

THE ELECTRIC CAVER

TRIP REPORT
Flat Rock Cave

On Feb. 24th, the DDD was almost in full force, with John Neack, Howard Kalnitz, Jacques Ramey, John Wisher, Jeff Streba, & newcomer Alex Samarco. We found Flat Rock about a year ago while on our way to Split Pit Cave. At that time, we explored as much of the cave as possible. But the cave posed a dilemma to us. There is a 50-ft. pit right in the middle of a passage, and on both sides of the pit are mud-sloped walls of about 45-50 degree angles. Our plan on this day was to have one group start surveying, while the other group attempted to cross the mud wall.

John Neack and myself got the job of traversing the pit. We had brought an ice axe, a bolt kit, rope, ascending gear, & climbing chokes, and were ready for anything this cave might throw at us. As John starting chopping a ledge thru one of the mud walls, I began looking for a spot to set up a belay. Soon, John had a nice, safe, 2-ft. wide ledge that went completely across to the other side of the pit. The passage beyond was about 12-ft. high, 20-ft. wide, and extended about 50-ft. to a hands-and-knees crawl thru breakdown.

By the time the survey team reached the pit, they wanted us to set up a hand-line for them. We explained that because of a lack of natural anchors, the only way for a hand-line would be to place bolts. And we weren't about to place bolts if we didn't need to. So the survey team gave us the OK to go ahead and scoop the passage.

The hands-and-knees crawl led to an ear-dip that was a total belly-crawl thru 1½-inches of water. We passed a 40-ft. long side passage that contained some beautiful, 5-inch high rimstone dams. The main passage turned into an easy hands-and-knees

crawl. We skirted around some old stalactites that looked just like massive teeth protruding from the ceiling. Beyond this, I was amazed by what I saw .The passage sparkled with soda straws, stalagmites, stalactites, & columns, most of which were still alive & growing. John and I were overwhelmed with excitement, and proceeded thru the passage with caution & anticipation. This passage eventually terminated, with no other side leads, and was not surveyed because of the cramped quarters.

Once back to the survey crew, we explained what we had found, and looked around the cave a bit more. John found a small 30-ft. pit to drop while the lower level was surveyed. We mapped about 200-ft., & there is about another 500-ft. left to survey. Any volunteers?

Some of us have set a goal to publish a new cave map or line plot every month in the EC. With Jacques nose for finding caves, we now have quite a few that need to be surveyed. The grotto equipment cache has at least 3-sets of survey gear, so we can use the help of anyone who is interested in getting into some new cave and/or learning how to survey. The caves vary in their degree of difficulty, so any level of experience can be handled. And Howard has a computer program that will spit out a line-plot in no time. And from there, the rest is easy. We just need people to get Down, Deep, and Dirty!

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PS: Any comments or criticisms of the cave maps are welcome.

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