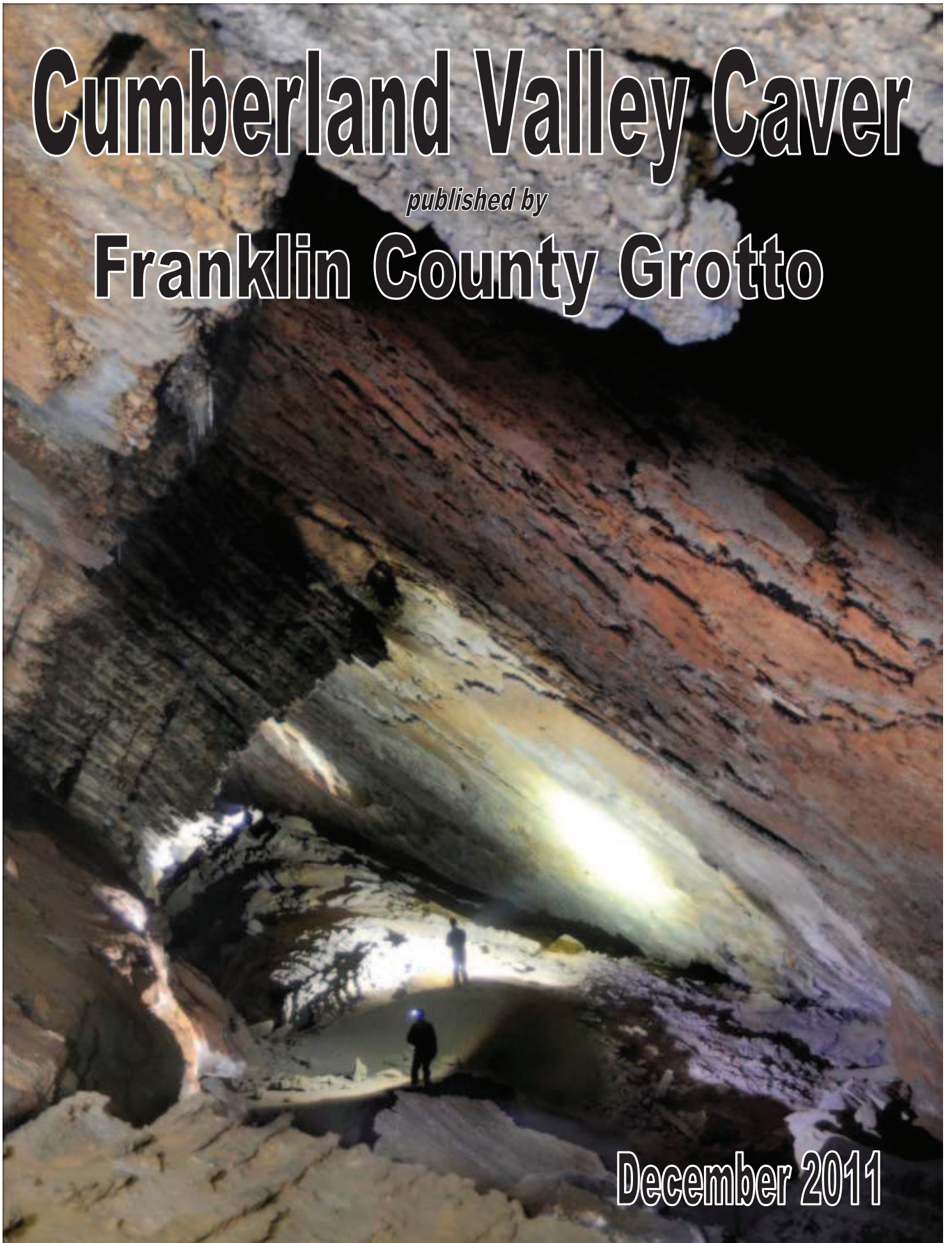


# Cumberland Valley Caver

*published by*

## Franklin County Grotto



December 2011

# CUMBERLAND VALLEY CAVER

Published by

## FRANKLIN COUNTY GROTTO

An Internal Organization of the National Speleological Society

Vol. 12, No 4

December 2011

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Franklin County Grotto meetings are held the 3rd Monday of the month. The location has been changed from the New Franklin Fire Department, New Franklin, PA, to the Franklin Fire Dept at 158 W. King Street, Chambersburg, PA 17201. The meeting starts at 7:30 PM. Both grotto caving trips and smaller individual trips are planned at these meetings. All members are invited depending on their ability to safely participate. You must attend at least one vertical training session in order to participate in vertical trips. Visitors are welcome. Contact any of the above individuals for more information or email [fcg@karst.org](mailto:fcg@karst.org).

The Cumberland Valley Caver is published a couple of times per year by the Franklin County Grotto PA. All cave related articles should be submitted to the editor for publication. The contents of this publication are not copyrighted unless previously copyrighted by the author. Material from this publication may be reprinted by other official organizations of the National Speleological Society without prior permission provided credit is given to the original author and this publication, and the article is not changed in anyway. Other interested parties must request permission in advance. Franklin County Grotto actively participates in a newsletter exchange program. All exchanges should be mailed to: Ken Jones, 4446 Duffield Rd, Chambersburg, PA 17201. Information regarding exchanges should be coordinated with editor so the exchange list can be updated.

Cover: The Big Room in Sinnett Cave, WV

Photo by Scott Markley

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See the entire newsletter in **COLOR** on the website  
[http://www.karst.org/fcg/fcg\\_newsletters.htm](http://www.karst.org/fcg/fcg_newsletters.htm)

## *From the editor...*

2011 was a great year! The most caving we've done in many years; A very successful MAR at Shade Gap; Several new, active, capable and energetic members; Our first NSS Fellow; An award winning T-shirt; Two ongoing research projects with Shippensburg University. We had a very successful project returning a 75 pound stalagmite to Mystic Cave. (Thanks to Bob Bennett and Tri-State Grotto for assisting.) Our plan is to continue the same level of caving for a very active 2012.

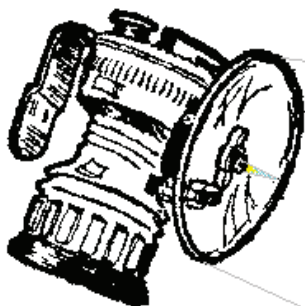
I'd like to thank Anne for doing treasurer stuff for two years while we recruited a new treasurer. Also thanks to Ken Jones for serving many years as Chair. He definitely left his mark on the grotto.

I'd also like to thank Scott, Glen, Andy, Gordy, John, Todd, Pat, Terry, Stitch, Don, Dave, and Howard, for articles, pictures, quotes, printing, distribution assistance and web support, all used in getting this issue out to our members and friends.

*Ken Tayman, Editor*

# Speleo-Spotlight...

Glen Sarvis    NSS # 6112    FCG # 47



When I was the FCG secretary, way back in the 80's, I used to see Glen's name on the membership Roster, but I'd never met him. Over the years he would stop by a meeting once in awhile, but not on a regular basis. Then there was the great re-awakening this past January (2011). Glen showed up at a planning meeting for the MAR Spring meet and has renewed his interest in caving.

His fascination with caves started at age three when his family toured Indian Echo Caverns. The numerous sinkholes near his home east of Guilford Springs and its proximity to Valley Quarries added to this early curiosity about caves.

A family trip to Baker Caverns and then again with his fourth grade class from New Franklin Elementary School continued to peek his interest. His brother Carl saw an ad in the Chambersburg Public Opinion newspaper posted by the then Chambersburg Grotto in the Spring of 1960 and he began caving that Spring. His first wild cave was Duffield. As a Freshman student at Shippensburg State College he became active in the Grotto there and joined the NSS in 1962. He attended the 1964 Winter meeting of the MAR at Ralph Stone's home in Harrisburg and volunteered the Shippensburg Grotto to host the 1964 Spring MAR. Later as a member of the Philadelphia Grotto he also made arrangements for the Fall 1970 MAR to be held at the same location on the Roy Yeager Farm South of Chambersburg.



**Glen, underground again and enjoying every minute!**

Sometime in the late 1980s I joined the Franklin County Grotto... dropping in on meetings but never getting much involved until 2011.

In early 2011, Glen proposed the returning of a large stalagmite to Mystic Cave in WV, (see article this issue). Since he seemed interested in getting back underground, we encouraged him to go on the Butler trip (his first non-carbide trip), where, when we exited the cave, he was standing by to thank us for encouraging him to go on this trip.. Since then, he has done Sinnett (including silo), supported several grotto projects at Cleversburg Sink, Frustration Pit, returned formation to Mystic, and will be Member-at-Large in 2012. Welcome back to the underground! *By Ken Tayman*

# PA Wind Turbines Kill 10,000 Bats in 2010

By ERICH SCHWARTZEL, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

The butterfly effect suggests the flapping of a tiny insect's wings in Africa can lead to a tornado in Kansas. Call this the bat effect: A bat killed by a wind turbine in Somerset, Pa., can lead to higher tomato prices at the Wichita, Kan., farmers market. Bats are something of a one-species stimulus program for farmers, every year gobbling up millions of bugs that could ruin a harvest. But the same biology that allows the winged creatures to sweep the night sky for fine dining also has made them susceptible to wind turbines.

The 420 wind turbines now in use across Pennsylvania killed more than 10,000 bats last year -- mostly in the late summer months, according to the state Game Commission. That's an average of 25 bats per turbine per year, and the Nature Conservancy predicts as many as 2,900 turbines will be set up across the state by 2030.

This is a bad time to be a bat!

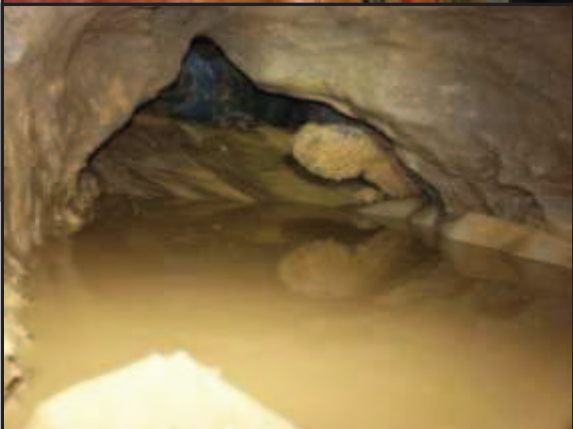
It may seem like a good thing to those who fear the flying mammals, but the wind farm mortality rate is an acute example of how harnessing natural energy can lead to disruptions in the circle of life -- and the cycle of business. This chain of events mixes biology and economics: Bat populations go down, bug populations go up and farmers are left with the bill for more pesticide and crops, which accounts for those pricey tomatoes in Kansas. Wind industry executives are shelling out millions of dollars on possible solutions that don't ruin their bottom line, even as wind farms in the area are collaborating with the state Game Commission to work carcass-combing into daily operations.

"If you look at a map and see where the mountains are, everything funnels through Somerset," said Tracey Librandi Mumma, the wildlife biologist who led the March commission report on bird and bat mortality. Bats are nature's pesticide, consuming as many as 500 insects in one hour, or nearly 3,000 insects in one night, said Miguel Saviroff, the agricultural financial manager at the Penn State Cooperative Extension in Somerset County. "A colony of just 100 little brown bats may consume a quarter of a million mosquitoes and other small insects in a night," he said. If one turbine kills 25 bats in a year, that means one turbine accounted for about 17 million uneaten bugs in 2010.

Bats save farmers a lot of money: About \$74 per acre, according to an April report in Science magazine that calculated the economic value of bats on a county-by-county basis. Initially, the "Economic Importance of Bats in Agriculture" article was meant to attract attention to the white-nose fungus virus that is wiping out entire colonies of bats across the country. "We were getting a lot of questions about why we should care about white-nose syndrome," said author Justin Boyles, a post-doctoral fellow in bat research at the University of Tennessee. "Really, it's the economic impact that makes people listen." The white-nose syndrome is compounding the wind turbine problems, having killed more than a million bats in the northeastern United States since 2006.

Technology is being developed on sound generators that would deter the creatures from getting too close with a high-pitched noise only heard by bats. Some studies suggest that a slowdown in blade speed would reduce mortality. But new technology is expensive and a blade slowdown would reduce the number of megawatts produced. Bats suffer from a condition called barotrauma. It's the bat equivalent of the "bends" that scuba divers can suffer if they surface too quickly. The rapid drop in air pressure around the blades causes the bats' lungs to burst, and they collapse with no ostensible lacerations or scars on the body. Barotrauma in bats was discovered in 2008, when a Canadian biologist thought to dissect one of the unblemished carcasses turning up at wind farms across North America. □

# Sinnett



# Sinnett Cave Trip

*October 1, 2011 by Gordy Ley*

When it was advertised by email that Sinnett Cave would be open for a couple weeks this fall, I proposed a trip. After a certain amount of encouragement and sorting through scheduling preferences, a Saturday evening 'day-trip' was decided upon, and we would forgo visiting Thorn Mountain entrance.

It seems that the hardest part of a Sinnett trip is the preliminary work involved. The management has very specific access requirements. Application must be made for the date selected, waivers must be obtained and submitted—only original signature, hard-copies

are acceptable. The complexity is staggering when you consider a group of ten cavers who do not see each other on a day-to-day basis. Somehow we managed to jump through all the appropriate hoops, and were on target for our Saturday trip!

On board were Gordy Ley, Ken Tayman, Todd Feasley, John Boswell, Glen Sarvis, Scott Markey, Stitch, Andy Filer, and Dave Morrow. Chris Edenbo had cancelled at the last minute.

This would be new cave to everyone except Ken and me. We met at the Greencastle McDonald's



In the "Big Room": left to right Andy, Todd, Glen, Stitch, Dave, Ken, John Gordy and Scott.

*Photo by Todd*



**"20 Foot Waterfall", illuminated by Todd (not visible) Photo by Andy**

and made our way to West Virginia. Traffic and rain were both quite heavy on I-81. We stopped in Brandywine, WV, at Fat Boys Pork Palace for lunch (one of my favorite places). It was just a short distance to the cave from there.

We arrived at the cave a little earlier than our appointed time, but there were no cars, so we geared up at 4:30 and got a little head-start. Using the combination given to me via email the

previous week, we were in! I seem to remember the 'main' passage into the cave being more straightforward. We made our way into the cave traversing various levels of canyon passage. We saw an old plank bridge, a relic remaining from the salt peter mining days. There were a couple fissure passages leading off that were actually dumping shafts from pits in the 'Big Room' for the peter dirt. Along the 'trail' were found burnt splints of wood (called 'faggots') that remained from the torches used by the 'petre monkeys'. At one point, Andy and I climbed up a higher lead into one of the fissure passages. In this 'path less taken' there were thousands of these burned-out little faggots! We found a perfectly preserved desiccated carcass of a cave rat, and also an unbreakable pocket comb advertising "Jack E. White, Athens County Commissioner".

When we got to the Silo, the younger guys took up a rope and rigged it to provide a safety margin, since we were carrying a lot of extra camera gear. I had some vertical gear for Glen, but it seemed too confusing, and he managed the climb nicely with a jumar safety. The Silo is another dumping shaft from the Big Room. All the dirt that had been dumped provided a nice landing zone/room at the base of the Silo. The Silo itself is very smooth-sided, due probably to the amount of traffic going up and down!

**Video Links crawling thru connection**

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Y2\\_deFCjOW](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Y2_deFCjOW)  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oNt-MKbYICU>

Once in the Big Room, we spread out and looked around. Scott and Todd set up to try some 'big room' photography. With walkie-talkies, we spread out through the length of the room with several flash strobes. On command, we flashed to our heart's content. After that effort, we took a group shot. We then went up to the connection passage, and four cavers tried their luck. Andy, Dave Stitch, and Scott found the connection lying about 3-4 inches deep in water. Various, they went through head-first or feet-first. Once inside, the second part (the actual connection) proved to be too constricting, and they retreated, wet and muddy!

As we made our exit from the Big Room down the Silo, the consensus was that the rope was a good idea! At the very base of the Silo is an easily overlooked low crawl which leads back to the waterfalls. This initial crawl is very dry and dusty, but opens to a small steam passage, or some other level of canyon along the same. A couple small waterfalls were passed as we made our way back to the 20 foot falls.



**Glen and John descending the "Silo" Photo by Todd**

We spent some time here and took some pictures. A few of us climbed up a lead to find the 9 foot fall. It was barely a trickle, but judging from the passages, this area could really get exciting at a high water flow!

We made our way out of the cave uneventfully, again following various levels of canyon passage. I just don't seem to remember working that hard. Either my memory is failing, or it is 'selective'! We exited at 11:45 and split for home. Traffic was much nicer on the way home. □



**Gordy and Dave checking map.**

*Photo by Andy*

- Description of Sinnett montage on page 6**
- Clockwise from top-left:
1. Glen Sarvis on self belay climbing 90' "Silo"
  2. "Twenty-Foot Waterfall" located about 25 minutes from bottom of "Silo"
  3. Scott Markley taking pictures of "Twenty-Foot Waterfall"
  4. "Stitch" sliding down final section of "Silo"
  5. Ken drawing directions to Thorn Mt. connection in the dirt for Andy.
  6. Scott's feet just barely visible through wet crawl to Thorn Mt connection
  7. Dave Morrow looking really serious in "Silo"

# Cleversburg Sink

by Ken Tayman

May 26, 2011

Gordy and I stopped by to check the water level. It was nearly full at 27' While there, Gordy set a bolt to redirect the hand line to insure it didn't slip off the ledge and cause a severe drop of about ten feet. Afterwards, we went over to Carnegie Cave to retrieve the register and replace the register-cable

with a new stainless steel cable. The crawlway toward the rear of the cave was sumped.

September 23, 2011

I set up a visit to Cleversburg sink with Prof. Feeney to collect the water level data which had not been dumped since March 27th. I put out an invite to a few FCG members to join in on the fun. It was John's first time in past the gate. Glen had been in before about 100 years ago, but never through the higher gate now located in what used to be known as the "skylight entrance".

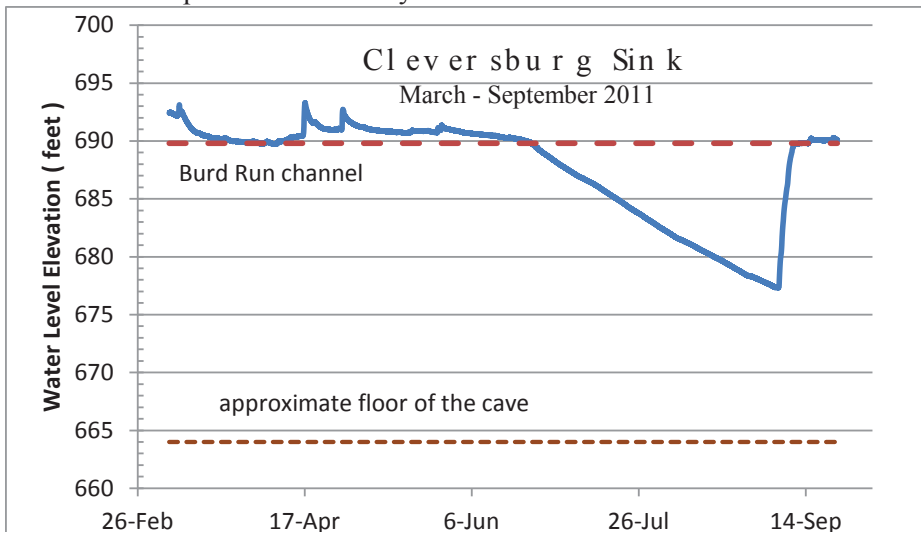


Ken T. removing graffiti from Kiosk. Photo by Gordy



Gordy setting bolt for hand line. Photo by Ken

While waiting for the professor, we used some denatured alcohol to clean graffiti off of the Kiosk. It worked well. The mosquitoes were so bad we decided to unlock the gate a wait for the others down in the cave. We took in a short shovel and cleaned several inches of mud away from in front of the old concrete gate so we wouldn't have to kneel down in the slop when going down into the entrance room. Prof. Feeney arrived with one of his students (Chad) and dumped the 6 months worth of data. He was quite pleased with the resulting chart with a almost complete drain/flood cycle. See chart this below.



This is a great data set as it shows, for only the second time in two years, the marked change in water level decline that I attribute to Burd Run drying up. We see this in early June. by T Feeney



John & Glen clearing mud. Photo by Ken

# Pitting in TAG

*Terry McClanathan NSS 12103*

If you are a vertical caver approaching senior discount, there comes a time when you reach a point where new deep pits start getting scarce. I guess I've been there for a while because I collected my 500th hundred footer ten years ago and since then have only added fifty more. Number 550 was a high dome in Memorial Day Cave bolted by Aaron Moses, Peter Johnson, and Abby Hohn over the past year. They christened it Lubyanka Dome and taped it at 213 feet. Rick Royer, Aaron, and I surveyed a lead at the top of it in a 36 hour camp trip in September. That was only my third new hundred footer for the year.

It should come as no surprise that 80% of the hundred footers on my list are in TAG. Last year at the TAG-Fall-Cave-In it was announced that the South East Cave Conservancy had just obtained a lease on the multi-thousand acre hunting club referred to as Jacob Mountain located in Jackson County, Ala. This property is home to many deep caves and pits. Visitation through a permit system would now be possible during non-hunting season months. I had been to many of the caves and pits over the years, but there were two rather obscure hundred footers which I'd not been to. So when I asked Andy Zellner, a long time TAG caving friend, if he'd be willing to put together a significant vertical weekend for me centered around Jacob Mountain, and he agreed; the trip was on.

A significant vertical weekend requires that I do a minimum 800 vertical feet in new-to-me pits. Within the past decade Marion O. Smith has treated me to several such trips, but it seems even he is running out of new things in Tennessee. Jackson County, Alabama, however, is the most pit-rich county in the U. S., and though my Jackson County pit list is voluminous, I've mostly concentrated on hundred footers and deep caves containing hundred footers. I know the county has at least a thousand sub-hundred footers I've never visited. At least a few had to be on the Jacob Mountain preserve.

Andy, who lives near Atlanta, rents a caving house right outside the gaping entrance to Montague Cave, which is itself just beside Russell Cave National Monument in northeastern Jackson County. After a Friday night (Sept 16<sup>th</sup>) solo drive from Maryland I arrived at Andy's around 6AM and grabbed a couple hours sleep. Brian Killingbeck, another old friend, who in recent years has relocated from Indiana to Chattanooga, and who is the property manager for the Jacob Mountain Cave Preserve, would be joining us for the day.

Brian and I left our vehicles at the designated camping area for Jacob Mountain and piled into Andy's truck. The preserve is immense and our first target cave was in one of the far corners. Andy's Nissan clawed its way up some pretty intense logging roads for about a mile, where we parked and then hiked about another mile. Fortunately we had already picked up most of the 500' elevation gain while jostling around in Andy's truck.

Graham Cove Cave is a five pit multi-drop with about 2000 feet of traverse to a depth of 300'. The big draw is there is virtually no crawling. A walking stream passage lead to the first drop of 56'. This was really the beginning of a deep down-cutting canyon. There followed a stairstep series of shallow pits and downclimbs to a 41 foot pit. At the top of this pit Andy sent Brian and me on to the bottom. He said the original Torode map indicated that somewhere high in the canyon there should be a 103 foot pit. He had not been successful in finding this on a previous trip and was pretty sure it had only ever been done by Bill Torode, who is famous in Alabama for his daring traverses. Andy thought it might be worthwhile spending a little time on this trip trying to locate the deeper pit. Of course, I started thinking, if he were successful, it would mean a bonus hundred footer. Now what was wrong with that?

Brian is a lot faster than I and we got separated enroute to the last pit. I made a wrong turn, ending up doing a big loop back to where I started. More careful on the second attempt, I caught up with Brian about 500 feet further on at the lip of the last pit, an 86 footer, which Andy warned might be a bit drippy. The previous week parts of TAG received about 8 inches of rain from a hurricane remnant, so thinking any multi-drop would be wet, I opted for my PVC suit. So far the cave had not been very wet at all, and I was getting rather warm, so the rappel and climb in the light waterfall were really quite refreshing.

Back at the top of the 41 foot pit, Andy informed us that he had indeed found the deep drop, but it would involve an exposed chimney out over parts of the canyon. He rigged two of the ropes Brian and I had brought up from the bottom cave as traverse lines and thus established a less daunting route to the 103. The long drop was down a canyon which we thought would connect at the bottom to one of the other pits, but if there was a connection, it was not obvious. The drop was not especially nice, though it wasn't bad either, and it was a new hundred footer for the three of us. The five pits to the bottom, plus the 103, totaled 318' of pits for the cave: a good start to the weekend.

Next Andy drove to a parking area about a mile away but at the valley floor. A two mile hike from here would allow us to pick up both of the other hundred footers in the preserve which I had not been to. The only drawback was that the 500' elevation gain was all in the first half mile up a steep, partly overgrown trail which left my 62 year old lungs wheezing. Thirty year old Brian and forty year old Andy didn't seem to be affected by this malaise. The steep trail kind of intersected a horizontal logging road which ran along a mountain bench. This entire area was a recent clearcut, so parts of the road were covered by invading blackberry briar patches which we carefully threaded our way through. It was nearly dark when we finally reached Hurt Tree Pit. This was a short 500' long multi-drop with 4 pits to a total depth of a bit over 300'. Essentially Hurt Tree was just a continuous rift which just kept

getting deeper. The entrance consisted of a ledgy 142' drop, followed in short order by drops of 20 and 60 feet. A crawl of about one hundred feet leads to stooping passage ending at the top of an 83 foot pit. Andy said this pit had been raging the last time he'd been there. Today it was not much more than a couple of spigots worth. Both Andy and Brian had been to the bottom on previous trips and didn't really want to get wet, so only I went down. Even though the water was pretty low, I was still thoroughly soaked by the time I got back up. We exited the cave to complete darkness.

The hour was advancing and we still had a two mile hike back to Andy's truck, but since we were already up on the mountain and had passed Wee Willie Well (the other hundred footer) on the way, we thought we might as well drop it. Though it was only about a hundred feet from our logging road, it was in a dense clearcut of blackberry and "hurt tree" brambles. I don't think I'd ever seen a "hurt tree" before. Some folks think they are young honey locust, which do have long thorns, but a "hurt tree" is a totally different plant. It seems to grow only finger thin to about two inches in diameter (at least that's the largest I saw). The stem (trunk) and branches are completely covered in needle-sharp spines up to more than an inch long. The spines appear to be somewhat barbed on the end and when brushed against, start working their way into your flesh, producing a festering wound. I don't know what they really are, and I've never seen anything like them, but the nickname "hurt tree" certainly seems appropriate.

Brian had been to Wee Willie Well the winter before when the clearcut wasn't quite as impenetrable, and had obtained dead-on GPS coordinates. Good thing for Andy and I, or otherwise we would probably never have found the tiny entrance. Brian had stopped at a certain spot on the road, pointed, and said the entrance was just one hundred feet in that direction. We were staring at a solid wall of the worst bramble tangle I think I've ever encountered. You couldn't even pick a spot to start into this mess. We had to literally thrash our way through ten foot high

blackberry thorns, which actually seemed friendly when compared to the "hurt trees". Those we did our best to avoid. There were times when all we could do was just stand there trying to determine if there was any direction at all which would allow us to advance forward. Our progress was slow and painfully measured foot by foot. It took us a full half hour to batter and thrash our way the hundred feet from the logging road to the pit. I'm no fan of technology, but without the GPS and Brian's up-to-date point, I think we'd have written the attempt off as hopeless. Brian wisely chose to wait up on the road. Getting to Wee Willie Well is not an experience that needs to be repeated.

The entrance to Wee Willie was tight and awkward, but once in the pit, the drop was free and actually pretty decent. That completed our efforts for the day. Between Gramh Cove, Hurt Tree, and Wee Willie Well, the total for the day was 734 vertical feet. It was past midnight when we got back to Andy's truck. Brian had some things to do around Chattanooga early next morning so he left us. Andy and I prepared some food and turned in around 2 A. M.

Sundays agenda was easier, though it did entail two hikes, each of which boasted a 500' elevation gain. First Andy took me to Dible Well which was still on the Jacob Mountain Preserve, but several miles from the camping area. The half mile trek was steep, but, mercifully, brambleless. The pit was a spacious, well decorated free drop of 88'. In fact it may be one of the nicest sub-hundred footers I've ever done. Next we relocated and trudged(well, I trudged and Andy walked) up a very steep hillside for yet another 500 vertical feet to a 500' deep cave called Nice Warm Cave. Andy said the cave used to consist of just the entrance pits with a tight airblower at the bottom. Determined digging efforts by Indiana cavers over the past few years had pushed the cave deep. I only bounced the entrance pit which was really two drops of 45 and 65 feet. While I did this, Andy checked out a nearby shallow pit with air. We then hiked a short distance to an old pit called Erics Pit which was 67' deep. (...continued on page 18)

## "Quotes" of the Quarter

"This is a bad time to be a bat."

*Pittsburg Post Gazette re 10,000 bats killed by wind turbines in PA in 2010*

"Any tight spots? Is it wet?  
Any high spots?"

*Ms E. re young son's trip to Duffield Cave*

"No tight spots, no water, no high spots, but it is dark."

*KT to Ms E re above trip*

"There's another pile of faggots"

*SR in Sinnott re piles of bundled wooden sticks used for fuel in saltpeter works (as described on the map)*

"Is that squirrel alive?"

*Nephew to MT re dinner cooking in kitchen.*

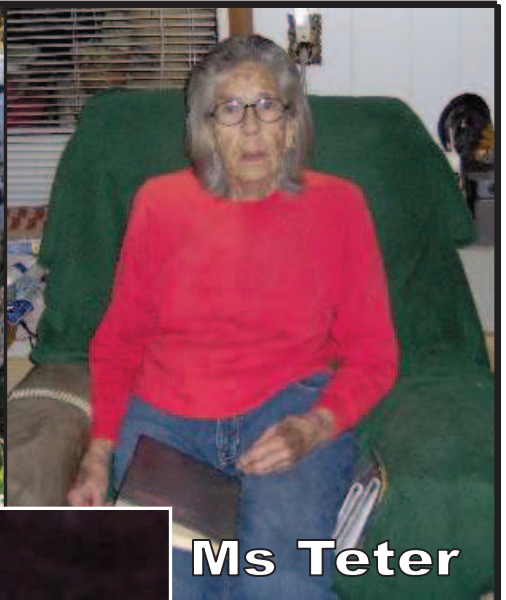
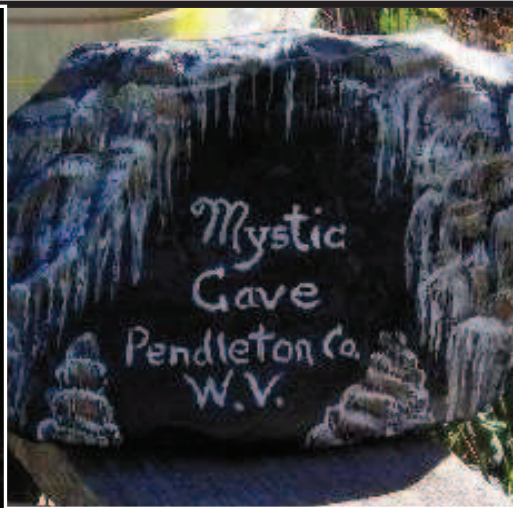


**New FCG member and mining engineer, David Morrow, researches and describes local geological formation...**

**Greenstone:  
Is a local oddity....**

**It is a Metabasalt. This is a very basalt lava flow that had little gas bubbles in it. When the Appalachians formed, the little voids filled with quartz and the host minerals were partly altered turning the color from black to green.**

**Fairly unique and a demonstration of the power that formed the Appalachians. Basalt is tough and normally doesn't alter much when heated or pressurized.**



**Ms Teter**



**John, Gordy, Stitch & Glen**

**Tri-State Grotto Assisting**

# Saga of the Mystic Stalagmite

by Glen Sarvis

**O**n Friday June 29, 1962 the Chambersburg Grotto embarked on a trip to Mystic Cave. Rick Oyler, Bob Cormany, Larry Schmitt, Fred Unger, and Allan Ward departed at 6 PM. Rich Martin, Wayne Rosenberry and I left several hours later departing after Rich's sister's wedding. We met at the 4U restaurant near Seneca Rocks for breakfast Saturday morning. After breakfast we set out to the cave. We turned off route 33 and headed up Timber Ridge Road. The WV Geological Survey described its location as .4 miles southwest of Teterton. Not seeing any village, we stopped and asked several people who were walking along the road for directions to Teterton. Nobody seemed to have ever heard of it. One man who was out walking a cow responded with, "you must be looking for old Pa Teterton and his boys". He pointed to the house that was located near the cave entrance. We parked our cars and were invited in to sign the owner's record book.

Just inside the entrance we were immediately impressed with the clutter of breakdown where the stream flowing into the entrance joined a stream coming down from the left. Among the breakdown and mud we were amazed by the sight of huge mud puppies swimming around, and quite a few pieces of collapsed cave formations. After proceeding upstream through the pools and waterfalls, we retraced our way back. Although tired and wet, I remember we were all invigorated by our watery adventure, and the sight of the abundance of mud puppies and formations in and around the entrance stream bed.

Sometime after that organized trip another party from the Chambersburg area returned to Mystic Cave and removed one of the broken stalagmites and transported it to Pennsylvania. I was not aware of that trip, but I

remember that the stalagmite was put on display in the Shippensburg State College bookstore in Old Main sometime during the sixties. Sometime after its display at SSC I heard that it had disappeared, and was never returned to its provider. A member of the SSC Grotto was suspected of absconding with it. Sure enough, after a while it was spotted in a yard of a home near Chambersburg. The stalagmite was being used as a pedestal for a birdbath. The original "importers" of the Mystic Stalagmite waited a while and eventually recovered it by dark of night.



Glen Sarvis, project initiator, with "kidnapped" Stalagmite.

From that time until June of 1972 the stalagmite remained inside a small cabin at Social Island south of Chambersburg. It leaned silently on the north wall of the cabin facing the flow of the Conococheague Creek. Before Hurricane Agnes there were two cabins on the East Bank of the creek just below the camel back bridge. The cabin containing the subject of this account was nearest to the creek. As the crest of the Agnes floodwaters moved toward Social Island my friend Rich drove his MG midget up the hill out of harm's way. He and other residents of the creek side community sat on their car hoods and watched the cabin next to Rich's break up and completely wash away. When the water receded, only Rich's cabin remained. According to Rich, the stalagmite acted as a brace against the force of the water and it saved itself!

**What should I do with an orphaned stalagmite that's now sitting in my barn nearly fifty years after its kidnapping from its home in West Virginia?**



**Gordy, Stitch, John and Glen humping formation down sink to cave. Photo by Howard White**

After Hurricane Agnes, Rich had to abandon the rented cabin and bought a house about a quarter mile upstream. From that time until sometime in the early 1990s I don't think I ever saw or thought much about "Rich's" stalagmite. Rich was working in the Mechanicsburg area frequently and was concerned about the security of his belongings back at his house at Social Island. He asked me if he could store some exotic car parts and other items in the upper floor of my barn. He later disposed of most of the items, but left the stalagmite sitting just inside the doors of the third floor hay wagon bay.

Rich died in his house along the creek at Social Island in April of 2005.

In March of 2011 my wife and I found a smaller place to live and decided to sell our four acre "farmette". At the March Franklin County Grotto meeting I presented my dilemma during "new business". What should I do with an orphaned stalagmite that's now sitting in my barn nearly fifty years after its kidnapping from its home in West Virginia?

Those present at the March meeting were enthusiastic about Chairman Ken Jones's suggestion that we begin planning to return the stalagmite to the cave from which it had been removed. Pat Minnick volunteered to contact Bob Bennett of Tri-State Grotto as to whether Mystic Cave would be open to caving. Howard and Diane White volunteered to come to my home to pick it up before our moving date in mid April. Ken Tayman, newsletter editor, asked me to write a history of the displaced speleothem's past forty eight years outside the cave.

Within the next few weeks Howard and Diane picked up the hefty calcareous object from its perch on the northwest side of the third floor of my barn. It had been undisturbed since Rich placed it there in the early 1990s. Howard cleaned it up and then transported it to Ken Jones's place for safekeeping until plans to return it were ready.

Pat got word from Bob that he had a good rapport with Priscilla Teter, owner of Mystic Cave. However we could not enter the cave until October because it was a bat maternity cave. Pat arranged with Bob for the three of us to visit Ms Teter on Saturday morning of OTR.



**Entrance drop into Mystic Cave.**

**Photo by Howard White**

We were welcomed into her home and had a pleasant visit and were welcomed to come back after the summer bat restriction.

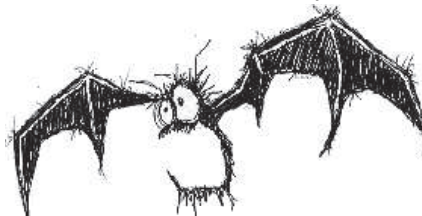
At the September meeting of the Franklin County Grotto we tentatively chose the date of Saturday October 22 to return the stalagmite. I emailed Bob that night and he responded... "I can make it work".

As the appointed day was approaching Gordy Ley took charge of preparing the stalagmite for the return home. He carefully wrapped it in foam padding and attached handles to facilitate carrying it from his truck, down the steep slope of the entry sink and through breakdown and waterfalls within the cave. Gordy also coordinated with Bob Bennett so that we would meet up with them inside the cave Saturday morning. The Tri-State group would arrive earlier and traverse the downstream passage, returning to the Formation Room as we arrived.

The Franklin County group consisted of Gordy Ley, John Boswell, Stitch Rentzel, and me travelling with the stalagmite in Gordy's truck. Ken Jones and Howard White came together for "ceremonial purposes".

Howard and Ken visited with Ms Teter and informed her of our mission to return the stalagmite to her cave. She was very appreciative.

Gordy's packaging and handles proved to be a Godsend in maneuvering the cargo through the entrance sink and cave passageways. We were met by Bob's team who helped carry it to the spot where it is now resting in an upright position supported by pieces of broken travertine that were nearby. □



**John, Gordy, Stitch and Glen. "Mission Accomplished."**

*Photo by Gordy Ley*

*Pitting in TAG continued from page 13*

It was only early afternoon, so I still had a few hours before my planned departure time of 4-5 PM. Andy wanted to check on the damage done by a spring tornado to a small preserve which he manages for the SECC located about half an hour from his house at Montague. The flagged trails were pretty much obliterated by the storm. The entire mountain side was a wreck. The downed trees created a nightmare for hiking (flailing). Andy was hoping to get the trails cleared for the upcoming TAG Fall- Cave-In, but after seeing the magnitude of the damage he opted for just reflagging around the blockages. Clearing the trails was going to take a lot of caver-power. Fortunately the three pits he was taking me to were all low on the mountain and close together.

Horse Skull Cave has historical significance with authentic Civil War era signatures I entered via a 30' rappel while Andy downclimbed the main entrance. We toured a few hundred feet admiring the elegance of some of the old signatures. The pity was that there were also some more recent and less elegant signatures of the spray-paint variety. The other two pits on the preserve were a bit further uphill and consisted of a 43' pit called High Hole and a 65' pit called Jacks Hole. Jacks Hole dropped into a large canyon which was profusely decorated with massive columns, flowstones, stalagmites and tites, and draperies; not to mention many smaller formations of delicate form and striking color. It reminded me of a miniature version of Ogle Cave in New Mexico. It was very nice and I enjoyed a leisurely gawking hour tour.

When we got off the hillside it was 5PM and time for me to head north on the interstate. Total vertical for the two days was 1134' in new-to-me pits. I had a great time and managed to add #'s 551, 552, and 553 to my hundred foot pit list. It's been a while since I've gotten three new hundred footers in one weekend.

Many thanks to Brian Killingbeck for granting me a permit to cave at Jacob Mountain on such short notice. And a special appreciation to Andy Zellner for his unfailing guide service. □

## Nevin C. Davis

*July 18, 1918 - September 29, 2011*



**Nevin Davis, renown caver, well known in Pennsylvania and Virginia**

Nevin Cryder Davis 93, of Williamsville, VA (formerly of Boalsburg, PA) passed away peacefully on Thursday **September 29, 2011**. He was born in Tyrone, PA **July 18, 1918** the son of Karl Nevin Davis and Eleanor Ruth Davis (both deceased). He was preceded in death by a sister Mary Lou Boal of Tyrone and a brother Richard (Dickey) who died in infancy.

On **May 30, 1940** he married Thelma Ruth Wilson of Tyrone who passed away in 2001. He is survived by three children, Nevin W. Davis (wife, Judith Ann) of Williamsville, Virginia, Bruce K Davis (wife, Terry), Christine C. Tate of Bellefonte, PA and three granddaughters, Melissa Weeks of Ft Lauderdale, FL, Alexis Clouse (husband, Kyle) and Amelia Tate of Bellefonte.

During the Second World War he worked in the car shops of the Pennsylvania Railroad in Altoona, PA. Mr. Davis attended Penn State University and was instrumental in the startup of Nittany Scientific Service, now Scientific Systems, Inc. of State College. He was an avid caver and enjoyed many outings with his family and friends to explore the wild caves of Pennsylvania and Virginia. Mr. Davis was one of the original incorporators of the Butler Cave Conservation Society, Inc., the first cave conservation organization in the USA.

In 1970 he and Thelma relocated to Virginia and took over a post office and general store for the town of Williamsville. His skill as a fine tool and die maker lent well to a hobby that he nurtured into a business, Multi-cut Gems. Nevin was an avid reader, and an artist at heart who loved creating beautiful gemstone jewelry. After retiring he and Thelma fulfilled a lifelong dream of traveling the world. His family is comforted by the thought of his returning to her, the love of his life.

Memorial contributions can be made to the Butler Cave Conservation Society (BCCS) 4025 Mt. Zion Road, Blacksburg, VA 24060. Nevin □

# 2011

## Cleversburg Sink/Carnegie Activity Summary

*Prepared by Ken Tayman*

### February 20

#### Cleversburg Sink

Ken T and Gordy checked water level at the top of ladder (19 feet). Did lock maintenance and cleared mud from around gate. Hauled out garbage bag of trash from cave entrance, sink and trail to parking lot.

#### Carnegie

Retrieved register, cleaned up canister and left fresh register pages and plenty of fresh sharpened pencils. Cable securing register has rusted through and needs to be replaced. Water level is very low. Picked up two garbage bags of trash near entrance and along path and on road between parking and trail.

### March 27

#### Cleversburg Sink

Ken T. and professor Feeney dumped data and checked water level at 27'. Hauled out some trash from cave entrance, sink and trail to parking lot.

### May 14

#### Cleversburg Sink

Professor Feeney gave a 30 minute talk on the water level study to the attendees at the Spring MAR at Shade Gap, PA. Well received.

### May 26

#### Cleversburg Sink

Ken T and Gordy checked water level. The water was a couple feet below bolt at about 27'. Gordy drilled and set bolt to redirect hand line away from drop to old concrete gate. Did lock maintenance, cleared mud from gate and hauled out a garbage bag of trash from cave entrance, sink and trail to parking lot.

#### Carnegie

Retrieved register, cleaned up canister and left fresh register pages and plenty of fresh sharpened pencils. Replaced the rusted cable with nice stainless steel cable. Water level is very high. The crawl passage to rear of the cave is sumped. Picked up trash near entrance, path, and on road between parking and trail.

Later, reviewed register. There were 95 cavers since February 2, with all but 11 already represented by POCs on the Carnegie User email list.

### July 28

#### Cleversburg Sink

Ken, Howard, Steve and Drew checked water level. The water is down 8 feet from May, now at 19 feet. (at top of ladder) Policed up some trash. Noticed some graffiti on Kiosk. Howard said he should be able to clean off with some acetate.

### September 7

#### Cleversburg Sink

Ken T & Ken J checked water level. Still raining hard from Tropical Storm Lee. Byrd Run flowing hard. Gussed Cleversburg is fully flooded from 2 weeks constant rain from Hurricane Irene and TS Lee.

### September 10

#### Carnegie

Steve **Isch** went to check water level and swap out register. Byrd Run flowing full force. Water level is high, but crawlway to mud room is passable.

### September 23

#### Cleversburg Sink

**Water:** Gordy, John, Glen, Steve and Ken T met with Prof Feeney (and student Chad) to dump about 6 months worth of data. Water at 25.3 feet. Shoveled mud from around gate away from old cement gate. **Kiosk:** Used some denatured alcohol to clean graffiti off of the Kiosk. Cleaned up well.

### September 25

#### Carnegie

Analyzed register and determined 53 cavers had signed in since May 26. POC were already available for 31 of those. Emails and phone calls contacted 20 of the other signatories

### October 14

#### Cleversburg Sink

**Water:** Ken T met with Prof Feeney (and student Chad) to collect water samples for a new research project. Water at 22.5 feet. Down about 3 feet. in the last couple weeks

### October 16

**Carnegie:** Dane and Gordy collected several pages from register and noted water level down.

### November 4

#### Cleversburg Sink

**Water:** Ken T, John and Steve met with Prof Feeney & Chad to collect water samples for a new research project. Water at 26 feet. Up slightly. Moved snow storm tree limbs. Did Lock maintenance.

### November 14

#### Cleversburg Sink

**Water:** Ken T, John and Steve met with Prof Feeney & Chad to dump data & collect water samples. Water at 27' feet. Up slightly. Did Lock maintenance.

**Kenneth Tayman, Editor  
13373 Sunrise Drive  
Blue Ridge Summit, PA 17214**

## FRANKLIN COUNTY GROTTO



Howard's black powder canon sequence. Fired off at FCG picnic.  
Check out video clip here: <http://youtu.be/OqJgdKH31cE>

*photos by Todd Feasley  
video by John Boswell*