

Carbide Dump



March 2024
Vol 59, No 03

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, Susan Burr, Earl Suito, Meredith Weberg, Nick Schmalenberger, Marian McConnell, Dylan Kelly, and Jerry Fuller.

Cover: A delicate straw column in Pritt (Singularity) Cave, Alleghany Co, VA. Photo by Dave Socky

CAVERS CALENDAR

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 page 26.

May 3-5: 2024 Spring VAR, Durbin, WV. Hosted by DC Grotto. See page 27

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 Saltwater Cave Preserve, Livingston, KY <https://karstorama.com>

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

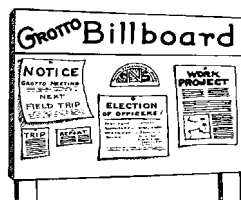
July 19: BRG meeting, 6:30p, Jersey Lily's-Salem, VA.

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

03/05/2024

Cave Bucks	\$ 110.96
Conservation	\$ 2.00
Equipment	\$ 144.12
General	\$6,893.09
Total	\$7,150.17

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

BRG Meeting & Trip Notice

The **March 15, 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 slide program of some of the recent cave trips by Dave Socky and others. Program will be about 15 minutes.

Grotto Trip

Lost World Caverns, WV

Date & Time: Saturday, March 16, 2023. Meet at Hanging Rock Orange Market at **8:30 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

Lost World Caverns is a commercial cave near Lewisburg, WV. However, the owner is caver friendly and allows responsible cavers to explore the wild section of the cave.

Entry into the cave is through the gift shop. Access to the wild section requires going through the very beautiful commercial portion of the cave.

There are several thousand feet in wild section of the cave, which can be pretty muddy with some fun climbing and scrambling. There are some really nice formations too. It's a fun trip.



Lauren Appel in Lost World photo by Dave Socky

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.

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!

CaveSim: Dylan Kelly (who works for Roanoke City Parks & Rec) just learned that CaveSim is coming to Roanoke July 12-13. they received a grant for half the fee. BRG will consider funding to help out. Dylan said that Saturday will be for the kids in various programs (like Big Brothers/Big Sisters) and Sunday will be open to the public. They are looking for a central site, perhaps Elmwood Park.

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.

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



Pritt (Singularity) Cave, Singularity's Sister Cave and Spinning Singularity Cave

By *Dave Socky*

These caves are part of the “Warm Springs Anticline Cave Survey & Karst Assessment Project (Warm Springs Project for short (WSP)) in Alleghany County, VA. Originally named Singularity Cave, Pritt Cave was first dug open on July 20th, 2021 by Keith Sweeney, Mark Hodge, Amos Mincin, and Rick Lambert. It turned out to be a very vertical cave with an entrance drop of at least 40 feet. A few weeks later, on Aug 8, it was rigged and first explored and then on August 25, 2021 it was surveyed by Yvonne Droms, Mark Hodge, Amos Mincin, Mark Minton, and Keith Sweeney.

It turned out to be an extraordinary cave

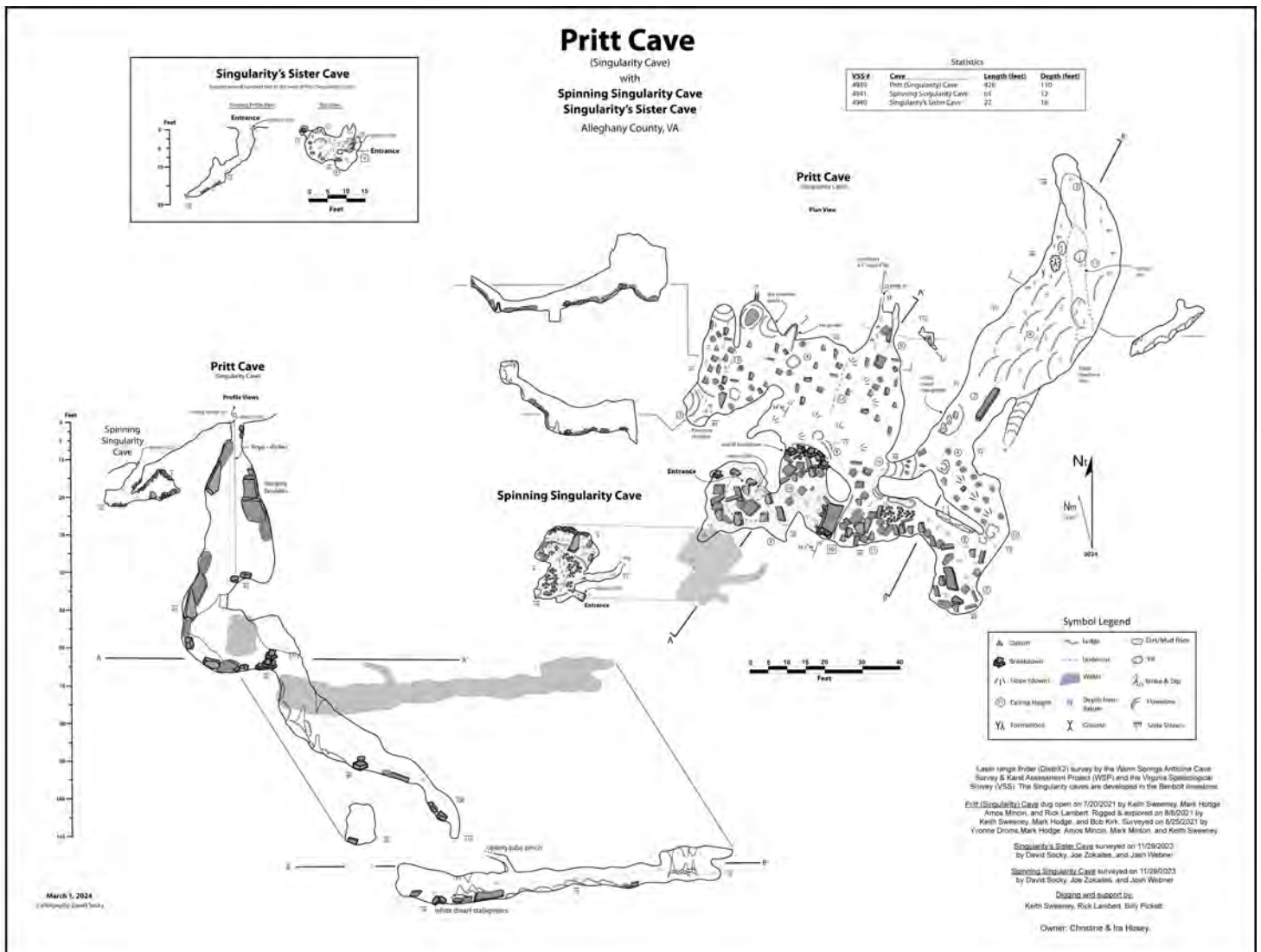
with a beautiful entrance drop of 40 feet which belled out into a large entrance room. The cave contained many beautiful formations with multi-colored bacon and very nice white draperies. The survey was completed in one day with a length of 428 feet and a depth of 110 feet.

Fast forward to November 29, 2023. When a group of WSP cavers returned to look at other holes close to Pritt Cave. Singularity's Sister was known to be a small cave just a few hundred feet west of Pritt, but had not been surveyed. So Joe Zokaite, Josh Webner, and I surveyed this small cave, which totaled a whopping 27 feet long and 18 feet deep.

Rick Lambert, Keith Sweeney, and Billy Pickett shouted encouragement to us from the surface as we surveyed!

On the way back to the cars, Joe noticed a small hole just below Pritt Cave. After about 10 minutes of moving rocks out of the way, he had opened up another cave! Spinning Singularity, which mapped out to 61 feet long and a whole 12 feet deep.

On Feb 14, 2024 (yes, Valentines Day!) we returned to Pritt Cave to try and find where the air was coming from (couldn't find it), take strike and dip measurements, and take photos of the numerous formations.





Pritt Cave



Alleghany County, VA



Photos by Dave Socky

BRG Google Group

In an effort to improve communication, the Officers (Nick Schmalenberger, Chair; Dave Socky, Vice Chair; Kelly Perkins, Treasurer; and Marian McConnell, Secretary) met on January 23rd and decided to create a List Serve using Google Groups.

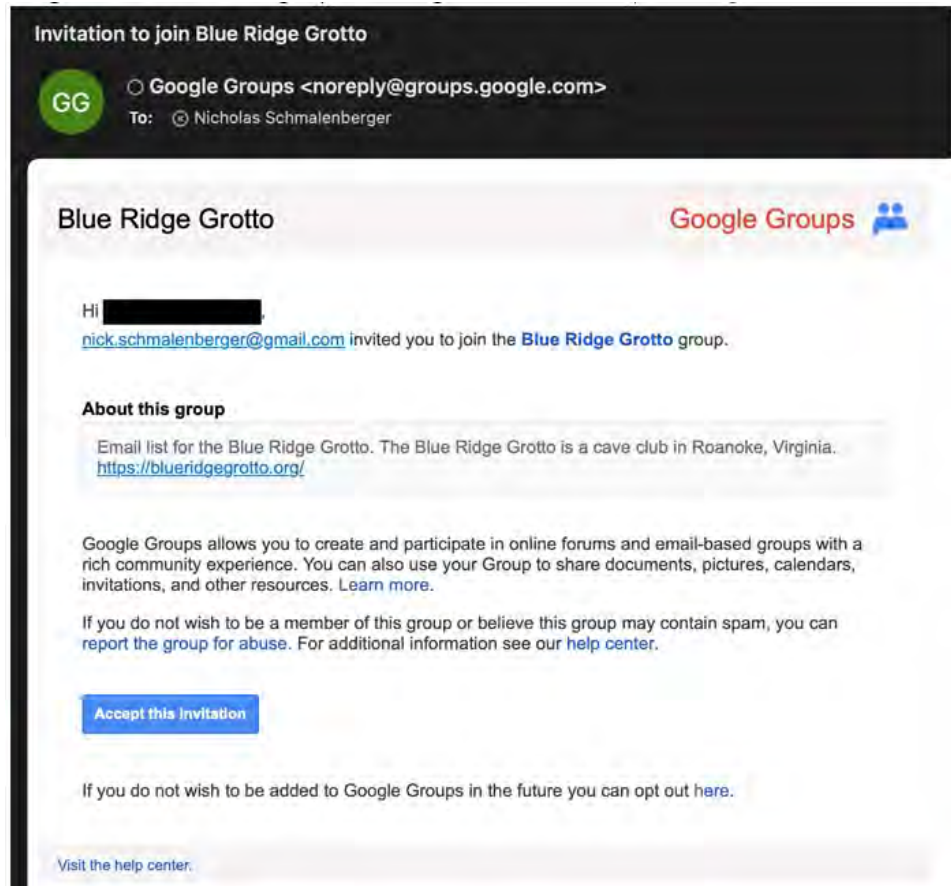
The Google Group will be named **BLUE RIDGE GROTTO MEMBERS** and will replace our current method of email distribution.

This Google Group will be used to share information about our monthly meetings, upcoming caving trips, the *Carbide Dump* newsletter, and other Grotto-related news. Any member can send out a message to this group to reach everyone. You have the option to "opt out" of this Google Group; **just realize that if you opt out, you will not receive any emails from us in the future to keep you informed.**

The Chair has created the Google Group and will maintain the list of members, based upon dues paid and email addresses provided. An invitation to all BRG members has been sent and about half of the membership has accepted. An email reminding the others has, or will be, sent out directly to remind those members that an invite from Google will be coming soon.

Please look for an email with subject "Invitation to join Blue Ridge Grotto" and click "Accept this Invitation" to join the group. An example of what the email will look like is shown to the right.

-Nick Schmalenberger



Grotto Trip Log

1/27: Lowmoor Cave, VA. Participants were: Susan Burr, Jeff Huffman-Leader, Nick Schmalenberger, Abby Arbeiter, Margo Soucek, Preston Pettit. Due to weather conditions on our regular grotto weekend we changed to the following weekend. The forecast for that day had the possibilities of rain, so we decided to go to Lowmoor Cave so we could park in the mine & stay dry. Jeff wanted to check out some other areas he had found on the map. After checking out the overlooks into the mine & the pictographs, we headed in to some new sections. They were nice areas with fun passages, cool looking rooms & some nice formations. Once we checked out the new to us areas, we went to the sections we normally visit. We had about a 4 hour and 45-minute cave trip. Changing afterwards was nice since the weather was actually pretty warm. We did not hit any rain until after dinner on our way home.

2/7: Glass Menagerie, VA. Participants included David Socky, Rick Royer, and Foster Murray. Surface support (Hoover Cave) Rick Lambert, Keith Sweeney, Billy Pickett, and Dagan Hunt. Rick went down first, then Foster, and then me. While Foster and I were going down, Rick dug at the lead with digging tools. When I got down, we switched places so I could take a look. The dig was a lot bigger than when we were there last. It was still too tight to get into. A little technical digging and we were in. Immediately through the crawl, the floor dropped down into a slot which dropped down to the lower level 22 feet below. But the slot was only 5 inches wide, so there was no way to fall through. We surveyed the new cave with 5 shots – a total of 45 feet. We had finished the cave.

2/10: McClung Cave, WV. Our team: David Socky, Kelly McCarthy, Kat Taylor, Andy Bui. There was a total of four teams in the cave for a total of 15 cavers. Our team went to the Ram Room to bolt up to the ledge where there was at least 600 feet of passage. When we got there, I reached up onto

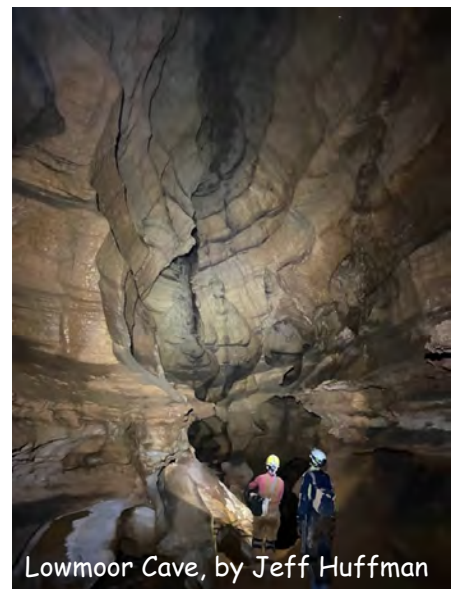
the ledge and was able to grab the webbing up on the ledge. I pulled it down. It was an etrier! Not a very good one - it only had two foot loops. But everyone was able to climb up, with some help from below. I waited until Kelly put a couple of bolts in place and rigged a safety rope. Our lead started out as a nice walking canyon. It soon got to a stoop walk with some obstacles. then a hands and knees crawl. But it was dry and fairly comfortable. Near the end was a really neat echo, indicating some water and an end. The passage got to be a belly crawl with a shiny mud coated flowstone. Kelly, doing point, got soaked from damp mud. It ended in a flowstone plug with a 5-to-6-inch flowstone covered floor to the right. There was no air. We declared it to be the end. We had surveyed 617 feet for a good 11-hour trip.

2/14: Singularity Cave, VA. Participants included Dave Socky, Bill Koerschner, and Amos Mincin. Rick Lambert and Keith Sweeney dug open Bee Tree Cave while we were in Singularity. This was a small vertical cave which had already been surveyed last year. But a thorough search for where the air is coming from was never made. We looked and looked but could not find the air. It was a very decorated cave. Many photos were taken. It was a good trip.

2/14: Bee Tree Cave, VA. Participants included David Socky, Bill Koerschner, Amos Mincin, and Keith Sweeney. Rick Lambert & Keith dug it open. While we were in Singularity Cave, Keith and Rick dug open Bee Tree Cave, which was only about 1000 feet or so down the hill from Singularity Cave. They did not enter it. Amos Mincin was the first one in. As soon as he squirmed through the body sized entrance, he said he was standing up. He said he was in walking passage and disappeared. Bill and I quickly followed. Very nice decorated walking phreatic passage going straight into the hillside. Lots of old formations, calcite, curtains, and columns. A little bit of animal scat. After 150 feet or so it got lower and smaller and then came to

an end with a little side lead to the left which was mud filled after 20 feet or so. The cave was small enough that we could survey it to finish off the day. We finished by 5:30pm. Lots of photos and the length turned out to be 161.5 feet.

2/21: Pasco Digs, VA. Participants included David Socky, Bill Koerschner, Rick Lambert, Keith Sweeney, Amos Mincin, Billy Pickett, and Foster Murray. Digging on the Pasco property. One dig turned out to be a long crevice about 15 feet long and 20 feet deep. We dug at this for about 4 hours. We did some technical digging so we could get down far enough for a good look. It got too narrow and the bottom was dead bottom. We surveyed it with 5 shots and called it Pasco Crevice. Then we dug at a new hole that had moss growing around it. We did one technical dig plus lots of hammering and prying. Finally got it big enough for Amos to get in. Rocks rolled down ways, making this dig very enticing. Amos got in but it got narrow again about 15 feet down. Amos said it would take some widening, but may continue down. This one would require us to come back to in order to do the technical dig. 🦋



Lowmoor Cave, by Jeff Huffman

Vote for your Favorite Five

These **CARBIDE DUMP** covers from 2023 are eligible to be entered in this year's NSS Cover Art Salon.

Send your votes by email to Mary Sue Socky at sockymss@cox.net.

Selected **CARBIDE DUMP** covers will be displayed at the NSS Cover Art Salon during the NSS Convention, July 1-5, 2024 in Seawanee, TN.

Anyone can vote. Any number of times!

Vote 5 times for your favorite. Or, vote only for sketched artwork. Vote for any photo that has green in it. Vote against your previous

vote – we don't care! BRG knows how to pick 'em!

Voting ends April 22,2024.

The covers are much more stunning in color – look at them on-line for the best viewing at <https://blueridgegrotto.org/carbidedump.htm>.

Below are covers from the 2023 **CARBIDE DUMPS** – Voting ends on April 22, 2024.



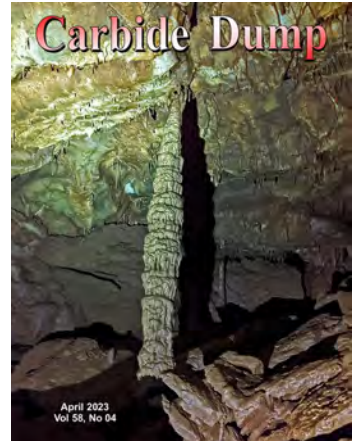
Jan 2023 v58 n1



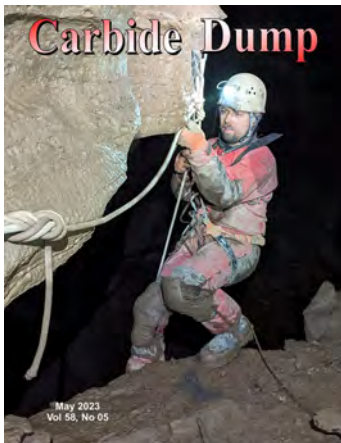
Feb 2023 v58 n2



Mar 2023 v58 n3



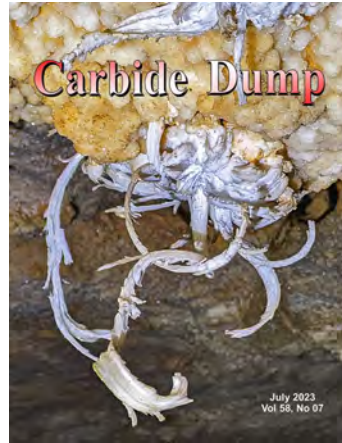
Apr 2023 v58 n4



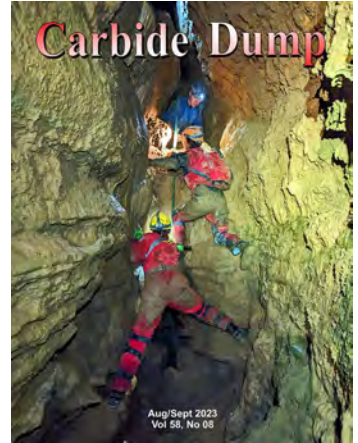
May 2023 v58 n5



June 2023 v58 n6



July 2023 v58 n7



Aug/Sept 2023 v58 n8



Oct 2023 v58 n9



Nov 2023 v58 n10



Dec 2023 v58 n11

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