

# Carbide Dump



March  
2023  
Vol 58,  
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.

**EXCHANGE MAIL**

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

**EDITORS**

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

**TRIP COORDINATOR**

Susan Burr  
4544 Cordell Dr SW  
Roanoke, VA 24018  
H: 540-989-5809  
email: [pondlady97@gmail.com](mailto: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****Chairman**

Lauren Appel  
C: 804-937-5409  
[lucvchickenft3@gmail.com](mailto:lucvchickenft3@gmail.com)

**Vice-Chair**

Nick Schmalenberger  
C: 530-574-5395  
[nick@schmalenberger.us](mailto:nick@schmalenberger.us)

**Secretary**

Marian McConnell  
C: 540-309-4707  
[marian.mcconnell@gmail.com](mailto:marian.mcconnell@gmail.com)

**Treasurer**

Mary Sue Socky  
H: 540-989-7693  
[sockvmss@cox.net](mailto:sockvmss@cox.net)

**Safety & Techniques**

Dan McConnell  
C: 540-597-7909  
[danomcconnell@live.com](mailto:danomcconnell@live.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 2023 by the Blue Ridge Grotto

**Contributors:** David & Mary Sue Socky, Susan Burr, Bob Alderson, Marian McConnell, Meredith Weberg, Janet Tinkham, John Pearson, and Jerry Fuller.

**Cover:** Anna Makarov in Freeman Ave Overlook Passage in McClung Cave, WV. Photo by Nick Socky

# CAVERS CALENDAR

**Mar 12, Mar 26, Apr 1:** BRG Vertical training dates at HROM, weather permitting. Contact Susan Burr [pondlady97@gmail.com](mailto:pondlady97@gmail.com) to sign up. See p. 20.

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

**Mar 26:** Slow Caver trip to Wild Cat Cave, WV. See p.20. Contact Mary Socky [sockvmss@cox.net](mailto:sockvmss@cox.net) to sign up.

**Apr. 21-23:** NCRC-ER Orientation to Cave Rescue (OCR) Elkins, WV \$60.00. Click [here](#) for more info.

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

**April 22:** VAR Earth Day Restoration at Apple Farm. VAR sinkhole clean up near Covington, VA. See page 28.

**May 5-7:** Spring MAR at Shade Gap, PA. Hosted by Franklin Co. Grotto. Camping, caving, vendors (TBA), near-by local attractions. Numerous cave trips. Saturday night BBQ dinner, Guest Speaker Corey Hackley, DJ by Tommy Carpenter. Alpine SRT Ropes Course set up by *The Gauntlet*. For more info and registration, click [here](#)

**May 7-13:** WKU Field Studies, Karst Hydrogeology class. This course will be held at the CRF Hamilton Valley Research Station near Mammoth Cave National Park, KY. Fieldwork will focus in the Park area, discussion about urban karst environmental problems will include a field trip to nearby Bowling Green and/or Horse Cave, Kentucky. To register visit: [karstfieldstudies.com](http://karstfieldstudies.com)

**May 13:** Blue Ridge MedWAR 2023. Three-member teams will race at Wilderness Adventure in Eagle Rock, VA. More info click [here](#).

**May 19:** BRG meeting, 6:30p, Jersey Lily's-Salem, VA. (Meeting conflict with VAR)

**May 19-21:** Spring VAR Thorn Spring Campground near Franklin, WV. Hosted by BATS. See page 29 in this issue.

**May 26-29:** Speleofest held at Lone Star Cave Preserve, Bonnierville KY. <http://speleofest.com/>

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

**June 19 to 23:** WVACS Convention Pre-Camp, at the WVACS Fieldstation north of Frankford in Greenbrier County, WV. For more information, contact Jessica Reep at [jreep@aol.com](mailto:jreep@aol.com)

**June 26-30:** NSS Convention, Elkins, West Virginia. Registration is open! For more information, see their website at <https://nss2023.caves.org>

**July 14-16:** Karst-O-Rama held at Great Saltpeter Cave Preserve, Mt. Vernon, KY. <https://karstorama.com>

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

**Aug 4-6:** Indiana Cave Capers. Click [here for the web site](#).

**Aug. 18:** BRG meeting, 6:30p, Jersey Lily's-Salem, VA.

**Sept. 1-4:** OTR, Dailey, WV.



## BRG Meeting & Trips Notice

The **March 17, 2023** meeting of the Blue Ridge Grotto will be held 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 the video program **Single Rope Ascending Systems - An Introduction** by Dave Socky. The program is an instructional video which is 14 minutes long.

### Grotto Trip

**Butler Cave, VA**

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

**Leader:** Amos Mincin

**Coordination:** Susan Burr 540-580-9409  
[pondlady97@gmail.com](mailto:pondlady97@gmail.com)

**Requirements:** Horizontal trip. Trip is limited to 8 BRG members. If you wish to go, let Susan Burr know ASAP!

**Limits:** 8 cavers.

### Description

Butler Cave is owned by the Butler Cave Conservancy Society (<http://www.butlercave.org/index.html>). Butler Cave is 18 miles long, so there is lots to see. Amos, your BCCS sponsor and trip leader, will take you on a standard loop which includes some very nice areas. Included will be the opportunity to move a few sleds worth of dirt and rock from the face of the 'Butler Air Dig'.

Don't forget to bring your camera and be ready for a most enjoyable trip.



Butler Cave VA Grotto trip June 2018. Photo by Dave Socky

## 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 3/10/2023

Cave Bucks	\$ 40.96
Conservation	\$ 2.00
Equipment	\$ 104.12
<u>General</u>	<u>\$3,872.42</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$4,019.50</b>



# 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!

**Thank you, Lynn Ott!** Lynn welcomed folks at the January 2023 BRG meeting by handing out envelopes containing yellow bat stickers!

**Memorial Service for Ackie Loyd.** Sat. April 1, 2023. 2-4 pm at Bethlehem Lutheran Church. 1148 Ladd Rd, Waynesboro, VA. 22980. For more info, contact Sharon Loyd at 540-241-3374. **Ackie Loyd** (former NSS #311) was a legendary caver and a founder of the

Shenandoah Valley Grotto. He will be missed.

**Memorial Service for Cliff Lindsay** (NSS # 11224RL, FE) will be held Sat. June 10, 2023 at the Osteopath School in Lewisburg, WV.

**Charlie Maus** (NSS #8267RL), a long time caver and conservationist, passed away on Feb 14, 2023 after an illness. No memorial service has been planned.

**May Grotto meeting/VAR conflict.** The BRG meeting on May 19<sup>th</sup> conflicts with Spring VAR which is May 19-21. **Should we cancel the meeting, reschedule it, or have anyway?** The issue was tabled at the February meeting. It will be discussed again at the March 17 BRG meeting.

**Boar Hole, WV.** Another Cave for Cavers! The WVCC is pleased to announce the acquisition of the original Boar Hole entrance (originally Esty Cave). The Boar Hole-Portal Cave System is another significant Greenbrier County cave and is 10+ miles long.

Thanks to cavers' generosity we are continuing to acquire caves for future cavers to enjoy.

**Bat Cave Closures** - We are now in **Winter Bat Cave Closure**. Some designated caves are closed so bat species can have critical habitat to hibernate. This closure affects some, but not all caves. If the cave you want to visit is closed, go elsewhere! There are thousands of caves in the Virginias.

- Winter closure for bat caves in **West Virginia is Sept 1—May 15.**
- Winter closure for bat caves in **Virginia is Oct 15 – April 15.**

See [wv-list-2012-03\(3\).pdf](#) 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](mailto:blase@virginiacaves.org) The Closed Cave List can be viewed at [this link](#).



## Upcoming Cave Trips and Activities

### March 12, 26, and April 1

**Vertical Training:** All training dates are weather permitting. Meet at HROM for Vertical Training! The exact time to meet will be announced before the date.

Bring climbing helmets, leather gloves, boots, and any vertical gear you have. Doug Feller and Nick Schmalenberger will be instructors. Learn how to safely rappel and ascend a rope; tie-offs and changeovers may be covered in later classes. Why? Because it is fun, it is there, and this is what you need to know if you want to see those 'special' sections of cave. Above ground training and practice are necessary before BRG does vertical cave trips. Contact Susan Burr at [pndlady97@gmail.com](mailto:pndlady97@gmail.com) to sign up.

**March 12:** Meet at 9:00am at Hanging Rock Orange Marker. If you are late, or if you do not see anyone in the parking

lot we may have already hiked up to the cliff we will use. Just cross the bridge & follow the trail to the right up the hill. I am sure you will see or hear us. You must have your own gear to participate, but you can come and watch if you like. ***FYI, Sunday morning starts daylight savings time. We will LOSE 1 hour, so make sure to set your clocks forward Saturday night!***

### March 26

#### **SLOW Trip to Wild Cat Cave, WV.**

Horizontal cave trip to a WET cave! Helmet, light, boots, pack, cave gear and complete change of clothes and shoes (to be left in the car) for the ride home.

**Leaders:** Mary Sue Socky, Marian McConnell, and Dave Socky who will help all the old farts and slow cavers of Blue Ridge Grotto in and out of the cave.

**Objective:** Slow, easy cave trip for able cavers who want to get underground again. Will get wet to knees. This will be Al Stewart's farewell cave trip.

We plan on going to Dread Pool (J Station Lake) and the beginning of Death Canyon for the more adventurous. Then everyone heads out and goes to Carlito's in Lewisburg.

We plan on going so slow *that no one's glasses will fog up on the trip.* Anyone who complains will be splashed and dunked!

To sign up, contact Mary Sue Socky at [sockymss@cox.net](mailto:sockymss@cox.net)



## "Explore Virginia Caves" license plate

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, 24<sup>th</sup> Floor Richmond, VA 23219. His contact information is (804) 786-8445 / [michael.fletcher@dcr.virginia.gov](mailto: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](#)



## Grotto Trip to Porter Cave, VA

*By Susan Burr*

January 21, 2023. The participants for this Blue Ridge Grotto trip included Susan Burr, Kelly Perkins, Jeff Huffman, Nick Schmalenberger, Lauren Appel, Stuart Candler (non-member), Lisa Graves (newbie), and Nathan Frye (non-member),

We did the normal tourist route through **Porter's Cave**. Since there was another group that arrived after us, we hurried up to the entrance to make sure we got the gate open & inside before they came up.

Jeff & I both brought tools to help dig the entrance open. This time it did not take too much digging to get it open. We went in and headed to the Keyhole first. Once through the Keyhole, we headed up to what I call the attic (not sure of the real name). Jeff had to lead through this area since I just can't seem to remember what to do & some parts scare me to death.

We got to the Natural Bridge, took a little break, and then headed back out through the Keyhole.

Next we went to what I call the Big Room, but believe it is actually called Grand Ave. We played around in there for a bit and then headed over to the formation room where we saw all the "pretties", fossils, and crickets. After everyone got their pictures we went to the Big Slit & then out the waterfall entrance route.

We did a good job of keeping away from the other group. We only saw them when we came out of the Keyhole, as we left Grand Ave., and just as we arrived back at the entrance. As I looked up to the gate, I saw the guy who said he just locked the gate.

I believe we were in the cave for about 3 hours 45 mins.

Afterwards we all went to Clifton Forge to eat at Bella's. Everyone had a good time!



Porter's Cave. Photo by Nick Schmalenberger

## Grotto Trip to New River Cave, VA

*By Susan Burr*

February 18, 2023. The participants for this Blue Ridge Grotto trip included Susan Burr, Doug Feller, Jeff Huffman, Nick Schmalenberger, & Lauren Appel.

It was a little cold this morning. There were some nice ice stalactites hanging in the entrance to **New River Cave**. As requested we quickly and quietly went in through the first 2 rooms of the cave to avoid disturbing the bats. Jeff lost count at 25 of the hibernating big brown bats.

We basically did the normal route to the



New River Cave. Photo by Nick Schmalenberger

China Slide. Now getting from that to the stream posed a bit of a problem for us. We did eventually find our way. Next we headed to the waterfall. It was really flowing nicely! We decided we would climb up the waterfall and possibly check out Tuxedo Junction. We all free climbed up.

We got near or to Tuxedo Junction which is where some of us just couldn't get through the tight lower crack or up the climb next to it. Basically by then and after attempting to get through, we were wiped out. On a side note, Jeff did manage to get up the climb. He also reported back about how tight the next area was. With that info, we decided to abort mission and head back out. Jeff brought some webbing and Nick rigged it so we could use it on the way back down the waterfall. I just want to say thank you to Nick and Jeff helping Lauren and me get down safely.

On our way out we did see 2 guys with helmets & mounted lights in the cave. It was past the 2 front rooms of the cave, but not to the China Slide yet. They did not have packs, knee pads, or gloves. I also believe they were both wearing tennis shoes. They asked if we had a map and I told them we did not. I did ask them if someone knew where they were and one of them reported yes.

Once back at the parking lot there was a car with three other guys. At least two of them were in old army uniforms. They said they were going to make a video. I believe they were doing it for an army reenactment thing?? I also think they were from PA. We told them they needed to move quickly and quietly through the first two rooms due to the large number of hibernating bats. One of them said they weren't going in too far. He also asked if I was talking about real bats. OMG! I replied yes and not to shine their lights on them. Hopefully they didn't bother the bats.

I did send a report to Travis Coad the cave manager.



## Good Reception Cave, VA

By *Bob Alderson*

*(Note: This trip was part of the Warm Springs Anticline Cave Survey & Karst Assessment Project. This project is run by a group of cavers that have been working in this area of Alleghany County for years. Rick Lambert said that "This is an open project and we can use anyone regardless of training and experience". So, if anyone is interested, contact Rick Lambert or Dave Socky.)*

**March 1, 2023**

### Surface Survey from Glass Menagerie Cave and Good Reception Cave, VA

Yvonne Droms, Dave Socky, Miles Drake, and I stood at the entrance of Good Reception in the chilly breeze that blows across the open field. We listened intently for any communication from Mark Minton or Rick Royer who were already down the pit. They had gone in ahead to work on a lead about halfway done the series of pit. The ropes had been de-rigged and staged so we could not enter until they were finished with their project.

We decided it would be a good use of our time to do a surface survey between the entrances of Good Reception and Glass Menagerie. I had two four-foot-long sticks and a fifty-foot tape with me, so the four of us went down the hill to the entrance of Glass Menagerie. Rick Lambert, Keith Sweeny, and Amos Mincin were there working on the culvert entrance. I took notes while Dave and Miles started out reading instruments trading off with Vonny. I had a set of suuntos, and Rick had a couple more for us to use. We started with a



Entrance to Good Reception Cave with Mark Minton and Keith Sweeny. Photo by Dave Socky



Bob driving a nail to help with climbing. Photo by Dave Socky

datum on the boards across the culvert opposite the ladder using the sticks to balance the suuntos on at a comfortable height.

After years of dependency on digital survey devices the transition to using analog equipment wasn't immediate. Once that was sorted out everything went relatively smoothly although the steady breeze made the survey tape oscillate.

Our third station up from Glass Menagerie, GM4, is at the edge of the big debris filled sink hole above Glass Menagerie. As we advanced up the hill Rick Lambert stood over the location of the covered up pipe that once brought warm cave air to the heat pump of the house and we put station GM9 there. Apparently, there was enough metal in the ground to affect the compass reading. Vonny resolved this by standing back from the station and aligning her eye and the suunto with the two sticks on station. The edge of another big sink hole is about fifty feet due south of GM9.

We finished the survey with GM11 on the NNW edge of the entrance to Good Reception between the two

bolts there. The total distance surveyed was 472.8 feet but is not in a straight line between the entrances. The straight line distance and bearing measured on the sketches with a scale and protractor is about 460 feet at 38 degrees from Glass Menagerie (compass data will be exact).

### WWS survey at Good Reception Cave

After Dave, Vonny, Miles and I finished the surface survey from Glass Menagerie we heard from Mark and Rick that we were cleared to go in the cave. Vonny went first followed by Dave and then me.

I met them at the bottom of the last drop where they were communicating with Mark and Rick at their climbing lead in the Lower Hoover Room. I went down to see how they were doing. Mark had pulled a rope up through the hole he had thrown a line through last week and Rick was climbing. Mark suggested they would survey the lead at GR2 when they finished there. This freed the three

*(Continued on page 23)*



Bob sketching under breakdown. Photo by Dave Socky

(Continued from page 22)  
 of us to go ahead to the end of last week's survey at GP19.

Our lead was a hole through breakdown at the top of an eight foot climb. I had climbed up far enough the week before to see a room in the breakdown above but did not climb all the way through. The breakdown at the top of the climb was a mosaic of interlocked breakdown and one rock near the top seemed to be the key to holding everything in place. My plan was to bring my drill and put nails in to provide secure foot holds and hand holds allowing us to avoid the sketchy rocks. Four nails did the job.

By this time we could hear Rick and Mark approaching in the break down passages below us. I climbed up and started the survey with a back sight down to GP19. Ahead of me, above GP19, was a breakdown room, about fifteen feet long and ten feet wide. Behind me was a thirty foot drop. Dave climbed up and Vonny climbed down to help Mark and Rick.



Bob pushing up through the breakdown.  
 Photo by Dave Socky

Our survey went NNE into the ten foot high room. Part of the north wall looked like a conglomerate of limestone and chunks of calcite. It did not appear to be breccia or clastic. Dave took a picture so it can be examined. The joining of the beds at the back wall was fractured and had apparently slipped.

At our third station WWS-3 the breakdown climbed steeply to the WNW and looking up to the SW, it appeared to end at the ceiling. I climbed up and found it continued through a slot in the breakdown. So we continued the survey which eventually turned south and ended in about twenty feet.

We were surveying in total breakdown, but it was not as intimidating as our climb up from GP19. The breakdown we crawled under was huge. We could see up past the big blocks above our survey line as much as fifteen feet in some places but it was too narrow to climb and none looked promising. The survey ended in impassable breakdown chokes.

As we headed back down we could hear the others through the breakdown below. Dave climbed down on the nails and I saw Mark, Rick and Vonny at the bottom of the thirty foot pit setting their final station of the day on the far side. We took the opportunity to tie their station, MY5 to my station WWS12.



Dave after climbing down using the nails. Photo by Bob Alderson

After grabbing a bite to eat we packed up and joined the others below. I took the time to look at leads beyond MY5. The slog up the muddy drops was going to take time so I put some nails in at a short but obnoxious climb up before heading out last.



## Membership

Nineteen cavers and friends attended the Feb. 17 BRG meeting. Awesome talk on climbing volcanoes in Chile, South America by Dave Socky.

BRG has 54 members and 4 subscribers for 2023.

By now, everyone should have received their BRG membership info in the mail.

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 ~

### Updates

Reinstated in NSS: Cyndi Hutchison NSS # 49174 RE




## 2023 NSS CONVENTION

JUNE 26-30, 2023 | ELKINS, WEST VIRGINIA



See <https://nss2023.caves.org/> for info on lodging, restaurants, and above ground activities. Registration is now open!

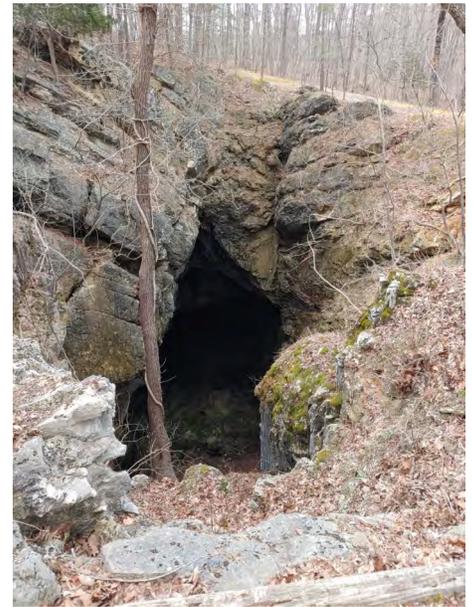
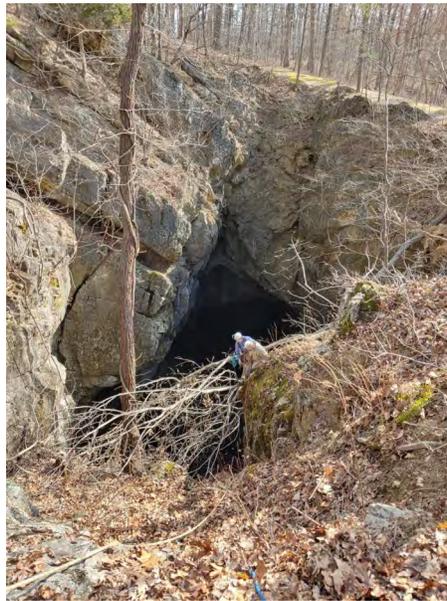
# Murder Hole Dream Team - Tree Removal

By *Marian McConnell*

Dano and I would like to thank Mark Minton, Yvonne "Vonny" Droms, Bob Alderson, Dave Socky, Doug Feller, and MarySue Socky for their fantastic hard work in the Catawba Murder Hole Cave daylight cave on Wednesday, February 8th. Two large trees had fallen in the daylight portion of the cave, blocking the talus slope, one of the main entrances into the cave. They safely, expertly, efficiently, with chainsaws, hammers, rigging, and lots of mind and muscle power got the trees cut up. The top branches were hauled up and out, then the big heavy trunks and root balls were dropped into the daylight cave to become habitat for little critters. Now the talus slope is clear and the beauty of the view into the cave has been restored. They worked hard from 10a-3p; and had some time left over to do a little exploring. We were extra blessed with the weather too - in the 60's and mostly sunny in February! Huge thanks to this Dream Team!

Below is a link to a video I made from my photos and videos of clearing the fallen trees out of the Murder Hole Cave. It's 6:55 minutes. This video is accessible only to people with this link.

<https://youtu.be/Fawkwxwhhw8>



# Grotto Trip Log

**12/10/2022: Brants Cave, WV.** Participants included David Socky, Nikki Fox, and Sydney Hansen. Short trip to Brants to fix and improve the rigging, check to see if there was a lake, and to rig the 'Rocket Formation' where we stopped last time. This was the night that Bob's 1978 Volvo burned up outside of Fincastle. Mary Sue and Dave Socky left the WVACS Christmas party early to rescue Bob.

**12/29/2022: Maxwellton Cave, WV.** Participants included David Socky, Nick Socky, Jason Delafield. Mopped up leads in the Cove Creek area. From Latte Room, go right down to Cove Creek, but take the right before the drop down to Cove Creek (at the Le Mudge). We went upstream for 400 to 500 feet and surveyed loops and leads around the H canyon cut across and the Classic Canyon cut across. I didn't fit in half the passages that were surveyed but was able to take notes while Nick and Jason pushed stuff. Fun eight-hour trip that resulted in 500 feet of survey.

**1/5/2023: Benedict Cave, WV.** Participants included David Socky, Greg Springer, and 2 teachers from Ohio University. This was a trip to get the two teachers from Ohio University familiar with **Benedict's** to see if they wanted to use this cave for their class field trip. They also went to **Norman** and **Boar Hole**.

The entrance crawl in Benedict's was a lot bigger than when I went there years back. Still a narrow crawl, but not an uncomfortable one. When we got into the first main room, we went to the right. A little way in you could go left or right, we went right first and explored to the end of a narrow sinuous stream canyon with deep potholes. The water was over our wellies, so we got pretty wet. It eventually got too tight. We went back and tried the left passage. There was some crawly stuff, then a larger room with formations. Back out in the main trunk, we went downstream until crawling would have been required. We turned around here. (P.S. They chose Norman Cave for their field trip.)

**1/7: McClung Cave, WV.** Participants included David Socky, Nick Socky, Matt Vest, and Sykes Richardson. We first surveyed a short dig near the entrance on the right. The dig ended in mud fill, but we got 30 feet of survey. Then back to the high lead just before the Beetle Run that Nick and Matt did back in Sept 2022. The climb up was right next to the waterfall, but Nick was good enough to us the bottom of the rope to pull us away from the water. The top had a traverse line which you had to pull yourself up and into a narrow slot before you could get off rope. It was awkward, but not as bad as it could have been. Up a little narrow canyon was a room where the previous survey had stopped. There were three leads. Two were easy digs and the third was going passage up a small 6-foot climb. Sykes and I started surveying the going lead while Nick and Matt worked on the digs. Our passage was narrow and muddy. At one point, we had to dig out a bypass tube so I could fit. After two digs, we got enough mud removed for me to fit. The canyon continued with really gloppy mud on the floor. It was boot sucking mud about 1 to 2 feet deep. It was sucky enough that it pulled my wellie right off my foot. We continued surveying until Nick and Matt caught up with us at 3pm. Their leads had ended soon as "too tight". We checked the footage and found we had the required 320 feet, so GSCS was now over 52 miles! We decided to let Sykes check ahead to see if there was enough to come back to. He saw at least a couple of hundred feet, so there was plenty. We surveyed 2 more shots in order to get to TAH20, and then headed back. We exited just as the sun was going down at 5pm. A good 6.5 hour trip with a total of 368 feet of survey.

**1/21: Shoveleater Cave, WV:** Bob Alderson, Vonny Droms, Mark Minton. Bolt climbing.

**1/21/23: Porter Cave, VA.** Susan Burr, Kelly Perkins, Jeff Huffman, Nick Schmalenberger, Lauren Appel, Lisa Graves, Stuart Candler, Nathan Frye. January grotto trip. See Susan's article on page 21.

**1/28/23:** Nick Schmalenberger and Jeff Huffman visited **Padlock Cave, VA** to help Martin DiLeggi with the dig. Jeff found a place in the entrance where we could take a large rock out, that led to the room underneath and parallel to where we had been before. The cave keeps going.

**2/1:** Bob Alderson, Mark Minton Vonny Droms, Tom Malabad, & Tim Reynolds visited **Warm River Cave, VA** for a bat count. (Warm River Cave is closed except for science trips.)

**2/4: Carpenter Swago Cave, WV.** Participants included David Socky, Paul Walko, and Aimee Ballard (team 3). There were two other teams in the cave for a total of 9 cavers. From Paul Walko – "We were surprised by how wet the entrance was, especially with it being about 20 F outside (luckily, the Carpenter entrance blows out in the winter). Thankfully we had the rest of the trip to dry off. Our first objective, re-survey the mid-level from A19, went well and we tied into CNC13. The second objective, re-survey the stream level, went well until we got to about 2/3 of the known length and it turned into a low stream crawl. NOPE! Our 3rd objective, re-survey the high-level ledge from A44 went quickly, then the ledge ended and we surveyed a parallel crawl (technically part of the main passage) making a nice loop. The climb out of the Carpenter entrance was wet! However, it was much warmer at 30 F so it was not too bad." A good 11.5 hour day with 1020 feet of survey.

**2/5:** Nick Schmalenberger and Martin DiLeggi checked out a trash-filled sinkhole on the property near the **Padlock Cave** dig. They dug around in the trash for a little while but just found more trash. There is more trash than a year ago. They also checked a nearby karst outcrop.

**2/8: Catawba Murder Hole, VA.** Sunshine Caving! While Marian McConnell and Mary Sue Socky supervised from the road, Bob Alderson,

*(Continued on page 26)*

*(Quick Trips continued from page 25)*

Dave Socky, Doug Feller, Mark Minton, Vonny Droms performed chainsaw surgery on two fallen trees hanging over the **Catawba Murder Hole, VA** Daylight Cave. Mark, Vonnie, and Bob did all the vertical work. Doug and Dave helped with hauling branches up. The big trees, including root balls, were dropped to the bottom of the pit. After the tree work was done, Mark, Vonnie, Bob, and Dave went to the back of the daylight cave to blast open the tight spot. Bob drilled three holes for straws, but none of them did anything. Maybe one blew out the back of the hole. But we'll need to go back and try again. Dan McConnell stopped by at the very end of the activities. We then all went up to the house where Marian fed everyone a great lasagna dinner. (See article on page 24)

2/11 – **Coon Cave, WV:** This was the “Dwight Livingston’s 17<sup>th</sup> dig trip” in this cave. Bob Alderson, Vonny Droms, Mark Minton, Gabby Zawacki, Gearhart Haupman, Marissa Loftis, Kurt Walrond, and of course, Dwight Livingston continued the dig. There were three teams: the lead team checked out a new pit. Another team continued pushing tight passage. The final team worked on removing a mud overlip at a drop.

2/11: **McClungs Cave, WV.** Participants included David Socky, Eli Meyer, and Jason Delafield. Team 2: Nick Socky, Lars Vogel, and Anya Vogel. We went to Venti-Muddy. Our team did the large left hand side passage that heads south. Nick and team did the connection crawl between Venti-Muddy and Little Muddy. Our team got 909 feet of survey - mostly walking passage. However, it did eventually get down to a belly crawl

in water. Jason Delafield offered to check out the crawl. He went about 100 to 150 feet until it got too tight for his comfort. But it kept going as a crawl in water, but only about 8 - 9 inches high. There was one section where the water was two feet deep with about 8 inches of air space, so Jason got totally soaked. He did find a high lead - a narrow slot in the ceiling which opened up into a room and/or passage. He did not check it out. This lead was about 75 to 100 feet past the point where he started his belly crawl in water. Nick's team surveyed the connection, completing a 9,800-foot loop! It was a good 8-hour trip.

2/14: **Banes Spring, VA:** Bob Alderson, Bill Koerschner, and Syke Robertson (VPI caver) resurveyed “old stuff” from the 1970s and 1980’s.



### Suggested BRG Donations & Dues for 2023

At the last BRG meeting, we had a discussion on past BRG gifts to conservation organizations, as well as the current and future donations. How much of the BRG budget do we wish to donate?

Last month, the treasurer used an old donation guide, circa 2010 -2020.

BRG is no longer raising money through Haunted Cave to give gifts to conservation organizations.

A more appropriate donation guide is displayed here.

We donate to many organizations by paying dues. Any other donations should have a suggested \$50.00 cap. Cave Bucks can be sent to any organization as needed.

In addition, during the grotto meeting, Dave Socky will have the information and guides displayed on the meeting room screen.

If you have any suggestions for grotto giving, please contact Mary Sue Socky [sockymss@cox.net](mailto:sockymss@cox.net) Thanks!



Organization	Type of Donation	Amount
American Cave Conservation Association	Dues	\$25.00 per Year
Appalachian Karst Conservancy	Dues	\$25.00 per Year *
Bat Conservation International	Dues	\$45.00 per Year
Cave Sim	Donation	\$50.00 for 2023 **
Mid-Atlantic Karst Conservancy	Dues	\$15.00 per Year
National Cave Rescue Commission Eastern Region	Donation	\$50.00 for 2023
National Speleological Society	Donation	\$50.00 for 2023 ***
Virginia Cave Board	Donation	\$75.00 for 2023
West Virginia Cave Conservancy	Dues	\$50.00 per Year
Southeastern Cave Conservancy Inc.	Dues	\$35.00 per year
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$420.00</b>

\* Proposed. Have not donated to in recent years.

\*\* Educational tool for young caver participation during NSS Conventions.

\*\*\* Traditionally have donated to Cave Vandalism Deterrence Fund, WNS fund or a specific Cave Preserve.



Dave Socky

Carpenter Swago stream passage.



### Vote for your Favorite Five

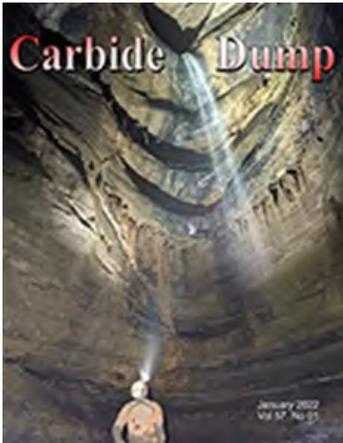
Every year, the NSS Convention offers a "Cover Art Contest". Grottos submit their favorite covers from the previous year to be judged and selected for awards.

BRG covers know how to pick them! Most recently, the *CARBIDE DUMP* won an Honorable Mention award for its 2021 newsletter cover.

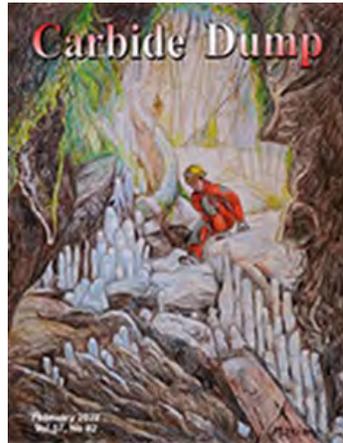
To be considered, a cover must be original, not previously used or reprinted. Covers may be photographic or non-photographic; a few other rules apply.

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

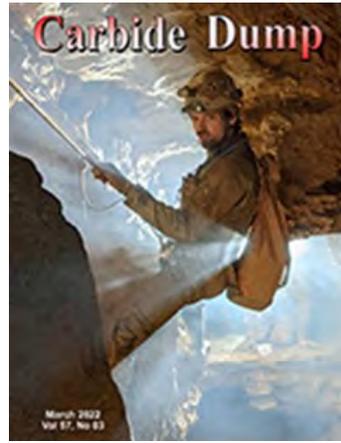
Below are covers from the 2022 *CARBIDE DUMPS* – Voting ends on April 21, 2023.



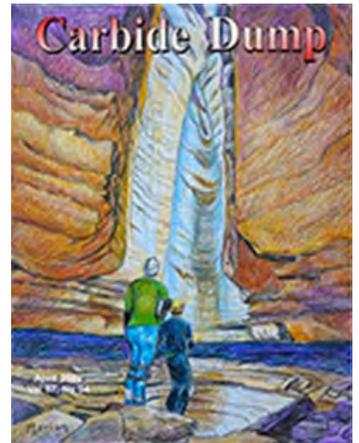
Jan 2022 v57 n1 - 1 vote so far



Feb 2022 v57 n2 - 9 votes so far



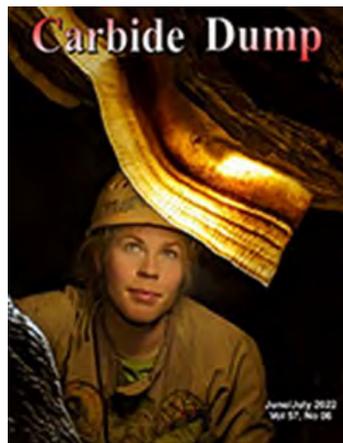
Mar 2022 v57 n3 - 8 votes so far



Apr 2022 v57 n4 - 6 votes so far



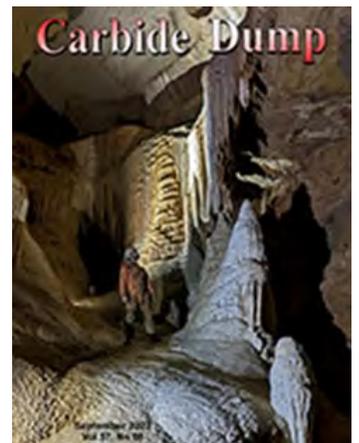
May 2022 v57 n5 - 6 votes so far



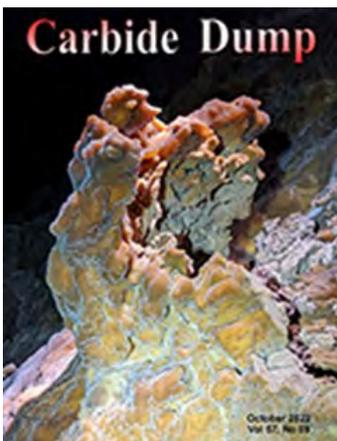
June/July 2022 v57 n6 - 9 votes



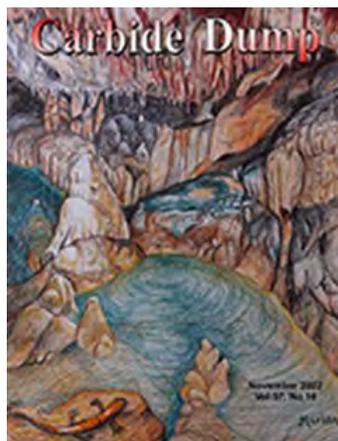
Aug 2022 v57 n7 - 6 votes so far



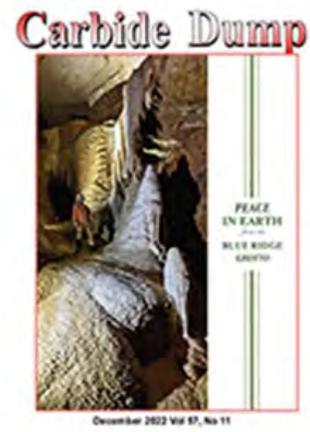
Sept 2022 v57 n8 - 16 votes so far



Oct 2022 v57 n9 - 6 votes so far



Nov 2022 v57 n10 - 6 votes so far



Dec 2022 v57 n11 - 4 votes so far

**SATURDAY, APRIL 22, 2023**  
**VAR EARTH DAY**  
**RESTORATION**  
**SINKHOLE CLEANOUT**



**Beginning 9 a.m. (may carry over into Sunday)**

**Camping is available Friday & Saturday**

**Location: Apple Horse Farm**

**5921 Hot Springs Road**

**Hot Springs, VA 24445**

- **Lunch and water will be provided Saturday, but please bring your own snacks and extra water.**
- **We'll be cleaning out 3–4 sinkholes**
- **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
- 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
- HAT
- SUNSCREEN
- INSECT REPELLENT

**RSVP—HELPS WITH PLANNING**

**[MERECAVER@YAHOO.COM](mailto:MERECAVER@YAHOO.COM)**

**[JANETE@SHENTEL.NET](mailto:JANETE@SHENTEL.NET)**

# Woohoo! Spring VAR!

## May 19–21

Hosted by the Battlefield Area Troglodyte Society (BATS)

**When:** May 19–21, 2023

**Where:** Thorn Springs Campground near Franklin, WV

**Cost:**

- Pre-registration Deadline April 30

- Saturday dinner included
  - Adults (aged 17+) \$30
  - Kids aged 6–16: \$22
  - Under 6 Free

- **At the Door:**

- Saturday dinner not guaranteed, but we will try to order extra meals
  - Adults \$35
  - Kids 6–16: \$22
  - Under 6 Free



**Camping:**

- RV with Full Hookups: \$30/night. Pay Thorn Springs directly.
- Cabin Rental: \$5/person/night extra. Stove, fridge, showers. Bring your sleeping bag and towels. Each cabin sleeps 8–12.
- Tent camping included—set up behind buildings.

**Coming Soon:** Pre-registration form and payment info

**Caving:** Of course! Led trips or on your own. Trout Cave will be open!

**Saturday Night:** Dinner, program, and party in the large pavilion. Come ready to dance! Pre-register to guarantee dinner.



**Sunday Morning:** VAR business meeting: 9 a.m.  
Grottos be sure to assign representatives to attend!

**Share This Info With Cavers!**

Pre-registration coming soon. Keep an eye out at the [VAR webpage](#)