

Carbide Dump



February 2024
Vol 59, No 02

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.

EXCHANGE MAIL

Mary Sue Socky
6572 Woodbrook Dr
Roanoke, VA 24018-5402
H: 540-989-7693
email: sockvmss@cox.net

EDITORS

David & Mary Sue Socky
6572 Woodbrook Dr
Roanoke, VA 24018-5402
H: 540-989-7693
email: sockvdr@cox.net or sockvmss@cox.net

TRIP COORDINATOR

Susan Burr
4544 Cordell Dr SW
Roanoke, VA 24018
H: 540-989-5809
email: pondlady97@gmail.com

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**

Nick Schmalenberger
C: 530-574-5395
nick@schmalenberger.us

Vice-Chair

David Socky
C: 540-529-1591
sockvdr@cox.net

Secretary

Marian McConnell
C: 540-309-4707
marian.mcconnell@gmail.com

Treasurer

Kelly Perkins
C: 919-710-0396
perkinskm13@gmail.com

Opinions expressed in The Carbide Dump are those of the editors, unless otherwise acknowledged. No part of this publication may be reproduced, except by the National Speleological Society and its various internal organizations, without the written consent of the Blue Ridge Grotto.

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

Copyright 2024 by the Blue Ridge Grotto

Contributors: David & Mary Sue Socky, Kelly Perkins, Marian McConnell, Nick Schmalenberger, Meredith Weberg, Keith Sweeney, Steve Gray, Yvonne Droms, Carol Tiderman, Blaine Schubert, Andrea Futrell, and Jerry Fuller.

Cover: Eli Meyer in McClung Cave, WV after surveying nearly 500 feet in a high lead. Photo by Dave Socky

CAVERS CALENDAR

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

Mar 9: *Tales From Dark Places*, an NSS presentation at the New York City Explorer's Club. See p. 11.

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

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

Apr 26-28: VAR Earth Day Restoration Sinkhole Clean out, Bland Co. VA. See p. 18.

May 3-5: 2024 Spring VAR, Durbin, WV. Hosted by DC Grotto. See p. 189

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

May 17-19: 2024 Spring MAR Field Meet @ McClure Bean Soup Festival grounds, McClure, PA. hosted by Bald Eagle Grotto. See <http://mar.caves.org>

May 22-28: Speleofest, Lone Star Cave Preserve, Bonnieville KY. See [link](#).

June 2-8: Virginia Cave Week

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

June 21-23: Karst-O-Rama, Great Saltpeter Cave Preserve, Livingston, KY <https://karstorama.com>

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

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

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

Sept 27-29: Fall VAR, @ Hungry Mother Lutheran Camp, Marion, VA. Hosted by Eric Landgraf, John King, and members of Out of Bounds Grotto.

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

Nov 7-10, 2024: Karst Waters Institute 4th Appalachian Karst Symposium, Lewisburg, WV. Save the date!

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 02/05/2024

Cave Bucks	\$ 110.96
Conservation	\$ 2.00
Equipment	\$ 144.12
General	\$6,754.08
Total	\$7,011.16

BRG Meeting & Trip Notice

The **February 16, 2024** 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 a 19 minute long video titled "*Invisible River*" by Sofia Oggioni about caving in Columbia. This was a 2021 NSS Video Salon entry that won the Best of Show.

Grotto Trip

New River Cave, VA

Date & Time: Saturday, Feb 17, 2023. Meet at Hanging Rock Orange Market at **9:00 am**.

Leaders: Jeff Huffman.

Coordination: Susan Burr 540-580-9409
pondlady97@gmail.com

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

Limit: No limit

Description

This is a horizontal cave with a bit of an uphill hike to the entrance. We will cave quietly through the first part of the cave so as not to disturb the hibernating bats. I am not sure where we will go, but probably to the waterfall and back at least. That means we will be walking in the stream some. Maybe we will explore other sections as well. After the cave trip we will be heading into Blacksburg to have dinner at the Mexican Restaurant.



Entrance to New River Cave 2004
photo by Dave Socky

Membership

BRG has 52 members and 5 subscribers for 2024.

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

TALES FROM DARK PLACES

March 9-10, 2024: The Explorers Club will host at their prestigious headquarters in Manhattan New York the spring meetings of the NSS Board of Governors (BOG) and National Speleological Foundation (NSF) as well as the annual daylong event "**Tales From Dark Places**".

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.



Generic Cave Waiver: Marian created a draft of a cave waiver that will work for any state. Note that these waivers are recommended for any non-BRG caving trips. It's up to the trip leader to determine if he/she wants to use them. The draft will be sent out by email for members to provide their feedback.

Again, this is just a tool and since it's available for use by trip leaders on NON-BRG trips, it's not required by BRG. It is highly recommended to "CYA" in case of an accident.

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!

Senate Bill 299 Update: From *VAR List Serve* - WOOHOO! The bill has been stricken. The Virginia Cave Board and the Virginia Cave Protection Act have prevailed! Thanks to everyone who wrote and called the legislature. CAVERS ROCK! A couple of folks are writing a more detailed account, and we will be sure the list gets it. Thank you, everyone! *Andrea Futrell*

VAR Closed Cave List can be found at this [link](#). Please send changes and updates to Brad Blase at blase@virginiacaves.org.

Bat Cave Closures -

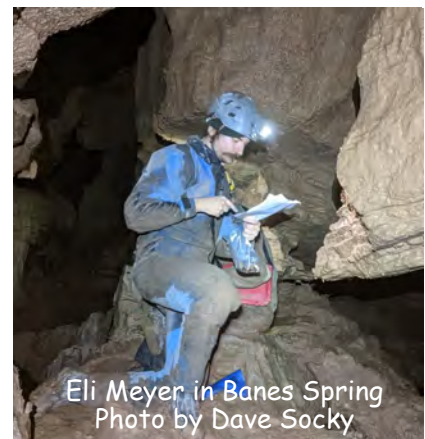
Some WV and VA caves have closed for the **winter** hibernating period for bats. Other caves may be open for the winter. The winter closure does not affect all caves. Check the closed list, and please go elsewhere if your intended cave is closed. *There are thousands of caves in the Virginias.*

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.



Eli Meyer in Banes Spring
Photo by Dave Socky

Catawba Murder Hole

Catawba Murder Hole Cave, VA has been attracting lots of attention lately.

Botetourt County Libraries are hosting **Murder Hole Cave** movie showings and cave talks in February. If you want to assist/attend any of these, please contact Marian.

- Saturday, February 10 at 11am at Eagle Rock Library
- Tuesday, February 13 at 4pm at Fincastle Library
- Saturday, February 24 at 11am at Buchanan Library

Marian McConnell

Volunteer with Eastern Region NCRC

Want to help with cave rescue?

Once a cave rescue is initiated, Eastern Region NCRC will contact you by text & email and ask if you can help.

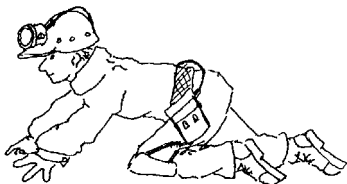
To get on the Emergent Volunteer contact list (TexCom) they will need the following information:

- Your name
- Email address/s.
- Cell phone number and carrier (AT&T, T-Mobile, Verizon, etc.).
- Special skills and training you have.
- Geographical area you cave in, and or live in.
- Caves you know well. And any other information you feel is relevant.

Send everything to:

Earl Suitor wvcaver216@gmail.com

Thank you for volunteering.



Virginia Cave Week

Virginia Cave Week is **June 2-8, 2024**, sponsored by the Virginia Cave Board.

So far we have two major events happening, but we could use more.

Does your grotto want to host an event? It could be as simple as making a cave display at the local library for the week, or giving a talk to school kids (though it might be too late for public school students), or leading a walk and talk at one of the sites along the Virginia Cave and Karst Trail.

Please let me know at my email address merecaver@yahoo.com if your grotto is interested. It could be an avenue to getting new members, but certainly it will help educate the public about the importance of caves and karst!

Thanks,
Meredith Hall Weberg
Virginia Cave Board



Cave Conservancy of the Virginias

Grants Deadline Approaching

The Cave Conservancy of the Virginias (CCV) has a grants program to fund a variety of projects, including education and outreach endeavors, cave and sink-hole cleanups, purchase of significant properties for protection, original scientific or humanities research on cave and karst systems, among others. Projects should promote or facilitate conservation, management, knowledge or acquisition of cave and karst resources in Virginia and West Virginia.

The deadline for proposals to be considered at the spring CCV board meeting is February 15, 2024.

Project leaders must submit their proposal through an appropriate organization (see proposal guidelines) as grants are not made to individuals. Please carefully review the grant proposal guidelines, available on the CCV website, before preparing your proposal:

<https://caveconservancyofvirginia.org/grant-proposal-guidelines/>

Sincerely, Blaine Schubert



Nick Socky bolt climbing to a high lead in McClung Cave, WV.
Photo by Dave Socky

Hoover Cave Landowner Day

Article by *Keith Sweeney*, Photos by *Dave Socky*

January 31, 2024

On Wednesday Rick Lambert, Tom McIntyre, Billy Pickett, Bill Koerschner, and Dave Socky met at Keith Sweeney's house to continue their work in the Falling Spring Cove.

Tom & Billy delivered an aluminum ladder and a 42" diameter steel tank to be used for future cave entrance protection & access.

After unloading the items from Tom's truck, they split into two teams.

1. Rick & Bill Koerschner were to take a picture of an exposed rock at the Pasco property for Prof. John Haynes before driving over to the Mitchell property to re-evaluate a troublesome interpretation of "a knuckle of Five Oaks Limestone" that was sequentially out of place and Rick wanted a second set of eyes on it from geologist Bill Koerschner.

2. Dave, Keith, Tom & Billy drove to Hoover Cave to carry out the plan of making Hoover Cave accessible to the property owner and his family and to at least start the fuel tank cave gating installation.

This is the third cave we've dug open on Jeff Hoover's property and is the only one in the valley developed by WSP that is not vertical. Even though the cave is free climbable for most cavers the entrance and an 8' drop into the East passage just beyond the connection crawl would be uncomfortable for kids & non cavers. Jeff asked if we would make it accessible for him and his family.

While Dave & Billy suited up, Keith went in to chop footholds into the very mucky mud slope. Dave entered and slipped by Keith to draw and measure the drop. It was decided that a 12-14 ft. ladder would span the difficult area safely if we could get it in.

Keith drove back to his house and returned with 2- sections of 12'+ length aluminum ladders.

One worked perfectly across the drop for allowing safe entry into the East passage. The second ladder was placed onto the muddy exit slope in lieu of re digging footholds on every trip.

Tom awaited topside with a propane heater as Keith, Dave & Billy exited the cave. Up walked Rick Lambert and Bill Koerschner, just in time to help lower the fuel tank into place. After drilling and anchoring the tank to bedrock in two locations, they dipped water from a stream and proceeded to place rocks with alternating quickcrete slurry as non-washable backfill around the tank. On the next project day, they will mix another alternating layer of rock and quickcrete slurry on top of the first cured layer to finish the gating project.



Another view of the ladder.



Rick shoveling quickcrete



Billy Pickett by the successfully installed ladder.



The installed gate

Caving in Mexico

Article & Photos by *Nick Schmalenberger*

Editors Note: This article was condensed from Nick's log book and edited for length and clarity.

Participants: Rolland Moore, Peter Zabrok, Nick Schmalenberger, and Joel Perez Salizar.

November 30, 2023

We hiked up the mountain to the west along the cliff top with beautiful views. Peter went to try and find the cave down the cliff while Rolland and I derigged the way that didn't go last week.

The rebelay is so far over horizontally that it's tough to swing over from the rope above and undo the bolt. Sometimes it was necessary change back to rappel and then climb in the other direction to get back. I was super tired from the derigging. After the last pitch Rolland brought up the rope bag and looked for Peter, but Peter wasn't there. So Rolland told me to bring up another bag of gear while he looked for Peter. He said he'd be back in an hour. I brought up the gear bag and returned for my pack and went back up again. I took off my vertical gear and did a crossword puzzle. By 9 pm I concluded they were overdue, so I put my vertical gear back on. Then I saw Peter coming back up. He had found Cueva de Águila! He was waiting for us there. He and Rolland scooped some of it. It was decided that tomorrow we would start surveying.

December 1, 2023

It was a sunny day! The route down to the Cueva de Águila had lots of rebelay



Peter doing rope work along the cliff

and a traverse through brushy jungle to where the solid rock was around the cave mouth. There were lots of agave plants clinging to the cliff. Rolland did a ceremony offering garlic, cacao, tobacco, and xean to the cave spirits.

We went into the cave and took lots of pictures with Rolland's big camera and flashes. He then left to go to town. Peter and I surveyed the entrance area. We left around 9:30 pm. It took about an hour to go up the ropes and an hour to get back to camp so we were back around midnight. Both of us were very tired. Rolland was still at camp.

December 2, 2023

It's a sunny day. Peter and I went back to Cueva de Águila while Rolland went with the guys from town to chop a new route into the east, where hopefully there was a cave draining into Rio Uluápam. On the cliff it was really beautiful above a layer of clouds. Yesterday we could see the town but today it was in fog.

Peter and I surveyed through the first two big rooms and made an 80m loop around the second room. Peter said the loop closed with less than a 2-meter error. We left the cave around 9:30pm. Again, it took an hour to get up the ropes. The fog had come up above the cave and it may have rained while we were in the cave. We were not as tired this time and we made better time going down the hill. We got back to camp around 11:40 pm. It started to rain while we were making dinner. Rolland was gone and apparently didn't return to camp. We hoped they didn't get caught out in the rain.

December 3, 2023

It was cold and foggy at camp. Rolland returned from town around 11 am. The previous night the guys from town showed Rolland a much shorter but steeper way down the mountain, which is why they didn't pass through camp. They got maybe 200 meters from Objective 1 in the east. He says Carolina and the kids could



Looking out the entrance

see our lights on the cliff above town! Very cool. We were not doing good for an early start of caving, though. At 2:30 pm we just decided to make it a rest today.

Monday December 4, 2023

All three of us went to the cave. Peter and I surveyed around the third room and up to the pit while Rolland rigged the pit. Around 9 pm Rolland came back up the pit and we talked about going back to camp because the brick (laser range finder) was not working. Rolland also wanted to check out the horizontal passage which continued on the other side of the pit. So, we went there. Peter got the brick working again so we started to survey.

By midnight Peter and I are both tired. Peter was doing the sketch, so had been working harder than me, but the borehole was just getting bigger and bigger. I said we should go back to camp, but Peter disagreed. But it was real late so I headed back. As it turned out, Peter and Rolland followed me out. It was raining and 4 am by the time we got back to camp.

Tuesday December 5, 2023

Another rainy day. We woke up late, so we planned for one last big push on

(Continued on page 15)

(Continued from page 14)

Wednesday, surveying the cave before the guys would be coming to help us break camp at the end of the week.

Wednesday December 6 / Thursday December 7, 2023

We went in the cave and planned to survey as much as we could, and then derig the cave and the cliff on Thursday. I brought my sleeping bag so I could take a nap in the cave which would give me more energy to help derig on Thursday.

The giant borehole continued, zigzagging through lots of formations, flowstone, and boulders. Some places had showers with beautiful pools. We took lots of pictures with Rolland's nice camera and flashes. Eventually we got to a slope going up, and it changed from rock to dirt. At the top of the dirt slope I found some green leaves and various bugs. Water was coming in from some small chimneys. I tried to look up into the chimneys, but it was too wet. It seemed like we had come to a collapsed sinkhole intersecting the passage and this could be another entrance.

We surveyed to this point and took more

pictures. We then went back to the spot on the slope where it was still rocky and set up the jet boil for coffee. We filled the water bottles from one of the drips and had some hot food. We rested for a little while, then started heading back towards the entrance.

Rolland and Peter still wanted to survey down the pit before leaving, so I let them go while I went back to my sleeping bag for a nap. I think I slept about 2 hours. I felt very damp.

When we all got back to the entrance, it was not raining anymore, and it was a beautiful morning. Rolland said some ceremonial words, asking the cave spirits permission to leave the cave. Peter set up the haul system for bringing all of our bags up the pitches on the cliff. I tied the bags on and let them out horizontally from the entrance to where they are hanging straight down, and then Peter hauled them up. I followed the bags up and Peter went up to the next pitch. Peter and I continued up with Peter hauling and me guiding the bags around obstacles. On one pitch there were some roots that were quite hard to move the bags around, so Peter set up a redirect on the

haul line, but it also seemed to get tangled. All of the pitches that weren't completely vertical, the bags seemed to drag on the ground. I kept thinking we should have just carried them out. But they were so heavy, and the haul system was still very useful for progress capture. Rolland followed me, and derigged the ropes and bolts as he went. It took us all day getting everything up the cliff, but it was not raining. We got back to camp in the early evening.

Friday December 8, 2023

I woke up around 8 am when the guys showed up at camp to help us move down the mountain. I packed up everything in my tent. We started hiking down the mountain. It was so steep I slipped and fell on my butt many times. At one point, though, we all stopped to look back at the cliff and see the cave entrance way up above us.

We finally got to Rolland's house where we all had a beer. Carolina made wonderful chicken with rice and mole sauce for everybody who helped move camp down from the mountain. So tasty! It was quite a trip.



Some of the formations in the cave



The entrance in the cliff face

DistoX2 and cell phones: not always a perfect pair

By *Yvonne Droms*

A while back, I received this email through the Swiss caving listserv. It's a warning about keeping tablets/PDAs/phones away from DistoX2s at all times. I've translated the text of Thomas Arbenz's message into English. I can make the original versions (German and French) available if anyone wishes them. Feel free to share this warning with other surveyors/groups.

"Over the weekend I met a surveyor friend of mine and he had a story to tell: Not so long ago he and his team switched from PDAs to tablets because their PDA had died and there was no replacement available. Everything seemed to be working fine, but then they noticed that their Disto was showing strange readings when it was positioned close to the tablet (which happens, espe-

cially when working alone). They knew it probably wasn't the tablet's battery (there had never been a problem with a PDA before), but then it dawned on them that tablets have speakers, and they have magnets inside..... voilà!

I realized that this is also the case with cell phones, which also have speakers. Well, I did an experiment: I brought my cell phone (turned on) close to the Disto (turned on) and the Disto went crazy... And what's more: the calibration was also gone (sh..t!). You really don't want that to happen when you're surveying in cave. Well, we knew about steel mail-lons, watches and headlamps, but....it's never too late to learn something new. So be careful when you use the DistoX with apps on cell phones or tablets and do not bring them close to each other. Do not transport them in the same pouch. Do not put them in the same pocket... and tell your buddy who's shooting videos on his phone to stay away."

P.S. Someone then mentioned that this also applies when the phone or tablet is turned off because they are still magnetic. So even carrying them together is a problem. 🐿



SAFETY ALERT: Petzl Superavanti and Aven harnesses

From a Facebook post by Steve Gray

Multiple reports have been received by BCA regarding harness buckles on the newest model of Petzl caving harnesses that have orange coloured webbing, i.e. both the Super Avanti and Aven. The issue is that buckles on harnesses that are either new, or in relatively new condition, tend to work loose to the extent that they come undone. BCA officers posted on this forum about this issue in April 2022 and have been in regular contact with Petzl since then.

Almost all the reports have been about leg loop buckles. We have had a very small number of reports regarding the belt buckle also loosening, though not coming undone.

Petzl has designed a buckle cover, specifically for leg loops on either harness. A small number of cavers in the UK and abroad were sent the prototype buckle covers in January 2023 and these were found to be highly effective. These anti-slip devices have now

been manufactured and can be ordered free of charge via the Petzl UK contact page <https://www.petzl.com/GB/en/Sport/Contact>

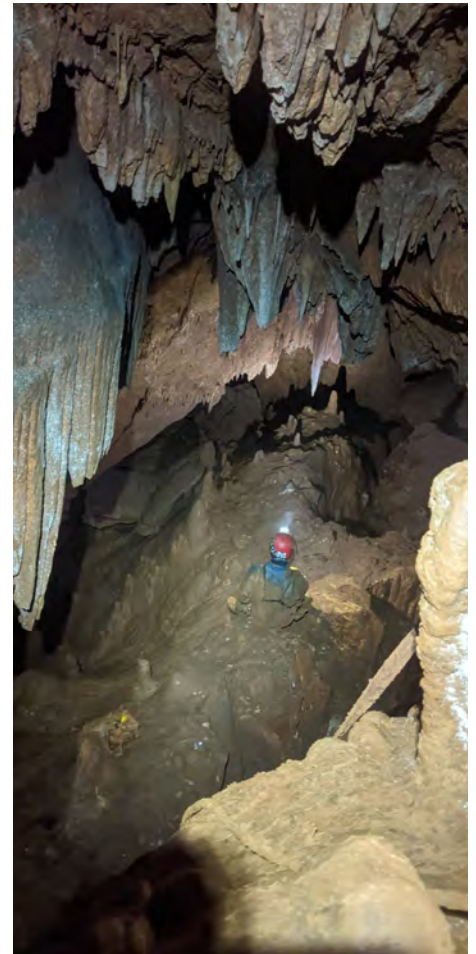
choosing the 'After-sales Service' option. You should mention 'anti-slip device for Superavanti (or Aven) harness' when you complete the form.

Petzl has also reminded everyone that regular checks of kit are important.

Cavers are advised to pass this information along so that as many cavers as possible are aware of this potential safety issue.

Regards, Steve Grey

Petzl Superavanti



Shenandoah Wild Cave.
Photo Dave Socky

Grotto Trip Log

11/25-12/9/23 Cueva de Águila. Nick Schmalenberger went on a Mexican caving expedition with Rolland Moore

12/1/2023 Hato Cave in Curacao, Mexico. Report by Trish Geiger.

12/11/2023 Rio Secreto (Secret River) in Playa del Carmen, Mexico. Report by Trish Geiger.

12/16/23 James Cave, VA. Susan Burr reported on the December BRG cave trip. See article in the January 2024 *Carbide Dump*.

12/31/23 Lowmoor Cave, VA. Susan Burr went with Glenn Hugus and Tony Smith for a total of 17 people!

01/2024 Xilitla, Mexico. Bob Alderson reported on taking a Cave for Pay trip to Xilitla, Aguila, Mexico. It was his first cave trip since his accident.

1/10/2024: Glass Menagerie, VA. Participants included David Socky, Rick Royer, & Amos Mincin. Rick Lambert, Keith Sweeny and others were doing surface support, surface geology and other entrance work. Rick R and I surveyed the whole cave since the notes from the previous survey had been lost. Amos Mincin worked on a dig at mid-level. We will have to return for the dig since straws will be required to continue, but it does show some promise. We finished the survey. It was not as muddy as it had been in the past, probably because of the lid that had been put on the entrance, keeping rainwater out. The drops were tight, but doable. They had been tighter, but the last drop was opened up. Keith Sweeney got stuck trying to go down the last drop; he took 40 minutes to do a change over and extract himself. I had no problems going down the widened lower drop. It was a cold and very windy day. We changed clothes in our cars to keep warm. We surveyed 203 feet in six hours of caving.

1/11 Murder Hole presentation at the Glebe in Daleville. Report by Marian McConnell. Dave and Mary Sue Socky helped with the presentation.

1/13 McClungs Cave, WV. Participants included David Socky, Nathan Otto, Tatiana Olin, and Kat Taylor. WVACS project weekend. We had 5 teams in the cave. Three in Seven Fingers and Kelly McCarthy and crew in the Crystal Pool lead in the same area where my team surveyed. Kelly's team got over 1000 feet of survey. We did side leads in the IBN survey (main passage parallel to the Wafflefoot). Mostly loops that tied back into the main passage. Some upper level stuff. Our final section was at the far end of Wafflefoot, and upper-level crawl over the main passage which wasn't even shown as a lead on the old map. It did eventually get too tight but is new cave. We surveyed 580 feet on a 12-hour trip.

1/20 Butler Cave, VA. Participants included David Socky, Paul Winter, Kat Taylor, and Dalton Emig. We surveyed at the start of Sand Canyon, going upstream towards the Natural Bridge. I sketched, using a clipboard and gridded 8.5 x 11 paper. It was complicated, so I got sketcher burnout after 1300 feet of survey in 10 hours.

1/27 McClung Cave, WV. Participants included David Socky, Nick Socky, Eli Meyer, and Ned Rose. Nick and Dave worked on the bolt climb (Dave belayed) at the end of the second entrance canyon section where the water comes out of a small hole at the top of a dome. Nick used 12 to 14 bolts to traverse and then climb up the dome. Before he got up to the very top, he was able to confirm that there was no passage at the top. It was just a wide alcove. Eli and Ned had gone back into the Breezeway to survey the going passage at the top of the bolt climb that Nick had done a while ago. When Nick and Dave got there at 5pm, they were just getting ready to come down. They had surveyed about 12 stations of tight canyon/crawlway. It was still going. We exited the cave at 6:30pm for a 7.5 hour trip.

1/29 Shenandoah Wild Cave, VA. Participants included David Socky, Carl Amundson, Casey Tucker, Eric Zieg. Shenandoah Wild Cave is a project of the Shenandoah County Cave Survey.

The cave is only open for the survey. This was the last of the survey trips to finish the cave. The trip was also to check for a voice/light connection between two spots in the cave that should be close together. We made the voice and light connection - a dig of about 5 feet which was not deemed worth it since both sides where in known cave. It will be noted on the map. We then did a check for a connection at another location, near the bottom of the second rope. That connection was not as clear as the first. The next task was a bolt climb traverse with some survey. We were out of the cave by 3:30 for a short 5 hour trip.

1/31 Hoover Cave, VA. Participants included David Socky, Billy Pickett, Keith Sweeney, Rick Lambert, Bill Koerschner, and Tom McIntyre. See the article on page 15 for details.

2/3 Banes Spring, VA. Participants included David Socky, Bill Koerschner, and Eli Meyer. This was my first time in Banes Spring. Bill wanted to get a good sketch and cross sections for a section of the cave about 2 hours from the entrance. The trip was quite 'sporting'. Lots of crawls, canyons, climbs, and gnarly spots. Stemming and crossing deep canyons at the top with lots of exposure. There were three belly crawls which Bill had told me I should be able to do since Joe Zokaites had been able to fit. Luckily, I fit through all of them. The section we surveyed was mostly walking with sections of short crawls and obstacles. The last part was a confusing mess of breakdown. I'm glad I wasn't sketching. We did an actual survey up into a virgin room - about 40 feet of new cave. We left one lead I had checked which would get about 50 feet of virgin cave, but that lead ended too. The trip out seemed to go faster than the way in. We were out by 9:30pm. A fun and strenuous trip of 10 hours.



APRIL 26–28, 2024
VAR “EARTH DAY”
RESTORATION
SINKHOLE CLEANOUT



Beginning Friday afternoon, April 26 for retirees and others, but 9 a.m. Saturday for everyone else (may carry over into Sunday)

Camping is available Friday & Saturday on an adjacent property (caver-owned!)

**Location: 47 Low Gap Lane
 Bland, VA**

- **Lunch and water will be provided Saturday, but please bring your own snacks and extra water.**
- **We’ll be cleaning out at least one large sinkhole**
- **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
- 1-2 STEP LADDERS
- 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
- INSECT REPELLENT

RSVP—HELPS WITH PLANNING

MERECAVER@YAHOO.COM

JANETE@SHENTEL.NET

SAVE THE DATE!

Washington, DC Grotto Presents:

SPRING VAR 2024

The DC Grotto Turns 85!
Celebrate by getting
down and dirty with us!



EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

Led Caving Trips

We need trip leaders! If you're interested in leading a trip in Pocahontas County or the surrounding areas, please email Donnie Hammond at: theglobetrottingdonnie@yahoo.com

Saturday Night Dinner

Catering provided by the local Elks Club

Birthday Party

When DCG has a birthday, we do the surprising! You won't want to miss the epic activities we have in store.

PRICING AND REGISTRATION To Be Announced

Mark your calendars!



MAY
3-5
2024

**EAST FORK
CAMPGROUND**

RT 250 MAIN STREET
MEADOW LANE DRIVE
DURBIN, WV 26264