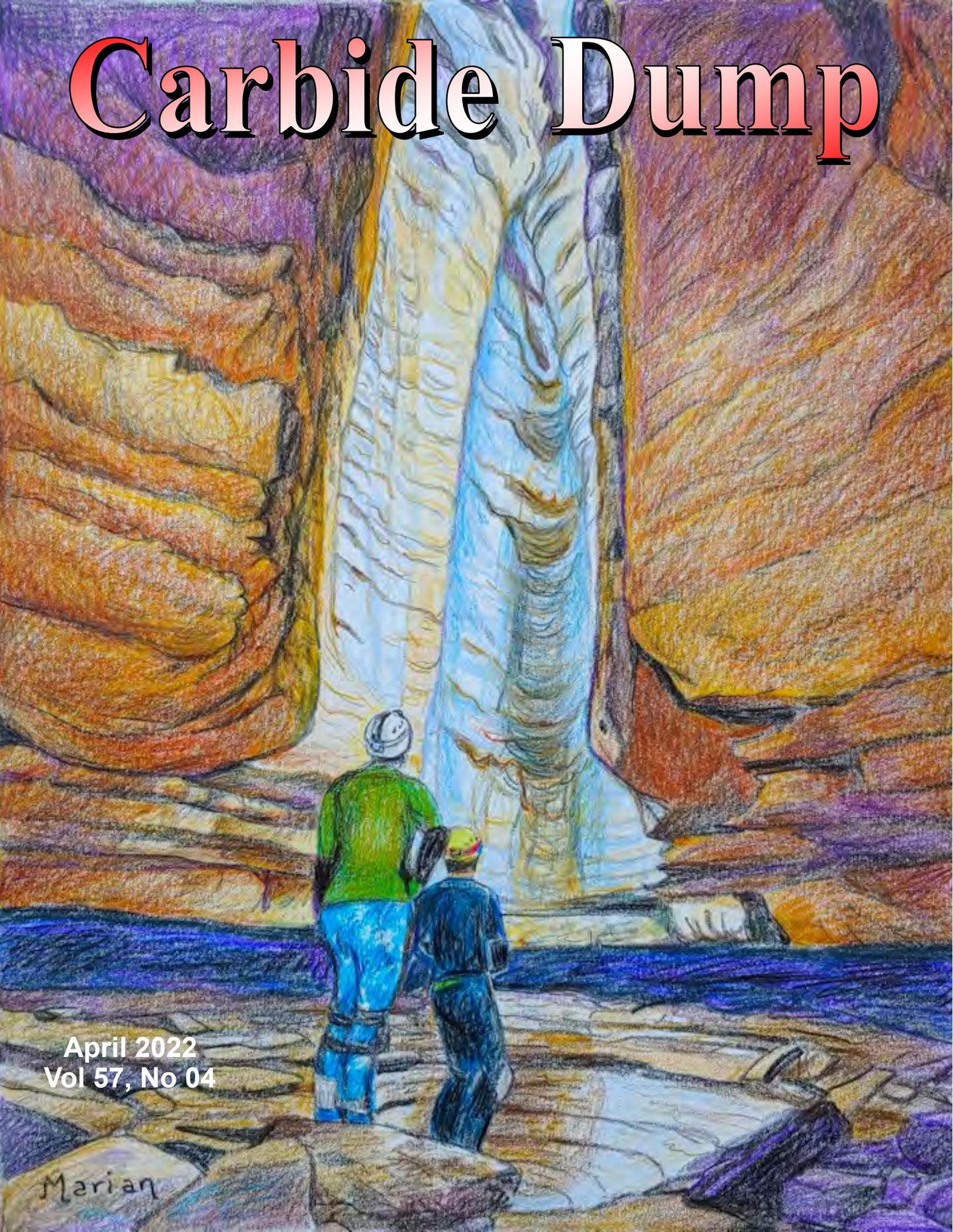


Carbide Dump



April 2022
Vol 57, No 04

Marian

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, Marian McConnell, Susan Burr, Bob Alderson, Bob Gulden, Karen Kastning, Pat Sims, Bru Randall, George Dasher, and Jerry Fuller.

Cover: *Missouri cave - Fluted Dome.* Artwork by Marian McConnell.

CAVERS CALENDAR

Apr 9: MedWAR Race at Wilderness Adventure in New Castle VA. MedWAR is a wilderness adventure race paired with medical challenges that test participants' knowledge of wilderness medicine. Click [here for more info](#).

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

Apr 22-24: VAR Spring Restoration. At Endless Caverns, VA. Contact Meredith Weberg merecaver@yahoo.com.

Apr 30: Silers Cave WV Open House. Contact Jim McConkey at this email mcjames@verizon.net for more info.

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

May 20: **NO BRG meeting - go to Spring MAR/VAR instead!**

May 20-22: SPRING MAR/VAR, at Grand Caverns, Grottoes, VA. Hosts: Seven Rivers Grotto & Charlottesville Grotto. Pre-registration is now open. See pages 34-35 for more info.

May 27-30: Speleofest 2022, Lone Star Cave Preserve, Bonnieville, KY. Hosted by Louisville Grotto. For more info, see <http://speleofest.com/>

May 28 or 29: John Fox Memorial. More info soon.

May-July 2022: Karst Field Studies. Western KY University, Bowling Green, KY. Visit www.karstfieldstudies.com for more information about the program, course descriptions and schedules, how to register, instructor bios, and more.

June 3-5: Orientation to Cave Rescue class at the Upper Tract Training Center in Upper Tract, WV (about 15 minutes north of Franklin, WV on US 220). See <https://ncrc-er.caves.org/events>

June 5-11: Virginia Cave Week.

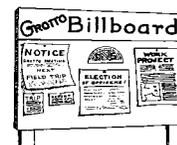
June 13-17: NSS Convention, Rapid City, SD. See nss2022.caves.org

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

July 8-10: Karst-O-Rama, Great Saltpetre Cave Preserve, Mt. Vernon, KY <http://karstorama.com/>

July 16-21: NCRC National Week-long, to be held in Covington, VA. See this [link](#).

July 24-31: International Congress of Speleology, Savoie, France. 🐾



Long Cave Lists

maintained by Bob Gulden
USA Long & Deep, World Long & Deep, & World Big Rooms
www.caverbob.com/usalong.htm
www.caverbob.com/usadeep.htm
www.caverbob.com/rooms.htm
www.caverbob.com/wlong.htm
www.caverbob.com/wdeep.htm

BRG Meeting & Trips Notice

The **April 15, 2022** meeting of the Blue Ridge Grotto will be held live, at **Jersey Lily's Roadhouse 1650 Braeburn Dr, Salem, VA 24153**. Dinner or appetizers with socializing starts at 6:30pm with the meeting starting soon after.

The program this month will be a presentation on **Cave Rescues and Rescue Training** by Larry Manning.

Grotto Trip

Cave Spring Cave, VA

Date & Time: Saturday, April 16, 2022. Meet at Hanging Rock Orange Market at **8:30 am**.

Leader: Doug Feller

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

Requirements: Intermediate horizontal trip. Some scary free-climbing. The cave is very wet & muddy. Basic caving gear. Contact Susan Burr by 04/15/2022 to sign up.

Limits: 10 cavers.

Description

Cave Spring Cave is one of the most extensive caves in Rockbridge County, VA, with 7,698 feet of passage and a depth of 150 feet. It is an unusually muddy solution cave with many deep narrow canyons.

Cave Spring Cave begins as a dry walking maze, but soon becomes more challenging and exposure-ridden (Scarlet's Hole). One must chimney over breakdown and pits in the canyons (The Eye of the Needle) while working down to stream level. There are some nice areas of formations in the cave, especially Buttermilk Falls is in the lower level. You will have to get muddy and wet to see the lower stream passage.



Buttermilk Falls in Cave Spring Cave, VA. Photo by Pat Sims



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.



Safety and Techniques: Dan McConnell's shoulder replacement was successful. He has a long recovery ahead.

NCRC Weeklong Scholarships: National Cave Rescue Commission Scholarships: USA The next National Cave Rescue Commission (NCRC) course will be held in Virginia, USA, on 15-23 July 2022. If you need more info about the seminar, please check out <http://ncrc.info/>. A handful of scholarships are available to cover half of the cost of tuition for the upcoming NCRC Nationals in Virginia held July 15th-23rd, 2022. To apply for a scholarship, before April 10th, 2022, send the following information to scholarships@ncrc.info. Decisions of who will

receive a scholarship will be announced by mid-May; all applicants will be contacted at that time. As NCRC classes tend to fill up, you are encouraged to sign up for the training and pay half of the registration fee to secure your spot. Receiving a scholarship does not guarantee a spot for you in the class.

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!

CaveSim update: CaveSim is planning to visit the SW Virginia/Maryland area in the fall of 2022. No other info.

BRG meeting conflicts – two caving events are also on BRG meeting nights. BRG voted to: (1) **CANCEL the May 20 BRG meeting** and encourage everyone to attend Spring VAR that weekend. (2) **KEEP the June 17 BRG meeting** at Jersey Lily's. Only a few people are attending NSS Convention the same week. Please mark your calendars!

WINDY MOUTH CAVE, WV: Three or four or more decades ago, a Pleistocene cat skeleton was found in the back reaches of Windy Mouth and was identified as jaguar. These bones have been re-evaluated, and determined not to be jaguar, but rather the saber-tooth cat, *Smilodon inexpectatus*. This is the fifth specimen of this species to be discovered in West Virginia, as three have been found in Hamilton Cave and one in Organ Cave. (From the *West Virginia Caver* April 2022 v40n2).

Treasurer's Report 04/7/2022

Cave Bucks	\$ 15.96
Conservation	\$ 1.00
Equipment	\$ 104.12
<u>General</u>	<u>\$4,199.20</u>
Total	\$4,320.28



Cow Cave

Botetourt County, VA

Article & Photos by *Dave Socky*

In January of 2022 Carson Leatherland contacted the Blue Ridge Grotto with interest in getting involved in caving. Carson also had a cave he wanted checked out on his parents' property in Catawba Valley, Botetourt County, VA. Carson did come to the January BRG grotto meeting and we had one failed attempt to check out his cave but it was cancelled due to too much snow and cold weather.

On March 6, Doug Feller and I were able to meet with Carson at his home to check out **Cow Cave**.

Cow Cave was marked as just an FRO in Caves of Virginia and with the Virginial Speleological Survey (VSS). However, Carson did say that VPI cavers did visit the cave 4 or 5 years ago and helped clean out a majority of the trash. However, they did not survey the cave. Our goal this day was to explore and survey the cave.

The entrance to **Cow Cave** is several hundred feet behind their house on the side of a wooded hill. The entrance is a 16-foot deep climbable pit, although Carson had installed a ladder to make entry easier. A large boulder sticks out of one side at the top of the drop, but it is pretty stable.

At the bottom of the entrance drop is a small room going back to the north west about 20 feet. Daylight filters through the breakdown collapse at the back of

the room, but there is no way through. The floor is covered with bones, glass, dirt, and surface debris.

From the bottom of the entrance drop, to the south east is a 10 foot downclimb on breakdown after which the passage slopes steeply down for 30 feet before leveling out in a 12 foot wide by 5 foot high room. The floor of this passage and room, again, is a mixture of dirt, sticks, bones, and small shards of glass. Heavy gloves are very much recommended in this cave.

From this lower room and another 5 foot climbdown through a small hole which then drops down into a final small room which extends to the left (north-north east) for about 12 feet. The room is about 5 feet high. To the right is a depression/drain that you can crawl into and see that someone has done a little digging. It's pretty small and has no air. It is not a dig that is really worth pursuing.



Carson Leatherland in entrance room

We surveyed the cave in a couple of hours with nine survey stations for a total length of 120 feet and 52 feet deep. The completed map is on the next page.



Cow skull in Cow Cave



Doug Feller at entrance to Cow Cave



Doug Feller among the bones



Cow Cave

Botetourt County, Virginia
March 24, 2022

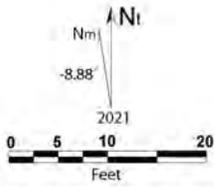
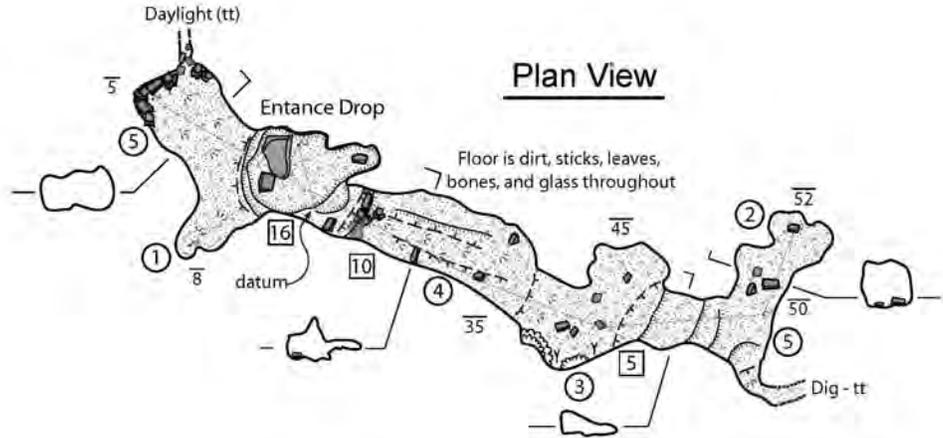


Laser range finder (DistoX2) survey
on February 26, 2022
by the Blue Ridge Grotto (BRG) and
the Virginia Speleological Survey (VSS).

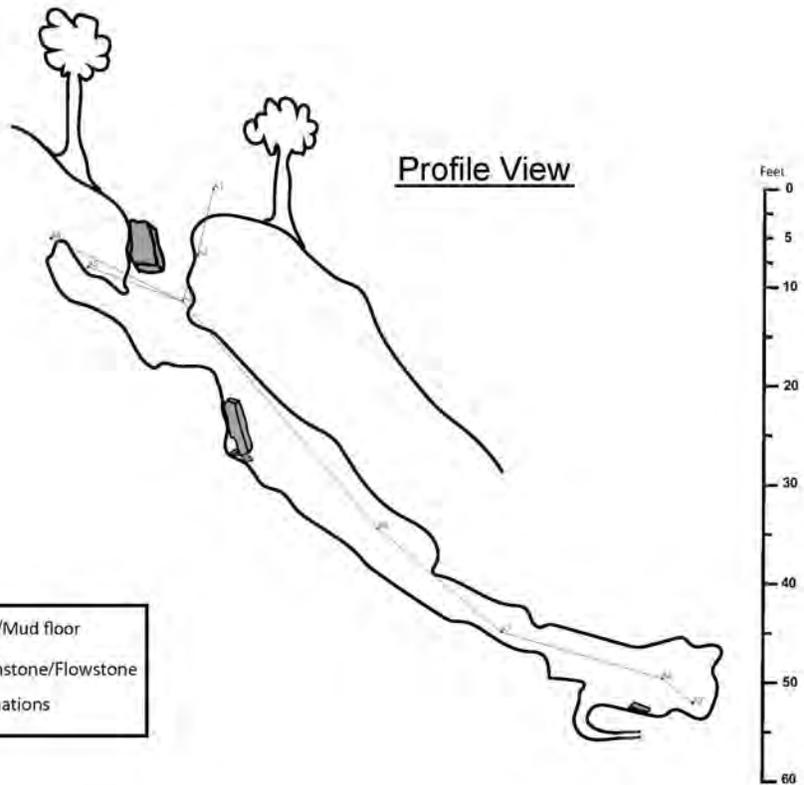
Surveyed team

Doug Feller
David Socky
Carson Leatherland

Owner: Leatherland
Cartography: David Socky



Survey Length = 119.7 feet
Depth = 52.0 feet



Symbol Legend

▲ Datum	~ Ledge	▨ Dirt/Mud floor
⚡ Breakdown	- - Under cut	⚡ Rimstone/Flowstone
/ \ Slope (down)	○ Pit	Y λ X Formations

Grotto Trip Log

2/19: BRG cave trip to **Rapps Cave, WV**. Participants were Doug Feller, Susan Burr, Lauren Appel, Jeff Huffman, Nick Schmalenberger, Kelly Perkins, Mystik Miller. See article on page 33

2/19: Bob Alderson and Bill Koerschner went to CRF in KY to do a bolt climb and resurvey in **East Salts Cave, KY**. They were also called to assist with a caver rescue in **Floyd Collins Crystal Cave, KY** (a caver had dislocated her shoulder on a CRF trip. Rescue was a success.)

3/1: Bob Alderson, Amos Mincin, Keith Sweeney, Mark Minton, and Vonnie Droms visited **Wave Function Cave, Allegheny Co. VA**. They surveyed passage and corrected errors from previous survey trips.

3/5: Bob Alderson attended the *Hellhole Bat Count, Hellhole Cave, WV*. The count was set up by the WV DNR and the F&W Service. Bob's group inventoried the north section of the cave. The bats were not hibernating – due to abnormally warm temperatures during the winter, the bats are waking up. The population seems to be doing OK.

3/5: Lynn Ott and Gene Harrison attended caver R. E. "Whitt" Whittemore's memorial service in TN. 70 - 80 cavers attended.

3/9: Bob Alderson went ridge walking with Kevin Sweeny, an Allegheny Co. VA caver who is a great neighbor contact. They checked out several sinkholes, etc.

3/12: McClung Cave, WV. David Socky, Nick Socky, Kelly McCarthy,

and Paul Walko. We had spent the morning and early afternoon doing dry-wall work in the WVACS loft, so we got a late start. We were supposed to go to **Brants Cave**, but it was a blizzard outside, and the temps were 20 degrees and falling. We decided instead to go to **McClung Cave**. We surveyed the second left lead out of the Breezeway. It turned out nicer than I'd expected. Walking, stoop walk, crawling, but dry. No active stream at all. We did a couple of loops the old survey hadn't included and then at the end, we dug through the breakdown and were able to break into the room that leads to the Junction Complex. Another big loop completed and 195 feet of 'new' survey.

3/12-13: Bob Alderson, Dwight Livingston, Vonnie Droms, Gabby Zawacki? did a long survey trip in **Shovel Eater Cave, WV**. They went to 120' Patrick's Pit and did a dodgy dig with an unstable wall/collapse. It was cool to the bottom of Patrick's Pit. Outside, 14F temps and snow made it "fun". The strong winds almost blew the roof off the fieldhouse.

3/15/2022: Mary Sue Socky reported on a BATS ZOOM talk on the *Petra Project*. The talk was given by Katerina & Mike Ficco, two of the cavers who discovered "Petra" – fossil skeleton of an ice-age big cat – in a Lee Co. VA cave. "Petra" remains on display at the VA Natural History Museum, Martinsville, VA where conservators are working to clean the bones, carbon date and I.D. the species of big cat.

3/19: McClung Cave, WV. Participants included David Socky and Bob Alderson. Bob did the bolt climb/traverse in the breakdown room at the end of

Musser's Mess. We surveyed 235 feet (200 included) but it ended in a breakdown collapse. The passage was nice walking trunk 7 to 10 feet high by 20 to 30 feet wide. Too bad it ended. Nice 8-hour trip.

3/19: BRG trip to **James Cave, VA**. Participants included Doug Feller, Susan Burr, Lauren Appel, Jeff Huffman, Nick Schmalenberger, Kelly Perkins. See article on page 33.

3/23: McClung Cave, WV. Participants included David Socky and Carl Amundson. Carl Amundson and I did a great 12-hour mid-week trip into McClung Cave. We surveyed 1050 feet in the Seven Fingers area which included about 328 feet of new (but not virgin) cave. In the new passage, we were only stopped by a tight, but 3 - foot diggable squeeze which opened back up into going passage.

3/27: McClung Cav, WV. Participants included David Socky and Bill Koerschner. Finished off the fourth finger of Seven Fingers. We dug through the lead we left last trip and surveyed a bunch more new stuff. I estimate we got around 400 feet of new cave on a nice 13-hour trip. Our total survey for the day was 807 feet.

4/1: McClung Cave, WV. Participants included David Socky and Joe Zokaites. No joke, on Friday, April 1, we finished the survey of finger number 5 in the Seven Fingers area of McClung Cave, except for 3 high leads (nails/bolts) and one 'small person' lead. We surveyed a total of 918 feet, of which about 240 was new footage. It was a good 12.5-hour trip.



Joe Zokaites in McClung Cave.
Photo by Dave Socky

Closed Caves: Remember that some caves have closed for the WINTER for hibernating bat colonies.

VA--Winter closure dates: Oct 15-Apr.15
WV--Winter closure dates: Sept 1-May 15.

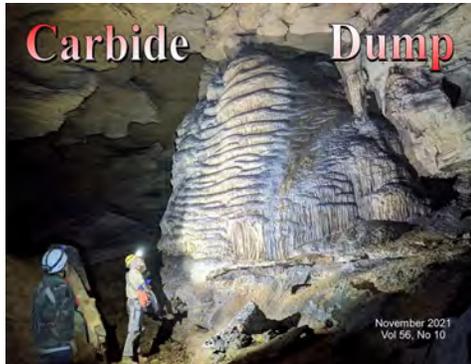
Please respect all cave closures.

Favorite Five 2022

The popular “Vote for Your Favorite Five 2022” has ended. Here are the winners from the 2021 Carbide Dump Covers! They will be entered in this years’ NSS Cover Arts Salon in Rapid City SD.



Dec. 2021 v56 n11: “Peace in Earth” BRG 2021 Cave Owner Christmas Card. Photo by Nikki Fox



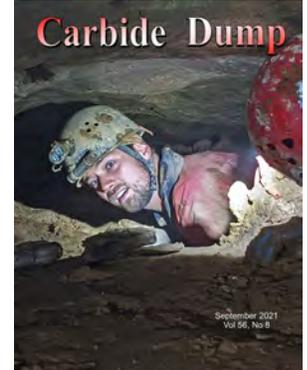
Nov 2022 v56 n10: The Beehive in McClung Cave, WV (L-R) Kathryn Koerschner, Mary Sue Socky, and Bill Koerschner. Photo by Dave Socky.



Mar 2021 v56 n3: “Contortions in Roppel” Bill Koerschner squirming through new cave passage in Roppel, KY. Photo by David Socky



Apr. 2021 v56 n4: “Max Cave Slug” Formation in virgin passage in Maxwelton Sink Cave, WV. Photo by David Socky



Sept 2021 v56 n8: “Checking a lead” Nick Socky and David Lyons checking a lead in Maxwelton, WV. Photo by Dave Socky

Rapps Cave, WV
2/19/2022 BRG Trip Report

By *Susan Burr*

Doug Feller, Susan Burr, Lauren Appel, Jeff Huffman, Nick Schmalenberger, Kelly Perkins, Mystik Miller

It was a really cold & windy day, but luckily we were able to change inside the warm WVACS field house, thanks to Mystik Miller. When we got to the first locked gate of course we couldn't get it open. Come to find out we were lining up the numbers using the wrong line. Then we had a really hard time opening up the cave gate lock. Once in though the fun began!

We checked out the petroglyphs in the entrance area first & then headed into the cave. We saw lots of pretty formations, cool looking formations, a section with lots of roots, & a section with a really neat looking ceiling & floor in part of the room. I believe the group saw 5-7 bats as well. We had a lot of laughs, especially making fun of some of the formations. We feel like we explored most of the cave.

We were in the cave for about 3½ hours. On the way back to the field house we got lost. Not the best time for that since we were really tired, sore & cold! Doug, Kelly & myself found the way back through the woods. The rest of the group ended up on the road & came back that way, but we all ended up back at the field house safe & sound!

After we changed out of our dirty cave gear, we swept up our mess in the field house. Then we headed to White Sulphur Springs to a new brewery for dinner.



James Cave, VA
3/19/2022 BRG Trip Report

By *Susan Burr*

Doug Feller, Susan Burr, Lauren Appel, Jeff Huffman, Nick Schmalenberger, Kelly Perkins.

Went in through the cow field entrance. We did the normal trip through to the back of the cave. The first drop wasn't to bad. The second drop we did rig a handline which was extremely helpful climbing back out. We spent a lot of

time taking pictures, especially in the long passage that was highly decorated near the back of the cave. Jeff Huffman was super nice about lighting up the room/formations for us with his zebra light. His just seems to be much brighter than mine.

Water level was up a little bit. We had more standing water in the tight, painful, belly crawl near the entrance. Plus the flowstone just past the tube was really flowing nicely. The stream was flowing, but it was fairly easy to stay out of the water if you wanted.

Even though we were tired & wanted out, we opted to take the group out the other entrance since several had not been before. This entrance is a little further down & across the street from the field entrance. Of course walking back to the cars on the road was all uphill! Overall we all had a really good time, but were all a little sore afterwards from belly crawling over all the rocks.



Spring MAR-VAR 2022

Grand Caverns, Grottoes, VA

May 20-22, 2022

Mark your calendars and save the date for the upcoming **2022 Spring MAR/VAR Field Meet on May 20-22**, hosted by **Charlottesville Grotto & Seven Valleys Grotto**. More info will be posted on the MAR and VAR websites as it becomes available:

<http://var.caves.org/index.php/events/spring-var> or

<https://mar.caves.org/fieldmeets.htm>

COVID - All Grand Caverns staff and visitors are required to wear face masks while indoors (including bathhouses) if they are not vaccinated. Please be respectful of the choices made by others and staff while visiting. All COVID restrictions are subject to change. Please stay tuned.

Registration - Pre-registration is NOW OPEN! Pre-registration price is \$33 for adults and \$25 for children 5-14. Children under 5 are free. On-site registration is \$38 per for adults and \$30 for children 5-14. [Click here for online registration](#)

T-Shirts—available, but only guaranteed with pre-registration. \$15—\$19.50.

Camping - Shaded camping is available with ample picnic tables, shelters, and facilities. Smaller campers are welcome, but larger RVs might have a difficult time in that there are no hook-ups.

Showers and water will be available.

Dogs - Well-behaved and leashed dogs are welcome!

Hotels - There are a number of hotels and motels in Harrisonburg and Verona VA (~10 miles from Grottoes, VA).

ALCOHOL—the park is under new management and alcohol is strictly prohibited on park grounds in accordance with Virginia State Law—"consumption or possession of an open alcoholic beverage in public is prohibited, regardless of age." We expect the local police to make periodic passes. **Please leave your alcohol at home this time.**

Friday, May 20

We will open the weekend Registration on Friday morning at **NOON** for those who want to come for a long weekend.

Cave on your own on Friday.

There are a number of area Show Caves to visit, as well as wild cave trips.

There are numerous above ground activities as well!

Vendor: Marissa Loftus - Cave packs Survey bags. Ask about custom made cave suits.

Saturday, May 21

SWAP - 11:00 a.m. Saturday & Sunday at Pavilion I. Now that you have upgraded your gear, it's time to spread the joy! Bring your old gear to sell or trade!

Cave Trips—see VAR/MAR website.

Conservation Project—TBD

Other Activities—see VAR/MAR site.

Dinner: Saturday's dinner will be catered by Battarbee's.

Evening Program: in **Pavilion II** with the Presentation Titled "*Thomas Jefferson, Speleologist*" by Bert Ashbrook

DJ: Tommy Carpenter will be on site to entertain, keeping John Fox's legacy alive.

Sunday, May 22

Breakfast! [Pennsylvania Cave Conservancy](#) (PCC) will offer a fundraising breakfast. Suggested donation \$5/person

Meetings: VAR & PCC meetings beginning at 9:00 a.m.

SWAP: 11:00 a.m. Saturday & Sunday at Pavilion I. Bring your old gear to sell or trade!

Then it's time to head home. 🐾

Membership

Seventeen BRG members and guests attended the March 18, 2022 BRG meeting. We had another great guest speaker – **Nick Schmalenberger**, who entertained us with his stories, slides, and videos of his 2021 *Project Cave Adventures in Mexico*. Great talk, Nick! Thanks!!

BRG currently has 56 members and 5 subscribers

Membership Proposals: Pat Banks, one of Al Stewart's students and member of VWCCC (1960's). Pat has shared many of his photos of past caving adventures with Al Stewart, Tom

Beaman, and Barry Ferguson. Pat could not attend this BRG meeting. Mary Sue Socky is Pat's sponsor; 2nd by Tom Beaman ("Fossil # 2"). Pat's membership is tabled until the April 15, 2022, meeting.

Membership Updates

Sharon Bruce
P O Box 220
Belspring, VA 24058

Caver Preparedness Survey

If something unexpected happens on your caving trip, are you prepared?

You are invited to participate in the **Caver Preparedness Study** to help us learn more about how prepared cavers are in times of trouble.

Dr. [Amanda Mortimer](#), Dr. [Sarah Truebe](#), and I are conducting this study and plan to present results on it in the fall.

The survey takes about 10-15 minutes to complete. Thanks in advance for helping out!

<https://tinyurl.com/CaverSurvey>

Spring MAR VAR 2022 Registration
Form May 20-22, 2022
Grand Caverns, Grottoes, VA

Name:		NSS#			
Street Address		Grotto:			
City/State/Zip					
Phone:		Email:			
Emergency Contact	Name:		Phone:		
Other Members of your household attending with you (one form per household)					
Name		Email Address			
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
Now for the Details....					
	Weekend Registration (#)	T-shirts (#)	Vegetarian Meal (#)	Advanced Registration Price*	Total
Adults (15+)					
Children (5-14)					
Children (under 5)				FREE	FREE
T-shirts (MALE SIZE)					
XS					
S					
M					
L					
XL					
XXL					
3XL					
4XL					
TOTAL					

* To qualify for the Advance Registration price, registrations must be post marked by May 4, 2022. We cannot guarantee dinner or a t-shirt for those who do not make the Advance Registration deadline. On-site registration is \$38 per adult and \$30 per child (5-14 years old).

* Alcohol is strictly prohibited on park grounds in accordance with Virginia State Law- "consumption or possession of an open alcoholic beverage in public is prohibited, regardless of age."

* Registration includes (MAR/VAR) membership, guidebook, and the next 4 issues of the Region Record... (a \$20 value!). Please make checks payable to **Charlottesville Grotto** and mail to:

Ed Smith
PO Box 343
Earlsville, VA 22936

* We can also accept PayPal. Send a PERSONAL transfer on <https://paypal.me/BlakeJordan61> and email a completed copy of this registration form to Ed at epsmith6@gmail.com.