

December 1987

Alaskan Caver, Volume 8, No. 5, December 1987

Mike Mauser

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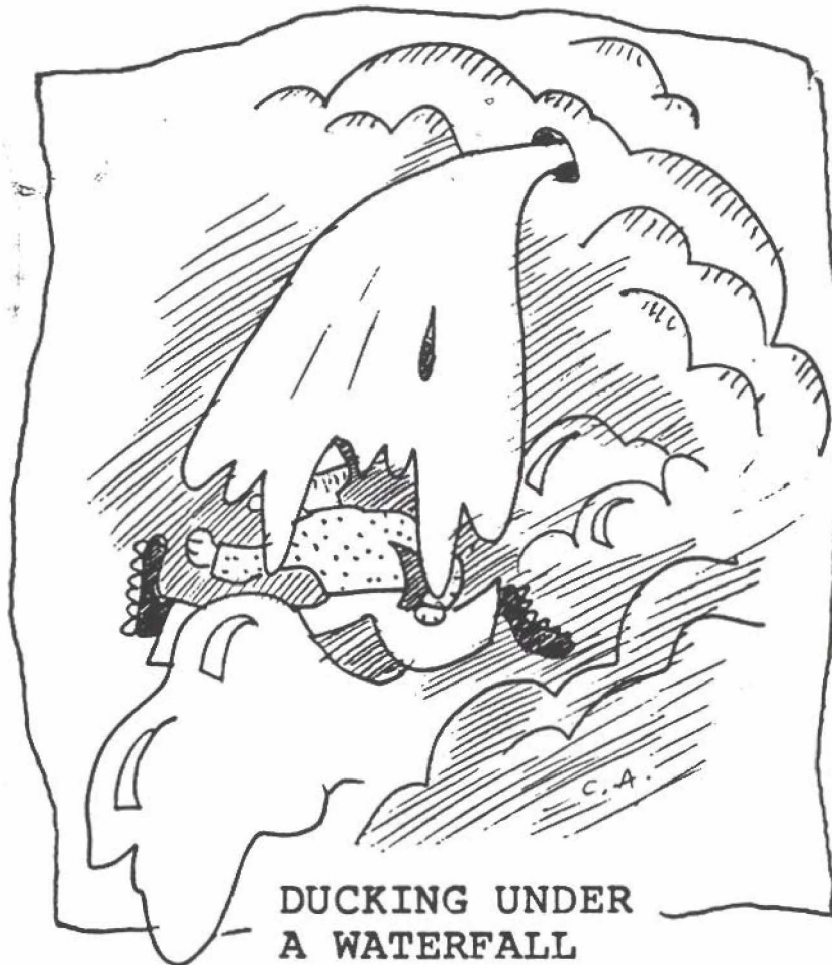
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The Alaskan Caver

Volume 8 Number 5

December 1987



July 20, 1987 Exit Glacier Trip

By Carlene Allred

While on vacation to the main part of Alaska with relatives we stopped by the Exit Glacier near Seward. Those who went past the "tourist view" area were Kevin, Aaron (Kevin's cousin), and me. We walked up the edge of the right side of the glacier (looking up), passing the lower opening, and continued on towards the further waterfall entrance. Entering required fording, climbing on ice and rock, and ducking under waterfalls. By the time we were well inside we were mostly soaked. The cave went about 70 feet and contained the stream, waterspouts gushing from holes in the walls, scallops, and banding.

On the way back we stopped at the other entrance described in Vol. 8, No. 4. We found it to be similar to the drawing, only lower, and more spacious inside.

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Articles, your trip reports, announcements, and letters to the Editor should be sent to Mike Mauser, Editor, 6631 Teshler Dr., Anchorage, AK 99507.

Opinions expressed within are not necessarily the opinions of The Alaskan Caver, the Glacier Grotto, or the NSS.

Membership in the Glacier Grotto, is open to all interested in Alaskan cave discovery, exploration, description, survey, mapping, photography, hydrology, morphology, biology, geology, history, speleogenesis and other spelean processes, conservation, management, adventures, and the fellowship of other Alaskan cavers. Dues are \$5.00 per year for the first member of a mailing address and \$1.00 for each additional dwelling member. Those living overseas must pay \$2.00 per year more if they wish to receive The Alaskan Caver via air mail.

Dues are due January 1 and are sent to Sam Dunaway, Treas., 7301 Chad St. Anchorage, AK 99518. Those paying for the first time between October 1 and December 31 will be considered paid up for the following year. The year through which you are paid is indicated on your mailing label.

Meetings are called by the President as needed to plan trips, and other special events; anyone desiring to have a meeting called for any reason should notify the him.

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This months cover: EXIT GLACIER GROTTO - looking out and looking in - Scott Mcgee

Members in the News

New Alaskan Cavers: Marshall Merit Moll II, Born in Fairbanks, August 14, 1987; to Sandy and David Moll.

Heath Garrison Nicholls, Born in Salt Lake City, September 8, 1987 to Jim Nicholls and Alyson Walker-Nicholls. (Heath qualifies for Alaskan Cavership because each parent has contributed have contributed to Alaskan caving.)

RUST CREEK CAVE - FINALLY

Trip Report by Kevin Allred

About eight years ago Carlene and I did some cave possibility research and discovered with the help of the Glacier Grotto, a number of promising limestone areas - particularly in Southeast.

One cave entrance described in a geologic report (Reed and Coats, 1941) describes Rust Creek flowing "for a considerable distance" (See the Alaskan Caver Vol.1, No.2) through a cave which is 30 feet high and 40 feet wide at the upper entrance. Living out in the sticks as we do has required a lot of attention these past summers and it happened that there was always something going on to make an expedition too difficult. This summer I - well actually I quit full time work mainly to goof off on this sort of thing. The only price I could find at the time to get flown in and out of Rust Lake which is a mile or less below the cave site was \$1180.00 so took the car with skiff on top to Sitka via ferry and left there June 23 for the 55 mile trip to Patterson Bay - my jumping off point. I wish I hadn't had to be alone, but this is the busy time in Alaska. On the first night there at Patterson two brownies (bears) passed 30 feet on either side but had nothing to do with me. The rain also began on that night and continued for the next three days as my travels did. I approached Rust Creek over a peak marked as being 2058 on which I was amazed to find lots of karst (alpine and subalpine). Close to the summit as I wandered about in the white-out and rain I came upon a line of sink holes especially deep (50 to 75 feet) which were developed along a fault. I climbed down one and it became clogged with snow and breakdown about 50 feet down. I felt that they were all superficial as they appeared to pinch down to mere cracks full of rubble. Most of the other sink holes were clogged 3 to 20 feet down. Further on almost to Rust Creek there were a line of sinkholes with water draining into them which all looked like good promising cave entrances. They were strung along the eastern edge of the band of limestone of which Rust Creek Cave cuts through. I continued on to the meadow upstream from where the Rust Creek Cave entrance should be and set camp up. I knew there was indeed something around the corner there as the canyon ended in an 80 foot wall. The entrance of the cave is fantastic! It is of a squarish shape being 53 feet wide and about 38 feet high and at the time I was there had about 350 to 400 gallons of water per minute pouring down it for there was still a lot of snow melt and the rain didn't help either. I decided to leave my camp at Rust Creek and besides exploring and surveying Rust Creek Cave, strike out with just caving gear to outlying areas. Rather than to go into great detail, here is an outline of what I discovered about the general area:

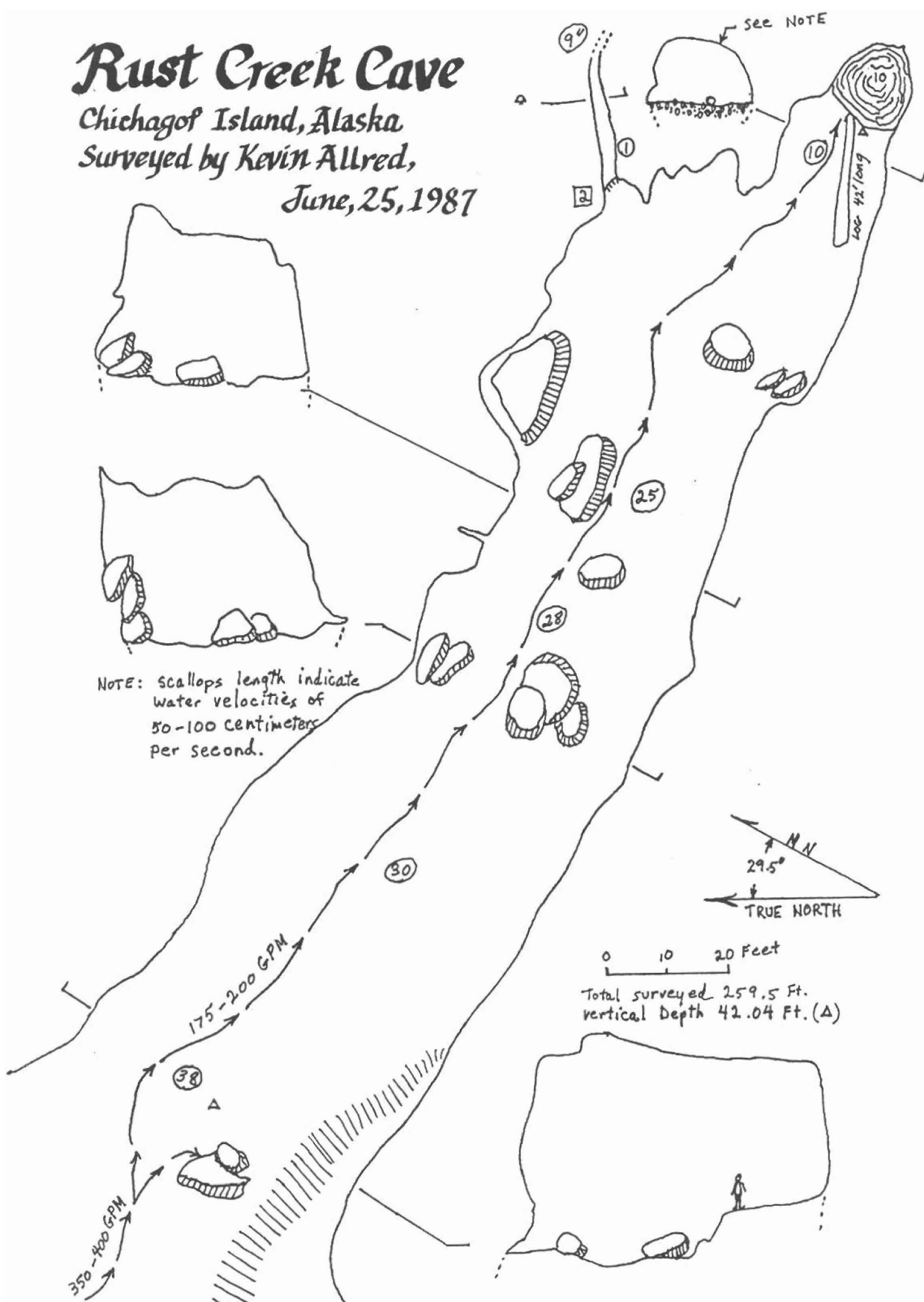
Rust Creek Cave sumped at about 200 feet in and continues as large walk through passage underwater. The last day I was there, the sump had gone down almost 3 feet. I surveyed the upper end but didn't on the resurgence end which goes in 30 or so feet to a large deep pool with vertical sides. I suspect this pool and also the ones further into the cave will go down as the volume of water decreases to the point where it can all seep out through a pile of talus which forms a dam at the lower entrance. The volume of water in the exit appeared about the same as the upper entrance which indicates the cave may be just go straight through conduit and doesn't have another "feeder" into it. Total surveyed in upper section was 259.5 feet. The cave's upper sump followed the volume of the water

Rust Creek Cave

Chichagof Island, Alaska

Surveyed by Kevin Allred,

June, 25, 1987



RUST CREEK CAVE - FINALLY

Trip Report by Kevin Allred

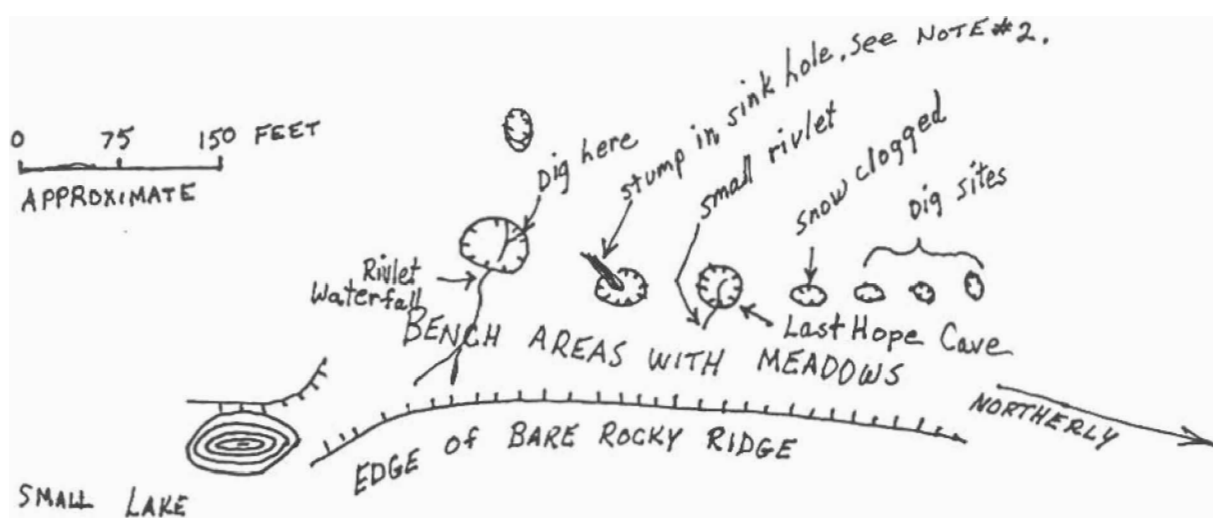
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- A. Basket Bay or Little Basket Bay has a cave known as "the Grotto" which carries the stream from Kook Lake. I don't know how far the stream goes underground, but apparently the Sockeye Salmon spawn on the lake side of the cave. Boats can be taken into lower entrance.
- B. Rust Creek Cave late July through August during dry or relatively dry weather. May need to swim some pools if it does open up.
- C. Black River where it crosses limestone. Also check surrounding areas.
- D. Whitestripe Lake are next to Whitestripe Mountain looked like it may be a good area for cavers where the limestone levels out into meadows there. Whitestripe Mountain is named for its wide limestone band which crosses over it and the next mountain peak just North West.
- E. Two creeks may be resurgences 3 miles North by Northwest of Rust Creek Cave entrance. They come off Northeast edge of limestone band at base of cliffs.

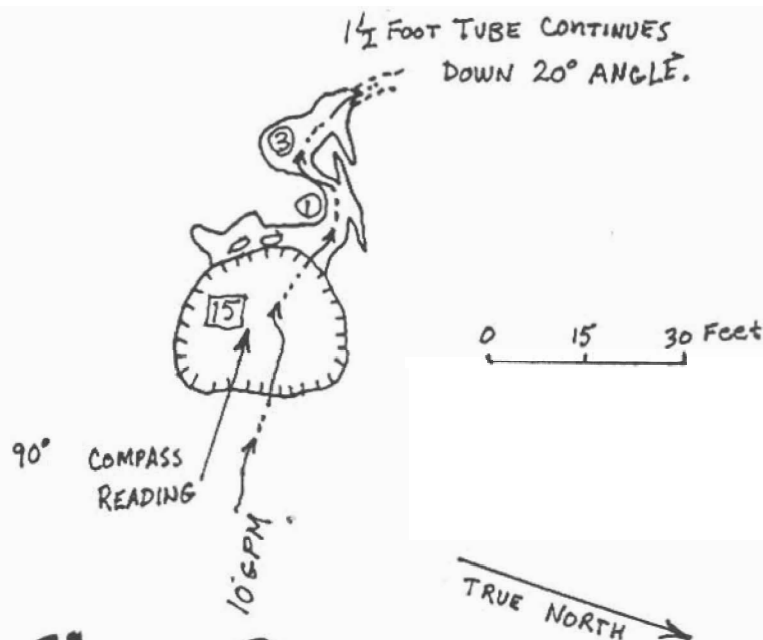
Conclusions - Although most areas on the limestone band where I concentrated looking for caves appeared to have just minor caves with extensive karst features, there is a potential for some more major systems as in Rust Creek Cave. No living cave creatures were found on this trip, but there may be some potential for interesting biological specimens. The regions remoteness makes it very difficult, as in other parts of Alaska, to get to without major efforts. Additionally, the area has probably at least 100 inches of rainfall annually. Because of being so wet, another tarp would be helpful to dry equipment and clothes under and some caves could require wet suits. Also, plenty of time should be allowed to take advantage of the better days on such trips. I think the trip and seeing the country was worth the efforts even without caving too. Its wild country. Chichagof Island is 2,104 square miles. Bellair flying have a deal this summer where a one way seat to the Chichagof mining site is only \$63.00 from Sitka. If there is anyone interested in going, let me know. (P.O. Box 376, Haines, Alaska 99827)



Seven Caves Area

$\frac{1}{2}$ mile East of Rust Creek Cave,
Chichagof Island, Alaska,
June 25, 1987. Sketch by Kevin Allred

NOTE: ① some digging in waterfall sink could yield some cave. 40-50 GPM.
② sink with stump ends in small 4-5' diam. room. Passage onward is chocked with breakdown.



Last Hope Cave
Chichagof Island, Alaska,
Sketch by Kevin Allred
June 25, 1987

STARLIGHT CAVE and EL CAPITAN CAVE J. Rockwell

A postcard from Kevin Allred, postmarked September 9th, reads as follows:

"Just returned from a family car camping trip on Prince of Wales Island [southern Southeastern Alaska]. It was a two week trip and we did a good bit of research until we got into the major karst areas where we checked one sinkhole and mapped a 2198-foot cave we named "Starlight Cave". It goes down 195 feet. So as far as we know, that is the longest and maybe deepest in Alaska so far? [Yes, according to our records. Ed.] There were other sinkholes we did not check. Also mapped about 1500 feet in a known cave called El Capitan Cave. Will continue it next year and it looks very extensive. Will get more info to you later when we finish the one map and write a report. It may be a while. Next summer we hope to get some help? There is some amazing potential down there!!!

Sincerely, Kevin

"P.S We can drive car within 30 feet of entrance of Starlight Cave."

This is a marvelous find and record, and Kevin and Carlene are certainly to be congratulated. Their complete report and map of this record cave will appear in the next issue of The Alaskan Caver.

We should start planning now to go down and give them a hand next summer. We could pool up and drive to Haines and walk on the ferry there, so it need not be excessively costly.

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