

The President is in the process of investigating possible permanent right-of-way back to the homestead and the membership decided to allocated \$50 toward bringing the farmhouse up to "field house" condition. The general direction of the Society was discussed and will remain on its present course for the coming year.

The next regular membership meeting will be at 9 p.m. on October 23, 1976.

GOOD NEWS AND BAD NEWS

Sheck Exley, Nevin W. Davis, Joe Brady, Keigh Wheeland, Frank Marks, Jack Igoe, Evan Shuster, Ron Miller, Lee Gilman. These persons gathered from various corners of the East for the BCCS Annual Membership Meeting and also some pre-meeting caving. Our goal was again the penetration of Last Hope siphon, this time with sufficient safety cord. Sheck drove alone all the way from Jacksonville, Florida, to attempt to dive the siphon again. He arrived Friday evening and we made arrangements with the coolies to be ready to leave for the cave at 8 a.m. Of course, this never happened but we did get a relatively early start. Much time was spent preparing the dive equipment; dividing it into parcels small enough to be carried easily. Two pieces of equipment which didn't divide too easily were the tanks. This time Sheck decided to use doubles. Luckily the 35 lb. tanks could be carried separately and assembled to a common manifold at the siphon.

At Dave's Lake Frank, Joe and Evan elected to stay dry while the rest of us carried the equipment through the lake down the 1000 ft. of passage to the siphon. At the lake Sheck donned his dry-wet suit, a special sealed, warm diving suit.

At the siphon we struggled with the equipment, assembling everything and checking its operation. Lee spent the time trying to get some good pictures of the dive. When everything was ready, Sheck walked out into the pool and while still

moving, put his flippers on, pulled down his face mask, and disappeared. With the double tanks he had the capacity to penetrate 2000 ft. of submerged passage and have a duration of one hour with an hour reserve if the dive was shallow. After he left we sat around periodically checking a watch. In one hour we started to worry; in an hour and a quarter we were beginning to wonder if he would return. In about one hour and twenty minutes there was a glow which rapidly grew brighter; then splash, he was back. Sheck removed his mask, smiled and said, "Well, I have some good news and some bad news. Which do you want first?" Someone said, "The good news!" Sheck said that the siphon came up into air filled passage about 100 ft. beyond the end of his dive on 31 Aug. There he removed his tanks and explored about 950 ft. of passage mostly 4 to 5 ft. high and up to 20 ft. high in one area. The passage got as wide as 20 ft. At the end of his downstream trek was the bad news, a second siphon. It was too difficult for him to carry his tanks down the passage alone to dive the second siphon. There was one side passage which quickly became too narrow to follow wearing a dry suit.

As soon as the tanks were disassembled Keith and Lee headed back toward Dave's Lake carrying them. By the time the rest of us arrived, Joe, Frank and Evan had already left carrying the tanks out of the cave.

As in any exploration a discovery uncovers more questions. What lies beyond the second siphon? The potential is there for two miles of air filled passage. There was an air draft blowing out of the ceiling at the highest part of the passage. Where does this come from? Indeed, for most of us, just what does this passage beyond a 600 ft. length of submerged passage look like?

NWD