

Finding Hilary's Hole and the Psychic Decline

(November 1985 to January 1988)



By Jim Hanhardt
February 19, 2012

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For those who may not be aware, the items in [blue](#) are hyperlinks. If you double click on them, they will provide more information.

These photos are from November 1985.

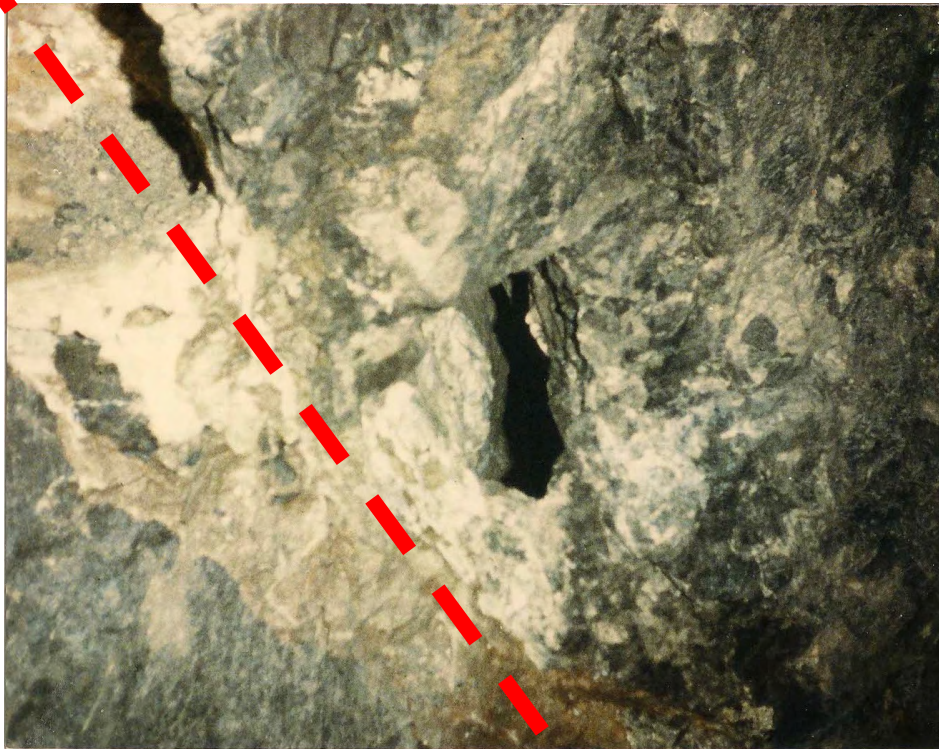


Mike Mackey and Dick Rennel are dumping the 2 ton Coeur d'Alene side dump ore car on the trestle with Jimmy Serril on the "Mule", a homemade rail locomotive.

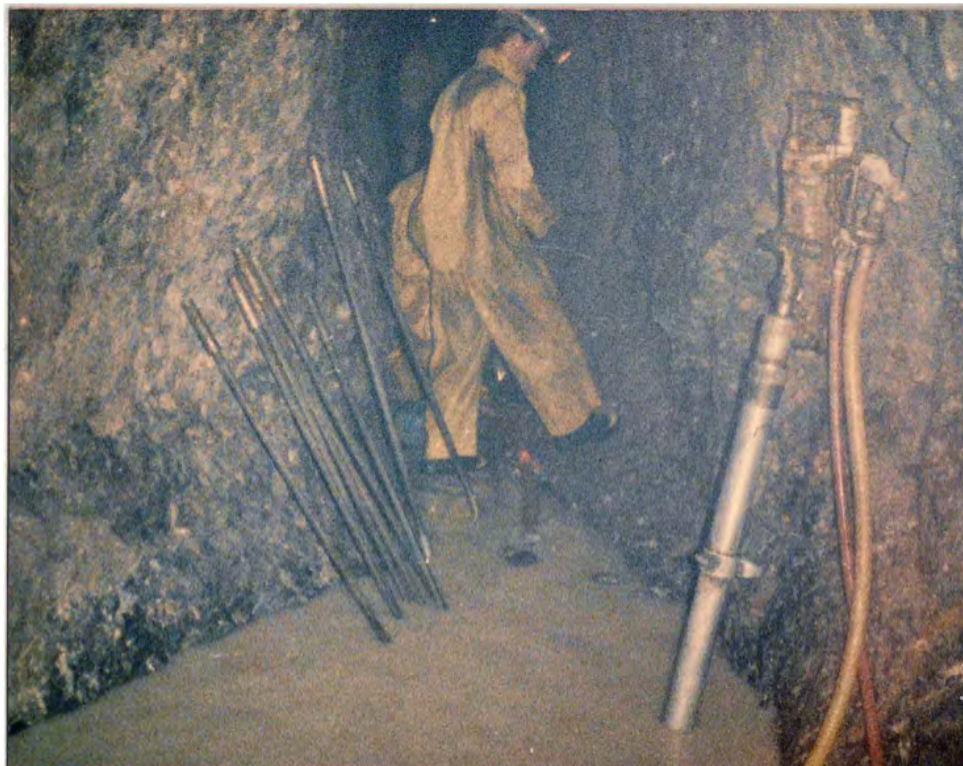


Part of the crew at the portal the day we got snowed out. Kneeling in front are Dick Starr, Alan Sees, and Dick Rennel's son. Standing are Kim Hanna, Dick Rennel, Jim Hanhardt, Jim Serril, Ralph Lewis, unknown, Mike Mackey.

Schnar's
Fault



The photo above is of the breathing hole first encountered. The photo below is taken from the face of the “ballroom” we blasted out to make room to longhole. Kim Hanna is preparing to run the jackleg drill standing in the right foreground. The sectional longhole drill steel is on the left.



Kim Hanna and I longholed (drilled a series of 40' exploration holes) from that ballroom to try to determine what lay ahead, the results indicating we should drive tunnel straight ahead on Schnar's Fault. The fault exhibited increasingly larger cavities the further we drove. The cavities had flowstone, popcorn, and crystals. We had a couple of delays in tunneling as we stopped to dig about in some holes and cracks in the floor.

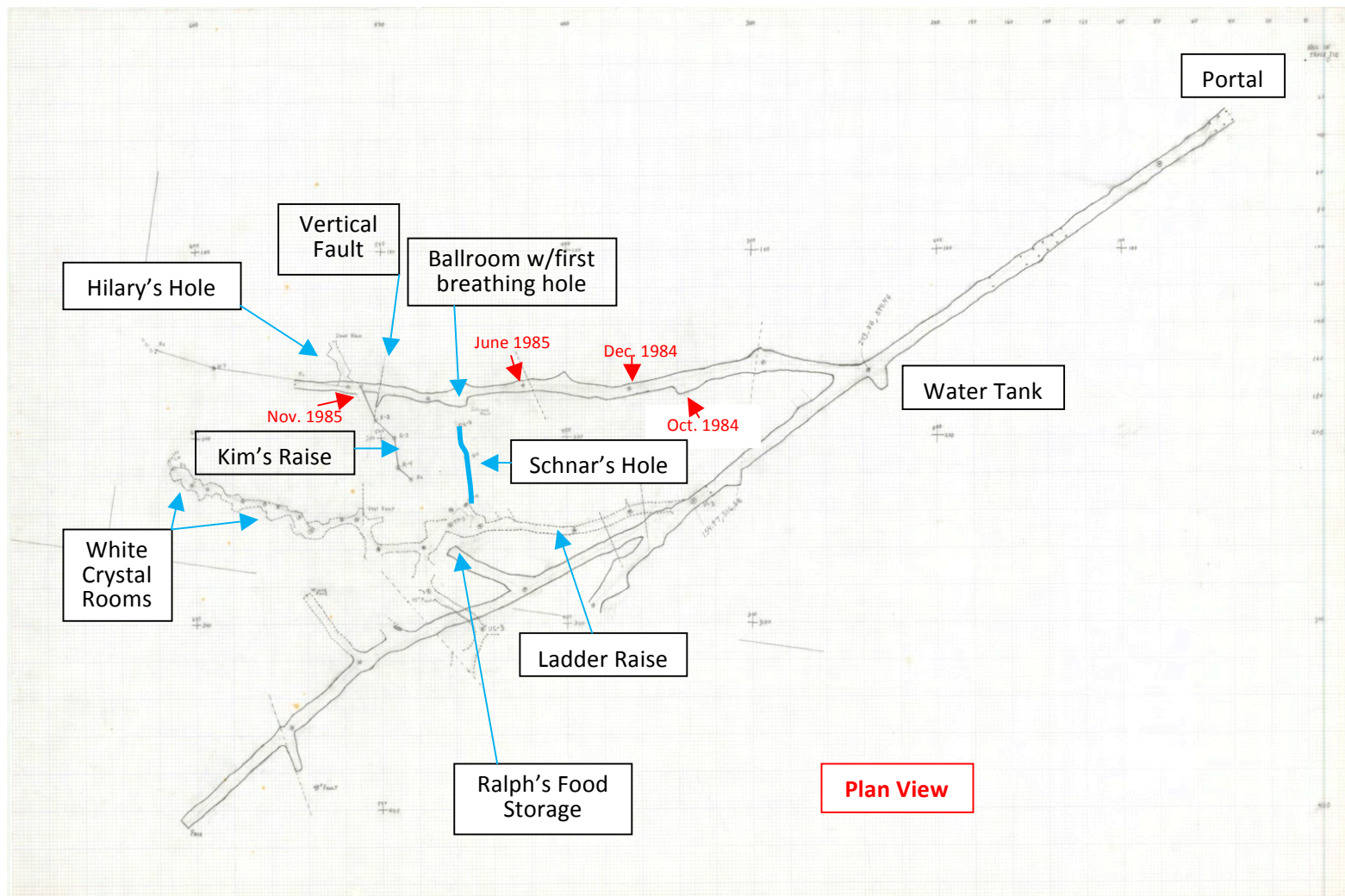
The fault became open enough we didn't need to drill a burn (a cluster of closely spaced parallel holes shot first to provide a space for the rest of the round of blast holes to "slab" to). The last round we took in November 1985 was a 10' slab on the open fault which exposed a hole above the tunnel level passable for about 15' upward with a curious ledge up inside that contained some black manganese oxide crystals. Kim and I had to make our airplane connections to return home to Idaho, so the last thing we did was set off a couple of green smoke grenades on that muckpile (blasted rock). The green smoke all disappeared into the muck ([see Kokoweef newsletter, December, 1985](#)).

In early 1986 I was made Vice President of Mining Operations ([see Kokoweef newsletter, February, 1986](#)). As this meant more obligatory responsibility (personal liability for myself), I contacted the Mine Safety & Health Administration (MSHA) and did the work necessary for our operation to comply with federal regulations, to protect the company especially if we were to find the gold (MSHA could shut us down if we were found in non-compliance).

In April 1986, I got laid off from the Lucky Friday (silver prices had decreased to where the mine was unprofitable), so Ged Miner, Kim Hanna, and I (all of us were between jobs) went out to Kokoweef, mucked out the last round shot in November, and uncovered a crack that was about 18" wide and we got the skinny Kim Hanna to explore it tied off to a rope to a depth of about 12' where it narrowed to become impassable. Then we drove tunnel two more rounds to discover a large void going down ([see Kokoweef newsletter, May, 1986](#)).

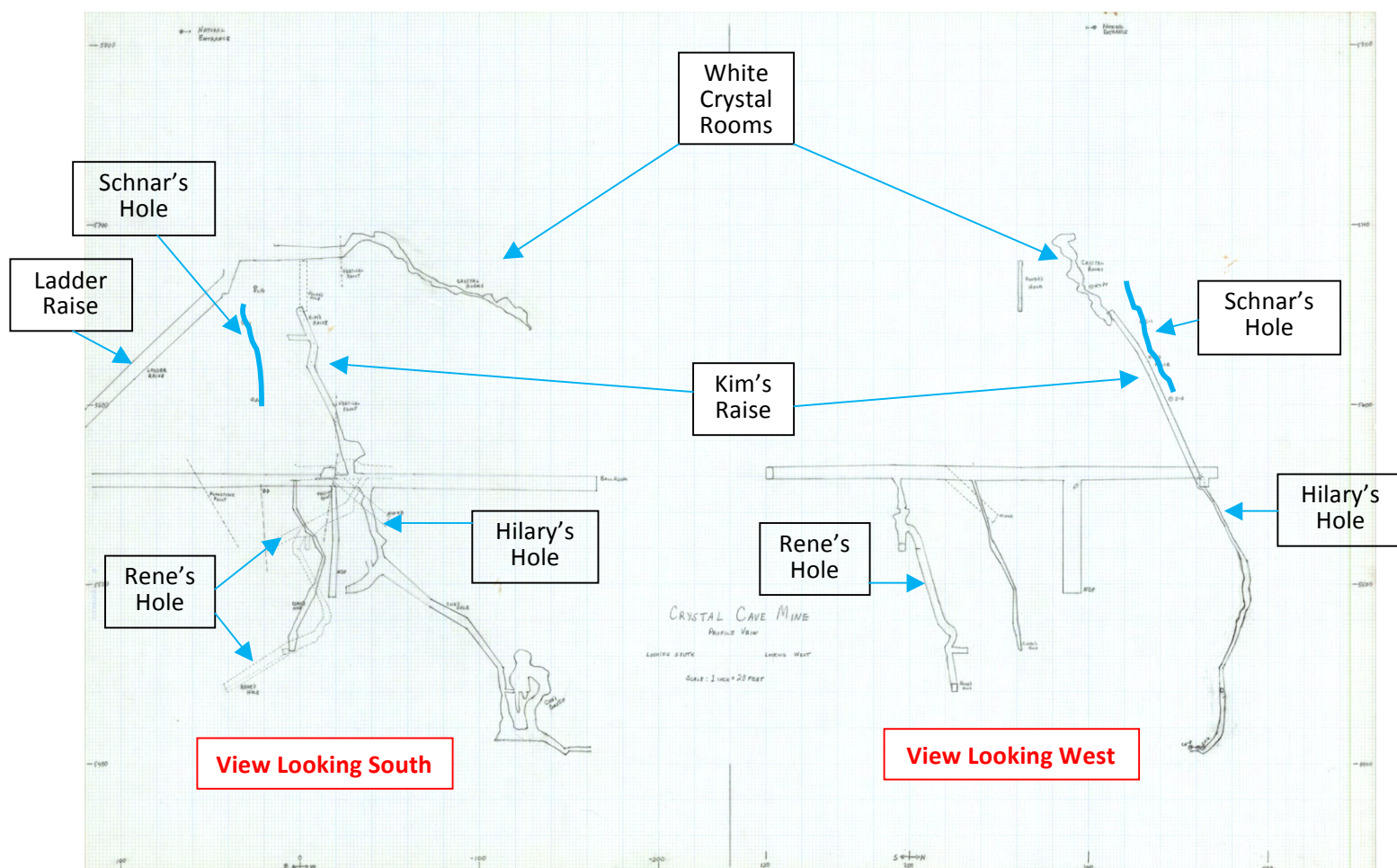
As I recall, we were mucking out the round with the slusher that was about 100' back from the heading. The slusher was used to pull the muck to the end of the rail where we had the rail mucker to load the car that would haul the muck away. The slusher was operated while the muck car was in transit. When the empty car arrived, the slushing stopped so the rail mucker could load the car, which gave Hilary White time to go to the face with a Finn hoe to scrape the muck from the sides and face of the heading. When the car was loaded, it was time to resume slushing, but Hilary hadn't returned from the face which was out of sight because the tunnel curved to the right. I went to check on him and found him lying prone on the floor of the tunnel with his head and shoulders hidden by the hole he was in. I said "Hilary, what are you doing". His reply was unintelligible so after repeating the question and receiving the same unintelligible response, I grabbed his legs and pulled him out of the hole and he excitedly stated "It looks like an elevator shaft down there", and indeed it did.

The May and September 1986 newsletters (see [Kokoweef Newsletter, September, 1986](#)) summarize the rest of that year's tunneling exploration. We had brought Doug New out from Idaho to survey and map some of the tunnels and caverns and I began to develop a 3-D image of the caverns, tunnels, and fault lines. Doug showed me how to operate a survey instrument and record the necessary information as I helped him with the survey. He also explained a bit about mapping.



The raise (tunnel going up, called Kim's Raise) was driven up past the large natural crack that connected to Schnar's hole, and from the survey we realized if we continued we were likely to come up through Beck's Hole in the upper caverns which at that time had been filled with rubble. The only advantage to continuing would be to have another means to pass muck from the upper caverns to where it could be mucked up for disposal.

Hilary's hole proved difficult to work and we made only small advances there. That exploration would be on hold until Che' Prol invented and mastered the techniques that enabled him to make significant advances and discoveries a few years later.



The horizontal tunnel had been driven to the slusher's efficient limit and had encountered a fault going across it. We blasted out another ballroom and drilled longholes but encountered nothing significant. One day as Kim Hanna and I were working in that tunnel, I remarked that if we could just learn how to read the information that was around us in the rock, if we could figure out the geology and the structure and the fault lines, we would know where to look for Dorr's passageway. In the following years I spent a good deal of time studying geology and caverns and came to some conclusions about where a passageway could be.

By July the company was running out of money. I had to get a real job to make a living and hired on to the Stillwater Platinum Mine near Nye, Montana. That winter as I reviewed Doug New's notes and maps in my spare time, I figured out how to perform survey calculations to turn the survey information into azimuths and bearings which could in turn be wrought into the northings, eastings, and elevations of the points that then could be put to graph paper to make a map. Stillwater wasn't paying contract (contract or incentive bonus is where you get paid so

much per unit of completed work, the miner's preferred way to make big money) so that spring I got a job at the Knob Hill Gold Mine in Republic, Washington.

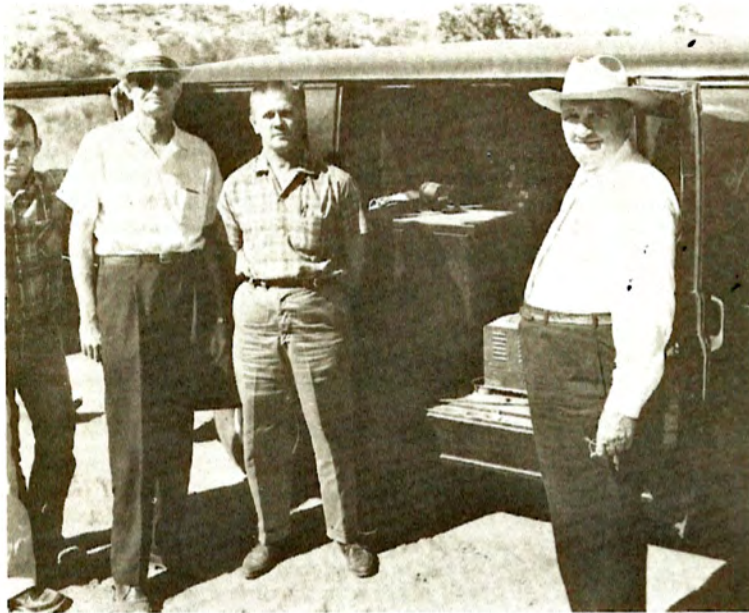
There was an exploration geologist there by the name of Rick Tsauder who had been previously successful in locating silver ore at the Sherman Mine up above Leadville, Colorado. The silver ore was found in ancient caverns termed Paleokarst, and he had figured out that cavern system which allowed that mine to locate a bunch more ore. So I took him the topographical maps of the Kokoweef area and the mine maps I had at that time, told him the legend, and asked "where do we dig, make an X". I remember he grinned slightly, and said "Well, it don't work like that. What you gotta do is study up on cavern development and geology; and you gotta map all the stuff like rock types, fault lines, bedding planes on that mountain that you can see; and then you gotta figure out what your particular cavern system is like. And then, after you've digested a bunch of that information you can kinda make some predictions about what you might expect to find". Now aint that just like science? You seldom get a straightforward answer, but you most always get a bunch more questions. So, he gave me a list of books (mostly on cavern development) to read and I got started. I also got a bunch of geological info on the Kokoweef area.

Applying the cavern development information to the mapping that was done, it became clear there was some potential for caverns on the Vertical Fault.

As part of my effort to gather geological information, I had remembered that someone said old man Culligan (the feller that started the Culligan water softener business) had drilled some wells out there (I assumed they were trying to find water to sell to Los Angeles), and figuring there may have been some well logs (a log kept detailing the rock formations encountered and their depth) with useful info, I called the Culligan man in Spokane who gave me the number for the head office in Northbrook, IL. The head office said old man Culligan did that project after he had retired from the company, but ran the project out of the San Bernardino office and they gave me the number. The San Bernardino office guy confirmed the story and said there was an old retired engineer back in Northbrook that had been good friends with old man Culligan and might know something and gave me his name. Directory Assistance had a number and I called, and the engineer said Culligan drilled them wells, but he didn't know much about the drilling, but he remembered the old drillers name, Steve Reese, didn't know if he was still alive, but thought he used to live in San Bernardino. Directory Assistance had a number and I called, and Steve Reese answers the phone! So I told him the same line I told all the guys I'd called before: "I'm looking for geological information from the well drilling". Steve Reese said they hadn't kept any logs. I asked "What were you drilling for? Water? To sell to Los Angeles?" He said "Nope, Culligan wasn't drilling for water." So I asked what was he drilling for? And Steve Reese told me about Earl Dorr and the Underground River of Gold! (I've still got the notes from that telephone conversation.) Years later I came across a book written by Emmet J. Culligan titled "On Water",

an enthusiastically written account of the virtues of softened water, his successful business ventures, and his quest to find the River, including a letter he wrote to Pres. Kennedy.

Chapter 18



Portable Radar-Pulsing Device

Photocopy of a page (p. 160) from “On Water”. Emmet J. Culligan is on the right.

In the meantime, Larry had acquired a hydraulically powered drill that fit within the tunnels to do some exploration drilling using a 3 ½” rotary tri-cone bit, making a hole large enough to send down the camera the company had at that time (see [Kokoweef Newsletter, November, 1986](#) and [Kokoweef Newsletter, March, 1987](#)). As I recall, they were back past the old muck chute on the main line, drilling for a target about 150’ below the tunnel level. Hilary White’s wife, Rene White, is a psychic and she told them that if they moved to the left a few feet they would hit a void not too far down (18’?). The tight quarters of the tunnel wouldn’t allow the drill machine to get into that position so Ralph Lewis mined out the left wall so the drill could be positioned. As they began to drill, Rene told them they didn’t even have to drill as the spot could be reached by digging down in the floor of the tunnel a few feet southwest of the drill. So Hilary started digging and sure enough, the ground was soft and could be dug without drilling and blasting, and it angled back toward the drill hole and intersected it! (When we did further mining excavation in Rene’s Hole, as it came to be called, we found it convenient to put our 2” compressed air hose

down that hole which was 11' long from the tunnel floor above to the tunnel ceiling below.) And, as was reported to me, Rene correctly predicted the voids and changing ground conditions as the hand excavation proceeded. Then they got down to some hard rock (requiring drilling and blasting) and wanted me to come out and drive a decline being directed by Rene's psychic abilities.

Photo of the start of Rene's Hole. Hilary White is in the hole and Bill Herkert's foot is on the platform.



Photo showing the drill on the left and drill stems on the right. Bill Herkert is in the white shirt and Rene White is in the red hard hat. I was told that the woman in the sunglasses and cane was a blind Indian woman who came to visit that day; she required assistance and the use of the cane until she got underground, and then navigated the tunnels on her own with no assistance or cane, another one of the odd happenings at Kokoweef.



I quit the job at the Knob Hill Mine in Republic, Washington to come and drive that decline. Rene said a passage lay 3 body lengths ahead. We drove the decline 18 to 20 ft; no passageway resulted. It was then assumed that it was 3 Lemurian body lengths, Lemurians being giants who had inhabited the area anciently, now extinct. We drove decline some more with Rene's assurance we would be to the River before Thanksgiving. We drove more than 32' of decline to the East, drilling with a jackleg and mucking out with shovels and 5 gallon buckets; then we took a break for Thanksgiving. As we regrouped after Thanksgiving, we discussed the psychic information. It was plain that the psychic information was inaccurate with regard to length (assuming Lemurians to be less than 10 ft) and time (Thanksgiving had come and gone). We were assured that psychic information was accurate with regard to direction, which of the three (length, time, & direction) is of the most value (well, given enough time, you can produce enough length to get to the target; if your aim ain't right, time and length ain't going to matter). Rene had us start declining to the Northeast from a point 24 ft or so west of the bottom of the decline we had been driving. We got pretty efficient at driving decline as we came up with a ladder-winch-bucket system for mucking and many investors helped with the effort. We reduced the decline face to 3' x 4' (just big enough to work a D-handled shovel) and were blasting 4' rounds. Every other round (8' advance), we brought in Rene, strapped her in a Stokes basket (that's a rescue stretcher for transporting injured persons), lowered her to the face where she would do her psychic business and line us up for the next 8' with a wooden pole. The direction would change over time as we swung to West-northwest, Northeast, East, and then East-southeast, eventually reaching over 100' below track level. When we inquired as to the change in direction, Rene thought that her psychic ability may be indicating the easiest way down through the softest rock. Mike Stewart, an ex-police officer from Los Angeles who had retired after having been shot up in the line of duty and claimed to possess psychic abilities, joined with Rene in the psychic determinations. Rene and Mike declared that their psychic abilities were mutually enhanced by the presence of one another.

We were now a few months into this project and the advance rate was slowing as we got farther from the track level. I suggested that: (1) we had the equipment and ability to efficiently drive a horizontal tunnel; (2) if Dorr went down to something below track level he would have passed through the geometrical horizontal plane of track level; (3) if the psychics had indeed the ability to detect that passageway where it crossed that horizontal plane and indicate the direction to it from several points within the current tunnels, (4) those lines could be plotted on a map to where they converged (telemetry) at the passage. So I positioned Rene and Mike at a survey point and recorded the angle from the station-back sight line. This was repeated until I had the data from six survey points which I plotted on a map of the tunnels. The lines did not converge on a single point, and indeed there were no points where three of the lines could have been said to converge.

Do psychics sense what can't be ordinarily sensed? I don't know. I am convinced that Rene (one of the most genuinely sweet and caring persons I've known) and Mike were sincere in their efforts. I'm convinced they weren't goofing around. There have been other excavations at

Kokoweef directed by psychic information that did not result in passable caverns. One was the decline known as the “winze” that is in the right wall of the tunnel between the muck chute and Rene’s hole. Another is the Warmoth winze located near the end of a tunnel driven South from the area of the Ladder Raise. There was a small void (about the size of a kitchen garbage can) encountered in Rene’s hole and the Warmoth winze has a small body size hole at its end, but no passable caverns.

Because I believed (from the geological research) that there was potential for caverns on the Vertical Fault, a few of us began to set up to drive a tunnel from the Vertical/Schnar’s fault intersection south along the fault. Rene and Mike said they could save a lot of effort by looking through the rock to determine if voids existed. They did the psychic thing and reported that there were but few voids, none that were large enough to insert your hand. Given that recommendation, I immediately began the tunnel and right away found voids you could get a leg into.

Conclusion: PSYCHIC INFORMATION IS UNRELIABLE. The inaccuracy (or inexistence) of distance, time, and directional information has not provided useful information for mining purposes.

My resume contains the statement “drove psychic decline”. That has rarely failed to elicit a query from a job interviewer; and I’m always happy to provide the details of when I helped drive a corkscrew hand-mucked decline a hundred feet below track level at the direction of a sweet little ol’ grandma we lowered into the hole in a stretcher.