

# ILLUMINATIONS

Publication of the NSS Arts & Letters Section

Issue No. 28

July 2018





# Illuminations



The Publication of the NSS Arts and Letters Section • Issue No. 28 • July 2018



## Dream Lake Study 3

Marian McConnell  
*Acrylic*



## Dream Lake Study 4

Marian McConnell  
*Acrylic*

Marian McConnell  
NSS 37358

Here are two paintings I did for use in Dave Socky's movie "Dream Lake Story" which has been submitted for the 2018 NSS Con Video Salon.

Here is a blurb about the movie "Dream Lake" from Dave Socky.

This is the story of the 1965 original exploration of the Lower Fullers section of Culverson Creek Cave as told by Rock Ward. It includes the discovery of the tall canyons of Lower Fuller, Mud Everest, the Dragon's Breath Room, and of course, Dream Lake. But what really makes this story exciting is Rock and Marty's encounter with something terrifying, something that was following them, something . . . evil. This is the story of their discovery, their encounter, and their supposed escape.

I'm sharing these with Dave Socky's permission.

Back Cover:

## Bill Metal Again

Charles Loving

*Pen & Ink and Watercolor*

Cartoon submitted by Bill Steele for the artist.



**arts & letters**  
**section** 

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## FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Blake Jördan NSS #43030

### I want to introduce myself as the incoming Chairman for the NSS Arts and Letters Section.

I put out word earlier this year to the members that I wanted to run for this position. A few responded positively and the rest, I supposed, did not receive my email. Since there was no opposition and Carolina Shrewsbury has retired from the Chairman position, I will take over officially at this year's annual NSS Convention in Helena, Montana.

#### Some of my goals as new Chairman are:

- Increase the membership within the NSS and draw new ones from outside the NSS to present their works in our section newsletter, Illuminations;
- Have an increased presence at caving events (especially in the eastern U.S. that I now have access); and
- Share our newsletter outside the caving community and into the members' local regions and grottoes.

At Convention, we plan to have the Writer's Workshop on Friday 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. (lunch from 12 p.m. to 1 p.m.), as well as an Arts and Letters Lunch Meeting on Wednesday from 12 p.m. to 2 p.m. Please look at the schedule for room assignments.

We are always in need for members to submit their artwork, poetry, music scores, and literary works to our section newsletter, Illuminations. The more submissions, the better.

Please send your submissions so we may build up that resource. You can send them to me at [blanvoid@gmail.com](mailto:blanvoid@gmail.com) or Kenneth Storey (Illuminations editor) at [kennethstorey@charter.net](mailto:kennethstorey@charter.net) to be included in upcoming issues. I look forward to the future of the NSS Arts and Letters Section.

Thank you,  
Blake

## SpeleoArt

### Want to become a member?

The Arts & Letters section welcomes new members. It doesn't matter if you create art, write, make music, make movies, teach, or just a fan of the speleoart process.

You can find a membership form, submission guidelines, and samples of our newsletter Illuminations on our web site at:

[www.caves.org/section/arts\\_and\\_letters/](http://www.caves.org/section/arts_and_letters/)

For information on the many different Speleoart salons, workshops, and speleo- news you can go to:  
[www.hawaiiiflow.com/SpeleoArt/](http://www.hawaiiiflow.com/SpeleoArt/).



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**Caver Climb 2**

Blake Jördan

*Computer Enhanced, Pen & Ink*



**Covers**

Designed by Emily Davis and Mike Warner

Pieced and assembled by Emily Davis

*Quilt*

## The First Caver Here

### Steve Beleu

We're not the first cavers here.  
 Look at that tiger salamander  
 Push itself along, arms and legs  
 On one side of its body moving  
 Then arms and legs on the other.  
 We move no faster for our size  
 And when we come to a sump  
 Look at it, draw it with careful precision,  
 Then plod back the way we came  
 As the salamander passes us,  
 Sinks into the sump, and continues  
 Under the ridge, over the horizon,  
 Down to the river.

## The Hope of All Diggers

### Steve Beleu

Bat, you've awoken me when all I wanted  
 Was to sleep in this cave on this dirt bank,  
 Not on dry or wet mud but on real dirt  
 And dream about, I hope, nothing.

I'm awake now and work awaits--  
 More hard digging into a new room,  
 So we hope, and beyond that room  
 More cave on through the ridge

That goes and goes and never, ever ends.

## No Ceiling, No Cave

### Steve Beleu

Here a layer of dolomite  
 Is ceiling to gypsum below  
 In which caves grow  
 And cavers delight.

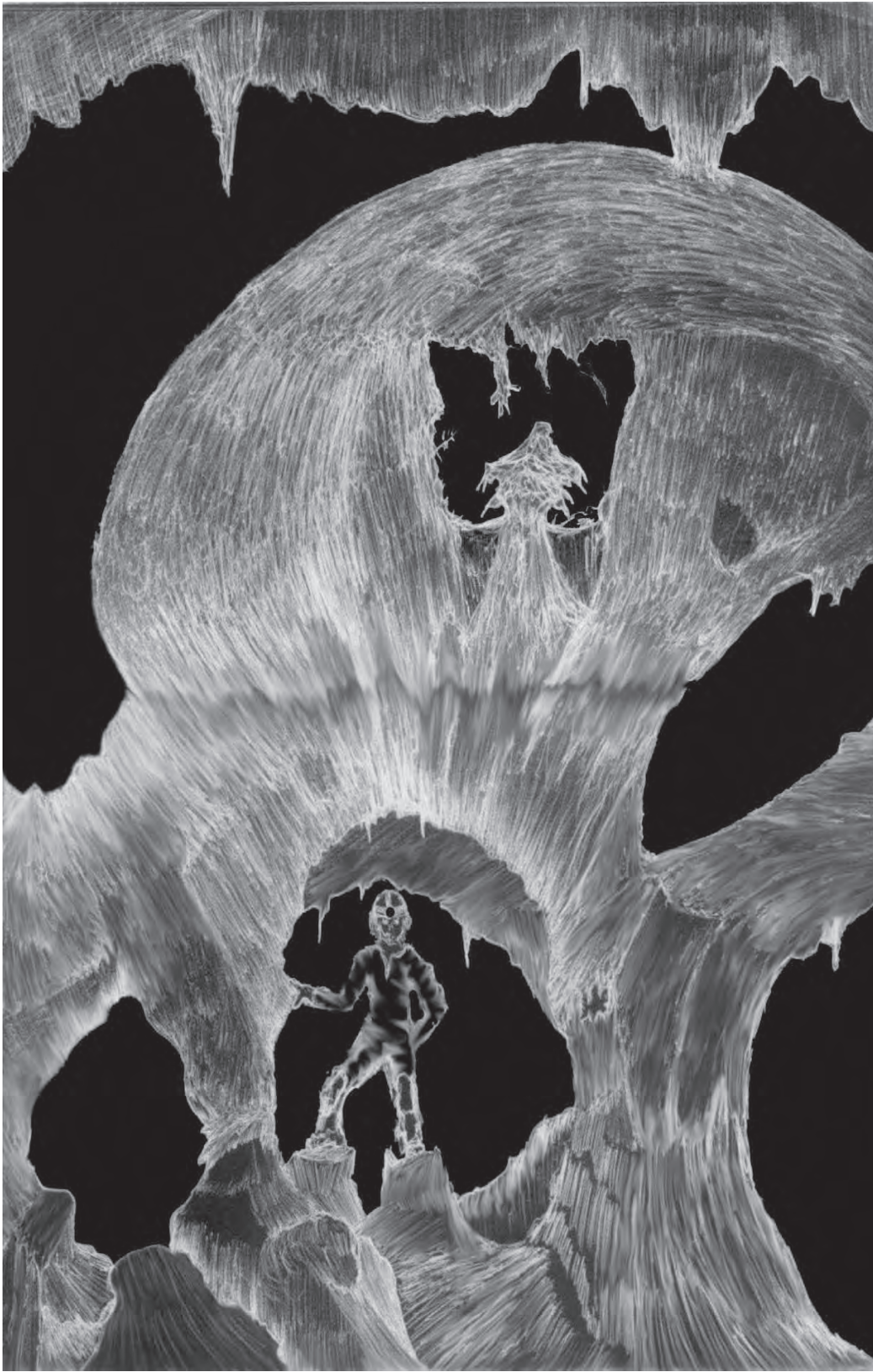
This strong ceiling allows  
 More width than gypsum alone  
 So vast domes aren't unknown  
 To sprawl beneath grazing cows

That before they sleep  
 Watch bats scatter out and away  
 After sleeping all day  
 And to feast on insects sweep

Them up into their wings  
 Then into their teeth.  
 Beneath where they sleep  
 Is guano and crawling things,

Histoplasmosis and rabies  
 Among splendor and mysteries.





**Underneath the Canopy**

Blake Jördan

*Computer Enhanced, Pen & Ink*

GYPSUM CAVING BAGATELLE #25

Quarter note = 75

Steve Beleu

Moderato

Piano

*mf*

*mf*

4

Pno.

*mp*

*p*

*mf*

Red. \* Red. \*

8

Pno.

*f*

*f*

11

Pno.

*mf*

*p*

*p*

2

Gypsum Caving Bagatelle #24

The musical score is presented in two systems. The first system, labeled 'Pno.', covers measures 14 through 18. It features a treble and bass clef with a 7/8 time signature. The melody in the treble clef begins with a half note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, B4, and C5, all under a slur. The bass clef accompaniment consists of chords. Dynamics include *mf* (mezzo-forte) in measures 14 and 15. The system concludes with a double bar line and the instruction 'Led. \* Led. \*'. The second system, also labeled 'Pno.', covers measures 19 through 24. It shows a treble clef with a whole note G4 in measure 19, followed by a long rest for the remainder of the system. The bass clef has a whole note chord in measure 19 and a long rest thereafter. The system ends with a double bar line and the instruction 'Led. \*'.

Note: there is a software glitch that appears at the start of measure 8 and 15 as a eighth rest; ignore these marks. I don't know howto remove these marks from the score (nor this long measure).

**A LITTLE BIT ABOUT CHARLIE LOVING, CARTOONIST, ARTIST, EXPLORER.**

Carolina Shrewsbury • NSS #46182

*Charlie Loving has been decorating our last two issues of Illuminations with his hilarious caving cartoons.*

We have all been there, in those scenarios, where adversity meets the pantomime verses circus. The best way to deal with these situations is to laugh about them. We make stories, words told and written. Another way to record, and mentally survive the 'incident', is the funny visual memory. This is what cartoonists are good at, picking the humor out of mishap. The other magical gift of cartooning is to see humor in serious situations. That is why political cartoons are such fun, because they take exasperation to expiration; a release of tension with a final realization of humorous understanding.

I was wondering who Charlie Loving was, so I asked my friend Bill, who knows him but he could not answer any of my questions except that he thought he knew Janis Joplin back in the day. The only way I could get anything was to actually put pen to paper and send an old-fashioned letter! I received an answer a few days later to the 10 questions I asked. Here is my story.

Back in the early days of last century, there was a really smart chap from Canada who flew Lancaster bombers for the Royal Canadian Airforce. Then he decided to join the USAAF as the war started. He transferred as a Cadre, which is kind of like a cabinet with knobs on. He was a really talented pilot and trained our American guys to fly big Lancaster bombers so they could win the war for those Limeys!

While he was there, he met a beautiful French lady who wore an elegant top-knot, very red lipstick and walked with a sway that made mens knees buckle. He was in a bar one day handing out silk stockings for Jesus, when she walked by. He enquired after her preferences for breakfast in Canadian French, which included an "eh?" by the way, and she replied in rapid fire, extreme European French, which included a solid "Non!" by the way. He blessed her, and gave her two more pairs of stockings, apologizing and declared he thought she was Swiss because her topknot looked remarkably like the swiss roll his mother made back at home and it made him homesick.

Later, it became evident her feelings toward this young man were more than just because she had to draw that wretched line down the backs of her legs every day. She told him that her topknot was based on a swiss roll because her sisters lived in Switzerland, and he admitted his undying love by letting her play with the knobs on his cabinet.

Nine months later, during the London Blitz, Hendon was ablaze as a child was born. His parents were overjoyed that such a horrendous night could end with such a miracle! This day was the start of the life of Charlie Loving!

Those early years were tough with that war going on. Those memories were full of the air-raid sirens going off and having to sleep in the air-raid shelters which were dank and crowded with neighbors and strangers, huddling together in smelly fear, listening to the bombs going off. Praying none would hit the shelter, burying them alive...

After losing two homes to German bombs, an anti-aircraft gun was placed in the back yard, and Charlie Loving survived the war.

Charlies dad was flying over Schieweinfurt, Germany when he was shot down. He spent the rest of the war as a POW before being liberated by Patten's 3rd army.

After the war they all moved to France in 1946. It was around that time, Charlie started drawing cartoons. Charlie's Dad was a hero. He did not have any brothers or sisters, instead they moved around, his hero father was one of the pilots in charge of taking care of the West Berliners during the "Airlift" years while the Russians held the citizens captive. The Russians not realizing the huge force of the west, failed in their attempt, as Americans and their allies flew food and supplies in with the old planes left over from the bombing raids.

Charlie was sent off to live with his aunts in Switzerland, he started school there, and learned the first of many languages Charlie picked up in his worldly travels.

Our early cartoonist was inspired by the work of Disney artists, and Charlie had a pretty extreme sense of humor! He loved Donald Duck in French. This channeled his interest to strip cartooning and he started creating his own comics in tablets.

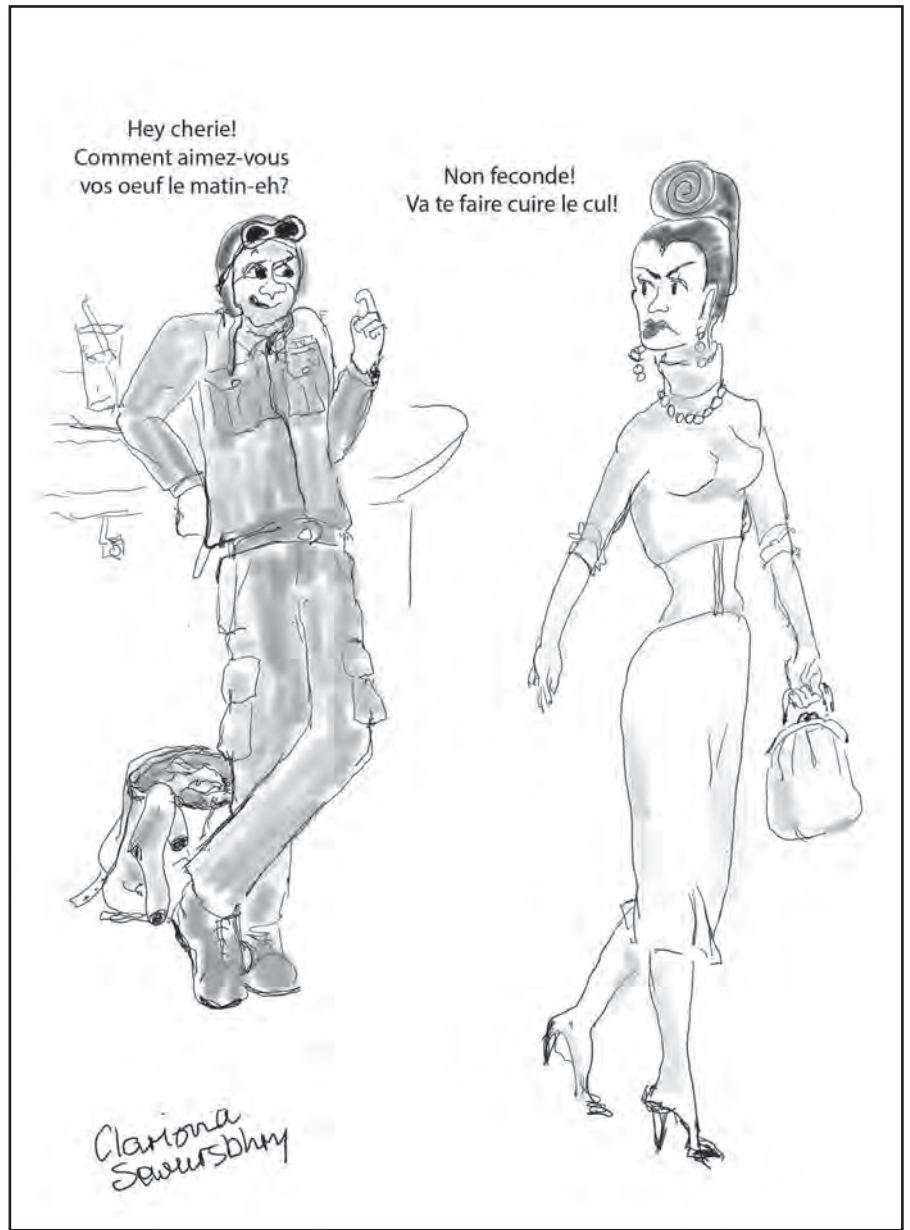
During the 1950s, Charlie's family moved to Texas. There, he did what all air force brats like us do... get to know the language and culture so you can fit in. The drawing became prolific and making friends with his art teacher so he could legitimately have an excuse to hang around the local whorehouse, for life drawing exercises, looking at naked women was topmost importance. Mexican bars in Zaragoza and Juarez were where he spent a lot of time as a teenager, spending hard earned money from his job at the minute mart to buy beer. He would often give away charcoal editions of his life drawings. His Mother was secretly attributing his skills to her natural ability to draw those perfect lines down the backs of her legs with her eyeliner during the war. This lad was a good artist, and this won him a scholarship to Texas Western. Charlie blew this off, and instead, joined the Airforce thinking he could be a hero pilot like his father... the only sky he got to study though was weather charts; he became a meteorologist.

He went to Christmas Island and witnessed the last hydrogen bomb test. Then he went off to Kunia, Hawaii (HQ of the Pacific Armed Forces) where he unsuccessfully tried surfing.

Next came Japan, Thailand with the Wolfhounds who built Camp Cobra. Charlie volunteered for MACV and Vietnam where he fell out of a helicopter and almost drowned!

All this time he was cartooning for various publications: Army Times, Navy Times, the Hawaiian Falcon amongst others.

After returning to the US, Charlie got interested in becoming educated and tried various subjects before graduating in something that he did not use. He tried marriage a couple of times, and had a couple of kids, then gave up to go caving.



**How Charlie Loving's parents met?**

**Carolina Shrewsbury**

*Cartoon*

His passion for beer caused an incident where he and friends posed as journalists at a brewing company that resulted in taking a crate of bad beer caving. It was unfortunately 'lost', this led to some pretty radical new maps of parts of "off road" Carlsbad Cave being drawn up and a reputation for being a typical Texan caver... for that matter, a caver who had 'lost it.'

The antics of cave exploration became a focus for many cartoon artworks that have made the mark on three generations of cavers. Charlie enjoys the concept of going somewhere no-one else has been or even seen! He sees the purity and beauty of untouched earth. This causes an artist to contemplate our social interactions as cavers, and reactions to outside influences of humanity on the environment.

Charlies interest in paleoclimatology and core studies led him to work with Dr. Washington at NCAR

where they studied weather patterns on the South Pole over the centuries. Charlie understands the impact of climate change and is upset with the ignorance humanity portrays with pollution.

Charlie Loving is one interesting guy, with a life more varied than hot chili sauces at a Texan Chili fest.

From camping out at body painting nudist bars to almost getting eaten in Nicaragua, he has suffered more near-deaths than a Peruvian sky diver. He speaks multiple languages, cooks, mingled with the likes of Bill Steele, R. Crumb, Gil Ediger etc. amongst many others he admires. He was even famously a production assistant for the film "Texas Chainsaw Massacre"!

I hope he carries on a while longer with this slight of hand he has... perhaps an autobiography superhero comic of his life!

Carolina Shrewsbury (with apologies to Charlie for some under decorating his life and times!)  
Thank you Charlie for being a sport and allowing me to tell some of your story to our readers.



**French Surprise**

Carolina Shrewsbury

*Drawing*

## The Creation and Conversion of Flashlight Covers

Michael Ray Taylor • NSS 21969

*The following memoir is adapted from the forthcoming book *Hidden Nature: Wild Southern Caves, to be published by Vanderbilt University Press in 2019.**

After community college I entered Florida State University as junior in January 1979 for the start of winter term. Rather than live in a dorm, I received housing from a nonprofit foundation that bought up old boarding houses around campus, providing rent-free rooms to students with good grades. Collectively, these became a sort of low-rent fraternity and sorority system, a de facto dating field for nerds.

The two nerds in the room next to mine were Tim Glover, a wiry chemistry major from Sebring, and Ed Hill, a tall, somewhat intense film major. Ed had grown up in Lakeland, but his mother came from Trinidad, lending Ed's face sharp, slightly exotic features and his voice a subtle musical lilt. The three of us bonded over our shared ability to recite Monty Python sketches as well as an interest in hiking, canoeing, and other outdoor pursuits. Two blocks away my younger sister, who had preceded me to FSU, lived in a similar house for women. Tim and Ed sometimes accompanied me on visits to my sister—after all, a dozen women shared her house. There Ed met and soon began dating an English major and College Bowl quiz star named Terri Olson.

The four of us, often accompanied by Yuki, Terri's aging Labrador retriever, began to regularly canoe area streams, visit local springs, and camp at nearby parks. Despite our heavy course loads, we tried to schedule these wilderness weekends once or twice per month. It was in this manner that we all became cavers on the same day in the early summer of 1979. Like most beginners I have encountered in all the years since, we did nearly everything wrong.

I was ripe for attraction to caving from a long habit of escaping into nature. I grew up loving Florida's streams and rivers. A family photo shows me as a baby perched in my mother's arms as she sits on the bow of my father's StarCraft aluminum runabout. The boat floats on opalescent water. My mouth and eyes are open in evident delight. I have an early memory of my

Aunt Violet and my mother skiing behind that boat, effortlessly slaloming across one another's wake.

Aunt Violet chain-smoked Kools, and for nearly a year she saved coupons from cigarette cartons to surprise me with a promotional sailboat for my 13th birthday. It had a Styrofoam hull, a green-and-white lanteen sail bearing the Kool logo, and just enough room enough for me and a passenger. In junior high I would set out from the rickety wooden dock of my family's home on the Halifax River—actually a brackish lagoon of the Intracoastal Waterway—and pick up a schoolmate who lived on the other side. We explored sandbars and oyster bars, surfed the wakes of motor yachts cruising the East Coast between winter and summer berths, and wove among schools of cavorting dolphin, which swam up the Halifax to give birth and nurse their young.

A couple of years later, I doubled my fleet with an open fishing boat powered by an iffy Mercury outboard. This greatly extended my nautical range. With a full tank of gas I would strike south toward Ponce de Leon Inlet, once more aptly—if less invitingly to tourism—called Mosquito Inlet. It appears by that name in Stephen Crane's great sea story, "The Open Boat." The inlet and its old lighthouse look, at least from the sea, much the same today as Crane described them in 1897.

Or I would set off north toward the Tomoka Basin and into the Tomoka River, winding through swamps and mangroves to anchor at sugar plantations abandoned during the First Seminole War of 1816-19 or the derelict set of a Johnny Weissmuller Tarzan film shot in 1932. At the furthest navigable reaches of the Tomoka it approached civilization, and I could sometimes hear the roar of the Daytona Speedway.

My first date, early in high school, was an afternoon trip in the sailboat, which I promptly capsized. It was the only time I ever did so, and the last time I went out with that particular girl. For my second date, I asked a different girl to join me in the fishing boat. We at least managed to stay dry through an awkward picnic at Tomoka. Even as I became increasingly expert at navigating the shifting sands of saltwater estuaries

(if not high school romance), I began to venture onto more distant fresh water. From earliest childhood, one or two weekends each summer my family left the boat at home, packing a picnic lunch to drive inland for a day of swimming at one of blue springs dotting central Florida: Alexander, Juniper, Salt, De Leon, Ichetucknee, and others. Regardless of season or weather, the water remained a cool 72 degrees.

As a teenager, I returned to these springs to snorkel and occasionally spearfish, testing my swimming strength against the powerful boil that emanated from the base of each clear pool. My friends and I would rent canoes or inner tubes and float the cool, narrow rivers that flowed from these sources, following them through forests of pine and palmetto. Dragonflies lighted on our elbows as great blue herons soared and plashed.

In a theoretical sort of way, I knew that these streams emerged from flooded caverns, if only because so many scuba divers drowned in them. Signs at each spring's parking area would warn against entering the water's source, listing the number of divers known to have perished there. Local newspapers carried accounts of these fatalities. My mother always pointed these out to me, knowing that I liked to snorkel just outside such dangerous places. In truth, I did enjoy holding my breath and swimming down to spring caves. I would peer at the darkness and read one final, dire warning sign placed underwater.

Sometimes the divers died in the caves alone, sometimes in parties of three or four. Their story was generally the same: Water so clear as to impart the sense of flying when they had entered became an enveloping, disorienting cloud as they disturbed layers of thick silt with their fins. Untrained cave divers would lose their bearings, run out of air, and drown with great regularity. I stayed out of the caves.

For Tim, Ed, Terri, and me, caving began with a typical weekend camping trip to Florida Caverns State Park in Mariana, about 70 miles west of Tallahassee. We piled the usual gear into Tim's Volkswagen Squareback and camped near the spring-fed Chipola River. The park sat atop a relatively high ridge. Many caves there had once been part of Florida's vast limestone aquifer but had drained and could now be entered on foot. Until

that day, I had not realized that the state contained dry caves at all, other than perhaps Tom Sawyer's Cave at Disney World. (Later I would learn that clusters of dry caves dot several elevated regions scattered about Florida.)

The main draw of the state park was a well-decorated tourist cavern. We adventurers had no interest in taking a guided tour—especially since ticket prices were higher than poor college students were willing to pay. Instead we set off down a hiking trail that wound past limestone rock formations and passed directly through a couple of short caves. We could see other entrances in the woods, inviting us to leave the trail. With two flashlights between us, we eagerly explored each new hole, at first stoop-walking, then on hands and knees, then on our bellies.

We became certain we were entering chambers that all others had missed. Who else would be willing to lie in mud and wriggle into a room so small you

could barely sit up? At some point we stumbled upon the most inviting entrance yet, a horizontal blackness six feet in diameter that lay in the flat limestone surface.

With our flashlights, we could barely make out a large walking passage at least 15 feet below. Frustratingly, the park had blocked this vertical drop with a metal grate. Ed, the skinniest, tried to squeeze through the bars, hoping maybe he could find us another way in. They proved too tight even for his narrow frame.

After noting the location we discussed coming back another weekend, perhaps armed with tools that might help us bypass this bureaucratic impediment. We decided we needed more flashlights and extra batteries; by day's end we were down to a single dim light between us. One of the plastic flashlights had burst to pieces against a rock, so we planned to acquire some heavy-duty models from a military surplus store in Tallahassee. Around the campfire that night, we compared our adventures to those of Bilbo Baggins.

The following week, I searched the university library for a book on Florida's caves. I found a few on caves in the U.S. and Mexico and a short one on cave exploration methods, which seemed mildly interesting, but there was nothing specific to the state. I had hoped to see listings of additional locations near

**THE CAVERNS HAD HOOKED US,  
AND THEY KNEW IT.  
IF THIS WAS A CULT, WE WERE  
READY TO SIGN UP.**



the park that we could explore. The reference librarian I asked for help suggested that I talk to someone in the university cave club.

A cave club? At Florida State? I practically ran to the student union, where I was given a telephone number for Karen Witte, the club's president. I called her that night and introduced myself.

"My friends and I have been spelunking in pretty much all of the caves near Florida Caverns," I explained. "We're hoping to get more entrance locations. Do you have a list?"

She paused a moment before answering. "Um, you probably need to come to one of our meetings for that." Her voice contained an odd hint of amusement.

It was my turn to pause. We four adventurers were not really *joiners*. We had no interest in any sort of official club. But if this were the way to get new locations...

"When do you meet?" I asked.

She told me the next meeting was the following Sunday night at 7 in the student union.

"That will work," I said. "We have a Marianna trip planned, but we can probably be back by seven."

We arrived at the meeting with army surplus flashlights dangling off our belts, our jeans and t-shirts torn. Mud clung from our wet, disheveled hair to our squishy tennis shoes, which leaked like sponges as we walked. Yuki had eagerly joined us in the caves this time, and the dog painted blobs on the wall with his muddy tail as we approached the meeting room. We had discussed cleaning ourselves up on the drive back to Tallahassee, but we were running late. Plus, we felt our condition would demonstrate that we were serious spelunkers. Surely the club would open its secret files to us. The 15 or so people in the room smiled as we entered, many of them stooping to pet the wet, smelly dog, who loved everyone.

The Florida State Cave Club, or FSCC, was not only a student organization but an NSS grotto as well. President Karen Witte and Vice President Marianne Korosy looked like average college students, dressed in jeans and t-shirts, as did one or two others, but most of those present appeared older. All were fairly lean and fit, if more than a little scruffy. They looked as though they had just returned from Woodstock or maybe a Depression-era hobo camp. Several of the group stood around a folding table as we entered, studying a sheet of paper about three feet wide and eight or ten feet long. I realized I was looking at one end of a scroll bearing a winding cave passage. Most

of the map was hidden at the end of the table like an economy-sized roll of holiday wrapping paper. One caver quickly returned the exposed portion back into the scroll as we approached. Nearly everyone in that room would have a profound effect on my life from that point forward.

From them I learned one of the most important lessons college can offer, which is that great mistakes occur when people don't know what they don't know. There was much I didn't know about caving. Over the next hour I learned that "spelunker" was a term of derision. *Cavers* had been *caving* for decades by the time a New England Boy Scout leader coined "spelunking" for a 1930s expedition that popularized it in the press. A bumper sticker on one of the cavers' cars summed up the difference: "Cavers Rescue Spelunkers."

I learned that in addition to "spelunker," another term for a clueless beginner was "flashlight caver." This was because the single most common callout for a cave rescue began when a group entered a cave by flashlight. A few hours into the trip, batteries would fail and one by one lights would flicker and die, leaving the group to sit in the dark. Cold, thirsty, convinced they would die, they would at last spot the approaching glow of the cavers who would rescue them. They would stand blinking at the entrance before local TV cameras, telling their adventurous story. In a living room somewhere a mother would turn to her child and admonish, "You are never, ever going into a cave."

Experienced cavers, I learned, carried a small rugged flashlight or two for backup and to spotlight interesting features, but their primary light source in the late 1970s was an antique carbide miner's lamp. Someone at the meeting—it may have been Chuck Machovec—presented one to demonstrate. We learned that this primary lamp should always be mounted on a helmet with a secure chin strap. This was because the second most common sort of cave rescue after "lost with no light" was "head injury from a ceiling bump or fall."

Perhaps because we were so muddy, raw, and enthusiastic, the cavers shared additional tips to the point of bombardment, most of which began with "never" or "always": Never enter a cave without three sources of light per person. Always carry a small, rugged pack with water, extra carbide and batteries, a candle and matches, and some waterproof food. Never leave your pack behind while "checking out" a tight crawlway or lead. Always tell someone not on the trip

which caves you planned to enter and what time you planned to return. And so on. We received a mantra I would hear again many times in many places: *Take nothing but pictures. Leave nothing but footprints. Kill nothing but time.*

The thing that kept me nodding along with the rules and regulations was not so much a desire to become a “proper” caver as that tantalizing glimpse I had caught of the map when we entered. It depicted something much larger and more complex than any cave we had seen in Marianna. Eventually the safety orientation petered out and club members resumed the meeting’s agenda. They discussed mapping new passages in Climax Cave, about 40 miles north of Tallahassee in southern Georgia.

The map we had seen showed just one branch of Climax, which was known to be over seven miles long. For the benefit of us newbies they unrolled the entire scroll across the floor. It stretched from one corner of the room out the door and into the hall. The cartographers took evident pride in pointing out big chambers, small crawlways, chimneys to upper levels, formations, fossils, and all sorts of features beyond anything we had seen thus far. The cavers had hooked us, and they knew it. If this was a cult, we were ready to sign up.

Over the next year, our core group—Tim, Ed, Terri, me and sometimes Yuki (at least for the shorter trips)—continued to explore together, but most often along with other members of the club. Starting with an official “novice” trip to Waterfall Cave, also in southern Georgia, we worked our way toward more difficult to excursions into Climax and Glory Hole. Part of the entrance system at Climax included a climb of about 18 feet down a “chimney.”

The first time in the entrance chimney was scary for everyone. It seemed you were about to flush yourself down a chute. But as more experienced cavers pointed out the smooth side to place your back and the rough side. The chimney ended above a passage in what appeared a dangerous five-foot drop to the floor. If a caver below you guided your feet, you could easily climb down the wall on a series of protruding rocks not visible from above. Once you knew where these were, you began to feel a certain mastery in moving effortlessly up or down a passage that had exhausted you the first time. The same was true of crawlways that worked best when approached at a certain angle, or

bypass tunnels that allowed you to avoid upcoming obstacles if you knew where to leave the main trail.

Gradually we learned details of the complex route and could move quickly through it to “interesting” areas. This sort of competence produced a feeling akin to a runner’s high. The very aspects of caving that made it difficult became pleasurable. Moving efficiently required a mixture of grace and brute force. Watching Climax veterans like Karen or Chuck fly through the cave was like watching a ballet and a perfectly executed football play rolled into one.

After each trip, we stripped out of our muddy clothes on the side of country lanes, dressing in dry jeans and t-shirts before any passing farmer might call the sheriff to report naked hippies on the highway. When your every bodily surface and crevice is caked with mud, matters of appearance such as haircut, clothing style, or body type begin to seem trivial. With enough mud, even gender becomes indistinct. Standing filthy and naked on a highway at midnight makes you less self-conscious about appearance than typical college students, more focused on the solid than the transitory. We were turning into cavers.

Sometimes, from necessity, we stripped out of our muddy clothing *during* the trip in order to keep mud out of a delicate formation area or clean cave pool. The passage everyone had been studying at that first meeting included “The Pool of Naked FROGs.” FROG was an acronym for the Fort Rucker-Ozark Grotto, a grotto based in Fort Rucker, Alabama, about two hours away. A group of FROGs had found and mapped a previously unknown pool in Climax. As was the custom, they had removed their muddy clothing and gear—except for helmets and lamps—to swim to the far side of the pristine pool and measure its size. Hence the body of water’s name. Word was, they continued to skinny dip a while after, just for funsies.

The FROGs’ sketch had noted a couple of leads near the pool, so our gang of four joined a later grotto trip to push those leads. We brought extra trash bags so that if we found dry passage on the far side of the water, we could keep our clothes and gear relatively dry, floating them across the pool to reassemble ourselves on the far side.

This is what we did, surveying a few new crawls and rooms near water level. We mapped a total of perhaps 200 feet. There was nothing terribly remarkable about the new passage but this: We were almost certainly the first humans there. And that felt remarkable indeed.



**Mistral form**

Carolina Shrewsbury

*Drawing*

**Lectio Divina**

Stuart Marlatt (NSS #19583)

Pause. Consider this pebble quietly at rest  
Cupped and still within  
your mud-creased palm.

Stop and consider, this stream-washed stone;  
And pay no attention  
that boulder within your shoe.

Rest and give thought: no sparkling gemstone,  
No pearl, only gravel-pale  
limestone, coarse, oblong,

Fragment of lives and deaths and bones,  
Crushed in time, by hands  
by many waters formed.

Be still and quiet. Let the scarred surface touch,  
Let the pits and ridges echo  
mud, water and wind,

Speak into your hand. Lift this rock before your face  
And give no thought  
the dust that clouds your eyes.

Contemplate in silence: stone fills space and time  
Striae and inclusions resolve  
Canyons and ranges far-flung snow-capped peaks,  
Redolent with breath of pine, winds infused  
Songs of stream and storm, rivers falling  
Into a black abyss to flow through lightless halls.

Rise and follow. Walk the paths that wind through hills and copse,  
Into the hollows of somber caves.  
breath winds and waters, know

Stories of the lives within the stones. This pebble selected,  
Lifted and held within your palm,  
It you did not choose.

In peace reflect and rest. Replace the stone  
Into the stream, remove  
a rock out of your shoe.

# NSS Writing Workshop Schedule

Friday, August 3rd, 2018 • Helena, Montana



- 8:30-9 a.m.           **Coffee and donuts**, with 5-minute open readings/share sessions
- 9-9:45                **“How to Speak Cave,” Jo Schaper.** Cave communicators are often called upon to deal with journalists in stressful and ordinary times. Need some tips and tricks to help? Come brainstorm with your experiences, and leave with the skills to help get your message across.
- 9:45-10               **Open readings/share sessions.** (2-3, approximately 5 minutes each.)
- 10-10:25             **“Writing for the Project,” Bill Steele.** Complex annual expeditions can’t happen without a great deal of writing. The founder and leader of PESH describes the types of writing that can help an expedition thrive.
- 10:30-11:50         **“Interviewing Cavers,” Bill Steele, Mike Taylor.** Whether you are writing for the *NSS News*, *American Caving Accidents*, books, newspapers, or magazines, you must interview cavers to get their stories right. This panel of experts tells you how it’s done, followed by a live exercise.
- Noon:                 Lunch provided to workshop participants (free for those holding ticket from 9 a.m. or 11 a.m. exercises—all others may dig in for \$5 cash).
- 12:30-12:50 p.m.   **Open readings/share sessions** as participants finish lunch.
- 1-1:50                 **“Learning to See—Water, Rocks and Poetry,” Jo Schaper.** Participants will be given a random cave photograph and guided through an exercise to write a short poem or piece of descriptive prose.
- 2-2:40                 **“Drawing Caves and Cavers,” Carolina Shrewsbury.** From comic cave stories to serious nonfiction, visual communication can enhance any cave story when writer and artist work together. This session explains how.
- 2:45-3-ish            **Final open readings/share sessions.** (Approximately 5 minutes each.)

Have some cave writing expertise you would like to share? Do you have some thoughts about cave fiction, non-fiction, poetry, getting published or getting your point across that is unique and from which others can benefit? Contact Mike Taylor at [taylorm@hsu.edu](mailto:taylorm@hsu.edu). or Jo Schaper at [joschaper@socket.net](mailto:joschaper@socket.net) in advance, or just show up first thing in the morning on Friday, and we will find some time for your contributions. We all learn from each other, and if you are a wannabe or published author, please bring your expertise to the Workshop. Bring a pad of paper and your favorite writing implement with you. We look forward to hearing from and meeting you.



**Bridge Day**

Dave Luckins

*Painting*

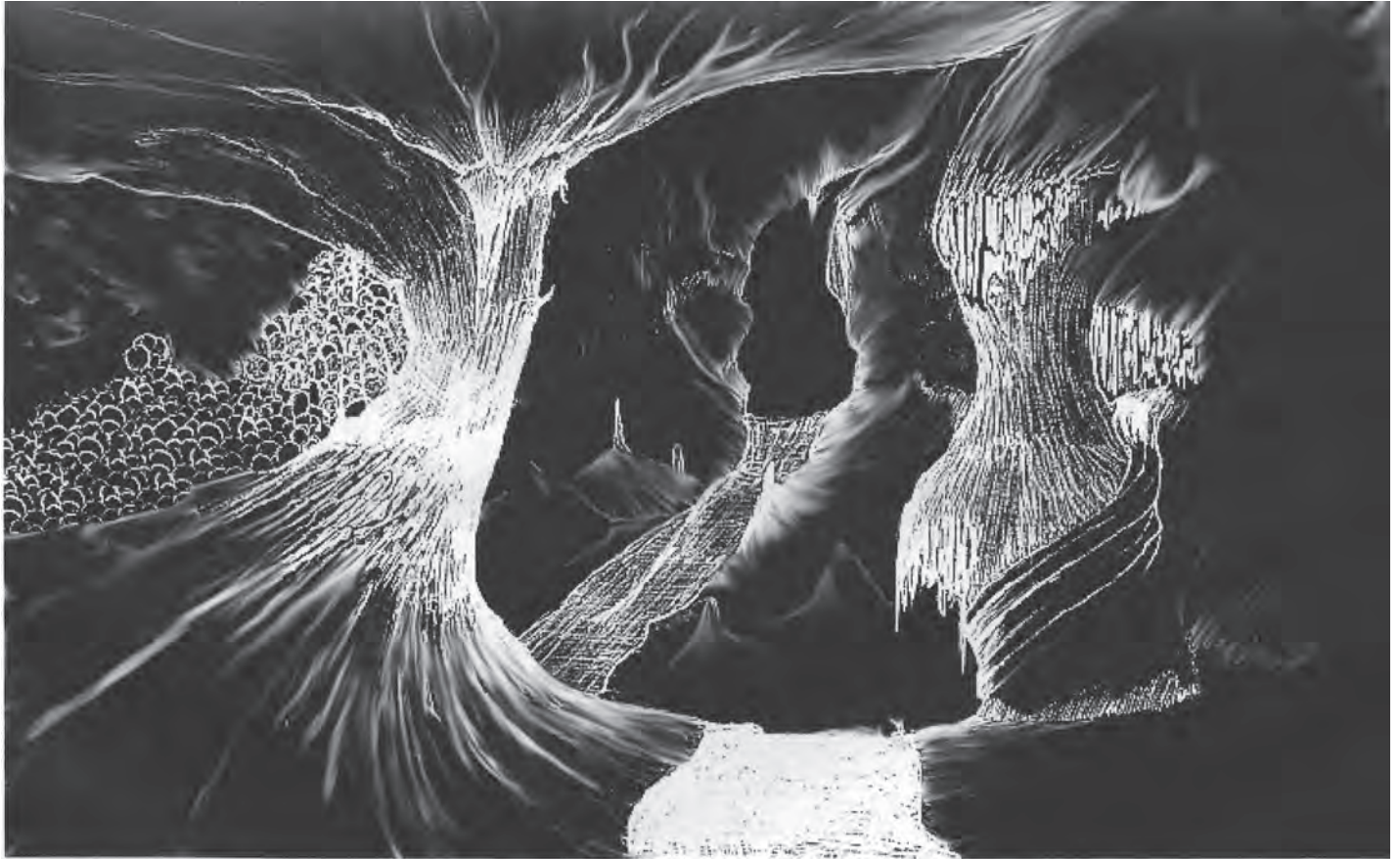
*Art work submitted by A&L member Carolina Shrewsbury*



**Lets Go Caving**

Carolina Shrewsbury

*Cartoon*



**Into the Brighter Side**

Blake Jördan

*Computer Enhanced, Pen & Ink*



### ESSO Grotto 50th anniversary t-shirt

Kenneth Storey  
*Screen Print T-Shirt*

*Bottom image is being used on the t-shirt. The image to the left is to be used on other items.*





**Bread**

Charles Loving

*Pen & Ink and Watercolor*

Cartoon submitted by Bill Steele for the artist.



