

WHAT IS AN EXPEDITION ?Chuck Young  
PSC 239

This is perhaps best answered by describing the various Jobs that are necessary to make the Simmons-Mingo trip (Project SIMMER) a success. For the "why" of such an operation, please read Lanny Lehto's article on page 58.

## The Operation

First of all, there are the cavers of various sorts who will be underground for three days, trying to move as rapidly as possible to make the most of their limited time. First there is the exploring type caver. He will range swiftly through the underground passages and side passages, to get a general idea of what the cave is like, and to determine where surveying should be done, or where to spend most of the underground effort.

Behind them will come the Brunton boys, moving slowly in their job of plotting the precise location of the major passages. Long after everybody has gone home, their data will be analyzed, coordinated, and plotted.

Also working in various parts of the cave will be the scientific types - the biologists, geologists, the stream tracers -- all working to gather information on their specialty.

Second, there will be a group of cavers working underground to *support* the first group, thus increasing the amount of time available for cave study. Just having someone to cook and make hot coffee will make more time available, in addition to being a big morale factor. If the surveyors, etc., are to make fast time in and out of the cave to allow more time for work, someone will be needed to carry the food, sleeping bags, etc., going at a more leisurely pace. Since the support teams can carry only relatively light packs because of the nature of the cave, they will need carefully planned loads to ensure that all required items are in the cave, and that no unnecessary materials are carried in and out. One of them must act as coordinator to iron out the little snags that arise because of human or equipment malfunctions. Then there must be a communications network to coordinate the work done, eliminating duplication, and avoiding confusion. Should illness or accident occur, the communications team will be essential.

Third, there will be a support group outside the cave. Since there will be coming and going at all hours carrying supplies and food, kitchen services will be needed to feed them, plus the feeding of the outside support group. Communications and coordination must be maintained outside the cave as well as inside. Since activities inside the cave will be operating round the clock, some outside activities also must operate on a 24-hour basis. Communications, the combined security-fire watcher-cook, and the body check man will be operating round the clock. The body check man will have as his job the logging into the cave of every individual, plus time of entering, and will log out every individual.

## The Planning

Of course, all this cannot be accomplished without considerable work before and after the expedition. Planning of every detail must be done if the cavers are to function effectively and make the most of their limited time. At the present stage of planning, no particular stress is being laid on any part of the total job. As planning progresses, the parts will start to fit together and the amount of emphasis on each job will emerge in its proper perspective.

An interesting aspect of the expedition is the application of a management tool to caving - use of the Critical Path Method. First, CPM will be used to plot the planning and preparatory stages prior to the expedition proper. Then, CPM will be used to plot the operations during the three days to ensure that no hitches will reduce the time available for caving.

## Get In On It

There are jobs for everybody, both inside and outside the cave. Since PSC and the Virginia Region are sponsoring the trips, notices will be sent to all affiliated cavers and groups. All our caver friends who are not affiliated are invited to join us in the planning and preparatory stages as well as the trip itself. Please do not wait for a personal invitation - we are a little short of those engraved kind - just show up at any of the planning sessions, and volunteer for any phase of the job you feel best fitted for. If you want responsibility, we have many major jobs to be done. If you want to help, how about volunteering to hold the target for the Brunton surveyor, help scientific types collect samples, explore side passages, man the field phones, carry supplies, etc. Just come to the planning sessions -- you will soon find what you want to contribute.

Oh, yes. One thing the planners have been unanimous [*sic*] on - no pets on the trip. There are a few who would also ban children, but if baby sitting for the three days is impossible or too expensive, bring them along - we would sooner have our friends bring their children than stay away. But please remember you will be responsible for taking care of them, and feeding them if they are too young to eat from the general mess hall (mostly because if you have someone like Chuck cooking, he would burn the formula!).

There are those who may feel that all this is rather involved just to get a few people into a cave. It's not really all that much - it's just that cavers do get sleepy, cold, and HUNGRY. All we are doing is helping our caver friends speed things up a little.

But there is one more thing. We all know of caves where an accident would involve a very lengthy rescue operation with the help of many cavers. We also know of, or have read of, the fiascos in some past rescue operations. The experience gained in this trip might be invaluable in some future crisis. But, by and large, look on it as just a three-day picnic and clambake!

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