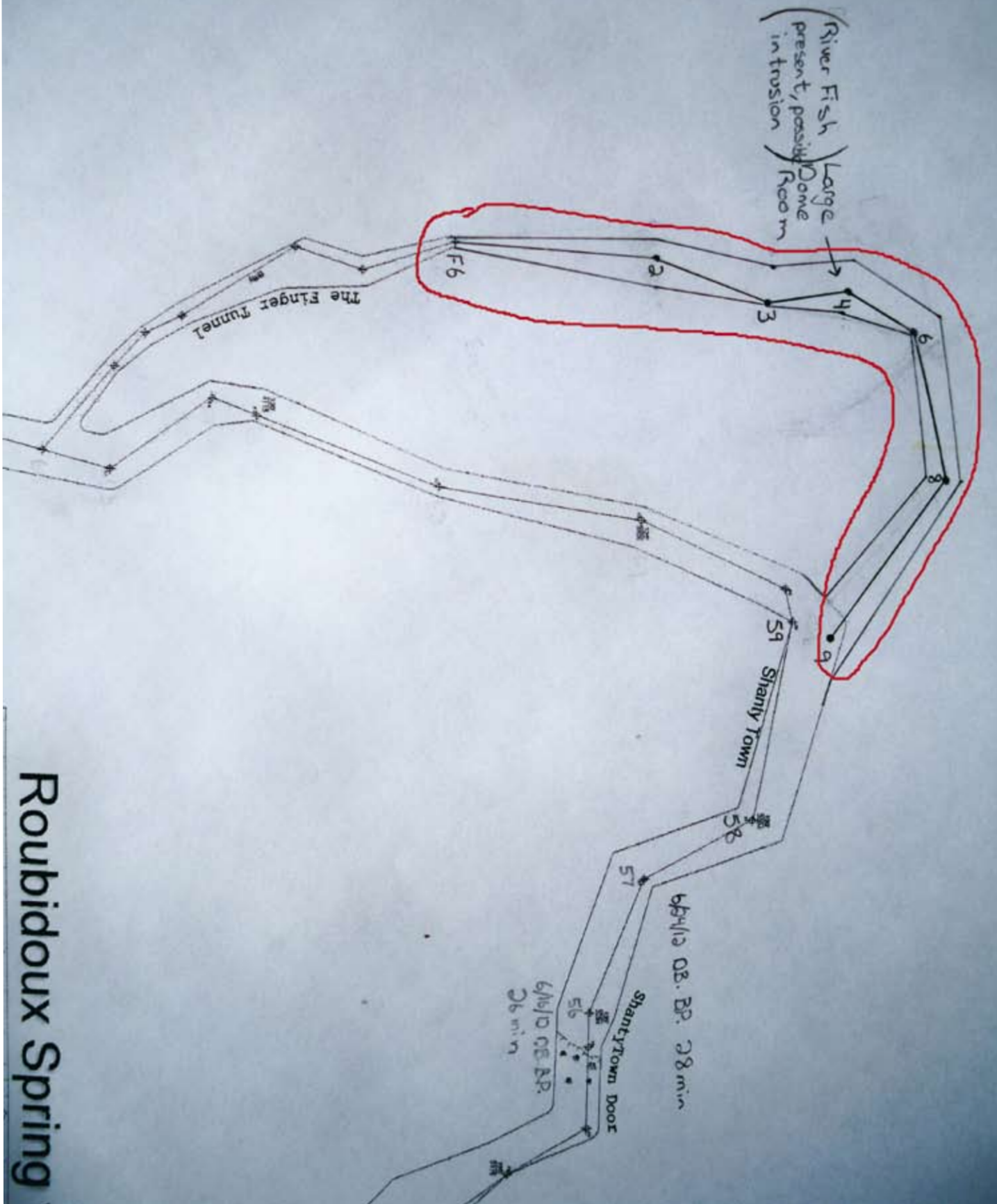
Helping tools:

- All regulators should be serviced annually and o-rings changed at the same time
- Inspect all equipment for deterioration before dives.
- Change the battery on back up lights
- Charge primary lights
- Take the time needed to prepare yourself mentally using some breathing and visualization techniques to make sure all equipment is in the right place before you jump in the water.
- Take the time to do an in-water check of all pieces of equipment and use this time to relax and adjust buoyancy.

Do not take your equipment, your buddies or the environment for granted. Be aware during dives of any changes and call the dive if something does not feel right.

Caves have been around for a long time and they will still be here tomorrow.

Roubidoux Spring



ROUBIDOUX GIVES US THE FINGER

The Roubidoux Spring system has been explored and continually pushed since Don Rimbach first breached the entrance in 1969. The 90s and early 2000s saw significant distance pushes into the system, ending at around 5400 feet. In recent years, the OCDA has pushed the system to 8300+ feet (7200 feet surveyed). Roub is consistent with most systems in the Midwest by being a singular conduit. Therefore the focus tends to always be pushing further and less effort on searching for side passages.

In 2002, during OCDA exploration efforts, Tom O'Connor and Scott Lesh discovered what is now called the Finger Tunnel. They later explored and surveyed 300+ feet of it. With the going borehole passage at the end of the line in the main tunnel, no one has since taken the time and effort to delve further into the Finger Tunnel...until now.

Almost exactly twelve years later, two hearty cave divers, Dirk Bennett and Ben Perkins (OCDA members), took it upon themselves to answer the curiosity many of us have had for years – where does the Finger Tunnel go? This was to be no easy undertaking, so they enlisted Brent Reeves and Dan Harder to help with support.

After much planning & preparation, on Nov. 23, 2013, at 9 am, the four divers assembled on the bank of Roubidoux Spring, in sub-freezing temps, to commence this exploration effort. Flow was up, requiring a fifty minute scooter ride out to station 65 (approx. 4300 feet), where the Finger Tunnel jump is located. (Average depth out to this point is around 170 feet, with max depth being 220 feet). Here, Ben and Dirk each dropped a scooter and a stage, then proceeded into the Finger Tunnel (145 foot depth) following the line laid back in 2002. Each diver swam towing a scooter with hopes of the tunnel opening up wide. Upon reaching the end of the existing line and tying in an exploration reel, they decided the system probably wasn't going to open up, so they dropped their

scooters and started laying new line.

Progress was slow but good, with Ben laying line and Dirk ensuring good tie-offs and placing new station markers. After a few stations, they came to a crack and ascended from 175 feet into a large dome room (160 foot depth) with a huge silt dune and black goethite rocks, similar to those in the Lower Tunnel. Some non-cave adapted fish were present indicating surface intrusion from somewhere (a future project?). The tunnel kept trending to the right and soon the divers saw existing line. At first they assumed they had circled back on their own line, but then realized it was old and stained. They quickly found station marker 59, thus they had backtracked toward the entrance of Roubidoux Spring and found a new entrance to the Finger Tunnel, completing a circuit. (Station 59 is approximately 3600 feet inbound and 145 feet deep).

They were close on their planned turn time, but headed back into the Finger Tunnel to complete a rough survey of the new line. Ben and Dirk gathered scooters and stages and headed out. They exited the system at 8:30 pm in 18 degree weather, with support guys anxiously awaiting their return (and freezing their butts off). The gear was freezing faster than they could disassemble it, the now wet concrete was freezing and slick and their dry suits crunched while walking. By 10 pm they were in vehicles, with heaters on high, enjoying their well-earned accomplishment.

In total, the team added 600+ feet of new line, making the Finger Tunnel almost 1000 feet long. A nice addition that good ol' Roub has finally given up.

The dive was a little over 8 hrs in 56 degree water. Many thanks to Brent and Dan for roughing it in the cold air, setting deco tanks, top-side gear hauling and helping make this a safe and successful discovery.

INSTRUCTOR'S CORNER

Deep Cave Diver

By: Carl Griffing

Hendley's Castle, the Blue Abyss, Eagle's Nest; a few of the places I have experienced over the years cave diving. Chances are you know one thing they all have in common: depth. Depth that requires even more complex planning and logistics than a typical 'full' cave dive. Each of these sites has its own characteristics that make them memorable dives. Some cave divers reach a point where they decide to take additional training so they can experience the wonders of sites such as these. For experienced cave and technical divers wishing to safely plan and conduct mixed gas deep cave dives, the NSS-CDS offers the Deep Cave Diver specialty course.

NSS-CDS Deep Cave Diver Specialty course description:

The purpose of the Deep Cave Diver course is to provide the Cave Diver training for the safe planning and execution of mixed gas diving in caves to depths not exceeding three hundred (300) fsw / ninety (90) msw. The diver will be introduced to the proper and safe use of helium as a breathing gas, along with oxygen and nitrox for staged decompression. This course will emphasize precision and accuracy in all aspects of the dive, beginning with advanced pre-dive planning. Safety will be a primary focus of this course due to the depths to which the dives will be made.

To enroll in the course, the prospective student must meet the following prerequisites: minimum of twenty-one (21) years of age, NSS-CDS Cave Diver or the equivalent, have a minimum of fifty (50) logged non-training cave dives after completion of Cave Diver, and must be trimix certified from a recognized training agency or taking this course in conjunction with a trimix course. This course builds upon the training, skills, and experience the cave divers have acquired in their previous cave diving training, technical diving training, and diving experience.

The NSS-CDS Deep Cave Diver specialty course duration is a minimum of four (4) days. Course academics include: Physics review, physiology, psychological aspects, decompression gas options, equipment considerations, dive computers, tables, available decompression software, dive planning, emergency procedures, accident analysis & prevention, and specific hazards of deep cave diving. Qualified instructors may also educate the Deep Cave Diver students on mixing and blending of breathing gases.

At least one (1) open water skills dive, a minimum of one (1) shallow cave dive (defined as less than one hundred and thirty [130] fsw / thirty-nine [39] msw) will be executed, and a minimum of three (3) deep cave dives to depths between a depth of one hundred and eighty (180) fsw / fifty-four (54) msw and a maximum of three hundred (300) fsw / ninety (90) msw will be conducted. Your instructor will provide specifics regarding land drills, open water skills, and cave dive skills to be completed during each part of the course.

Due to the heightened level of risk involved in the activity of deep cave diving, rigorous precision and accuracy is required of the deep cave diver students at this level of training. Students who have demonstrated the utmost respect for the deep cave environment as well as high proficiency and awareness levels during all course phases will be issued a training completion card as a NSS-CDS Deep Cave Diver upon course completion.

The skills, experiences, and safe cave diving practices learned in the Deep Cave Diver course can enhance your overall diving. To locate an NSS-CDS instructor who can teach the Deep Cave Diver specialty course, go to the NSS-CDS Instructor listing in this issue of Underwater Speleology or on the Web at:

www.nsscds.org/instructorlist

Current NSS-CDS Instructor Listing

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FROM THE BACK OF THE CAVE.....

By: Cheryl Doran

It's not really history, but we all were there once, so it is a part of all our histories. Remember the beginnings of your cave training? Were there moments of awkwardness, fumbling, mishaps and then wonder at the sights? I was reminded of mine recently when having a conversation with someone just beginning their cave training.

I began my cave career coming from a Jersey Wreck Diver background and spent nine days training in North Florida, sending reports to the "guys back home" who couldn't figure out why I wanted to see wet rocks..

"We can see what's on the dark side of the moon or what's on Mars, but you can't see what's in the back of a cave unless you go there..." ~ Sheck Exley

How true is this? I don't know. I saw the cave, not the back of it, but far enough for now. Let's start from the beginning.

My fingers were raw from pulling on rocks and I covered them in band aids and set up my gear. It was a bit brisk this morning. 43F as I loaded up Today was better. I knew it would be, and I felt better. I had coffee, plenty of coffee, and Hello Kitty band aids. Life was good.

We had completed all of our skills for our Basic Cave certification but felt we were still a little shaky and opted for one extra day of training. We were at Ginnie Springs and diving the Devils System. Yesterdays weather had stirred things up a bit elsewhere and we happily dove the site again.

We climbed down the stairs and into the water and began our S-Drills surrounded by small curious fish from the river. I am still a little shaky when restowing my long hose, not quite maintaining perfect buoyancy, but much better than previous dives. Much better than yesterday, I felt so good..... I poked a fish

Our first dive was in the Devils Eye. We planned our dive and dropped over the edge to the sandy bottom before the eye shaped slit in the rock that is the caves entrance. I led this dive and heading into such total darkness with just the narrow beam of light from my light was a bit eerie. The tunnel has ups and downs and twists and turns and it is necessary to pull yourself along the rocks to make headway against the flow. By the time we reached the main cave and the gold line all but one of my band aids were gone. There are now a slew of Hello Kitty band aids plastered along the ceiling of the tunnel for future cavers to muse at and retrieve as they come across them. Sorry guys.

Once reaching the gold line, we check our reel left in from the day before and head on up to the ceiling to get out of the flow and make our way on back. Teamwork is our ob-

jective on the way in. Awareness... body, buddy and light. We make it back to the Lips and turn the dive. Although we are concentrating on each other, we are able to relax more this dive and enjoy the cave. There are catfish swimming below us, their whiskers visible from afar in the crystal clear waters, and a never ending line of Mother Natures art in limestone all around.

Coming back to the end of the gold line I retrieve the reel and begin to reel up the line. I can feel all eyes on me waiting for the foul and it doesn't happen. The flow pushing me from behind has its way with me and I am constantly adjusting myself as I reel in more and more of the line as I move up through the tunnel. Doug is just ahead of me freeing the line from its placements as we make our way along. We work as a team. Squeezing ourselves out of the Eye and onto the sandy bottom of the river hole we hover doing our safety stop before heading up and into the river where those curious little fish are again waiting. As I make my way back to the stairs I chase after and pull a tail or two. I feel good. It wasn't picture perfect, but I feel good. The fine tuning in the flow will come with practice, but the rest was good

Dive two was in the Ear. Down the narrow chimney, pulling along the rocks, we make our way down against the springs flow. Doug is leading this time and as I pull myself along the rocks to make my way through the long narrow slit that is the Ear, I have a few moments of doubt that I can make it. The power of the water is tremendous and my fingers are uncovered and a bit raw. With a few good pulls I am through and hide out of the worst of the flow as Doug ties the reel in. Primary tie in, secondary tie in and then at the gold line and we are on our way. Once more up to the high ceiling, the rocks forming a limestone picture of cathedral shapes as we move along. Coming up to the large side tunnel, Doug heads in that direction and I signal him. He catches himself and comes back to follow the line. I think he should carry my tanks for this one.....but alas I know it is only a dream.... and we move forward.

We continue on past the Lips and make our turnaround at the Keyhole. We are signaled for a lost buddy light and then an OOA drill. Doug donates to me and we take a bit

of time getting aligned for the trip back but are on our way when both of our primary lights go out. My first thought is that the cover light signal and OOA signal meant a lights out exit while air sharing. I acclimate myself to the flow and make sweeps eventually finding the line. Doug in the meantime has not seen any of the signals and turns on his secondary light as we fin along. We have accomplished two separate drills in one without even trying and are given the signal to break off and continue on.

Doug now pulled the line out as we exited with the same issues of the flow beating up his buoyancy, but managing admirably none the less. After collecting the reel from the primary tie in we dumped all the air we could and shot through the Ear and did our best to slowly make our way up the chimney to the Deco Log and our safety stop. The log is kinda cool to sit on. You can lean back and watch your bubbles rush to the surface and into the sunlit river water. Trying to make bubble patterns and rings makes the time move along. FYI.... I cant do bubble rings.... I think that whole thing is just a myth.....

As we clear the rim of the chimney and head on in, I again play tag with the curious little fish..... although they are catching on and keeping their distance a little bit better now.

We have pulled our act together and have passed Basic Cave.

If diving with a Full Cave Instructor, you may dive one level above your training if the instructor feels you are able. After lunch, we are rewarded with such a dive. Basic cave only allows us to dive 1/6 of our gas, thus limiting how far into the system we can get. We have already reached the Park Bench and now we are going to see what is beyond that.

I have now covered all my achy little fingers with duct tape and before we ever reach the river more than half have fallen off, leaving a little silver breadcrumb trail behind me. I gotta come up with a better way.

Our plan is for 1/3's and we are dropping down into the Ear. Doug leads again and we are on our way. We reach the tie in and make our way up to the ceiling and pull ourselves along. Past the Catacombs Tunnel

that has been Dougs navigational nemesis and he is right on target up and over it and moving along the line. On to the Lips and vent some gas as we crawl our way through this low but wide restriction and tap in some air and we are past the Keyhole and moving back. We make it back to the Hill 400 Line before our turn. No goals. We actually had no idea where we in the system were until after we surfaced and asked. We saw some amazing sites and like tourists looked all around. Our shorter dives showing us something new each time we made them, just as this longer one. There are some amazing things just past the little fishes playing in the grass on the sandy river bottom.

My confidence has been restored some. I am not perfect but I can do this.....and I will get better. I needed that.....that extra day.....that extra confidence.....on to Advanced Nitrox and Deco.

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TRI HUNTER 6000



School Sink Clean-Up



A clean-up was held at School Sink on February 1, 2014. An interesting assortment of trash was removed and brush and trees trimmed, as well as some needed repairs.

Thanks to all those who attended and made this possible:

Irene Odell
Mike Odell
Colt Smith
Jack Marut
Nikolaj Kavallar
Lindsey Bowen
Li Loriz
C Matt Fletcher
Eric Deister
Roy Reynaud

Marie Reynaud
Chad Engler
Paul Clark
Craig Hartman
Tracy Niesent
Paul Heinerth
David L. Jones
Cheryl Doran
TJ Muller
Bubba James

Eagle's Nest Sign

On February 28th, NSS-CDS BoD member TJ Muller attended a meeting with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission(FWC) along with representatives from several other cave diving agencies (NACD, NSS-CDS, ICURR, and AUE) .

This was a discussion on ways to better manage Eagle's Nest Sink and keep it open to cave diving. A plan was made to install a new Grim Reaper Sign warning of the dangers of the site.

Through inter-agency cooperation, a double- sided Grim Reaper sign, provided by the NSS-CDS, was installed at approximately 35 feet, right where the line drops down the solution tube. Here, a diver following the line towards the solution tube has to swim over the sign before entering.

We would like to thank everyone for their assistance and cooperation. And we also thank Jeffery Dugliss and Depth Perception Dive Center for their help and for providing the fills and transportation.





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