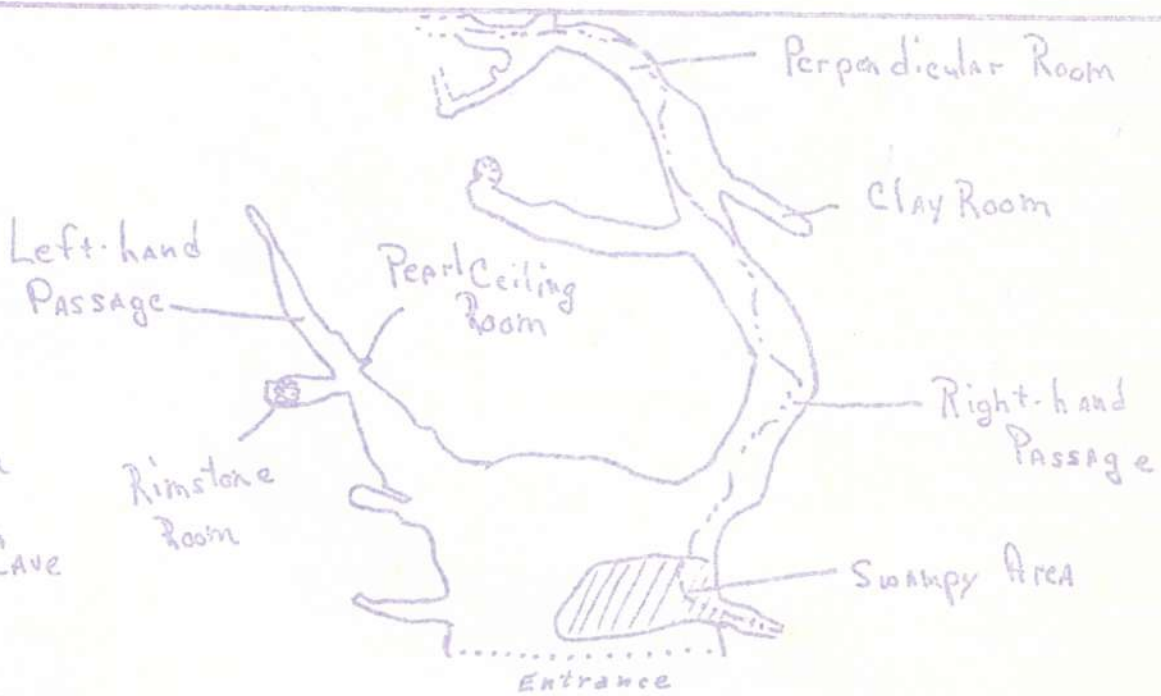
THE Rope's End

Published by Chaminade Student Grotto
Member of the M. S. S.

Volume - 5 June 1, 1972 Number - 10



Rough Sketch
MAP of Wick's Cave

Editor - Rick Yelton
Moderator - Bro. Herman Drees S.M.
Reporters: Mike Lackner
Rich Brooks

Chaminade Grotto
c/o Chaminade College Prep.
425 S. Lindbergh Blvd.
St. Louis, Mo. 63131

WICKS CAVE (REY 002)

Bro. Herman Drees
SM

[Ed. Note: As this is the last issue of the year, we thought it would be a good idea to print an example of our scientific work. We turned this report and the map of this cave in to the MSS at the Spring meeting.]

The cave entrance has evidently been enlarged by back-flooding at some past age, but not for many years now, perhaps since the end of the Pleistocene. The interior of this large entrance room is protected by a natural rampart, a mound of dirt perhaps 6-8' high, formed by material that washed from the sloping top of the bluff above. The drip line is about half way from the rampart crest to a line below the rock roof that forms the cave ceiling entranceway. The drip line runs slightly west of magnetic north.

The entrance itself is about 55 feet wide by 6 feet high and almost at the interior end of the sloping rampart, which has effectively blocked the small cave stream forming a swampy floor area which has since worked a drainage channel for itself along an exceedingly low un-

[Cont. Pg.4]

A SPLICE OF KNOWLEDGE ON ROPES

Rick Brooks
****

With the wide use of ropes in caving today, it is important to know how to care for these fibers that we depend on so much. To keep these ropes in top condition, it is important that a thorough inspection be made from time to time. Here are some things to look for.

1. Look for worn spots and broken fibers on the outside. No matter how tiny the worn spot may be, it is a sure indication that the rope is greatly worn on the inside.

2. Inspect the inner fibers by untwisting the rope in various places. If the inner strands are bright, clear, and unspotted, most of its strength has probably been preserved.

3. In general, a rope that has lost its feel of stretch or has become limp or in which the fibers have lost their luster and appear dry and brittle should be looked at with suspicion.

Since even a moderate load on a rope in which there is a kink may overtax the fibers at the point

[Cont. Pg. 6]

JUNIOR CAVE TRIPS

[Ed. Note.: There was a demand from the Junior divison for two trips planned exclusively for Juniors.]

COX CAVE (PUL 087)
Mike Lackner
March 26, 1972.

On this Sunday morning the first Junior cave trip consisting of Fred Minert, Rick Yelton, Richard Ritz, Bro. Drees and myself drove down to Cox Cave. We took Yelton's car which produced oscillation wavelengths a mile high. (If you want to lose weight this trip is a must.) After arriving at the area near the cave, we donned our caving apparel in the brisk country air.

The terrain surrounding the cave entrance is wooded and hilly. On arriving at the cave entrance, a small stream was noticed flowing from the cave into a pond on a side of a valley of an intermittent stream.

Starting our endeavor into the cave we followed the stream up the current. In this stream passage the height of the ceiling varied from 5'to 6'. The stream never amounts

[Cont. Pg. 7]

EDITORIALS

We will print any response which is written in a well phrased manner and we retain the right to change spelling or phrasing in order to retain the quality of the paper.

This is the last issue of the paper I will edit. I would like to thank first my typewriter which has never broken down, the copying machine and the post office. But without Mike Bender the Post Office would never have gotten the paper. With Mike, the O'Connells, Karpowicz and Bro. Drees, the copying machine would never have gotten the chance to smear ink on all the pages.

But all kidding aside the paper has improved greatly and I hope it continues to do so under the new editor.

I would like to wish our president John White success in the world outside Chaminade and thank him for the Grotto for all the work he has done for us.

I would also like to say good-bye to Joe Lambright who is moving to Ohio and wish him good

[Cont. Pg. 8]

MINUTES OF THE CHAMINADE STUDENT GROTTO

SIXTEENTH GENERAL MEETING, APRIL 26, 1972

Meeting called to order at 3:05pm.
Minutes of last meeting were read.
Treasurer's Report - Expenses: $15 worth of cave and topographic maps were bought; $5 invested in MSS patches to be sold back to regular members @ 50¢; $5 MSS dues

...Old Business...

Rope's End - The deadline is May 15 and to have the right to vote you must have an article accepted.
Letter - We will submit a unique Grotto letter and find out the faculty response.
"T"-Shirt - We will vote on a design at a special meeting Wednesday May 10 after school in Room 301.
Cave Radio - We are going to turn it back to the builder and get a refund on our investment by May 12.
Nominations - The Nominating Committee reported its recommendations in the form of a newsletter. A list of active regular members will be put up at the special meeting.
Admendment - The question of allowing people outside Chaminade to hold some type of membership in our Grotto will be discussed at the special meeting Wednesday. Voting will take place at a regular meeting.

...New Business...

Calendar - 4/29 MVOR
4/30 Mapping trip to Jefferson County.
5/6 Rockwoods and Tower Pit.
Meeting adjourned at 4:00pm.

SEVENTEENTH GENERAL MEETING, MAY 17, 1972

Meeting called to order at 3:05.
The minutes of the last meeting were read.
Treasurer's Report: none given.

...Old Business...

Admendment - The constitutional admendment for "associate members" (students of other high schools having some rights in our Grotto) was explained. It was suggested that they have the right to vote but not the right to hold office. Their requirements would be the same except they would have to have the approval of the officers. Some alternate meeting time would have to be arranged. The voting will be at the next meeting.
Elections - The results of the elections:

Rick Yelton - President
Tom Conran - Vice-President
Mike Karpowicz - Editor of Publications
Mike Bender - Secretary
Mike O'Connell - Treasurer

Length of tenure is one semester.

[Cont. Next Page]

MINUTES, from Pg. 3

Equipment - Mike Karpowicz will investigate the possibility of a chain-link ladder for Grotto use.

...New Business...

Calendar - 5/13 Great Scotto Cave
5/20 Skagga Cave

Summer Caving - Bro. Drees will be at Chaminade this summer so trips this summer are a possibility. For information call Bro. at 993-4400.

Trip Reports - 4/30 Jefferson County map work - Steve O'Connell.
5/3 Special Meeting - Bro Drees.
5/6 Rockwoods and Tower Pit - Bro. Drees.

Meeting adjourned at 4:00.

WICKS CAVE, from Pg. 2

decut of the west wall of a small northward nitch of the room. A brief examination of the outside slope to the north did not reveal the stream's exit.

The main room is about 120' long by 40' wide and runs slightly south of west. Its most outstanding feature is the whole system of pendants outlining the position of the former cave stream about 4' above the present mud floor. To the right rear of the room is a natural bridge at about the same height as as the former cave stream, and just beyond it is a high level natural bridge marking the last evidence of the highest level of channeling, more clearly evident further into the right hand passage. The swampy area of the right side of the room has the unnerving property of giving off irregular popping sounds from your previous footprints as marsh gas bubbles to the surface and the bubbles pop. This indicates the organic decay taking place in continual standing water. The water is nowhere more than about 2" deep but with the thin coating of mud effectively prevents oxygen from reaching the decay products.

The main room has 4 small channels leading from it in addition to the 2 main passages at the rear. The 2 small channels on the right side end soon, the first being the stream exit niche which ends in about 15'; the second was a former small tributary and only about 25' long. The first small channel on the left side heads southeast as if in continuation of the former upper right-hand passage, but at a much lower level, and ends in about 30'. The second small channel on the left has a maze-like entrance chamber to a small dome room with a central mound of dirt. It ends in this room, about 15' from the main room. Nowhere in the main room or these small passages are there any secondary cave formations.

The left-hand passage entrance is marked by a 3' cliff on a southward extension of the far end of the main room. This passage is decorated. It soon turns and again heads west then divides with 2 small left-hand passages coming around a rock blockage from the same source area. This is a wet area with several small rimstone dammed pools (water-filled) containing cemented cave pearls in the pool floors. This tributary passage soon pinches out. Just beyond this tributary on the right side of the passage is a broken rimstone dam about 2 1/2' high. By lying on your side and scooting behind this dam you find half of yourself in a very small room uninteresting except for a pocket of cave pearls in the ceiling marking the now debris-choked channel formerly used by the tributary that had built the breached rimstone dam. The remaining 50' of passage is decorated, partially red clay filled, forming a rising floor higher against the ceiling until a small 4' dome marks the

[Cont. Next Page]

NICKS CAVE, from Pg. 4

passage end. The total linear extent of this left-hand passage is about 280', and it now has no stream.

In contrast, the right-hand passage has an intermittent stream and seems to be a complex 3-level passage formed by this stream in other cycles of erosion. This is the main cave passage and heads WNW. The lowest level contains the stream, the next level (on shelves and breakdown) is the easiest for caving, but the uppermost level (with crushed floor nearly everywhere except right near the entrance room) can be climbed up to and explored. This uppermost level is dry with evidences of former animal inhabitants in small side niches. The two lowest levels cross and re-cross, sometimes as separate passages, sometimes united.

About 150' up this passage a right-hand extension around a rock block forms a Red-Clay Room of the ubiquitous Missouri red clay. Exactly opposite this on top of a 6' shelf of red clay is a tributary left-hand passage. This side passage is a crawlway which extends about 130' on this red clay shelf, with several small domes along the way before it pinches out. No stream evidences are now found in this passage although this could have been the stream source of the uppermost level near the entrance before more recent underground piracy deprived it of its surface water sources.

In the main-passage beyond this side passage there are 2 domes within 60' on the right, both are small and in the midst of much red clay. About 70' beyond the side passage (10' beyond the dome area) a well-decorated low crevice (fault?) crosses the passage trending N 54°, but only extends for 15' with a 3'-4' ceiling. For 30' around this perpendicular fault Room the cave stream is outside the main passage on the right side but with 3 small windows showing it about a foot below the present cave floor.

Further back where the cave stream is still in the cave passage, the passage has flat-roof to a height of 1.5' in the stream channel. After 15' there is a small dome on the right and a 3' high side passage on the left. This dry passage extends back about 40' before pinching out, almost to the same area where the other side passage, now also dry, terminated. Beyond this point the water-crawl that the main passage has now become soon be too tight to penetrate although the water still comes mainly from this source. The total length of this right-hand passage is about 270', or including side passages, a little less than 400'.

Geology. The entrance room, except for its higher back part, seems to be almost entirely in the (Cambrian) Bonneterre formation. The division between this and the overlying Davis formation is clearly evident. The roofs of both main passages show the sandy surface and the characteristic "salt and pepper" appearance of the Davis.

The mud floor of the entrance room is tan-brown clay; the right-hand passage then has red clay (chocolate) to the first two main rooms until the Red Clay Room where the red clay seems to be overlying the lower brown clay. In both main passages there is almost a sudden appearance of the characteristic Missouri red cave clay.

Bedrock is evident at the drop-off entrance of both passages and under a thin cover-ing of loose gravel in most parts of the stream channel. Breakdown blocks and shelves are evident in the right-hand passage.

The chief lack in the neighborhood of the cave has several other channels, some small enough for only a fist to fit in, but 2 or 3 big enough to crawl in for 10' to 15' (in-some filled).

Archeology. Between the beginning of the capping in December, 1971 and its finish in March, 1972 some amateur archeologists dug in the NE corner of the entrance room, leaving an exposed hole, no grid lines evident, but much trash scattered around. This could be a likely spot for Indian habitation but no smoke signs are evident on the ceiling, so it

(Cont. Next Page)

WICKS CAVE, from Pg. 5

Biology. Few bats were seen there (during hibernation time) but there were ceiling stains that showed evidence of former bat inhabitation. The two widest rooms in the left-hand passage and the two widest rooms in the right-hand passage show evidences of former bat colonies.

One cave cricket and one immature (1" long) black salamander were seen in the right-hand passage near the Perpendicular Fault Room.

The topmost level of the 3-level section of the cave showed in dry dusty pockets seeds and other evidences of former racoon habitation. But this must have been very very long ago.

One rather recent(?) partially mummified baby rat(?) remains were found on a dry shelf in the second large room of the right-hand passage.

Secondary Formations. In addition to the formations already noted, popcorn covered sections of the wall in the near left-hand passage and helectites were found on the ceiling shortly up the passage from this. Helectites were also noted in the right-hand passage up to the first main room. (Small pendants also appear later in this same passage.)

Note. Most caves in Missouri Cambrian strata are rather small. In comparison Wicks Cave is unusual in its size, and especially in the size of its entrance room.

ROPE, from Pg. 2

of the bend, great care should be taken to avoid kinking. Kinks are most likely to occur when a rope is wet. To avoid kinks in a rope, lay it out until it is dry. NOTE: The inside fibers may be wet when the outside appears dry. Rope put away wet will quickly mildew and break when any pressure is put on it.

To preserve a rope always coil it. Always coil it in the direction of its lay, i.e. if the strands seem to be twisted from the bottom left of one end to the top right of that end the lay is right-handed and should be coiled clockwise. Likewise if the strands seem twisted from the bottom right of one end to the top left of that end the lay is left-handed and should be coiled counter-clockwise.

The best way to keep a rope from fraying (unraveling) is to use the end splice on it.

End Splice. This is also referred to as the "back splice". This is a permanent fastening on the end of a rope to prevent fraying. Begin by making a crown knot. To make the crown knot, unlay the end of the rope far enough so the knot or splice may be completed, then bring strand 1 down between strands 2 &3, forming a loop. Pass strand 2 across the loop thus formed, so that it will lie between the loop and strand 3. Strand 3 is now passed through the first loop. Then splice back the loose ends.

Strand 1 is passed over the nearest strand (A) on the main rope and under the second (B) diagonally, almost at right angles to the twist of the strand. Strand 2 & 3, in turn, are spliced back, 2 over (B) and under (C), and 3 over (C) and under (A). Each strand is tucked under but one strand of the main rope at one time. To make a smooth tapering splice roll the finish product between your hands vigorously. In splicing ropes, a smooth, b bluntly pointed, hardwood stick or marlin-spike is very convenient for raising the strands.

WICKS CAVE, from Pg. 5

Biology. Few bats were seen there (during hibernation time) but there were ceiling stains that showed evidence of former bat inhabitation. The two widest rooms in the left-hand passage and the two widest rooms in the right-hand passage show evidences of former bat colonies.

One cave cricket and one immature (1" long) black salamander were seen in the right-hand passage near the Perpendicular Fault Room.

The topmost level of the 3-level section of the cave showed in dry dusty pockets seeds and other evidences of former racoon habitation. But this must have been very very long ago.

One rather recent(?) partially mummified baby rat(?) remains were found on a dry shelf in the second large room of the right-hand passage.

Secondary Formations. In addition to the formations already noted, popcorn covered sections of the wall in the near left-hand passage and helectites were found on the ceiling shortly up the passage from this. Helectites were also noted in the right-hand passage up to the first main room. (Small pendants also appear later in this same passage.)

Note. Most caves in Missouri Cambrian strata are rather small. In comparison Wicks Cave is unusual in its size, and especially in the size of its entrance room.

ROPE, from Pg. 2

of the bend, great care should be taken to avoid kinking. Kinks are most likely to occur when a rope is wet. To avoid kinks in a rope, lay it out until it is dry. NOTE: The inside fibers may be wet when the outside appears dry. Rope put away wet will quickly mildew and break when any pressure is put on it.

To preserve a rope always coil it. Always coil it in the direction of its lay, i.e. if the strands seem to be twisted from the bottom left of one end to the top right of that end the lay is right-handed and should be coiled clockwise. Likewise if the strands seem twisted from the bottom right of one end to the top left of that end the lay is left-handed and should be coiled counter-clockwise.

The best way to keep a rope from fraying (unraveling) is to use the end splice on it.

End Splice. This is also referred to as the "back splice". This is a permanent fastening on the end of a rope to prevent fraying. Begin by making a crown knot. To make the crown knot, unlay the end of the rope far enough so the knot or splice may be completed, then bring strand 1 down between strands 2 &3, forming a loop. Pass strand 2 across the loop thus formed, so that it will lie between the loop and strand 3. Strand 3 is now passed through the first loop. Then splice back the loose ends.

Strand 1 is passed over the nearest strand (A) on the main rope and under the second (B) diagonally, almost at right angles to the twist of the strand. Strand 2 & 3, in turn, are spliced back, 2 over (B) and under (C), and 3 over (C) and under (A). Each strand is tucked under but one strand of the main rope at one time. To make a smooth tapering splice roll the finish product between your hands vigorously. In splicing ropes, a smooth, b bluntly pointed, hardwood stick or marlin-spike is very convenient for raising the strands.

JUNIOR TRIPS, from Pg. 2

to a roaring torrent, but remained only a small trickle. We followed it until we came to the first right. But noticing that the passage went on we followed it. It led to a dome room about 26' high whose walls were covered with red clay. We backtracked to the first fork and promptly scrambled up to the main cave.

We kept to the right choosing to explore the lesser of the two passages in length. At the first curve there were some very interesting formations. The ceiling is covered with stalactites and certain areas of the wall have flowstone on them. About fifteen feet further in the cave one came to a thirty foot chimney. At the base of this waterfall there are several crawls one of which joins the main passage further down. Following the main passage we came to a deep sump which terminates in a dome room with a large piece of breakdown overlooking the passage. On this rock we found a white fungus growth in a small depression in the rock. The floor in this area consisted of red clay evident on our clothes. We retraced our steps and proceeded to explore the left side of the main passage.

We climbed over a mud bank and slid down a steep side of the same bank. The ceiling height was about 15'. On the right side of this room there is a fifty foot pit known as Karp's Pit. Yelton wanted to explore the pit but Bro. Dress advised against it because we didn't have a safety line. (Bro. should have let him go down, we might have gotten lucky.)

Proceeding along in this passage we came to the first of the large pits. It could be possible to cross the pit but on the right hand side there is a small crawl which detours this pit. But the crawl ends in a tricky swing-around point. Once on the other side of this first big pit we descended to its bottom by following a side passage on the left hand side. We retraced our steps and followed this main passage until we came to the second pit. We had to swing around some large pieces of breakdown that acted as unique bridges.

After this obstacle the main passage splits into two. The stream passage is extremely tough and slow going. It is mainly a straddle. But the upper passage is relatively easy. We followed this passage past a few clay covered sumps and then came to another pit. It was necessary to crawl around it on the left side. The passage after this pit opens up quite a bit with the ceiling height becoming about 25'! We continued until we happened upon a steep dome room. We looked up into it, squeezed Rita into it and then tried to pull him out. We found a deposit of green clay in it.

We then turned around and headed back to the car through the rain.

******* ******* ********* ******** ******* ******* *****

PIQUET CAVE (PUL 111)

Rick Yelton

April 6, 1972

This is one cave trip I will never forget. We assembled at Chaminade the Thursday of our Easter vacation. "We" included: Rick Behlmann (medium at the wheel), Troy Brennan (hippy freak) Tim Jordan (Bullet), Dick Albair (fat man) Mike Grady (shorty), Bro. Dress (Vulture) and myself. N.B.: Before leaving we made plans to be back by 7:00pm.

We took the 2 hour ride down to Waynesville without too much trouble. We got off at the correct exit and then hit the back roads. But they often hit back and when we reached the top of a hill the car stopped. We got out and checked the motor. Behlmann who was our master mechanic (?) noticed that the radiator was overheated so we poured our canteen water into the little monster. We ate lunch boys with a cow while we let the car rest. After a while Rick also noticed that the car was getting no gas. So we pushed the car so that the car was pointing downhill. It started. We piled in after saying good-bye to the cows and headed to the cave.

(Cont. next Page)

JUNIOR TRIPS, from Pg.7

We arrived at the cave, tried to find the owner and then met a neighbor who said it would be allright to go in. We put on our caving clothes and walked to the cave. At the base of the hill in which the cave is located there was a lake which we made good use of. The entrance is 60' by 40' with a stream coming out of it. There is an extremely large amount of breakdown blocks in this room. The ceiling had a few bats on it, and showed some areas of bat stain indicating bat inhabitation. There is a small room to the upper left of the room. But the main passage follows the stream to the right.

We followed the stream passage alternating between walking in the stream or on the clay covered shelves. We finally came to a spot where we had to wade through the 3' stream. We were looking for the Royal Rooms. We took the first right possible.

About twenty feet in the crawl we came to a passage that ran perpendicular to the crawl. We explored the left side first. It had a 30' ceiling and was about 4' wide. It had many shelves on either side. It ended in a pile of breakdown. We backtracked and explored the right side. It was like the left side but a little wider. On the ceiling were hibernating bats of the colony variety. This passage ended in a dome with gravel on the floor. On both sides there was an abundance of formations.

We continued along into the crawl. We stayed to the right. It was our first mistake. This passage is much smaller than then the left and was harder to fit Albair and Behlmann through. We finally came to a room where we could stand up. The floor was extremely muddy but there was no stream. Following it we first came to a few beautiful columns and then a room filled with stalactites. The passage ended in a dome on top of a breakdown pile. We then looked at the side passage on the left of the dome room and saw it also ended ina small dome room. We don't think we found the King's or Queen's Room.

When we got back outside we took a little dip in the pond. The water was cold but it cleaned our muddy clothes well and refreshed us a great deal in the ninety degree heat.

We then took off on the fun leg of our trip. We had just filled up in Rolla and were trying to get back on the highway. The car stopped and wouldn't start. Rick called home and was told the trouble was a fuel pump. We bought a fuel pump and tried to put on ourselves but we couldn't do it. We made a second call home telling them we would be late.

It ended we were forced to put our trust into the surgeon-like hands of an incompetent mechanic. We first realized our mistake when he had trouble backing the tow-truck. When the car was finally pushed into the garage we went to dinner at the "big" dinner in town. When we got back our boys just found the fuel pump. We then called home to tell we would be even later. We finished the job only after replacing a sprocket that had fallen down the drain, fixing somebody's axle, and then giving us a jump. We pulled in at Chaminade at 12:00 midnight not too eager for the Caving-Camping Weekend that was the next day.

EDITORIALS, from Pg. 2

luck also.

The year in general has been a fruitful one. Through the efforts of Jeff Blum our mapping output has increased a good deal, not only in quantity but in quality. Two pit maps will join the number of those already inked and turned in before next fall.

As for summer caving we plan to do as much as possible. It will mainly be scientific work but if you want to go along call me at 993-4050 or Bro. Drees at 993-4400. We welcome people from other grottoes.

I would wish everyone a nice summer and hope to see them again in fall when my reign begins.

Rick Velton
Editor of Publications
Chaminade Student
Grotto.

New officers

Rick Velton - President
Tom Conran - Vice-Pres.
Mike Karpowicz - Editor
Mike Bender - Secretary
Mike O'Connell - Treasurer