



# underwater speleology

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE CAVE DIVING SECTION OF THE NATIONAL  
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MAY 19 1978

# UNDERWATER SPELEOLOGY

published bi-monthly  
beginning in February  
by

The Cave Diving Section of  
The National Speleological Society

Membership in the NSS Cave Diving Section is open to any NSS member in good standing that is interested in cave diving and has paid the dues (\$3.00 for 1978). Immediate family of members not wishing to receive a newsletter may also join for \$1.50. Persons not wishing to join may subscribe for \$5.00 per year. Checks should be made payable to "NSS Cave Diving Section" and sent to the treasurer, Stephen Maegerlein.

Deadline is the second Friday of the preceeding month. Send articles and correspondence to the editor, Sheck Exley.

Opinions expressed herein are not necessarily those of the NSS Cave Diving Section.

**CHAIRMAN** - Tom Cook, 378 Webster St.,  
Manchester, NH 03104

**VICE CHAIRMAN** - Gene Melton, Rt. 1, Box  
175-M, Vero Beach, FL 32960

**SECRETARY-TREASURER** - Stephen Maegerlein,  
P.O. Box 60, Williams, IN 47470

**EDITOR** - Sheck Exley, 1591 Lane Ave. S.,  
Apt. 118C, Jacksonville, FL 32210

**PUBLISHER** - Stephen Maegerlein

**SLIDE PROGRAM COMMITTEE** - Paul W. Smith,  
2842 NE 14th Dr., Gainesville, FL  
32601

## MORE ON G.B.I. BLUE HOLES

One of the very best highlights of the recent 7th NSS CD Workshop was a fabulous set of slides by one of our new members, Dennis Williams, of the Blue Holes of Grand Bahama Island (see vol. 3, no. 1 of *Underwater Speleology*). Dennis reports that now approx. 50 of the island's underwater caves have been explored, with more left!!

## COVER

The outstanding cover photo to kick off the fifth year of *Underwater Speleology* is courtesy of New World Publications, publishers of *Diving Guide to Underwater Florida*. The shot is of Pete Velde near the entrance to Cow Springs Cave, Florida. (Photo is copyrighted by New World Publications.) See story on p. 5.

## NEW NCRC DIVING OFFICERS

Tom Cook, national diving officer for the National Cave Rescue Commission, has announced that two additional members have agreed to serve as regional diving officers (see initial list on p. 49 of vol. 4, no. 4 of *Underwater Speleology*). The new additions are Wayne W. Russell, Jr. (Texas), P.O. Box 492, Austin TX 78767; and Chuck Heller (New Jersey and Penn.), 27 Lakeshore Dr., Lake Hiawatha, NJ 07034.

## CALENDAR

May 28-29, 1978: 8th NSS Cave Diving Workshop, Branford, Florida. (Contact Sheck Exley, 1591 Lane Ave. s., 118C Jacksonville, FL 32210.)

June 12-16, 1978: 1st National Cave Rescue Seminar, San Antonio, Texas. (Contact Terry G. Jones, Deputy Director, 16240 San Pedro #257, San Antonio, TX 78232.)

June 18-24, 1978: Cave Diving Session and Annual Section Meeting at NSS Convention, New Braunfels, Texas.

July 8-9, 1978: Cave Diving Course (1st of 4 weekends), Branford, Florida. (Contact Sheck Exley.)

Dec. 30-31, 1978: 10th NSS Cave Diving Workshop, Branford, Florida.

1979: 4th International Cave Diving Camp, Mexico. (Contact Eduardo Castro Ruiz, Cerro de Tezonco 117, Mexico, D.F.)

Sep., 1981: 5th International Cave Diving Camp, Bowling Green, Kentucky.

## NEW MEMBERS

Dennis Williams, Box 491, Opa Locka FL  
John Wittersheim, 3645 Barna Ave., Apt.  
14-D, Titusville FL 32780

UNDERWATER SPELEOLOGY, February 1978

## WORKSHOP DATES CHANGED

The date of the 8th NSS Cave Diving Workshop, as reported on the preceding page (p. 2), has been changed to June 3-4 (the following weekend). There was a conflict at the Branford Women's Club, and rather than trying to meet at another site on Memorial Day weekend it was decided to stay at the Women's Club and meet the following weekend instead. The next closest possible sites would be Lake City and Gainesville, but those locations would have significantly increased the driving time to the area's springs and caves.

Tentative plans for the workshop include papers dealing with air supply management and planning on Saturday (though other papers of different subjects are welcome), then a wet practice session on buddy-breathing that afternoon. Sunday morning will deal with advanced topics primarily, then we will close that afternoon with practice dives in area caves for participants including hopefully installing new warning signs in the area's caves, paid for with the proceeds from the workshop. Make plans now to attend!

We still need some papers to fill the schedule. If you are interested, send the title of your topic, time needed and your name to Sheck Exley, 1591 Lane Ave. So., 118C, Jacksonville, FL 32210. Speakers will receive a free workshop registration and a free copy of the proceedings when (and if) they are published.

\* \* \* \* \*

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS 1977

Once again we pause to gratefully recognize the authors and contributors that made *Underwater Speleology* possible in 1977. Among the many section members, subscribers and friends who helped last year (number of articles in parentheses) are: Tom Cook (3), Martyn Farr, Robert W. Goodman, Eddie Head, Chuck Heller, Mark Leonard, Joseph Lieberz and Norm Pace, Greg McCarty, Stephen Maegerlein (3), Don Monnot, Jamie Stone, Forrest Wilson (3) and J. Billy Young. Although Tom, Steve and Forrest contributed the most number of articles, Greg McCarty's fascinating account of cave diving in Iowa added up to the greatest number of pages (15). Certainly not to be ignored is Ned DeLoach of New World Publications, who contributed free of charge the outstanding cover photo to kick off the volume. The editor would like to also draw attention to the unsung efforts of our publisher, Stephen Maegerlein, who in addition to contributing three articles and serving as our treasurer, also found time to spend many hours having our newsletter printed and to address each issue.

## CORRECTIONS TO LONG DIVES LIST

Oliver "Bear" Statham of the Cave Diving Group of Great Britain has written to advise us that the 3080-ft. dive reported in *US* vol. 4, no. 4, p. 48, was actually accomplished by T. Geoff Yeadon, although Bear was instrumental in making the dive possible through several earlier dives.

An exploration of 120 minutes bottom time but unknown length has been made by Lewis Sollenberger, Dave Manor and Dale Sweet in a spring in the Florida panhandle. It is highly likely that this dive is in excess of 3000 feet.



# COW SPRING CAVE - RUNNING SPRINGS JCT

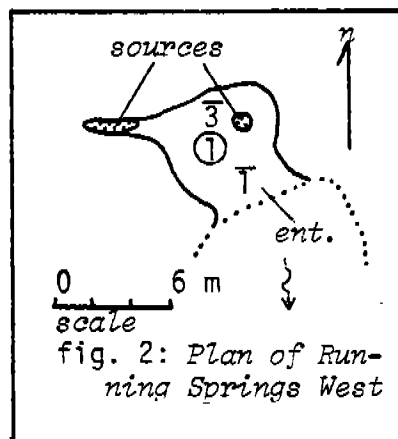
by Sheck Exley (NSS 13146)

The Running Springs area has been receiving more attention lately as a suspected (but not confirmed) terminal resurgence of the Peacock Springs Cave System and Peacock Spring III Cave, some 2.5 km to the northwest (see *Underwater Speleology* 3:1, pp. 9-10 and 4:1, pp. 4,6). Running Springs itself consists of two separate springs, normally designated as "Running Springs East" and "Running Springs West," both flowing into the north bank of the Suwannee River (which flows due east at this point). The head of Running Springs West was first explored on 7/2/66 by the author while searching for Peacock (our directions were a little off). Although I was rather excited at the time (this was my first virgin cave), the cave really wasn't much to crow about: from the .5m high x 2m wide entrance one proceeded into a small room roughly 3 m in diameter and 1.5 m high with a maximum water depth of 3 m, then the cave "continued on... and on..." If you were the same diameter as an eel, that is (see fig. 2).

Oddly enough, after spending half a day at Running Springs West, we never even suspected the existence of Running Springs East, less than 60 m away. But it was no big loss - despite the fact that a larger amount of water emerges from the east spring, any cave openings are well disguised by rocks and boulders.

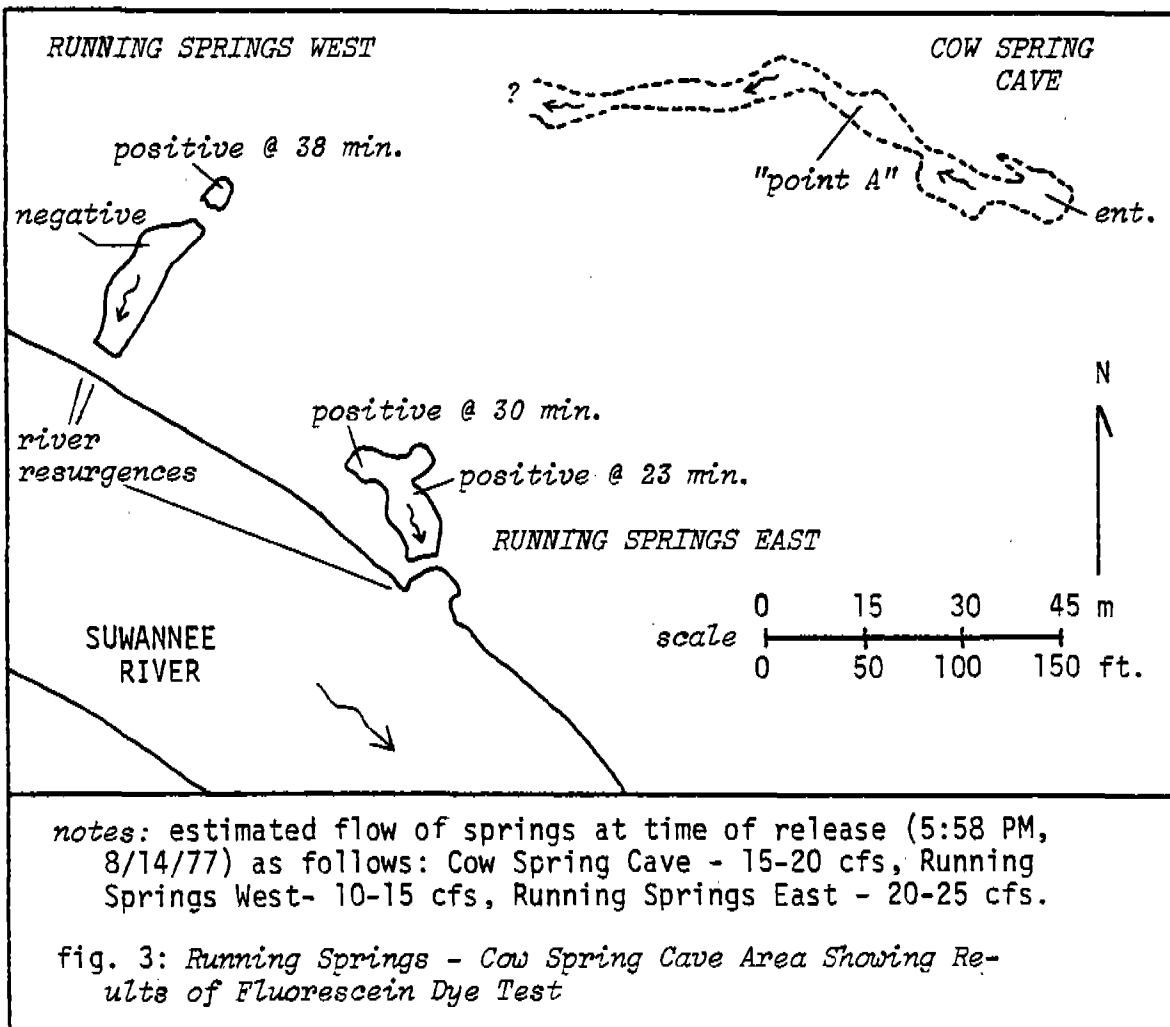
By the time of a cave diving seminar at Hornsby Springs in 1969 I had been in just about all the Florida springs and caves that other divers had been in, so I was quite surprised when Larry Briel flashed a pretty slide on the screen and pronounced it "Cow Spring," which I had never heard of. Despite persistent questions on my part, Larry remained "mum", fearful that the beautiful site would be vandalized if the location got out (time has proven him right). Not until Dutch Vande Noord told me in May of 1971 did I learn of the location of Cow... and its proximity to my old friend Running Springs. However, a dive on 5/16/71 with Bill Byrd was disappointing - we could find no passage proceeding farther than 20 m from the entrance.

Later that summer while we were making a dive elsewhere, Frank Martz confided to me that he had been "600 feet" (183 m) into a downstream passage of Cow Spring. With renewed interest we returned to Cow and found the passage (see fig. 1). While the passage is actually only 84 m long, it seems like 183 m after so much low clearance area and many turns. The passage itself, with a lot of dark goethite formations set off by the light-colored limestone (Crystal River formation I think but possibly Suwannee formation) and white sand floor, is rather picturesque, particularly near the entrance (see cover). Although the passage is exploreaable for at least 12 m beyond the 84 m point, further progress would necessitate destroying a very fragile .5m-square goethite plate



hanging by an incredibly narrow 3 cm-wide ceiling pendant. With no prospect of a traverse through the impenetrable Running Springs, it obviously isn't worth it.

To confirm the hydrologic connection between Cow and Running we released 360 grams of fluorescein dissolved in 4 liters of water at "point A" on fig. 1 and 3. The respective travel times are shown in fig. 3. It is interesting that the travel time to the west spring is so much longer than to the east, suggesting either an intervening conduit of much larger cross-section or, more likely, a breakdown-clogged passage. Also, the fact that the second boil in the west spring tested negative suggests a source of water independent of the Cow Spring source, as does the estimated flow of the various streams on this date (roughly twice as much discharging from Running as is flowing through Cow). Finally, the fact that the general direction of flow in the conduit is almost 180° opposed to the surface flow of the nearby Suwannee is of interest - the most pronounced example of this that the author has yet observed in Florida.



## TREASURE IN FLORIDA UNDERWATER CAVE?

In a story on page 34 of the 4/29/77 edition of the *Jacksonville Journal*, Woody Russell recounts a legend that a half dozen children found a chest of pirate's gold on Ponte Vedra Beach in 1811. Howard Mickler reported that the oldest boy prevailed upon the others to put the gold into "an alligator cave" near Guana River because he felt that the pirates would search for the loot and "go after them."

When the children returned for the gold in an area near the present Mickler's Road, it was reportedly gone. The site of the "alligator cave" is now flooded by Money Tree Pond.

There are also legends of Spanish treasure in other springs and caves in Florida, most notably Ponce de Leon Springs in Volusia County and Little Copper Springs in Gilchrist County. It is believed that some gold was actually recovered by cave divers from the latter spring in the late 1950's or early 1960's.

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## DIVER SURVIVES FOR FOUR HOURS IN AIR POCKET

A story on page 8 of the 6/28/77 *Jacksonville Journal* describes the miraculous survival of a wetsuit-clad skin diver who was missing and presumed drowned in the Skokomish River, Washington. 18-year-old Charles Warnock was swept unconscious into a freak air pocket in the concave underside of a boulder by the raging current of the river. He was apparently brought to consciousness by the sounds of searchers above, and managed to swim out and surface next to a diver looking for his body.

"The diver darn near swallowed his air hose," remarked a park ranger.

There was no information on how large the air pocket was or what other factors might have kept the CO<sub>2</sub> content in the pocket from becoming excessive. Warnock was treated for hypothermia and multiple bruises and released from a nearby hospital.

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## DIVERS STUMBLE ACROSS MAFIA MURDERS IN FLORIDA SINK?

Two teenaged divers, G.W. Pridgeon and Lamar English, were searching for artifacts and Pleistocene megafaunal remains in Watering Hole Sink, one of the many sinks interconnecting with the underground route of the Aucilla River near Perry, Florida, when they ran across some remains they hadn't bargained on... three concrete-weighted corpses. The bodies were found on 8/7/77 in 48 to 55 feet of water. One of the bodies when examined was found to have a 38-caliber pistol wound in the back of the head. The search for additional bodies was to extend into a nearby underwater cave.

Fla. Dept. of Criminal Law Enforcement agents said that the slayings looked like mob-style murders.

## MORE ON SURVEYING UNDERWATER CAVES

by Shek Exley (NSS 13146)

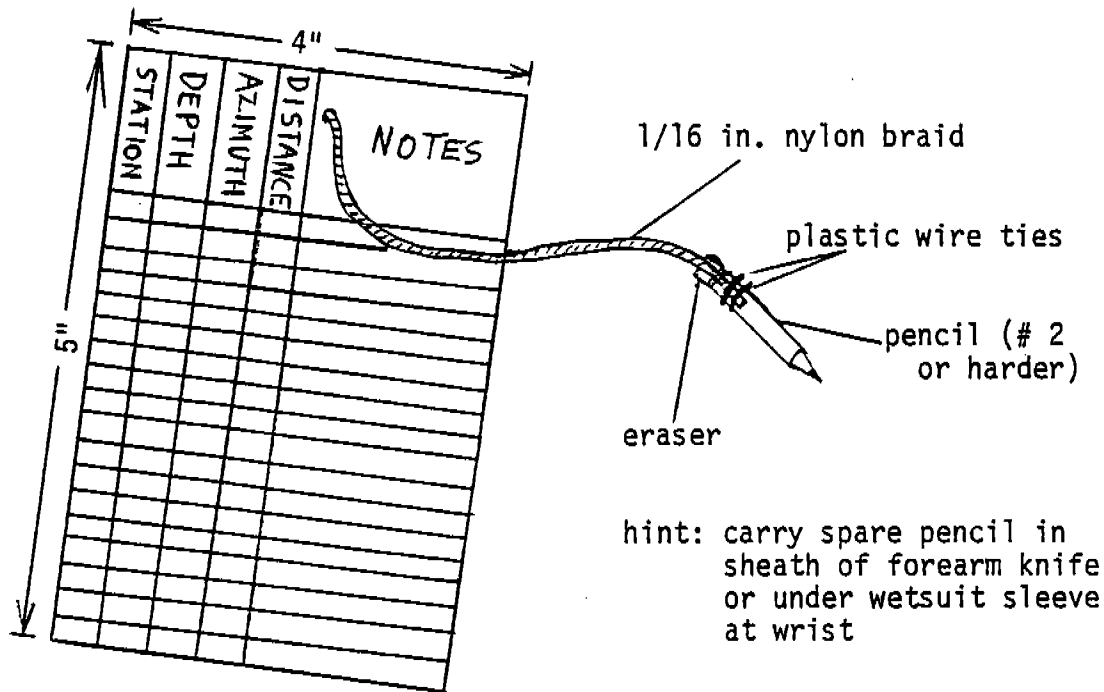


fig: RECOMMENDED DIVER'S SLATE FOR RECORDING SURVEY DATA

### SHORTHAND FOR SURVEY NOTES

A diver's slate has to be compact to be practical for underwater work. This makes taking detailed survey notes virtually impossible. However, the following shorthand system that I use for condensing data can be quite helpful. You may wish to develop additional symbols of your own. Make sure that any symbols used are distinctive: few of us can print extremely clearly underwater, where frequently the surveyor is cold and may be writing upside down, so similar symbols can easily be later confused when copying the data.

- ↘ survey line against the left\* wall of the cave
- ↙ survey line against the right\* wall of the cave
- ↑ distance to ceiling above the survey station
- ↓ distance to floor below the survey station
- └ offshoot on right\*
- ├ offshoot on left\*

\* be sure to record which direction (in or out) you were surveying in so you can tell left from right when plotting your map.

## FIRST NATIONAL CAVE RESCUE SEMINAR

*information supplied by Tom Cook (NSS 15548), NCRC National Diving Officer*

On June 12 - 16, 1978 (the week immediately preceding the NSS Convention), the National Cave Rescue Commission will conduct the first National Cave Rescue Seminar with the assistance of the following organizations: National Speleological Society, National Parks Service, Bexar County Civil Defense, University of Texas School of Medicine, British Cave Rescue Organization, International Cave Rescue Commission, Appalachian Search and Rescue Conference, National Association of Search and Rescue, Cascade Caverns, USAF School of Aerospace Medicine. It will be held at the School of Medicine of the University of Texas, San Antonio, Texas.

The seminar will be composed of both class and field work in all phases of cave and underground rescue. The course is designed to provide the most current and competent methods and techniques to those agencies, groups and individuals with a serious interest in underground rescue. Subjects to be covered include: The Underground Environment... Organization & Management... Tools and Equipment... Medical Management... Extrication... Evacuation and Hauling Systems... plus much more. In all the areas the student will be given extensive "hands on" training, including actual underground operational experience.

Following the seminar, there will be trips arranged to local wild caves for the further enrichment of students who wish to continue their experience.

All necessary tools and equipment will be furnished for the student with the exception of his own personal safety equipment, which must include: an approved helmet with chin strap, a light capable of being helmet mounted, sturdy rubber-soled, lace-up boots, 15 ft. of 1 in. tubular nylon webbing, a locking carabiner, rugged clothing such as coveralls or overalls and gloves with leather palms.

Students wishing to participate in the full five days of instruction must be in good physical health and condition and be willing to sign a liability waiver. The student should be additionally prepared to work in difficult situations and, while under supervision, negotiate vertical drops of 25 meters during the course. However, no prior experience is required in either caving or climbing.

Tom Cook will be presenting topics related to cave diving on June 13 and June 16, including search techniques, sump stretchers, use of pumps, etc. The presentation on the 16th will include an actual mock sump rescue.

Persons interested in attending should contact Terry G. Jones, Deputy Director, 16240 San Pedro # 257, San Antonio, Texas 78232 (phone 512-494-6455). The fee is \$95.00 for the full five days, or \$50.00 for 2.5 days.

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## 6000 FOOT PENETRATION

The next issue of *Underwater Speleology* will contain a report of a 6000 ft. dive completed recently in Australia.

