



# ULSA Newsletter

Editor: Kristian Brook

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## Editorial:

It's only goddamn happening!! The smut has reached the third issue and we have been some busy bunnies as you can be reading in the forth coming pages.

People have been very kind and sending me their writings despite my deluded publication schedule so you'll get nothing more from me this issue and it's mostly be contributions of your fellow club members.

Nothing more to say. I'm in the USA now so I'm out of the social loop and currently am not aware of any in jokes. Will be back in the UK in July.

KBrook

## Upcoming Meetings

- 12-20/6 – ULSA holiday, Jura, France  
01/07 – 12/08/23 – CUCC expedition  
03/10/23 – Leeds Uni Autum Term start

## New Committees

I'm a bad reporter. There was a new committee last newsletter but I didn't bother to report it, or the May weekend. Oopsie!

Anyway here's you new committee.

President – Mike Butcher, he's only done for the free membership

Secretary – John Holloway

Treasurer – Chis Williams

Librarian – Adam Aldridge

Distributions Officer – Nicola William

Conservation Office – Nicola William

Training Coordinator – Adam Erskin-Jones

Editor – Kristian Brook

Ordinary Members - -Lyndon Easterbook, Mike 'Sniffer' Fearn, and Rachel Turnbull

Also a new student committee has been elected so here you go. These are some good people and we wish them all the luck over the next year.

President - Lea Giguere-Richards

Secretary - Niamh Barry

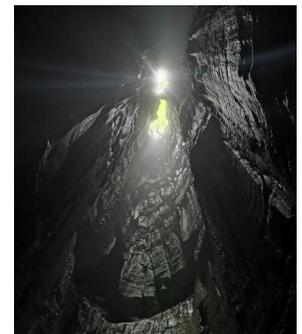
Treasurer - Adam Aldridge

Welfare Officer - Janey Gregory

Tackle Officer – Adam Erskin-Jones

Caving Officer - Ben Chaddock

## South Pittsburgh Pit, TN, USA



## New Gate At Mahlam

The entrance for divers at Malham Cove was upgraded on the week Ending of the 14/15 May. How to gain access is still being agreed. If you need access, I suggest contacting the CDG Northern Section in the first instance. There is a CDG Dive camp in June I believe, for those interested, which will probably feature a dive into Malham.

Note the lid is very heavy ( 70kg ) do not drop it on yourself, anyone else, or itself.



*The New Lid....*

*Rich Trusson*

## Javed Bhatti's Eating Habits (Opinion Piece)

*Editors notes:* As I look down at my expanding gut I emailed Javed asking for his insane ideas on diet. For those who don't know of Javed's legend he was a student with ULSA between '82 to '85 and still hung around for 5 years afterward working in the psychology department (unsure if he was a expert or a subject). He still caves, and hopefully the students will get some time in the future with this athlete. In his spare time he runs ultra marathons in the Arctic. Like you do.



*Pictured: A Mad Lad*

Nutrition is both complicated and complex area where good evidence based advice is rare. So my approach based on reading across many areas of relevant the literature, hanging out with exceptional athletes (cavers, mountaineers, endurance cyclists and ultra runners) and personal experience..... is to ask myself and others a series of questions:

1. What is your metabolism like now and in the last few years ? Are you high carbohydrate consumer or are you a part fat adapted athlete? Are you someone who enjoys and thrives on intermittent or longer term fasting ? This helps you assess if you have some metabolic flexibility, and to what extent you might have some metabolic and psychological resilience. All of this is modifiable and beneficial if you have 4-6 weeks to work on your diet.

*(cont.)*

2. What duration of activity are you considering? An 8 hour caving adventure should be do-able by all healthy people without too much concern about nutrition. Take a couple of favourite bars and a flask of drink to be extra comfortable.

3. Fluid consumption ..... assume a minimum of 3 litres a day. Adding some nutrients and calories (protein shake ? and some carbs) to this fluid is an easy way of feeding the body. The key is to practice before a long trip. Otherwise for an 8 hr trip have a couple of mugs of tea before you go down and a few pints when you come out. If you are looking for marginal gains just be more sensible with all the obvious stuff .... Or take up cycling. Caving is frankly too variable, emergent, complicated and complex to dissect or plan with much more detail. Unless that kind of behaviour turns you on.

4. Most well fed individuals will have 2-3k ready calories on board in glycogen (stored in muscles and liver). An 8 hour trip could easily burn through 4k calories. So most cavers will burn through the readily available glycogen reserves inside that 8 hours (especially if it's cold) and therefore it makes sense to have a big cooked breakfast before going underground. Besides this breakfast stop is when you get to argue over choice of cave, flirt with/entertain/educate/inspire/inhibit your fellow cavers.

5. One kilo of body fat will provide 8k calories of energy. Most cavers will be 10-25% fat ... so even the leanest can survive many days without eating. However to be able to access those calories easily you will need to be metabolically flexible.

6. Assuming you are not caving to lose weight but are wanting to fuel and perform well you will need to :

A. Only do short trips

B. Carry sufficient fuel to cover energy/nutrient requirements

C. OR ..... Learn to use endogenous sources of fuel ... essentially become fat adapted .. which reduces the need to feed

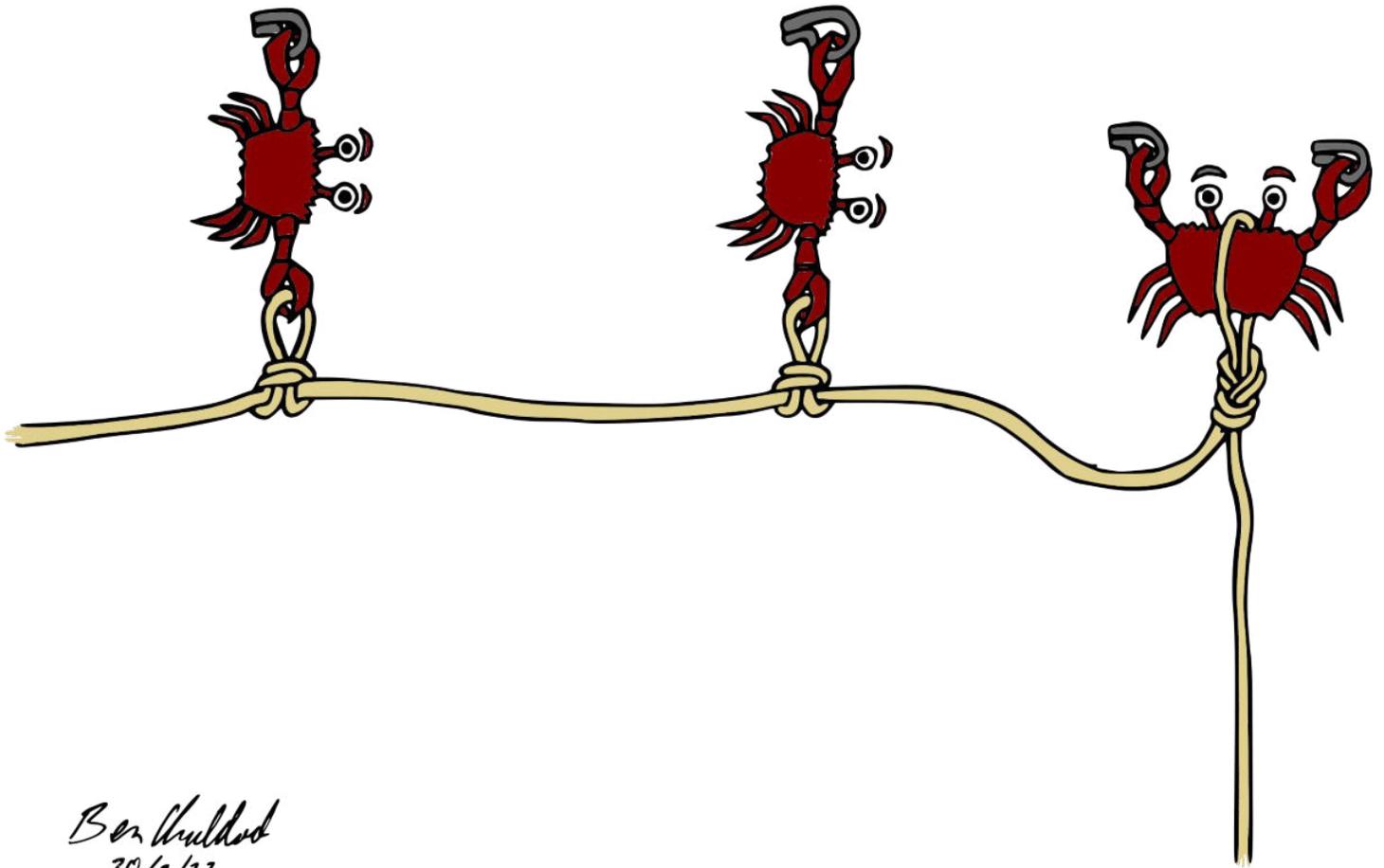
What should you carry ?

If it's simple carbs (chocolate/gels) then be aware that the change in metabolism (raising of thermostat if you will) means that you will burn through those calories quite quickly, and that the the burn rate will remain elevated long after those calories have been exhausted. This results in greater hunger. So my advice is to consume complex carbs and or fat rich foods. My favourites being salami, trail mix (my recipe being pumpkin seeds, almonds, a few raisins and dark chocolate), cheeses, boiled eggs, home made pemmican when I've time. I have managed many days on just a tablespoon of food per day, and several long running expeditions (300-500 mile trips) on less than 2k calories a day, and still finished strong and healthy.



*Not Pictured: Bread*

## Rigging with Crabs!!



*Ben Chaddock*  
30/3/23

Humour and drawing by our very own Ben Chaddock

### ULSA/ BSCC Joint trip

In the latter half of April Kai Trusson organized a trip down OFD staying at the SWCC in Penwyllt.

The cast would be a mix of old ULSA and NPC members (Ann, Rich and Rob), young ULSA/BSCC (Kai), Robs nephew, Dom and someone called Naked Baby Oil Man ( NaBO!). The aim of the trip being for Kai to practice guiding a group down various bits of Ogof Ffynnon Ddu and for the oldies to see if they could still a) find all their gear and b) use it successfully and get both in and out of a cave.

The pre-trip activities consisted of a flurry of messages on various channels organising travel and gear. A late afternoon start from west Leeds saw Ann, Rich and Rob flying down the M1 towards Birmingham to meet up with Kai in Robs 'Jaaaaag'. Collecting Kai at the services on the M42 we headed south and on to the Heads of the Valley Road. The timings worked out well as we had a booking at the Ancient Briton pub, where we met up with Dom, on the way to the SWCC hut.

The SWCC hut was much as I recalled from the previous century, the most obvious changes being paying hut fees by contactless, and the removal of Lead Acid charging racks and no carbide bins.

Saturday kicked off with a very hearty breakfast cooked by Kai, and the late arrival of NaBO (who proceeded to eat as much as the rest of us put together.) We still managed a nice early start though – leaving the hut around 11:00am! The first trip was going to be a circular route in and out via the bottom entrance. Kai did a brilliant job leading us through the cave, going in via a high-level route with fixed traverse lines. We took belay belts and cows tails for this. Returning via the stream way – which I found to be the ideal width in many places to trap my size 11 wellies in a vice like grip. Crossing some of the deep pools on Scaff' Tubes was fun – thankfully the water levels were lowish so the crossings were easily visible.

Exiting the cave, we started the walk back up the hill. A brief detour was had to do the Cwm Dwr through trip. Where we found a bat.

Apparently caving twice on a weekend is a thing! Sunday saw us up and walking up to the top entrance just after 9:00. The SWCC drying room had done a grand job drying off our gear. This was going to be a short trip so we could start the drive back north at a reasonable time. There is a feature just after the top entrance called the Brick Field – it's a nightmare of angular sharp blocks – I didn't enjoy that at all. However, I did enjoy the pretties as we got to the Trident and the Judge as well as a nice dead-end chamber on the way full of stal and straws.

The return journey north was interesting as the Heads of the Valley Road was closed for road works. This led to some unexpected cross country driving and added an hour to our journey.

All photos were taken using a Samsung A52 with no external flash.



*L-R NaBO, Kai, Rob, Ann, Dom*



*Route Finding*



*The team underground*

*OFD: Sunday Top Entrance Photos*



*The Trident*



*On the way to The Judge*



*Team at Top Entrance*

## SpeleoSisters+ Notts Pot left hand route Day Trip.

On Friday night, Alice, Ane and I were tired from a long week of work for them, and for no good reason for me, and reasonably unmotivated for caving from the heavy rain and bad forecast. All of us secretly thinking of sacking off the trip tomorrow, but the prospect of a leisurely start, and the weatherproof trip down Notts Pot, convinced us to carry on. Arriving at Leck Fell the weather was better than expected and we were all feeling significantly more motivated than the night before.

One of Alice's goals of the day was to practice using her newly purchased Shewee (other feminine urination aids are available), in hopes that this device would revolutionise her weeing experience allowing her to wee fully clothed. Returning she was disappointed to report that she was not urgent enough to get her practice in. Apparently its hard to relax standing in a full set of caving gear. Oh well, there would be time to build up some urgency underground. Walking to the cave I started feeling a bit nauseous and started feeling some pain in my uterus which made me think I was going to get my period on the trip, although I was holding hope that it was just an early warning sign. I was reassured by my well stocked first aid kit with pills and tampons as well as 4 chocolate bars, so we carried on.

Ane took the lead rigging and dropped the first 3 pitches. I then swapped to rig the next 3. Not having the exact rope length required we had opted for a longer rope for the 4th pitch and a shorter rope for the 5th pitch with a plan to join the ropes in the traverse. Starting on the 4th pitch I was worried about having enough rope so I was rigging tightly. The rigging guide showed a traverse between the first 2 bolts, even though there was a reasonable climb down. Fearing I would run out of rope I rigged a traverse instead of a rebelay. Mistake one. The guide then showed from the second bolt you should rig a rebelay to natural below. I spotted a natural at the same height as my current level but it didn't make sense with the rigging guide so I dropped down into the rift. Mistake two. There was no natural in the rift but I could just about shimmy over to the y-hang bolts so I decided to carry on. After rigging the Y-hang I decided to tighten up the traverse line so the others wouldn't go too far down the rift. Mistake three. But more on that later.

I headed down while the others found the rigging a bit awkward. Since it was all pretty tight they had no rope available to make any changes, so they just had to deal with it. I on the other hand had plenty of rope to play with and carried on through a quite reachy traverse and an impressively long pitch. It was a little disconcerting on the bone dry creeky 8mm rope. Another short pitch to follow before Alice took over. Alice set off on the 7th pitch which started with a reasonably easy but unprotected traverse and, if you know Alice, you know she likes feeling protected. But she carried on without complaint. At the top she did a brilliant and surprisingly quick triple hang, with bunny ears connecting two bolts and an alpine butterfly connecting the third. The rift is quite constricted at the top so all three were needed to prevent rope rub. Down she went and landed on a ledge out of sight. After a considerable amount of time, we were a bit confused as to why she had not called rope free yet. But upon asking the rope was definitely not free. More time passed and then she called rope free so I made my way down and found her sitting on a bolt. As I made my way over she said "I am not having fun anymore." The pitch had landed on a ledge with a bolt and there was an ascending travers that she had had to climb from there. As I went up to meet her, I was unable to climb up without using the rope she had rigged. I was thoroughly impressed she had gotten up there without it. We rigged a pull through for the derig.

Having used up her mental stamina on that climb, and with more exposed traversing to follow, Alice was ready to take a break from rigging, so Ane carried rigging to the bottom. More climbs up on the traverse, although a little less sketchy, and a very reachy pitch head over a reasonably tall pitch. Finally, a short pitch to the sump. A quick break from the ropes here made it the best wee spot, and Alice once again tried her Shewee. When she finally could relax enough to go, the Shewee worked splendidly and she was able to go without delayering. Although, after removing the Shewee she admitted she realized her body wasn't quite finished and she had a bit of a dribble. So, more practice needed, but a promising prospect. At this point, I realized I had most likely started bleeding, but I was not feeling like I was clean enough to put a tampon in hygienically, so I decided to just free bleed and not worry about it. There is always a washing machine.

Up we went. I derigged the bottom 3 pitches and realized how heavy the bag Alice had been carrying on the way down. I gave Alice the option of taking the big bag out or derigging the rest of the cave and she opted to derig. While prusiking out, I calculated that I was carrying 135m of rope, 20 odd carabiners, and a group shelter, far too much, but at least it was thin rope.

Remember those mistakes I made rigging? Well, here is where they come back to bite us. Ane headed up the pitch and changed over to the traverse line that should have been a rebelay. Because the line was tight, She wasn't able to put both jammers on and the angle meant the hand jammer wasn't pulling in a helpful angle. Ane was struggling to climb up on to the pitch head in the smooth rift. She was making progress and then would slip back down. I eventually caught up to her and was able to wedge myself in the rift below her, still on the pitch rope, and give her my shoulder to step on and she popped right up. I then got to struggle with the climb out. I got the traverse line in my armpit, then was able to press down on it with my hand and get a knee on top. I needed a rest from the exertion and took a quick rest while sitting on the traverse line. From there I was able to shimmy on to the pitch head. I told Ane to carry on up, and I'd try and help Alice get up. I decided to try and change the rigging because Alice would have an even harder time derigging. I undid the figure of 8 on the second bolt and put in a clove hitch, pulling the line as tight as it would go to get the most rope. Then I grabbed the longest sling I had and hitched the natural I had neglected before and connected the rope again with a clove hitch. This created somewhat of a rebelay and when Alice got up she did not struggle too much. I was however trapped until we could loosen the rigging because the line up the climb was too tight to use jammers on and it was reasonably hard with my heaving bag. So that was a bit of a faff, but lessons learned and good problem solving opportunity. I do believe the rigging guild is mixed up this section, because even upon reflection the rigging guide doesn't makes sense.

I was beginning to struggle with the weight of my bag but was glad to see the exit shortly thereafter. I was amazed to see daylight! We exited to a lovely sunset overlooking the dales. Back at the car I was happy to find out I was wearing black underwear and I wouldn't have to worry about having stained my underwear. Alice helped me wash my hands with the water bottle and I was finally able to put a tampon in. I didn't think Alice would have appreciated me free bleeding on her car. The following day I was completely wrecked. I have learnt that if I have a limited amount of energy on the first two days of my period and I can push myself day one but I will be absolutely dead the next day. Great trip with my SpeleoSisters and worth the rest day.

*Nadia Raeburn-Cheradi*

### **ULSA Malham Weekend**

In celebration of the queen dying (*Editors note: God bless her and all who sailed in her*), ULSA ran an excellent Malham weekend that mostly avoided Malham. The weather was not looking ideal for a long weekend of camping, and Luke's parents were away dragging a boat down a shallow river, so those available for the whole weekend broke the serenity of the nice family neighborhood in the Lake district and slept all over Luke's parents floors.

On Saturday, those interested in caving on a nice sunny day in the Lakes were forced out of bed at an ungodly hour to meet a Red Rose infiltrate (Phil Whitnal) at the Conniston mine car park at 9 (they left the house at 9 while Phil scoured the area for parking spots while waiting for them). I have been told the 12 cavers pranged their way down very thick ropes that many had to down prussik because they were too light. The mines were less extensive than expected and even with the faff of a huge group they were done in 2 hours. Off for ice cream and a swim they went. The rest of us went climbing all day and Rob and I did a lovely and wet multipitch climb mostly in the shade.

Day 2 was a little slower of a start for most but a keen few were off to Lost John's early. The rest of us were still committed to the sun and did above ground adventures.

On Sunday night we had a much larger group and actually went camping in Gordale Scar as planned. The ULSA minis made for excellent evening entertainment. A favourite event was Ted Jepps collected a sticky jar on a string, full of mystery white goo, from the stream. When he was told to go put it back we heard a loud smash and off the Jepps went to deal with the mess. Martha Jepps came up with an excellent game of offering apple juice to her friends only for them to find out it was horrible nasty beer. It's safe to say the Jepps bloodline is strong.

For more communal entertainment we played various counting and multiplication games until the young ones went off to bed.

The morning brought a steady drizzle and a wet breakfast. The less hearty headed home. One group picked up some students from train station and had a successful trip practicing hauling down Bar Pot and got a good show of the GG waterfall with very high flow.

The ULSA mini's trip was a smashing success and had Sam, Nic and their two (Isaac and Beanie Allshorn), Bakers (Tom with Grace, George and Tess, Youngs (Ben with Matry and Hannah)) and Team Jepps (Si and Caroline with Martha and Ted). They went down valley entrance to the top of the pitch and out, with some practicing ladder work and set on the pitch.

In total the weekend had 30 attendees at various points and was a great event. We are looking to plan a future weekend in late September. Details to follow soon!

*Nadia Raeburn-Cheradi*

### **Wind Cave 4/20**

How does aragonite made? Do you know? Does anyone? I certainly don't. Is it something to do with airflow? Probably! Is it something to do with magnesium? Almost certainly! I'm writing a doss-ertation about it. So off to South Dakota I go once again; back to Wind Cave! Where, you guessed it, there is both airflow AND magnesium!

Flew to Denver, got there absurdly early. Went for a bimble in the flatirons to kill time before the drive to South Dakota. Baker's Way, very nice and gentle solo up the first (fig 1., fig 2.). Passed lots of children with Bluetooth speakers on the trail. Fuming. Three other endemic species in these parts: thin white alpine beard man, yoga yuppie granola girl maybe with a designer dog in tow, and vastly unprepared Versace sunglasses dad. The dads are the most entertaining archetype.

Two days later I went into Wind Cave on business. The mission: move Andreas' ultrasonic anemometer to the new sample site. We broke the instrument into its parts and shifted it along the cave trails to a new site next to some well-developed aragonite frostwork on the cave wall. Wind Cave is what we call hypogean, which means it has power outlets, so a 100 ft cable was run to the sonic to allow continuous airflow speed and direction measurements to be taken for the next few months (fig. 3). I also staged some temperature and humidity loggers across the passage to try and detect any stratification of air at the site. Everything in place and operational, mission complete. "What does this have to with microbiology?" I hear you cry. "Likely nothing!" I respond. There's biofilm all over these minerals but it is difficult to say whether microbes steer their formation or rather just get caught up in the process (fig. 4). I favour the latter, but going so far as to suggest that the surficial colonizing bacteria stimulate calcite precipitation and (diagenetic?) alteration of the underlying aragonite to more stable polymorphs like calcite via  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  metabolism. Airflow is implicated in frostwork formation in the literature but no one's done the work to prove it, so here we are.

On 4/20 I drove to Rapid City for a Hydrology Conference to score some free high fructose corn syrup snacks and blend in with the boffins. They managed to cross wires in the one conference room by playing microphone audio from an adjacent room's speaker and couldn't rectify the issue for some time, so the presenting speaker just had to shout over the erroneous PA system. Watching one presentation while listening to another was a difficult experience.

An actual exploration trip was promised if I stayed at the park until the weekend. In the meantime, I ventured to Custer State Park for a 'run'. However, upon reaching the park it became apparent that the friction coefficient of the ground was not permissible for running... such a shame. Instead, I hiked the loop to Black Elk Peak and back in icy temps, sheltering in the abandoned firewatch station for a tuna lunch (fig 5., fig 6.). When the day of the second Wind Cave trip came around, Adam, the organizer, bailed and instead Chris turned up with two newer cavers from the local Paha Sapa Grotto, adorned in jeans and OSHA cowboy boots – yeehaw. Until this point I'd only seen the same route through Wind Cave to the Buffalo Gap sample site 3 or 4 times so finally deviating from this was quite exciting. The route to our planned leads was revealed to be beyond a sketchy climb that the group was not prepared to negotiate. Instead, we began mopping up crappy side leads the original explorers hadn't bothered seeing through to completion, of which there are many. Wind is a bit like a playground for horizontal caving; relatively clean, extremely dry, not much sustained crawling, plenty of scrambly climbs and fun boulder hopping, and a very pleasant 11°C. We bagged approx. 400ft of new survey over 9 hrs or so – mostly scratchy twisty nasty passage, accessed through liberal use of the conservation hammer, that had very obviously been ignored for a reason. I knew it was about time to leave when the cowboys began making noises about critical race theory and expressing incorrect views against gender affirming care for kids – yikes. A cool trip, questionable personnel. But that's what you get in a country where pro-life means forced birth and education is secondary to the right to depopulate a school yard with a constitutionally protected death machine ☹️

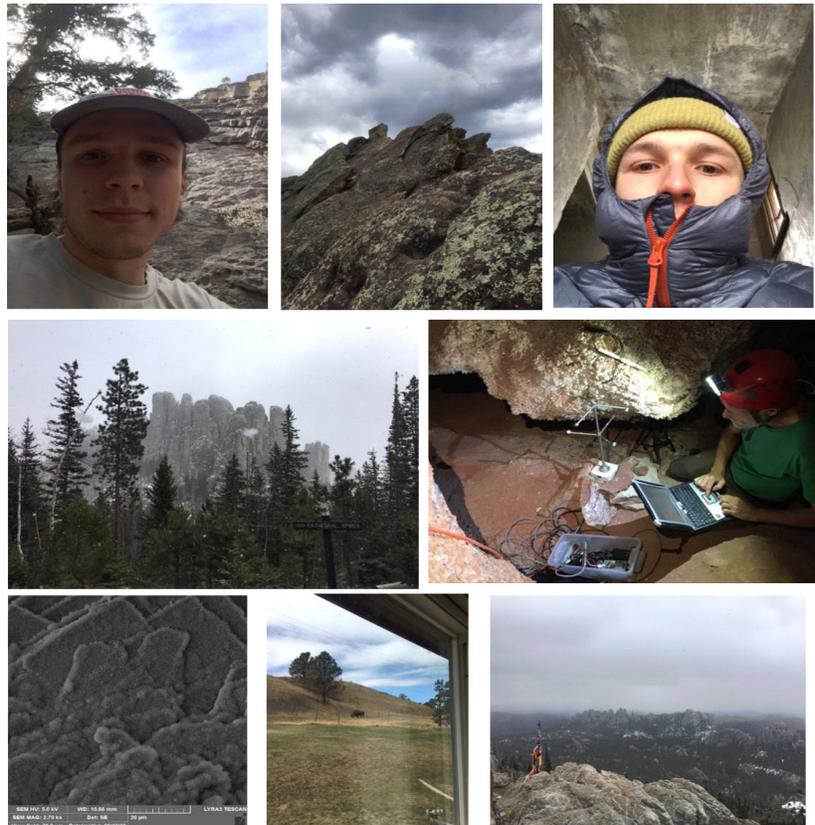


Figure 1. (top left) happy boy in Colorado. Figure 2. (top middle) first flatiron summit. Figure 3. (middle right) Andreas fettles the sonic. Figure 4. (bottom left) scanning electron micrograph of biofilm coated mineral. Figure 5. (top right) cold boy on Black elk Peak. Figure 6. (bottom right) Black Elk Peak summit view. Figure 7. (middle bottom) bonus pic of bison from park residence window. Figure 8. (middle left) Cathedral Spires.

*Gorge Belay, rumored mullet*