

## BLUE RIDGE GROTTO

David Socky – Treasurer  
6572 Woodbrook Dr  
Roanoke, VA 24018

### Monthly Meeting Minutes – Jersey Lily’s Salem, VA January 21, 2022

#### Attendance:

Marian McConnell – Chair	Dave Socky - Treasurer	Mary Sue Socky – Secretary
Kevin Johnson	*Carrie Doupnik	Trish Geiger
Susan Burr	Larry Manning	*Carson Leatherland
Jeff Huffman	Doug Feller	Bob Alderson
*Kelly Perkins	*Summer Skye Ward	(* denotes guest)

Meeting called to order 6:38p by Chair Marian McConnell.  
Introductions were made, new folks welcomed.

#### Trip reports:

**11/13/2021: McClung Cave WV.** Bob Alderson and Bill Koerschner replaced some worn vertical rigging.

**11/20: Porter’s Cave, VA** Doug Feller, Jeff Huffman, Lauren Appel, Tracy Martino & Susan Burr. We did the normal trip including the loop past the Keyhole.

**11/20?** Bob Alderson visited **Wave Function Cave, WV** with Mark Minton and Vonnie Droms. A local guy had found the site; it took three months to dig it open to reveal a fissure with a 40’ drop. This cave has lots of vertical bedding, similar to Warm River Cave.

**Thanksgiving:** Bob Alderson and Bill Koerschner went caving in Hamilton Valley, KY – to **Stan’s Well, KY**. Entering involves a vertical downclimb using a too-short tree stand ladder. There is an overhang at the top. They tried to improve the rigging... and removed a rusty cable ladder that had been left in a crawl. They also dug 15’ in a sandy dig.

**Thanksgiving:** Bob Alderson and Bill Koerschner visited **Roppel Cave, KY**. They went to Orpechia’s Dome. Did an easy 5-bolt climb up to an alcove... next balcony was above a flowstone slope. They encountered more alcoves, and more climbing.

**11/20/2021: McClung Cave, WV.** Participants included David Socky, Joe Zokaites, and Aaron Thomas. Surveyed a side passage near the start of the JEB Stuart Passage in Seven Fingers Section. At station 17, Joe drank an energy drink which didn't agree with him. He got sick. Nauseous, hot, dizzy. We aborted the trip. Joe got out ok and he was fine on Sunday. Too much caffeine and sugar too fast. We got a bit of new passage anyway and a total of 417 feet of survey for a 7.5-hour trip.

**12/4: McClung Cave, WV.** Participants included David Socky, Joe Zokaites, Nikki Fox, Alex Faunce, and Leen Alzubi. Another survey into the Seven Fingers section to complete side leads at the beginning and end of the JEB Stuart Passage. The group split up into two teams. Joe and Dave were one team. Nikki and team did the lower stream passage along the edge of North Freeman Ave. When they finished that, they looked for Joe and Dave, but couldn't find the Jeb Stuart Passage. Joe and Dave finished off the side passage they had worked on last trip, then did the lower stream passage that paralleled the Jeb Stuart Passage. After that, they worked on the lead to the left at the end of the JEB Stuart Passage and found the stream passage that doubled back and tied into the THT survey from last trip. The survey netted 860 feet in 11.5 hours.

**12/11: McClung Cave, WV.** Participants included David Socky, Joe Zokaites, Bob Alderson on Team 1. Nick Socky, Nikki Fox, Paul Walko on Team 2. Greg Springer, Bill Koerschner, Gabby Zawacki on Team 3. Dave, Joe, and Bob went to get through the tight spot into the WVACS Room at the end of Bat Bone Crawl. We surveyed once we finally got through. After only 50 feet (or less), we got to another tight spot that was the entrance to the large WVACS Room. A rock hammer was used to make it easier. It was still a tight fit. The WVACS Room was large and beautiful. They surveyed the room; Joe took photos while Dave sketched.

David Socky



After surveying the WVACS Room, we then checked a nearby lead. Bob took his long-sleeved shirt off and did the hands and knees in water to check it out. It went! It got bigger! Wow! They surveyed into it. Formations all over. And it did get bigger. They ended up surveying 455 feet of virgin trunk that was 60 feet wide in places and 30 feet high. It was decorated, also filled with huge breakdown, with some holes that were vertical and 20 feet deep. Unfortunately, it ended. No leads to speak of. Nick and team did the bolt climb in the Beetle Run Room. They surveyed 300 feet of new cave and turned around in walking passage to do the other bolt climb, which wasn't finished because of bad rock. Greg Springer's team went to finish the "Southern Trade Route", which is now called Speed Bump Passage. They reached the room at the end of the known passage but left several leads. Plus, they didn't sketch the whole room. Good trip by everyone!

**12/18: Windy Mouth Cave, WV.** Participants included David Socky, Nikki Fox, Rob Wardell, Nick Socky, Kelly McCarthy, and Tommy Poulson, Alex Faunce, Joe Calderone, and Bill Koerschner. Dave, Nikki, and Rob went back up to the top of Black Water Falls #2 where they had done a bolt climb on a previous trip. They did clean up survey - the short high lead tube, the pancake crawl, a side room they couldn't get into, and the upper level of the main way in. Alex and team went past Black Water Falls 2 and surveyed leads up that way. Nick and crew went up the E Survey and surveyed over 600 feet and left a going lead. The total surveyed by all teams was a little over 1100 feet, putting Windy Mouth at 18.06 miles! It was a good 11-hour trip.

**1/1/2022** – Bob Alderson and Bill Koerschner surveyed 600' in the *Musser's Mess* area of **McClung Cave, WV**. They did an incredibly tight squeeze that goes to a waterfall.

**1/1/2022** – Larry Manning and NCRC folks visited **McClung Cave, WV**. They went as far as the gate at first breakdown, then headed out. (Site selection for the NCRC Weeklong)

**1/8/2022**- Bob Alderson, Vonnie Droms and Mark Minton surveyed in the *Patrick's Pit* area of **Shoveleater Cave, WV**. They rigged the pit and got through a dig into a room the size of two phone booths. How many cavers can we pack into this room??

**01/15/2022: McClung Cave, WV.** Participants included David Socky, Greg Springer, and Sydney Hansen. We went in to check the streams and scope out locations for probes (sensors) for Sydney's research thesis through Ohio University. We went to First Break down, through the Toilet Bowl, and continued downstream past the turn off for Bat Bone Crawl. We then went down Breakdown Trunk to Second Breakdown. From there we went to Chocolate Ave and went downstream to the first near sump. No one wanted to get wet up to the neck, so we turned around there. At the top of the 2nd Breakdown, we decided to just go out the way we came in instead of doing the loop through Freeman Ave. The upcoming snowstorm was the main reason for completing the trip early.

**UPCOMING TRIPS**

Tomorrow Sat. 1/22/2022: BRG trip to **Greenbrier Poor Farm Cave, WV**. Sign up with Susan Burr.

**Next Month's Trip** – To be announced.


**BUSINESS MEETING**

1/21/2022 BRG Treasury Report – Dave Socky, Treasurer

Fund Amounts

Cave Bucks	\$ 00.00
Conservation	\$ 00.00
Equipment	\$ 104.12
General	\$ 4180.41
Total	<b>\$4284.26</b>

\*Cave Bucks: All Cave Bucks donations are voluntary; funds go to cave conservation programs.

David Socky 

### Committees:

- **Newsletter** – Postage has gone up to .58 per stamp. BRG prints 15 hardcopies each month.
- **Membership** – Pay Your Dues! BRG has 42 members and 5 subscribers. Tonight, we have a tabled membership application.
- **ROCKS** – Carson Leatherland has **Cow Cave** on his property. Carson, Dave, Bob & Marian are making plans to visit the cave.
  - Susan Burr says Mike Guzo knows a new Botetourt Co. VA cave owner! Susan has the contact info.
- **Safety & Techniques** – Dan is expecting shoulder replacement surgery in March . He cannot do any training until after surgery

**Membership Proposals:** **Carrie Doupnik, NSS 71075, applied for BRG membership in November 2021.** Carrie's sponsor is Mary Sue Socky. Carrie was voted in (9-0) and paid \$15.00 family dues for 3 years. Welcome, Carrie!

### Old Business:

#### Welcome the 2022 BRG Officers:

Chair: Marian McConnell

Vice Chair: Lauren Appel

Secretary: Mary Sue Socky

Treasurer: David Socky

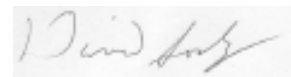
As the Blue Ridge Grotto treasurer, David Socky is Key Executor with control of entity. David Socky replaces Patricia Geiger and Stephanie Petri. Patricia Geiger and Stephanie Petri should be removed as Key Executors.

- BRG Christmas/landowner cards – We mailed 71, only one came back, with a bad address.
- Al Stewart's caving books auction netted \$674.00. BRG needs to send him a TY card (sign @ Feb. meeting)
- **Caroling in the Caverns** - was a no-go. The town of Grottoes took over everything from locals and caver volunteers.
- Donations to MAKC and WVCC were sent, and BRG has received TY notes from both organizations.
- Wi-Fi Hotspots and future meetings? No report.
- Donation to JSS in memory of John Fox was voted on in October 2021. There was a problem with the NSS accepting JSS money. Marian McConnell made a new motion to send the money Memory of John Fox to **Cave Sim**. Dave Socky 2<sup>nd</sup>, everyone voted in favor – **money will be sent to CaveSim, instead.**
- **The Caverns at Natural Bridge, VA.** Susan Burr toured the cave on 1/8/2022. She reports that the show cave is awful – it is entirely GREEN! **ST PATRICK'S GREEN.** The 'frog formation' looks like a Chia pet. Manager Larry Manning is responding to customer complaints about how bad the cave looks. He wants BRG to clean it. If BRG volunteers do it,
  1. Susan Burr will be in charge of this conservation project.
  2. Manager Larry Wheeler and the owners must pay for, purchase all cleaning materials.
  3. **Water is a necessity. TC@NB. must provide water.** Water is needed to rinse off the formations after treating them with peroxide. We will NOT be using, dipping water out of the Amphipod Pool as a source of clean water.
  4. Volunteer work will be done on Saturdays or Sundays. We can begin before the cave opens for business (11a -4p) and will work during tours, explaining to interested tourists what we are doing and taking safety precautions, such as not exposing the tours to the cleaning chemicals.
    - What days and alternate days have been proposed.?
  5. How many people have volunteered?
  6. This show cave has numerous hazards. All volunteers need to be aware of these hazards and protect themselves from them, as well as the caustic hydrogen peroxide liquid we will be using for cleaning.

### New Business

- Caver and landowner Cliff Lindsay died 1/10/2022. 😞 R.I.P. He was a good guy, and he will be missed.
- Lynn Ott – sent in a request that if any grotto members are in the Vertical Section and received a disturbing email about the obituary of Ray Sira's mom, please send their concerns to the BOG, NSS President, and cc Gene Harrison. <Short grotto discussion.> Essentially, "cavers will continue to honor our friends and family. Obituaries will appear in newsletters and emails. If you don't like it, don't read it."
- Vote For Your FAVORITE FIVE!!! Vote well and vote often!

David Socky



## Announcements

- Grotto Get-together at Keith & Lisa's Catawba property is on hold.
- Pandemic Caving – let's be healthy going underground. Rules have been posted in the **DUMP**.
  - Winter closure for bat caves in **West Virginia begins Sept. 1**.
- Winter cave closure for bat caves in **Virginia begins Oct. 15**. Please respect all cave closures.
- The upper entrance to Boar Hole, WV, is very closed. Use the Radio/Culvert entrance on Carroll Bassett's property instead!
- **CaveSim** <https://www.cavesim.com/> may be coming to the New River Valley and Roanoke Valley! More info soon.

## Calendar 2022:

- Feb 18 BRG meeting.
- **NEW- Feb 26**. Is rescheduled date for Virginia Cave Board Meeting, 11a, EnGeo building at JMU in Harrisonburg VA.
- Mar 18 BRG meeting.
- Apr. 15 BRG meeting.
- Apr 22-24 Grand Caverns Spring Restoration. Contact Meredith Weberg.
- Apr. 30 – Cricket Maze Cave (Martinsburg, WV) Open House. Caver Gloria Briggs will be honored at this event.
- May 20-22, 2022 – Spring VAR/MAR, @ Grand Caverns (rescheduled)
- June 5-11 Virginia Cave Week.
- June 13-17, 2022 – NSS Convention, Rapid City SD.
- Jul 16- 21, 2022 – NEW! NCRC National Weeklong, which will be held in Covington, VA.

Meeting adjourned 7:37p, followed by Program: **"Compilation of recent cave trips"** by Dave Socky.

## Cold Beer!

*Minutes Submitted by*

Mary Sue Socky, Secretary

David Socky

