

Carbide Dump

A photograph of a cave interior. The central focus is a large, vertical, textured rock formation that appears to be a stalactite or a similar mineral deposit. The rock has a rough, layered appearance. The surrounding cave walls are also covered in similar rock formations and numerous smaller stalactites hanging from the ceiling. The lighting is dramatic, with strong highlights on the rock surfaces and deep shadows in the recesses, creating a sense of depth and texture. The overall color palette is dominated by earthy tones like brown, tan, and grey, with some greenish-yellow highlights from the lighting.

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The Blue Ridge Grotto holds its monthly meetings every third Friday of the month at 6:30p at Jersey Lily's Roadhouse, 1650 Braeburn Dr. Salem, VA 24153. See the Grotto meeting announcement in this issue.

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You can access the *Carbide Dump* electronically at: <https://blueridgegrotto.org/carbidedump.htm>

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Cover: Huge stalagmite near the Meatgrinder in McClung Cave, WV. Photo by Dave Socky

CAVERS CALENDAR

Apr 21: BRG meeting, 6:30p, Jersey Lily's-Salem, VA.

April 22: VAR Earth Day Restoration at Apple Farm. VAR sinkhole clean up near Covington, VA. See page 39.

May 4-7: SERA Cave Carnival, @ Caver's Paradise, Sewanee, TN. Visit <https://www.sera2023.com/> to register.

May 5-7: Spring MAR, @ Harper's Memorial Park, Shade Gap, PA. Hosted by Franklin County Grotto. For more info and registration, click [here](#)

May 7-13: WKU Field Studies, Karst Hydrogeology class. This course will be held at the CRF Hamilton Valley Research Station near Mammoth Cave National Park, KY. Fieldwork will focus in the Park area, discussion about urban karst environmental problems will include a field trip to nearby Bowling Green and/or Horse Cave, Kentucky. To register visit: karstfieldstudies.com

May 13: Blue Ridge MedWAR 2023. Three-member teams will race at Wilderness Adventure in Eagle Rock, VA. More info click [here](#).

May 19: NO BRG meeting. go to VAR

May 19-21: Spring VAR @ Thorn Spring Campground near Franklin, WV. Hosted by BATS. See p. 39 this issue.

May 26-29: Speleofest, held at Lone Star Cave Preserve, Bonnieville KY. <http://speleofest.com/>

June 16: BRG meeting, 6:30p, Jersey Lily's-Salem, VA.

June 19 to 23: WVACS Convention Pre-Camp, at the WVACS Fieldstation north of Frankford in Greenbrier County, WV. For more information, contact Jessica Reep at jreep@aol.com

June 26-30: NSS Convention, Elkins, West Virginia. Registration is open! For more information, see their website at <https://nss2023.caves.org>

July 14-16: Karst-O-Rama held at Great Saltpeter Cave Preserve, Mt. Vernon, KY. <https://karstorama.com>

July 21: BRG meeting, 6:30p, Jersey Lily's-Salem, VA.

Aug 4-6: Indiana Cave Capers. Click [here for the web site](#).

Aug. 18: BRG meeting, 6:30p, Jersey Lily's-Salem, VA.

Sept. 1-4: OTR, Dailey, WV.

Oct. 5-8: TAG Fall Cave-In.



Lucy Ogle getting the shot in McClung. By Dave Socky

BRG Meeting & Trips Notice

The **April 21, 2023** meeting of the Blue Ridge Grotto will be held at **Jersey Lily's Roadhouse 1650 Braeburn Dr, Salem, VA 24153**. Dinner or appetizers with socializing starts at 6:30pm with the meeting starting soon after.

The program this month will be a three items. First will be the video *Beyond the Lost Waterfall*, produced by Dave Socky in 1995. The program was filmed in Culverson Creek Cave with some of the same locations we visited

on the recent BRG 'Slow Trip' to Wildcat. The program is 15 minutes long. Then the short 7 minute video Marian made of the tree work at Catawba Murder Hole will be shown. And then we will hear the song "Caver's Heaven" by Marian McConnell.

Grotto Trip To Be Determined

Long Cave Lists

A legacy of Bob Gulden, now maintained by Paul Berger

<https://cave-exploring.com/index.php/long-and-deep-caves-of-the-world/>

Treasurer's Report 4/14/2023

Cave Bucks	\$ 40.96
Conservation	\$ 2.00
Equipment	\$ 104.12
General	\$3,838.21
Total	\$3,985.29

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BRG Meeting Minutes – can be read on the BRG webpage at: <https://blueridgegrotto.org> under the 'BRG Organization' button.

NSS Membership:

Would you like to join or renew with the NSS? See this [link](#) for details.



Cave Bucks – Are voluntary donations from cavers who have recently been caving. Most people donate a few dollars for each cave trip they have been on. Then send the money where it will do some good and buy some caves!

April 22 - Earth Day Sinkhole Clean Out: Mary Socky will be participating, leaving 7a from HROM. Anyone want to carpool? Contact Mary Sue sockymss@cox.net if you want to ride up for the day.

Raffle at Spring VAR: John and Lyn Pearson have graciously donated **one early registration fee for the 2023 NSS Convention in Elkins, West Virginia**, to be raffled at Spring VAR - a prize valued at \$250. Tickets cost \$10 and will only be available at Spring VAR. You can pay with cash/check or via PayPal or Venmo. The winner will be announced at the VAR business meeting on Sunday (May 21), but you don't have to be there in person (though why wouldn't you be?!). If you've already registered for Convention (yay, you!), you may choose to "pay it forward" to attending the 2024 Convention in Tennessee OR use the money to buy a space in a workshop/class/Geology Field Trip

OR buy a guidebook/patch/pin/t-shirt OR donate it back to the 2023 Convention. (by Meredith Weberg)

Madison Saltpeter Cave, volunteers needed.

April 24 to 28. Cave gate construction at Cave Hill Natural Area Preserve in Grottoes, Va. We need 5-6 people each day (Monday-Friday). It might not take all week to complete the work but assume it will for planning purposes. Some of the activity will be strenuous, dirty, potentially dangerous work. We'll be moving the approximately 5 tons of steel up the hillside via a highline, with cutting/prep work performed down on the access road along the river. CCV will provide lunch and snacks/beverages. Camping will be available. Please RSVP the day(s) you are available to assist:

Mike Ficco mficco@mindspring.com or Janet Tinkham janete@shentel.net

Loaner Caving gear needed for NSS Convention:

We'll have cavers visiting from non-WNS regions who will need to borrow cave gear. Does anyone have extra cave packs, helmets, knee pads, gloves that we could borrow or have? Maybe you just bought a cool new pack and have your old one just taking up space. Please let Meredith or Rich know: richgeisler11@gmail.com and merecaver@yahoo.com. P.S. You could bring them to Spring VAR if you want. Or just bring them to Convention. (by Meredith Weberg).

2023 Spring VAR Preregistration is now open! See page 39.

Memorial Service for Cliff Lindsay (NSS # 11224RL, FE) will be held Sat. June 10, 2023, 1p-4p at the Alumni Hall, Osteopath College in Lewisburg, WV. Contact Bill Balfour at this email, bal4karst@hotmail.com, for more info.

Bat Cave Closures -

We are beginning to switch from Winter to Summer **Bat Cave Closures**. Hibernacula may be open, but other caves will be closed due to bat maternity colonies. VA and WV have differing schedules.

- Summer closure for bat caves in **Virginia is April 15—Oct 15.**
- Summer closure for bat caves in **West Virginia is May 15—Sept. 1.**

See [wv-list-2012-03\(3\).pdf](#) for more WV closed cave information.

This closure affects some, but not all caves. If the cave you want to visit is closed, go elsewhere! There are thousands of caves in the Virginias.

Please respect all cave closures.

VAR CLOSED CAVE LIST: lots of information needs to be updated. Please send changes, additions to Brad Blase blase@virginiacaves.org The Closed Cave List can be viewed at [this link](#).



Karen Kastning Memories

BRG Cavers,

I am sorry to say that one of our members, **Karen Kastning, NSS 12164 RL, OS,FE, AL** has passed away.

Karen was a founding member of New River Valley Grotto, Radford, VA.

Karen had been a member of Blue Ridge Grotto since 2014.

Here are some caver's memories of Karen Kastning.

 Good afternoon, Virginia Cave Board members;

I wanted to let you know that Karen Kastning, one of the longest serving members of the Virginia Cave Board and a leader in Cave and Karst Conservation, died on Thursday April 6, 2023. Karen was arguably the hardest working Cave Board member of all time, and in my opinion was the "Queen of Thankless Tasks". She was smart, dedicated, creative, and no-nonsense. Long before there was a karst program at DCR, she and others like Dave Hubbard, John Holsinger, and Dave Culver fought the good fight to protect caves and karst and to educate the public about their importance. I'll share the official obituary when it comes out, but I wanted everyone to know that she had passed away. For Cave Board members, if you

could make a fraction of the impact Karen Kastning made on cave and karst awareness and protection, you'd be making a huge impact.

Wil Orndorff

(Posted to the Texas Cavers e-list)
 Karen Clements (Kastning) was from San Antonio, and I met her at my first grotto meeting in January 1976. Soon after, she married and became Karen Kastning, eventually landing in Virginia for most of her years. She was a constant fixture at NSS Conventions and instrumental in organizing many cave conservation programs and caving conferences. Most younger Texas cavers never met her. If you attended the International Congress of Speleology in Kerrville in 2009, you may have connected with her as she did a magnificent job organizing that event's massive and complex registration.

Nearly a month ago her good heart began to give out. A couple of surgeries and other measures were not enough, and she died yesterday. We've lost another star in our constellation of cavers. I will miss her.

George Veni

Oh my, so sorry to hear this.

I visited Karen in the hospital when Dano (my husband) was in the same hospital on March 28th.

She looked great that day and she told me the story about how Ernst helped her get to the hospital when she was having the stroke.

Last I heard, she was in Rehab.

May she rest in peace in the arms of the angels. She will be greatly missed.

You are right that so many of our dear caving friends have left this earthly home.

We just took Al Stewart's ashes underground on March 26th.

Sharing a song I wrote... in memory of Karen too. "Caver's Heaven."

Marian McConnell

Blue Ridge Grotto NSS 5758

 I enjoyed Karen's friendship for many years but hadn't seen her for some time when we met again last year at the service for John Fox. As always, she was cheerful and friendly. We've lost a lot of stalwarts in the caving community lately and like others she'll be missed.

Walt Pirie

VPI Cave Club NSS 19778

Final Fifth

Hello Cavers!

We are down to the Final week of the Favorite Five vote! The Favorite FOUR have been selected - September, February, June/July, and March. What we

need is to decide the FIFTH. Please vote for your **ONE** favorite newsletter cover out of the choices below.

The winner of the Fifth place will go with the rest to the NSS Cover Art Salon.

VOTE! Say something like "I like _____ cover. (Specify month.)
 Send your vote to sockymss@cox.net

Thanks!
 CARBIDE DUMP editors



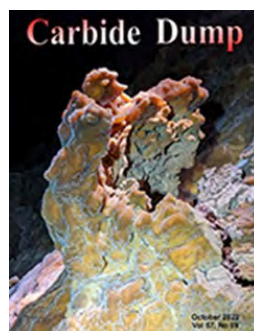
Apr 2022



May 2022



Aug 2022



Oct 2022



Nov 2022

Warm Springs Anticline Cave Survey & Karst Assessment Project Survey Trip Report

By *Dave Socky*

(Note: This trip was part of the Warm Springs Anticline Cave Survey & Karst Assessment Project. This project is run by a group of cavers that have been working in this area of Alleghany County, VA for years. Rick Lambert said that "This is an open project and we can use anyone regardless of training and experience". So, if anyone is interested, contact Rick Lambert or Dave Socky.)

April 5, 2023

On Wednesday, April 5, 2023, Dave Socky, Joe Zokaites, and Rick Royer continued the survey in a cave that had been worked on in March. They met up with Rick Lambert and Keith Sweeney who would be doing surface geology mapping while the surveying took place.

Before entering the cave, everyone walked about 500 feet to the south-west to look at a blow hole which was a potential dig. It was agreed that the surveyors would do a surface survey from the cave to the dig if they finished up early.

After checking the potential dig and a little more discussion, the group entered the cave around 10:45am. The start of the survey was only a few stations from the entrance, at the top of a narrow canyon within sight of entrance light. Before any surveying could start, the bottom of the canyon needed to be cleared of rock debris which resulted from the technical digging that had occurred on March 25. Using a rope tied to a tree near the entrance, Rick went down first. Dave followed to a ledge about halfway down (the drop was about 20 feet). Rick passed rocks up to Dave who stored



Rick rappelling the canyon to the initial dig. Photo by Dave Socky

them on the shelf. Two of the rocks were large enough to require webbing to haul them up. Joe, at the top, pulled the rocks up, one at a time, with the help of Rick from below. When the rock got high enough, Dave shoved them onto the shelf. It worked well. Within a half hour, the lead was enterable.

Just a few feet beyond the low spot was the 10 foot deep pit that Dave had reported from the March 25 trip. Rick declared that a rope should be used, so the extra rope was tied to the end of the entrance rope and the group descended. As it turned out, it was possible to free climb out of the pit because that is how Dave recovered his pack, which he'd accidentally left at the top.

The pit was only about 10 feet deep and 8 to 10 feet in diameter, with a ceiling of 20 feet. At first Rick reported that there were no leads, but on closer inspection, he found a tight muddy crawl at the back end of the pit. The cave continued.

They decided to explore as far as possible and then survey out. Joe dug mud out of the crawl so he and Dave could fit. The crawl was only 6 feet long and opened back up into another canyon passage with a high ceiling (LPG10). The ceiling fissures seemed to slant a little up to the north and were fluted with limestone that fractured and broke easily. It was necessary to be careful about hand & foot holds when climbing.

Almost immediately, there was another climbdown and then the ceiling went up even higher with two high leads disap-

(Continued on page 34)



Joe Zokaites making the crawlway bigger. Photo by Dave Socky



Joe checking for high leads between drops. Photo by Dave Socky

(Continued from page 33)

pearing above. The leads were climbable (LGP8). There was another short climb down and then a 10-foot-deep pit was found in which a piece of webbing was used to body rappel down. The webbing was three feet short of the bottom, but there were enough foot holds to get down safely.

The rigging technique for this trip was interesting. Two ropes and two lengths of webbing were tied together with the sole anchor point being a tree at the entrance to the cave. It turned out that all climbs were free climbable, but having the pits rigged makes for a safer trip.

There were a couple of too-tight drains in the final room (LGP4) that looked to go down a good way. Up and over a shelf on the right (south-east) was a fluted crevice going down. Rick climbed down about 6 feet to where he could inspect a hole that looked down into



Bones found at the bottom of the pit series. Note the finger for scale. Photo by Dave Socky

darkness. Rocks dropped through the hole crashed down 20 feet or so into what sounded like larger cave. Rick said he could 'probably' fit through the hole, but it belled out into a vertical drop. We had no more rope.

In the main room at the bottom of the final drop, Rick pointed out a few sets of rodent bones, including a very nice skull. There was also some debris including a walnut. Above the drop, up a steep mud slope, were multiple claw/scratch marks in the mud made by a small animal.

Dave and Joe started the survey out of the cave while Rick climbed back out to where the drill and digging pack had been left. Rick planned on digging open the small hole at the bottom while Dave and Joe surveyed.

The first shot was a temporary station through the tight vertical hole down as far as the DistoX2 could see – a 16 foot backshot from LGP2 to LGP1. From LGP2, the room was defined and then the survey headed out to-



L-R: Rick Royer, Dave Socky, and Joe Zokaites. The 'after' photo. Photo by Rick Lambert

ward the entrance. Being a very vertical cave, the profile was more important, and informative, than the plan view.

Dave and Joe were at LGP10 when Rick caught back up to them, reporting that the lead had successfully been opened up enough to get in. Exploration would have to wait until the next trip because there was not enough rope. The survey continued out of the cave and was finally tied into station 3 from the original survey at about 5pm. Rick Lambert and Keith Sweeney were waiting for the team to come out and helped pull up packs.

The survey netted a total of 176 feet with a vertical depth of 98 feet! The cave is now a total of 456 feet long and 113 feet deep. 🐾

Membership

Sixteen cavers and friends attended the March 17 BRG meeting. The program was Dave Socky's video *"Single Rope Ascending Systems – An Introduction."* (C 2003) Featuring Dan McConnell, Doug Feller, Gary Drewry, and other cavers.

Sadly, Karen Kastning, NSS # 12164 RL, OS,FE, AL, has passed away. Karen was a founding member of New River Valley Grotto, Radford, VA. Karen had been a member of Blue Ridge Grotto since 2014.

Membership Proposals: John Pearson, NSS # 25731 RL, FE, CO applied for membership in BRG. His co-

sponsors are Dave and Mary Sue Socky. Seconded by Michael Rowland. John's membership is tabled until the April 21, 2023, BRG meeting.

Attention former BRG members – all you must do to rejoin BRG is sign a membership agreement and pay your \$10. None of the hoopla we are putting John Pearson through is required.

BRG has 53 members and 4 subscribers for 2023.

Know of a potential caver? Bring them to a BRG meeting, sponsor them on a BRG activity, do lots of fun things with the best cavers around. 🐾

Cave Apparel - Bib Overalls

By *Kevin Johnson*

Tractor Supply sells a lot of bibs if someone is looking for that. They have different brands and different price points. I went with the duck unlined bib, which is the most abrasion resistant. No snaps or zippers on the leg. Metal clasps on the straps. The only thing I don't like is the elastic in the straps, which eventually wear out. Wash them in a garment bag to protect the straps and your washer. Dry them in the bag (which protects your dryer) lightly to get off the heavy moisture then hang dry or put on a drying rack the rest of the way to prevent shrinking and damage to the elastic. 🐾

Grotto Trip Log

2/18/2023: BRG trip to New River Cave, VA. They made it up the Waterfall, to Tuxedo Junction. Met two 'non-caver' groups as they exited the cave. See report in **March DUMP**.

2/18: Boar Hole Cave, WV. Participants included David Socky, Greg Springer, Jada Townsend, and Ripley Taylor. Survey in Boar Hole. Ripley learning how to sketch. Jada's 2nd cave trip and she learned how to do foresights. I did point and backsights while Greg also sketched. We did mostly walking passage, but there was one side lead which devolved into a belly crawl. I dug enough to move forward 8 feet, but the crawl wasn't getting any better. It continued, but for us to keep going would have required digging. It was perhaps 9 inches, so a tiny person survey could have continued. We then surveyed upstream in a nice stream passage. We stopped where we would have had to crawl in the water. Normally the passage is dry. We then surveyed another 7 or 8 stations in larger passage and tied into a known survey. We headed out at about 6 pm. Good, fun, easy trip. It was a good 8-hour trip with 400 feet of survey.

2/22: Good Reception Cave, VA. Participants included David Socky, Bob Alderson, Mark Minton, Yvonne Droms. Surface crew: Larry Hart, Rick Lambert, Amos Mincin, Billy Pickett, Jim Reddington, and Keith Sweeney. The surface crew put up a fence around the pit entrance in order to keep cows out. The cave is 120 foot deep, with 3 rebelay, plus one redirect. Some of the drops are pretty narrow and very muddy. But there is a big room (Hoover Room) at the bottom. Surveyed a bunch of virgin cave! Pain in the butt getting back out, but not as bad as I thought it would be. Challenging 8-hour trip with 315 feet of survey.

2/24: Conley Hole, TN. Nick Schmalenberger, Elliot Stahl, Noah Mann visited this beautiful, decorated 150' pit.

2/26: Crossroads Cave, VA. Lauren Appel, Doug Feller, Kelly Perkins, Nick Schmalenberger, Brian Williams.

Nice little trip, explored the creek area, then left.

3/1: Good Reception Cave, VA. Participants included David Socky, Bob Alderson, and Yvonne Droms. Team 2: Mark Minton and Rick Royer. Surface work: Rick Lambert, Keith Sweeney, and Miles Drake. Bob, Yvonne, Miles Drake, and I did a surface survey between Glass Menagerie and Good Reception while Mark and Rick Royer used straws to open up a lead part way down the entrance pit series. However, the holes blew out so no luck there. Bob, Yvonne, and I went to our up lead that we had left last time while Mark and Rick R worked on a high lead in Lower Hoover Hall. Their lead didn't go. They also surveyed the canyon going upstream out of Hoover Hall, which didn't go either. Bob put in 4 nails which allowed us to climb up the small hole without touching the loose breakdown on the way up. Yvonne didn't want to do the climb because of the unstable breakdown so Bob and I did a two-person survey. Yvonne teamed up with Mark and Rick R where they surveyed in a lead we had left at the initial climb up. Their lead tied back to the bottom of a pit that was just before the climb up that Bob and I had done. Our lead went up and up, but eventually ended in breakdown collapse with was too small to get through. By this time, it was getting late, so everyone exited. There was one lead left where Mark and company were, plus the now dried out stream crawl. There is also a possible bolt climb. Climbing out, I had problems at the first rebelay. I had gotten up too close to the bolt and had problems getting my ascenders off the rope. But I finally managed. The rest of the climb was obnoxious, muddy, and contorting, but doable. We got out just after dusk, around 7:30pm for an 8-hour trip with 128 feet of Survey.

03/04: McClung Cave, WV. Participants included David Socky, Nick Socky, Paul Walko, Anna Makarov, and Laurel Moley. This trip had a dual purpose. One was to have Laurel do her vertical test for the VPI Cave Club, but the best was to survey the passage that leads to the overlook over Freeman Ave at the Tufa Trail connection. The tight

squeeze at the entrance to this section was not as bad as I remembered. The trick was to stay right in the center of the slight channel. Finding the right way from the end of our previous survey turned out to be simple. A little crawling, scrambling, and a down-climb and then a short section of walking passage and we were at the overlook. Paul and Laurel started their survey from where we had left off last time. Nick rigged the drop while Anna and I surveyed back toward Paul. The survey started simple, then got complex at the junction between the lower and upper level. But we finished. We may have left one lead that is on the old map. It was really nice to be able to rappel down into Freeman Ave right at the Tufa Trail, saving us from going back around the long way. Going out was uneventful. It was cold out, about 31F, but not bad. Another 8-hour trip with 333 feet of survey.

3/4/23: Cyclops Cave, Russell Co. VA. Nick Schmalenberger visited Cyclops Cave with Jon Mnich and Sonya Erickson. Nick reported he was happy the cave passages were not as tight as the description implied. (This was the site of a 2019 cave rescue-Dave Socky reported that the tight spots had been drilled, modified to get the spelunkers out of this vertical multidrop cave. See this [link](#)). Probably true about the drilling, we noticed some drill holes also. There were big rooms, borehole, a nice stream and interesting places such as the Pirates Treasure Traverse and the Cheese Farm Traverse. Nick enjoyed this cave.

3/11: McClung Cave, WV. Participants included David Socky, Bob Alderson, and Chris Coates. This survey trip started in the Historic Entrance with the goal of going back to Outer Mongolia to do a high lead in the north section. It took us 2.5 hours to get there. The high lead was a funky 12-foot climb on the right side of the main passage. The starting point for the climb, though, was on the edge of a bank, so a fall from the climb would have been close to 20 feet. The climb was also slightly over-

(Continued on page 36)

(Quick Trips continued from page 35)

hung. Hmmm. Bob climbed up with no problems. I started, but felt uncomfortable so I asked for a belay, apologizing for being a wimp. Chris also put in a nail to supply a better foothold on the way up. The handholds were good, which was a plus. With the nail and belay, I climbed up with no problem. Of course, it was easier than it looked at first blush. I sketched. We first surveyed to the southwest and eventually killed all leads. Then we traversed over the pit (with a few nails for handholds) and surveyed to the northeast. There were a few tight spots, one in which I had to exhale a little, but they were short. I got through without too much trouble. In one, I dug it out a little to make it easier. In any case, we killed all leads that way too. We finished about 8:30pm. We got to the entrance around 11:00pm, making for a good 12.5-hour trip and 438 feet of survey.

3/15: Good Reception Cave, VA. Participants included David Socky, David Socky, Rick Royer, and Amos Mincin. Rick Lambert and Keith Sweeney doing surface geology. Went in about 10:20am. I went in first, then Rick, then Amos. Lots of warm air blowing out the entrance. It was a cold morning, around 28F. We first went to Lower Hoover Hall to look at the stream crawl. Looked tight but doable. There was air blowing out. We then headed to the last breakdown lead at MY5. I sketched and did foresights while Rick did point and back sights. Amos checked leads. MY5 to DR1 was a shot down the drop off into the breakdown room. There was a lower route under the breakdown that didn't require climbing down the little drop off, but we didn't survey that route since it was just under the upper survey. The breakdown room had leads up on the right which Amos climbed into, but they all headed up and back toward our previous WWS survey. Going south, the survey went through a narrow canyon with a slopy ledge on the left and then opened up into a small room with another narrow canyon heading south. Only trouble is that the canyon ended totally with mud/dirt fill. There was a narrow crack in the floor where you could see down about 10 or so feet, but it was only a few inches wide. But this is where the water goes. At this point, we considered the lead dead. We then went back to the room before the climb up (GP13) with the narrow crack in the floor. There was

a lead in the breakdown at the end of this passage, on the left and about 5 feet up. Amos dug at this lead for about 40 minutes, moving lots of mud and some rock. Soon enough we could stick our heads in and see what it looked like ahead. More tight breakdown too tight to fit into. Another lead killed. Finally, we went back to the crawl in Lower Hoover Hall. Being the smaller of our group, Amos crawled in finding it was big enough that he could fit. After 15 feet, the ceiling came up enough that it was a hands and knees crawl. But after 20 feet or so, it got low again. Amos crawled in another 20 or so feet and determined that it continued, but maybe a little tighter. He would have to squeeze to get through. But it looked like it might get a little higher ahead. There was a good breeze blowing out of the crawl, but not as much air that was coming out the entrance. I tried to squeeze in and found I didn't fit. It was close, but just a little too tight. Amos came back because he didn't want to 'scoop' too much without surveying. Rick was not enthused about getting wet from the mud floor even though there was no standing water. It was still early, but we decided that a small person survey team was needed for this lead. So, Amos dug out some of the initial crawl on his way out but left the first 5 or 6 feet for the next team. We made our way back to Hoover Hall. Rick went up first, then me, and finally Amos. We were out at 4:30pm. A good 6-hour trip with a whopping 53 feet of survey.

3/18: Battered Bar Cave, VA. Participants included David Socky, Tommy Shifflett, Mike Broome, Lisa Broome. This trip was during the BCCS Pancake Weekend. The dig was at the bottom of the second pit. The entrance pit was 77 feet deep, and the second pit offset by about 40 feet and was about 30 feet deep. The dig was in the passage right at the bottom of the second drop. It was a technical dig and the rock blocking the way down was removed in an hour. Below was a 10-foot-deep pit, which was underhung, so it was rigged for a very short rappel.

3/25: Unnamed Cave #1, VA. Participants included David Socky, and Bill Koerschner - did survey. Rick Lambert, Keith Sweeney, Billy Pickett, and Eric Wishon - did surface geology mapping. This is part of the Warm Springs Anticline Cave Survey & Karst Assessment Project. This cave was dug open and is about 200 feet long and is semi vertical. When first going in, my pack rolled off a

ledge and fell down a short pit and then down a narrow canyon. I couldn't tell if I could reach it. It had fallen a long way. I climbed down and looked into a narrow crack which I wasn't sure I could fit into. I clenched my teeth and slid down into the canyon. It turned out I fit ok. I then slid down through a low spot and popped out into a small room. There was my pack, thank god. Ah, but the passage continued (and there was a lot of air blowing out!). It continued in another pit. It was about 12 feet deep and looked like it could be climbed. But I was alone and scooping, so I went back. Climbing up the narrow canyon was challenging, but not too hard. Everyone else came down and we headed for the back of the cave. Bill and I surveyed from a point near the actual end of the cave. No leads. We then did a loop under a natural bridge. There were some tricky climbs, one of which Bill did but I rappelled down a rope that Rick and I rigged. It turned out pretty easy to climb out the way Bill climbed down. We then headed back toward the front end of the cave. Everyone else had gone out but Rick, who was doing a technical dig to make the crevice I had gone down bigger! After cleaning off ledges and loose rock, I slid down into the canyon to see what would be needed at the pit. but I got to the bottom and found there was nowhere to go!? It turned out the rock debris from the dig had plugged the hole I had gone through. We decided it was too late in the day so we exited at 4:30pm in the afternoon to a sunny and warm day. For our 6.5 our trip, we managed to survey 127 feet.


3/26: Culverson Creek/WildCat Cave, WV. Participants included David Socky, Mary Sue Socky, Bob Alderson, Keith Goggin, Barry Ferguson, Ben Johnson, Kevin Johnson, Carrie Douppnik, John Pearson, Marian McConnell, Trish Geiger, and Jessica Bowser. This was the BRG "Slow Trip" for those who wished a leisurely, easy cave trip. This was also a memorial trip to honor Al Stewart, and throw his ashes into Dread Pool - one of his favorite spots. The trip went well and everyone survived.

4/5: Unnamed Cave #1, VA. Participants included David Socky, Rick Royer, and Joe Zokaite. Rick Lambert and Keith Sweeney did surface geology. We found more cave. The 10 foot pit I had found had a small crawl at the bottom and the cave continued down. We eventually came to another downward dig, so

(Continued on page 37)

(Continued from page 36)

Rick Royer took care of that while Joe and I surveyed out. Surveyed a total of 176 feet in 6 hours. We will be back. See article on page 33.

4/8: McClung Cave, WV. Participants included David Socky, Joe Zokaites, Lucy Ogle, and Ripley Taylor. Other team: Kelly McCarthy, Bill Koerschner, Daniel Wilson, and Zoe Hoelmer. We went to the end of Megalithia and turned left, surveying lower levels in a section which was before the Waffle Foot passage. We had two teams and surveyed a total of 683 feet in 10 hours. Lots of small, confusing, and convoluted passages which were really hard to sketch. It was a good productive trip, but there is probably more to do, including the majority of the Waffle Foot passage. 

Final BRG Donations for 2023

We donate, support conservation efforts of many organizations by paying dues.

Any other donations should have a suggested \$50.00 cap.


Cave Bucks can be sent to any organization throughout the year.

Dropped: AKC, BCCS, BCI, VAR, VSS, WVACS. Maybe next year.

Organization	Type of Donation	Amount
American Cave Conservation Association	Dues	\$25.00/year, due in June
Cave Sim	Donation	\$50.00
Mid-Atlantic Karst Conservancy	Dues	\$15.00/year, due in June
National Cave Rescue Commission Eastern Region	Donation	\$50.00
National Speleological Society	Donation	\$100.00 brick for AI
Virginia Cave Board	Donation	\$50.00
West Virginia Cave Conservancy	Dues	\$50.00/year, due May
Southeastern Cave Conservancy Inc.	Dues	\$35.00/year
TOTAL		\$375.00

2023 NSS CONVENTION

JUNE 26-30, 2023 | ELKINS, WEST VIRGINIA



See <https://nss2023.caves.org/> for info on lodging, restaurants, and above ground activities. Registration is now open! Early registration ends May 1.



Getting the shot in a well decorated section of McClung Cave, WV.
Photo by Dave Socky


Drone Applications in Search and Rescue

By Lynn Ott

One of Gene Harrison's Search and Rescue (SAR) colleagues, Rehan Mahmood, is a graduate of George Mason University (GMU) and worked with Gene on a PowerPoint presentation which was an overview of SAR and how drones could be designed and used as a tool to assist

SAR personnel at GMU. The presentation was on March 31, 2023.

The instructor had 6 teams of students working on a drone competition. Gene & Rehan presented an overview of SAR plus several SAR scenarios. There was a Q&A session after the presentation plus giving the students ideas for designing small, medium, or large drones based on various applications from locating subjects to providing food and medical items until SAR personnel can

arrive. The presentation was primarily focused on ground search, including references to caving & underwater applications. 



Tales From Dark Places

The Explorer's Club – New York City

by Lynn Ott

April 1, 2023

On Friday, March 31, 2023, Gene Harrison & Lynn Ott drove to Chris Nicola's home in Astoria, NY. When we arrived, Chris was at the Explorer's Club with Benjy von Cramon covering windows with black plastic for Benjy's presentation. We unloaded the car & hung out with Jay Jordan & Joey Fagan at Chris' place. About 5:30 pm, Jay, Joey, Gene & Lynn took an Uber to the Explorer's Club for the Friday night Frolic. We met up with Chris, Benjy and a number of other cavers & EC members.

Chris, Benjy, Gene, and Lynn left around 8:45 – 9 pm & headed back to Chris' place, while Joey, Jay & a few others went out to explore the night. We were all up early by 5:30 am and took an Uber to the Explorer's Club by 6:30 to set up a caver display with mannequins on rope while Devlin and 2 other women set up art paintings/photographs on the first & second floors.

Gene had rigged the stairwell and with the help of Dave Springhetti and a few others. We attached the mannequins (dressed as cavers in vertical gear) to the rope. A Halloween bat decoration was also hung.



Photo from Facebook, post by Kristine Ebrey

The program was filled with various speakers and Speleo-books had two tables of books with other items for sale in the lobby.

At 9am, once everyone was seated, the lights went out. Chris and 2 other cavers crawled from the back of the room to the front of the room. "How much farther?" was heard from one of the cavers then the response from Chris "Just 10 more minutes". A few laughs from cavers were heard. Then Chris introduced John Scheltens, who was our emcee for the event.

The NSS Video - *Darkness Beyond The VOID* compiled by Dave Socky and Dave Lester from various caver's photographs was shown. The slide show had some breathtaking pictures!

Uralkale - An Immersive Map of a Psychedelic Mine in Siberia Russia was a wonderful 3D presentation by Benjy von Cramon - The colors from the potash mines had so many colors! The 3D glasses were limited, so an encore event was shown after the reception. So very cool. Check out Benjy's websites at [link1](#) and [link2](#).

The Long Way Down, Exploration in the World's Most Remote Frontiers by Adam Weaver.

Digging Into The Darkness From Caves to Dinosaurs by Dr. Sharon Weaver was very exciting to see her journey from childhood to living out her dream of working in paleontology.

At the lunch break, Chris Nicola got everyone to sing Happy Birthday to Adrian "ED" Sira, as he had turned 92 the day before. Ed was really enjoying his visit at the Explorer's Club.

John Scheltens introduced NSS President Kristine Ebrey who signed an MOU with the Explorer's Club. Plus a caving artifact was donated from the Gurnee's estate.



President of Explorers Club, Richard Garriott, and president of the NSS, Kristine Ebrey, signed an MOU. Photo from Facebook, post by Kristine Ebrey

The First US Caving Expedition to the USSR (in Ukraine) by John Scheltens was presented next with reference to future trips. A special nod to Ed Sira as a member on the team.

The Road To A Lifetime Dream: Diving On The TITANIC by Renata Rojas was fascinating. She gave a brief history of her fascination with the Titanic and finally after several attempts over many years got to dive 2.2 miles down in a submersible to visit the Titanic.

It's Different In The Dark or When Good Exploration Goes Bad by Emily Davis was on the discovery of Lechuquilla, her accident & rescue from the ordeal, including all the press afterwards. An excellent program.

Tribute to Cave Biologist & Former Explorer's Club President, Brother Nicholas Sullivan by Susan Gurnee was a wonderful tribute to an amazing individual.

A Holocaust Era Cave Survival Story in Ukraine by Chris Nicola was a more in-depth look at the Jewish families hiding out in two different caves during WWII.

The formal program ended with closing remarks and a brief reception.

Taken all together, the Explorers Club 'Tales from Dark Places' event was a success and enjoyed by all that attended. 🐉

SATURDAY, APRIL 22, 2023 VAR EARTH DAY RESTORATION SINKHOLE CLEANOUT



Beginning 9 a.m. (may carry over into Sunday)

Camping is available Friday & Saturday

Location: Apple Horse Farm

5921 Hot Springs Road

Hot Springs, VA 24445

- **Lunch and water will be provided Saturday, but please bring your own snacks and extra water.**
- **We'll be cleaning out 3–4 sinkholes**
- **If you have a truck (or trailer) with a winch and are available for transporting trash from sinkhole to dumpster, please let us know.**

Sponsored by VAR Conservation Committee—we need and appreciate volunteers!

SUPPLIES TO BRING

- CHAINSAWS
- WIRE CUTTERS
- WEED WHACKERS
- 5-GAL BUCKETS
- RAKES
- SHOVELS
- OLD TARPS
- ROPE
- CHAIN WITH 3/8 SLING HOOK ON END OF CHAIN
- TOOL TO SEPARATE TIRES FROM RIM
- LOPPERS
- WORK GLOVES
- BOOTS
- HAT
- SUNSCREEN
- INSECT REPELLENT

RSVP—HELPS WITH PLANNING

MERECAVER@YAHOO.COM

JANETE@SHENTEL.NET

Woohoo! Spring VAR!

May 19–21

Hosted by the Battlefield Area Troglodyte Society (BATS)

When: May 19–21, 2023

Where: Thorn Springs Campground near Franklin, WV

Cost:

- Pre-registration Deadline April 30
 - Saturday dinner included
 - Adults (aged 17+) \$30
 - Kids aged 6–16: \$22
 - Under 6 Free
- **At the Door:**
 - Saturday dinner not guaranteed, but we will try to order extra meals
 - Adults \$35
 - Kids 6–16: \$22
 - Under 6 Free



Camping:

- RV with Full Hookups: \$30/night. Pay Thorn Springs directly.
- Cabin Rental: \$5/person/night extra. Stove, fridge, showers. Bring your sleeping bag and towels. Each cabin sleeps 8–12.
- Tent camping included—set up behind buildings.

Coming Soon: Pre-registration form and payment info

Caving: Of course! Led trips or on your own. Trout Cave will be open!

Saturday Night: Dinner, program, and party in the large pavilion. Come ready to dance! Pre-register to guarantee dinner.



Sunday Morning: VAR business meeting: 9 a.m.
Grottos be sure to assign representatives to attend!

Share This Info With Cavers!

Pre-registration is OPEN until April 30. Keep an eye out at the [VAR](#)



Spring VAR!
May 19–21, 2023



Thorn Springs Campground

Hosted by Battlefield Area Troglodyte Society (BATS)

Print clearly and include ALL in your party

Name(s):

Address:

Cell #: Grotto:

Email address:

Category	Price Through April 30	Price Starting May 1	How Many?	Total \$ Due
Adult (17+)	\$30	\$35	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Kids (6–16)	\$22	\$22	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Little Kids (<6)	Free	Free	<input type="text"/>	\$0
Total Due	Please double check your math!			<input type="text"/>

CABIN bunks are first come, first serve, but you must check with BATS for availability. Contact mercaver@yahoo.com and ctider@ymail.com. Cost is \$5 per person per night. To pay, put your money (cash or check) in the envelope with your name on it that you'll find in the cabin. If you don't contact BATS, you might not get a bunk.

RV SITES with full hookups are available. You must reserve directly with Thorn Springs Park at 304-358-7737. You pay them directly.

How to Pay

- PayPal: bats-treas@caves.org. Select "Friends and Family" to keep our fees low. Email this form to SpringVAR2023@gmail.com.
- Check: Pay to "BATS" with "Spring VAR 2023" memo. Mail with completed form to: Cheryl Jones, 1865 Old Meadow RD, Apt 202, McLean, VA 22102-1997.

NOTE: Saturday dinner guaranteed ONLY to those who pre-register.