

Carbide Dump



May 2023
Vol 58, No 05

The *Carbide Dump* is published monthly by the Blue Ridge Grotto of the National Speleological Society in Roanoke, Virginia. Distribution date is approximately the second week of each month. An issue may be skipped if insufficient material is received. Contributions of articles and artwork are invited and will be gratefully acknowledged. Art work originals will be returned. Contributions should be sent to the editor. Regular and associate grotto membership (\$10) includes a *Carbide Dump* subscription. Subscriber rate is \$10.00. Exchanges with other grotto and caving organizations are invited. Direct exchange mail to Mary Sue Socky.

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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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Contributors: David & Mary Sue Socky, Nick Socky, Susan Burr, Marian McConnell, Meredith Weberg, Dylan Kelly, and Jerry Fuller.

Cover: Nick Socky at overlook into Freeman Ave in McClung Cave, WV. Photo by Dave Socky

CAVERS CALENDAR

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.

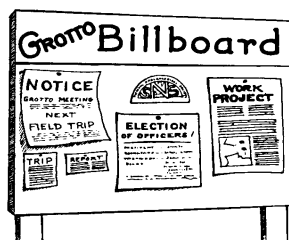
Aug 4-6: Indiana Cave Capers. Click [here for the web site.](#)

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

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

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

Summer 2024: NSS Convention, Sewanee, TN.



Alex Faunce checking a high lead in Outer Mongolia in McClung Cave WV. Photo by Dave Socky. →



BRG Meeting & Trips Notice

There is NO May 19, 2023 BRG meeting. Go to VAR instead!

Grotto Trip
To Be Determined

Treasurer's Report 5/12/2023

Cave Bucks	\$ 40.96
Conservation	\$ 2.00
Equipment	\$ 104.12
General	\$3,820.36
Total	\$3,967.44

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/>

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!



2023 Spring VAR Preregistration is now open! See page 47.

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.

Safety & Techniques – After almost 30 years, Dano McConnell is retiring as the BRG Safety & Techniques officer. He is available for S&T consultations, and possible above-ground assistance at cave rescues (he still works full-time so it will depend on his availability). **We appreciate and thank Dano for his decades of service!**

Susan Burr proposed, and Lauren Appel seconded that Nick Schmalenberger be the new S&T Officer; and those present all agreed. Nick Schmalenberger agreed to accept. Nick has had (and continues to be involved in) NCRC training, is currently reviewing cave accident reports to catalogue them, and has been helping with BRG vertical practices.

Donation in honor of Karen Kastning: Susan Burr proposed and Lauren Appel seconded that we donate \$100 to the NSS Save the Cave fund in honor of Karen. Lynn Ott will share info about how to do this with Mary Sue. This passed unanimously.

Allegheny Wood Rats: Marian McConnell and Mary Sue Socky will be assisting Dr. Karen Powers on April 25th with her ongoing Allegheny wood rat, *Neotoma magister* (cave rat) studies; this time at Dixie Caverns & New Dixie property, setting up cameras to collect data on the cave rat population in Roanoke Co, VA.

Bat Cave Closures -

We are now in 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](#).

Convention Updates

Raffle at Spring VAR: Win and go to the NSS Convention!! 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)

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).



Karen Mason Kastning

NSS 12164

March 25, 1946 - April 6, 2023



(From Mullins Funeral Home, Radford, VA. See this [link](#))

Karen Mason Kastning, age 77, passed away at Carilion Roanoke Memorial Hospital on Thursday, April 6, 2023, after a brief illness. She was preceded in death by her parents, Daniel Boone Mason and Mildred Mason; and her siblings, Joan, James, Michael, Jeanne and Pamela. Survivors include her son, Ernst H. "Kass" Kastning III, his wife Yunha, and their children, Aayla, KJ, and Austin; sisters, Barbara Scheib (Carl) and Peggy Perkins; brother, Gary Mason (Deborah); and many other family members and friends, including her former husband, Ernst H. Kastning Jr.

Born in Baltimore, Maryland, she lived in San Antonio, Texas until 1979. Following a couple of moves, in 1985 she relocated to her present home in Radford, Virginia.

Karen received her B.S. Degree in Geology from the University of Connecticut and M.S. in Geology from Radford University. Professionally, she was employed at Studer's Photography in Texas (1967-1979). She later taught geology courses at Radford University and New River Community College. She was also employed with the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality in Roanoke from 1997 until her retirement in 2016.

Of her many life-long interests, the most prevalent were caves. She began caving in Texas in 1967 and visited, mapped, photographed, and studied caves in 40+ states and internationally. She was active in local and regional caving groups, having served as an officer and on committees. She joined the National Speleological Society (NSS) in 1969 and held various positions, including chairperson of the annual photographic salon competitions, and maintaining the photographic archives. She attended 45 NSS conventions, held across the U.S. serving on the organizing committee for many years. Honoring her 50+ years of dedication to the caving world, she received several recognitions

including the NSS William J. Stephenson Outstanding Service Award, its highest award, in 2011.

Karen served as a governor appointee on the Virginia Cave Board of the state Department of Conservation and Recreation from 1987 to 2004. Karen authored and coauthored numerous publications on caves, history, and conservation. Karen was an active conservationist and participant in preserving groundwater quality and the environment.

Karen enjoyed visiting natural and historic sites around the world. As a descendent within the greater family of Daniel Boone, she became interested in genealogy and was a member of the Boone Society where she served for many years as the editor of their journal, *Compass*. Her other interests included hiking, history, photography, needlework, dollhouse miniatures, and horses.

A Celebration of her Life will be held in Virginia at a later date. An Urn Burial Service for close family and friends will take place in San Antonio, TX on July 8, 2023.

In lieu of flowers, contributions can be made in her memory to the National Speleological Society's Save-the-Cave Fund (<https://caves.org/>) and the National Parks Conservation Association (<https://www.npca.org/>).

Membership

Fifteen cavers and friends attended the April 21, 2023 BRG meeting.

The program was in three parts: 1) "Beyond the Lost Waterfall" video by Dave Socky; song by Marian, sung by Dano. This included the wild cave where we said farewell to Al Stewart on March 26th. 2) "Dream Team Tree Cleanup" slide presentation by Marian McConnell of Dave & Mary Sue Socky, Bob Alderson, Vonnie Droms, Mark Minton, Doug Feller efforts to remove some half-fallen trees in the Daylight Cave entrance of Catawba

Murder Hole, VA. 3) "Caver's Heaven" song (audio only) by Marian McConnell in honor of those we have lost.

Sadly, **Karen Kastning, NSS # 12164 RL, OS,FE, AL** passed away on April 6, 2023. Her obituary is on this page. Karen was a founding member of **New River Valley Grotto**, Radford, VA. Karen had been a member of **Blue Ridge Grotto** since 2014.

BRG has 56 members and 5 subscribers for 2023.

Attention former BRG members in good standing – to rejoin BRG, you need to sign a membership agreement and pay your \$10.

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 Softly

**Trip Report:
Paxton Cave, VA
By Susan Burr**

April 22, 2023
Susan Burr, Doug Feller, and Matt Gilliam

Basically everyone had things to do other than caving this month. It was a cooler, rainy day, but Doug & his coworker, Matt, wanted to go caving so we had a nice 2 ½ hour trip. We did the normal tourist route & then went to see part of the “Historic” section - the section with the large room at the front of the cave near the entrance.



Entrance photo with Doug Feller and Matt Gilliam. Photo by Susan Burr



Matt Gilliam surrounded by formations in the Christmas Room. Photo by Susan Burr

**Vertical Practice at
Hanging Rock**

April 1, 2023

From Dylan Kelly: *“Did a new thing today! Learning how not to fall off of cliff. Proper safety gear used.”*



Membership Updates

John Pearson, NSS # 25731 RL, FE, CO applied for membership in BRG in March 2023. His co-sponsors are Dave and Mary Sue Socky. 2nd by Michael Rowland. On April 21, 2023, John was voted in as a Regular BRG member. Congratulations, John!

Barry Ferguson, NSS 12436 RE, is one of the original founding members of BRG. Barry asked that his BRG membership be re-instated. Barry has rejoined as a Regular BRG member, along with his wife **Helene Ferguson**, who is a BRG subscriber. Mary Sue Socky proposed them for membership and subscribership; Lauren Appel seconded; both Barry and Helene were welcomed unanimously.

Please add the new member information to your BRG list!

Barry Ferguson NSS 12436 RE
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mercury7sigma@jetbroadband.com
540-263-0183 C

Helene Ferguson Subscriber
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htess.ferguson@gmail.com
540-537-6224 C

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941-441-6830 C

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.

Grotto Trip Log

3/18: Butler Cave, VA. Participants included Susan Burr, Lauren Appel, Nick Schmalenberger, and Kelly Perkins; the leader was Amos Mincin. They did a little digging in the Air Dig and explored some other areas in the cave.

3/26: Hanging Rock Orange Market cliffs, VA. Vertical practice went well; organized by Susan Burr and led by Nick Schmalenberger.

4/1: Hanging Rock Orange Market cliffs, VA. Vertical practice went well; organized by Susan Burr and led by Nick Schmalenberger.

4/12: Unnamed Cave, VA. Participants included, for survey: David Socky, Joe Zokaïtes, and Rick Royer. For digging: Amos Mincin and Jeremy Davis. For surface geology mapping: Rick Lambert, Keith Sweeney, and Bill Koerschner. Explored past the point where Rick Royer had enlarged the hole at the bottom of the cave. Some digging was involved. Joe, Rick Royer, and I surveyed while Amos and Jeremy worked on digging. Rick Royer also did some digging on the tight continuation of the passage while Joe and I surveyed the high lead at LGP8. The high lead still goes but requires protection (the whole climb up should be rigged). The dig at the end of the cave still goes on too, but it requires some more technical digging to let us big folk get through. By the way, an 85-foot rope is perfect for tying off at the surface and reaching the first rigged pit in the cave. We were in the cave for 8 hours and got a total of 127 feet of survey in the book.

4/13: Catfishes Pot (Gory Hole), VA. Participants included David Socky, Brian Williams, and Terry McClanathan. Terry was the only one to do the pit. He recovered an \$800 dog collar

from a dog that had fallen to its death 3 months ago. It stank pretty bad. Terry definitely gets kudos for getting the dog collar. Terry also measured the pit with a 200-foot tape to 134 feet!

4/13: Catfish Caverns (Catamount Cave), VA. Participants included David Socky, Brian Williams, and Terry McClanathan. We went in with Brian carrying a mason hammer in order to try and get into the narrow lower canyon. The rock was too thick, so we were unsuccessful. A few sessions with straws would do the trick. Brian got some really cool photos of the sunbeam shining into the entrance. We then ridge walked for 4 hours but didn't find a thing.

4/22: McClung Cave, WV. Participants included David Socky and Carl Amundson. We went to Outer Mongolia and surveyed the lower-level leads in the northern section of Outer Mongolia. We then went to the southern section and checked the first low lead on the left. Turned out to be a nice room after a short climb down, a 10-to-12-foot pit, and low drain canyon which T'd into another stream passage. To the left it went to the bottom of the pit, so no vertical stuff will be needed on the next trip. To the right the canyon went for 30 feet or so and continued, but I stopped because I'd reached my 'scoop' limit. We then headed out. It was a good 10-hour trip with 410 feet in the survey book.

4/25: Madison Saltpeter Cave, VA & Steger's Fissure, VA. This was the CCV/DCR project to re-gate Madison Saltpeter by so it would have a bat friendly gate. The gate construction was done by Jim (Crash) Kennedy, It was a weeklong project involving lots of iron, highlines for hauling, trail building, welding, etc. I spent three days and 2 nights at the site. We also gated Steger's Fissure.

4/29: McClung Cave, VA. Participants included David Socky, Joe Zokaïtes, Bill Koerschner, and Alex Faunce. We went to Outer Mongolia and surveyed the lower level lead that Carl and I had found on the previous trip. We surveyed the initial lower room and the 10-foot-deep pit, then the passage that led back around to the bottom of the pit. Alex and I surveyed a mid-level lead on the side of the pit which ended in a double dome/room after only a few feet. There was a high lead where the water was coming in but would require bolting. Going the other way - downstream - continued tight, gnarly, and muddy. There were places where Joe and I barely fit. We eventually got to a point where the passage ended in breakdown and a dig. We dug for several hours. Seven feet of clay and rock until we broke out into a large stream passage up near the ceiling. No safe way to climb down, but there was a survey station - BTO22. We called it a day after that. This was a good 11.5-hour trip with 420 feet surveyed - all new cave.

5/6: Phil Lucas Dig, VA. This was a drilling activity to bore a 3-inch hole 80-feet down to find the void that Phil's resistivity studies indicated should be there. The drill went down 110 feet and found no void. Darn. Lots of clay and probably sandstone. No limestone and no void. Mark Minton, Nick Socky, Alex Faunce, and I also worked on the dig just 100 feet from the drill site that Phil had started earlier. The dig was supposedly close to the upper end of the void. Lots of sandstone. We did a little technical digging too, which proved to be pretty effective. We dug down about 2 feet. No hole to follow - just dirt and rock.



Carl Amundson in McClung Cave.
Photo by Dave Socky

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 webpage](#)



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 style="width: 40px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/>
Kids (6–16)	\$22	\$22	<input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/>
Little Kids (<6)	Free	Free	<input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/>	\$0
Total Due	Please double check your math!			<input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/>

CABIN bunks are first come, first serve, but you must check with BATS for availability. Contact mercaver@yahoo.com and ctider@vmail.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.