

Carbide Dump



**Don't be a Dry Cave Chicken.
Vote in the BRG November Elections.**

November 2023
Vol 58, No 10

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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.

GROTTO OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES**Chair**

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

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Contributors: David & Mary Sue Socky, Lauren Appel, Marian McConnell, Meredith Weberg, Carl Cornett, George Dasher, Carol Tideman, and Jerry Fuller.

Cover: Dry Cave Chicken (VOTE!) near the 'Bitter End'. Photo by Dave Socky

CAVERS CALENDAR

Nov 11: WVCC Cave Banquet in Lewisburg, WV. See page 86.

Nov 15: Deadline to submit all awards nomination letters to the NSS.

Nov 17: BRG meeting, 6:30p, Jersey Lily's-Salem, VA. Elections.

Nov 24-26: Rock & Mineral Show, Salem Civic Center, Salem, VA 24153

Dec 9: WVACS Christmas Party. Contact Kelly McCarthy 419-303-1694.

Dec 15: NO BRG MEETING. Come to the BRG Party.

Dec 17: BRG Holiday Party, Dave & Mary Socky's place. Noon-5p. Pot luck, BYOB; this is in lieu of a BRG Meeting

Jan. 19, 2024: BRG meeting, 6:30p, Jersey Lily's-Salem, VA.

Jan 25-28, 2024: Carter Caves Adventure Weekend, Olive Hill, KY
<https://www.winteradventureweekend.com/>

Feb. 16, 2024: BRG meeting, 6:30p, Jersey Lily's-Salem, VA.

March 15, 2024: BRG meeting, 6:30p, Jersey Lily's-Salem, VA.

Apr 19, 2024: BRG meeting, 6:30p, Jersey Lily's-Salem, VA.

July 1-5, 2024: NSS Convention, Sewanee, TN. Details at [this site](#)

Fall 2024: TAG will be held at the Lazy G Ranch, Union Grove, AL. Date and details TBD.

Membership

BRG has 56 members and 5 subscribers for 2023. And now, it's time to pay your 2024 dues!

Attention former BRG members in good standing – to rejoin BRG, you only 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

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 11/4/2023

Cave Bucks	\$ 45.96
Conservation	\$ 2.00
Equipment	\$ 144.12
General	\$3,882.52
Total	\$4,074.60

BRG Meeting & Trips Notice

The November 17, 2023 meeting of the Blue Ridge Grotto will be held at **Jersey Lily's Roadhouse 1650 Braeburn Dr, Salem, VA 24153**. Dinner, appetizers with socializing starts at 6:00pm with the meeting starting around 6:30p.

This month's program will be video program: "Science View - The Leading Edge - A Mysterious Substance Lying In Caves" from Japan's NHK. It is 28 minutes long.

Grotto Trip

Porters Cave, VA

Date & Time: Saturday, Nov 18, 2023. Meet at Hanging Rock Orange Market at **8:30 am**.

Leaders: Susan Burr & Jeff Huffman

Coordination: Susan Burr 540-580-9409
pondladv97@gmail.com

Requirements: Horizontal Cave. If you wish to go, let Susan Burr know.

Limit: No limit

Description

Porter's Cave is gated. You have to climb through a metal culvert to enter the cave.

Porter's contains maze passages, big rooms, and crawls (mostly soft sand and dirt, except for one which has lots of mud and water). Wear your knee pads. There are also numerous pits (the bottoms can be reached without vertical gear) and lots of breakdown. Don't forget to visit Misery Pass.

This is a fun and fairly easy cave, and very good for beginner introduction trips.

A trip into Porters can be up to 4 to 5 hours or shorter, depending on where you go. You can go to Misery Pass, the Key Hole, and the Big Breakdown Room. Another place to go is the Big Slit area.



Dave Socky in the Key Hole of Porters Cave on 2/22/2014. Photo by Carl Cornett

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!

BRG Holiday Party – yes, there will be one! **Sunday, Dec. 17, 2023. Noon-5pm** at Dave & Mary Sue Socky's place, 6572 Woodbrook Dr. Roanoke VA 24018. Potluck, BYOB, casual, friends and family welcome. Contact Mary Sue Socky 540-529-3954 sockymss@cox.net for more info.

2023 BRG Landowner Christmas Cards: Marian designed a fantastic Landowner Christmas card this year. An email vote confirmed that the BRG would use it, so Marian has ordered the cards from Shutterfly. They should be here is time for Christmas.



Front of the Landowners Christmas Card by Marian McConnell

Blue Ridge Grotto Elections: There are vacancies in 2024 for the BRG Offices of Chair, Vice Chair, and Treasurer. There are current nominations (see page 92), but if you are interested in serving in one of these roles, or would like to nominate someone (*who agrees to accept, if nominated*), please let Lauren Appel know by **November 10th**. The list of nominees will be shared with all of you via email on November 11th, to allow time for your consideration. Votes will be taken at the November 17th meeting.

Nominations for 2024 NSS Awards. It is time to nominate deserving cavers for NSS awards to be presented at the 2024 NSS Convention in Suwanee, Tennessee July 5, 2024. Please submit nominations to the appropriate award sub-committee chair by the firm deadline of **November 15, 2023**. Award information, including the selection process and what a well-written nomination should contain, is published on the NSS Awards web page (<https://caves.org/nss->

(Continued on page 89)

(Announcements continued from page 88)

[awards/](#)). This includes Fellows, and also the Arts and Letters award – Marian is new Sub-Chair - You can nominate anyone who qualifies.

Cave Rescue ER-NCRC Updates:

- Cave Rescue Protocol: Sign up if you wish receive information and notifications at this [link](#).
- Don't use the old phone number on the back of your BRG membership card - that phone # is no longer in service. Call **911** if there is a cave rescue. 2024 BRG membership cards will be updated.
- Use the Caver Alert Information Sheet for each cave trip. Download [this Caver Alert Information Sheet](#) as a template for important info for you and your surface contact.

PAY YER 2024 DUES!!

It's close to that time. Dues are not due until the November 17 grotto meeting, but it never hurts to pay early. Current BRG members and BRG Subscribers:

- 2024 BRG dues are \$10.00 for regular or associate members, \$5.00 for additional family members. Discount for members under 18. Subscriber fee is \$10.00 per person.
- Make checks to **Blue Ridge Grotto**.
- Families, additional dues payers – there will be printed info on your family rate at the Nov 17 BRG meeting.
- If you mail in your dues, please include a piece of paper with your current address, phones, email, NSS number (and NSS expiration month), and primary grotto affiliation.
- You can pay for multiple years.

Pay your dues at the November 17 BRG meeting, - or mail them to:

Mary Sue Socky
BRG Treasurer
6572 Woodbrook Dr.
Roanoke, VA 24018

Bat Cave Closures -

Some WV and VA caves have closed for the **winter** hibernating period for bats. Other caves may be open for the winter. The winter closure does not affect all caves. Check the closed list, and please go elsewhere if your intended cave is closed. *There are thousands of caves in the Virginias.*

- **Virginia - Closed Oct. 15—Apr. 15 for bat hibernacula. (Winter Closure in effect)**
- **West Virginia – Closed Sept. 1 - May 15 for bat hibernacula. (Winter Closure in effect)**

See [this link](#) for more WV closed cave information.

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](#).

Fred Grady's Obituary can be found at the following [link](#).



Dry Cave soda straws - Dave Socky

Can't remember if you've already paid? We do! Check the **Pre-Paid List:**

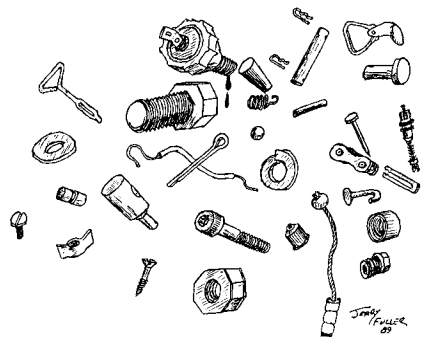
Lauren Appel - 2025
Sharon Bruce - 2024
Susan Burr - 2024
Joseph Caldwell - 2026
Carl Cornett - 2024
Miriam Cuddington - 2032
Carrie Douppnik - 2029
Joey Fagan - Life
Cheryl Feller - 2025
Doug Feller - 2025
Barry Ferguson - 2024
Helene Ferguson - 2024
Trish Geiger - 2024
Keith Goggin - 2024
Lisa Goggin - 2024
Gene Harrison - 2032
Jeff Huffman - 2030
Kevin Johnson - 2029
Randy Michael— 2024
Sharon Mohny— 2026
Lynn Ott - 2032
Jen Perdue— 2024
Kelly Perkins - 2024
David Rose - 2024
Suzanne Rose - 2024
Ed Saugstad - 2024
Marianne Saugstad - 2024
Nick Schmalenberger - 2024
David Socky - 2024
Mary Sue Socky - 2024
Nick Socky - 2024

Not a BRG member? Ask any officer how to begin the membership process.

Vertical & Caving Gear BRG Auction

The BRG Grotto Auction was closed on October 31, 2023 at 11:59pm. It was a great success as everything sold.

I want to thank Carl Cornett for his generous donation of his gear, especially considering that the auction brought in close to \$2,800.00!! That I not an exact figure because shipping and PayPal fees still need to be figured in, but it is pretty close.



MY COMMITMENTS TO MEMBERS OF THE BLUE RIDGE GROTTO

October 28, 2023

I will soon be celebrating **30** years as a member of the Blue Ridge Grotto. Dano and I joined BRG in March, 1994. BRG is like a second family to me, and I am grateful! I love having such a diverse wonderful group of friends who sharing our love of caves and caving.

Out of gratitude for what has been, and hope for what is yet to come, I make the following commitments.

- I will do all I can to help BRG continue its mission to share our passion for caving in a **SAFE and CONSERVATION-MINDED** way. Safe caving relies on teamwork; we never know when our relationships and interactions can come down to life and death. That became abundantly clear recently in the successful cave rescue of Doug Feller!
- I will show **RESPECT** to each one of you, and appreciation for your unique personality, skills, and views.
- We are all volunteers, so I will do my best to **SAY THANK YOU** for the positive things you do for and in BRG. Whether it is serving as Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, Newsletters, Safety & Techniques, coordinating and leading trips, coming to meetings, participating in caving and cave-related activities, hosting parties, submitting items for the newsletters, helping out during rescues – each person is a valuable part of our team. Thank you for **ALL** you do!
- If I ever say or do anything that you do not perceive as respectful or considerate, please **TELL ME** – in private. If you feel uncomfortable doing it in person, then by phone or email or

letter. That way we can clear up any misunderstandings and work out any issues between us in a positive, constructive way. I promise to do the same for you.

- All **QUESTIONS** are welcome. If you are unsure about a policy, procedure or protocol or any part of our caving organization or activities, please ask! I welcome questions and if I don't know, I'll find out for you! Although I have been involved with caving for 3 decades, I know I don't know everything, and never will. I believe there is always something else for me to learn. I hope we continue learning from each other.

Sincerely,

Marian McConnell
NSS 37358



Bighorn Cave, WY by Dave Socky



Culverson Creek Cave, WV by Dave Socky



Fort Stanton Cave, NM by Dave Socky

VAR Grants Available

By *Carol Tiderman*

Do you need to raise funds for a project or other activity? Consider hosting a VAR. There are instructions for hosting on the VAR website, so you do not need to figure it all out. Past hosts are available to give you advice. Hosts are needed for the Spring and Fall meet in 2024. Help the VAR and your activity. WIN-WIN. See <https://var.caves.org/index.php/events/how-to-host-a-var> for more information.



Grotto Trip Log

9/16: Paxton Cave, VA – September's BRG trip – see write-up in the *Carbide Dump*.

9/16: Crozet Tunnel, VA – Easy trip, 4 people, see write-up in *Carbide Dump*.

9/30: Clover Hollow Cave, VA – Nick Schmalenberger during Blacksburg Cave Rescue Training.

10/1: Tawney's Cave, VA – Nick Schmalenberger visited during Blacksburg Cave Rescue Training.

10/1: Lowmoor Cave, VA – Pick-up trip with Lauren and some newbies. Saw lots of salamanders and took lots of photos. Easy laid-back trip

10/7: Neversink, Moody's, Stephen's Gap, Tumbling Rock - Nick Schmalenberger in TAG with Greenbrier Grotto.

10/14: McClung Cave, WV. Participants included David Socky, Chris Coates, Brian Young, Ned Rose. We went back to the Waffle Foot passage to tie into Kelly's NIP survey. Took three hours to get to the start of our survey. It continued gnarly and small, but nothing too tight. Everything was covered in slimy mud, which may have been left over from the 2016 flood. But it wasn't wet. After tying into the NIP survey, we did an upper-level loop back the way we had come. The start of it was a tight

belly crawl I barely fit through. After that the passage was gnarly and small, but nothing uncomfortably tight. There were numerous places it ties back into the lower level. We finally called it a day after 43 stations, but stuff still left to do in the Waffle Foot area. Probably several hundred feet, plus leads to check according to the old map. It was a tiring 13-hour trip, but we surveyed 541 feet.

10/20: Smoke Hole, VA – Nick Schmalenberger visited during Blacksburg Cave Rescue training – mock rescue.



“Explore Virginia Caves” license plate

UPDATE: The notice and application for the Explore Virginia Caves license plate is now live on the DCR Cave Board page at this [link](#).

We are still a good ways away from the 450 applications needed for the legislation to move forward. Please feel free to share the link with your networks.

Please forward this to your grottos if you have Virginia residents as members.
Meredith Weberg

Hi VAR Cavers, specifically VIRGINIA Cavers,

Here is a great opportunity to help the Virginia Cave Board and get a cool caver license plate for your car!

Before this becomes a reality, we need 450 of us to preorder them. And it probably won't be until sometime next year, but it'll be worth the wait, I think. The cost is \$25 for a non-personalized plate and \$35 for a personalized plate.

This license plate was designed by a [Show Cave owner](#) (Luray Caverns). Below is the message from Elizabeth Graves Good from Luray Caverns:

My name is Elizabeth Graves Good, I am the assistant manager for Marketing & Public Relations with Luray Caverns.

We have designed a Virginia license plate to support the Virginia Cave Board. The Virginia Cave Board works diligently in collaborating with multiple organizations and the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) to promote the conservation and protection of caves, karst, cave life and environmental education.

*We have created a plate that is DMV approved. I will attach all the paperwork that goes with this process for you to read over. Along with this email will be the actual form each individual will need to fill out with check attached. Please send DMV Preorder Request paper work and checks payable to **Treasurer of Virginia** with “Explore Virginia Caves” license plate in the memo.*

Send paperwork & check to: Virginia Cave Board, Attn: Michael Fletcher (FOIA Officer) 600 E. Main Street, 24th

Floor Richmond, VA 23219. His contact information is (804) 786-8445 / michael.fletcher@dcr.virginia.gov.

We wanted to get this email out to each of you so you can get started on filling forms out. In mid-April we will follow up on how things are going.

If you have any questions or concerns please call me at (540) 743-6551 ext. 2250.

Thank you for your help in making this happen!

Click on the links below for the forms that need to be filled out to preorder:

[License Plate Development Preorder request.](#)

[DMV Special License Plate Dev Process](#)



