

THE ELECTRIC CAVER

95

MISTY CAVE SURVEY

Oh, yeah, a little more to the left. No, not quite. Maybe if I put my leg over here. Yeah, oh! That feels much better. On station! Jeff, please try to not put the stations back in a crack, OK?

Thus went the initial survey of Misty Cave, located in the beautiful hills of south central Kentucky. Keeping book was Howie Kalnitz (pretty intense he was), Big Bird (aka Jeff Streba) and yours truly, the grotto contortionist. We came with the goal of surveying until we dropped, or until our knees got sore, whichever came first. After suiting up we started running the tape down the main trunk, Jeff at point putting stations in as inaccessible a spot as he could find, while my job was to shout words of encouragement, obscenities, and wrong directions to Jeff as often as possible. Working as a team we were able to keep Howard in a constant sketching frenzy. Shooting 25-30 meter shots on a relatively constant basis was a great deal of work, but hey, when your good your good.

After making the first connection into the dome complex I directed the group with my unerring sense of direction into a nice long mud and sand crawl. "Mark, does this look right?" "Hell if I know. Why don't you crawl on down the passage while we wait here." It's interesting how loud someone breathing hard in a tight crawl sounds while you lay there eating a candy bar and relaxing. While Howard slept I kept asking for progress updates (Jeff had to dig to go any farther). He eventually gophered his way into a new virgin room, out of which several crawls continued. Since this wasn't our main objective we left a permanent survey station (Jeff claims to be

the master of survey marker art) and exited back from whence we came. After explaining that I knew all along where the continuation for the passage was, we surveyed into the almost virgin section of the cave that Jacque and company had deflowered. We took the survey up the stream passage and set our last survey point, #47, at the dome complex that we had discovered on the last trip. At this point I have to give the gang of three a good hearty "atta-boy". Putting that many stations in in only 8 hrs. was pretty damn good, if I do say so myself. Sorry, I digress, but I can ramble all I want since I'm writing this thing. After packing the gear up we proceeded to climb the dome for an assault on the top. After tying the safety and Howard got on belay, I tried the climb. By the way, Jeff makes a good foothold. The dome was a series of tight vadose canyons some of which I followed to termination. Others continued, but due to no pack and a fading light I exited before a through investigation was accomplished. On the way back to the climb down I saw a large void that I had missed on the way in. It looks like another level above the one that I was in. Some more fun for the future.

Total time in the cave was about 10 hours, with 47 stations set and about 800 meters surveyed. We retired to a pizza joint in Berea and stuffed ourselves until we were ill. A great time was had by all.

By the way, any one ever look closely at the string of sink holes above Hoadley?

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