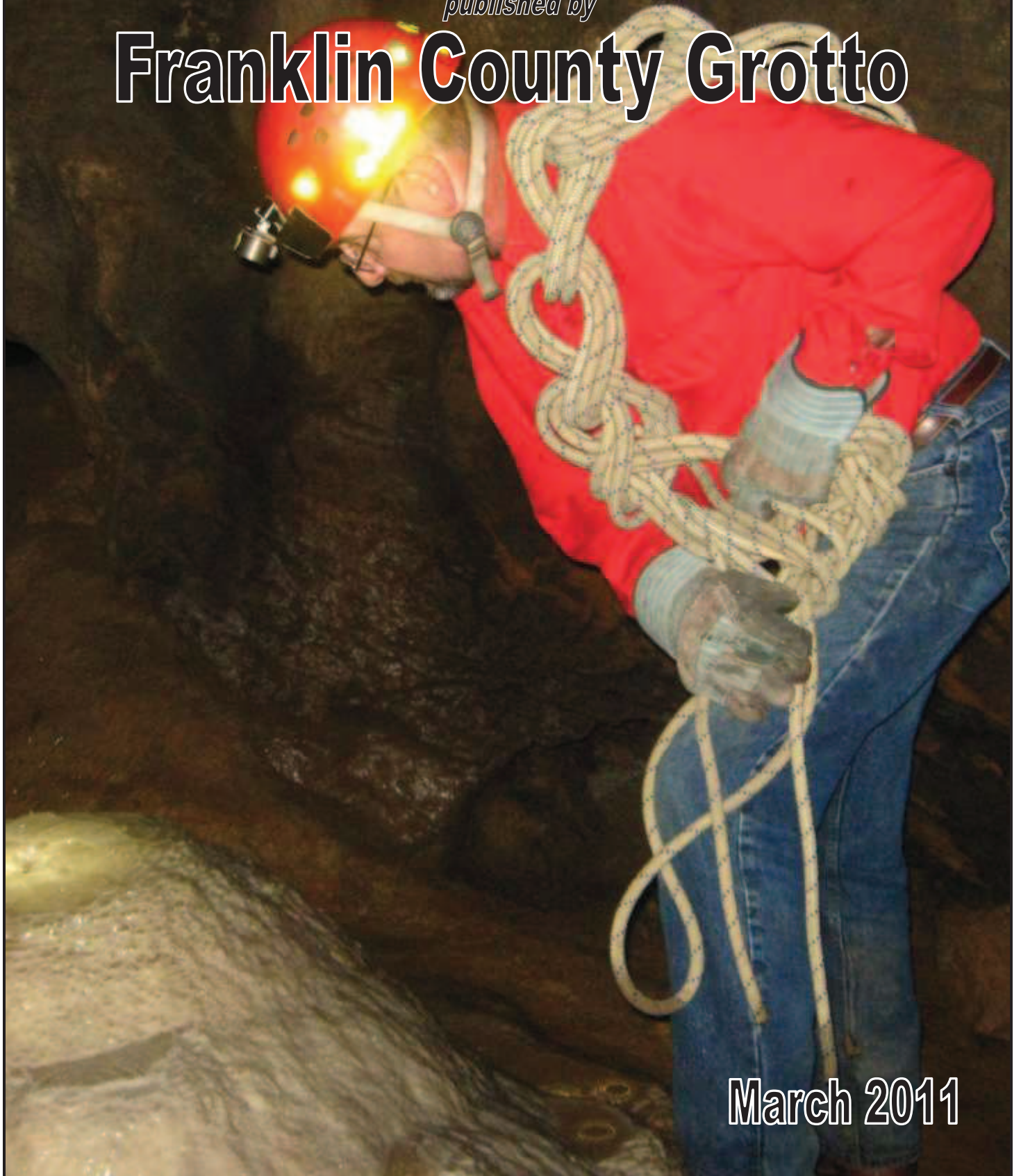


# Cumberland Valley Caver

*published by*

## Franklin County Grotto



March 2011

# CUMBERLAND VALLEY CAVER

Published by

## FRANKLIN COUNTY GROTTO

An Internal Organization of the National Speleological Society

Vol. 12, No 1

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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:** Does this scene look familiar? Gordy Ley in Haynes Cave reenacting a classic photo of Bill Cuddington from the '50s. This photo is part of project working up to article that was published the January 2011 issue of the NSS News. See page 15 within for write up.

*Photo Directed by Gordy, assisted by Dane Wagle*

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*From the editor,*

*Recently we've been concentrating on getting things ready for our MAR Spring Meet in May. That, plus the extremely cold weather, has kept our caving activities mostly to local day trip stuff. However this has worked well for our group of new members for whom all caves are new to them. The plan is to get them into some of the small local stuff before we take them to West Virginia. We are enjoying a recent upswing in new membership. Several new members from Messiah College and Shippensburg University has infused FCG with youthful enthusiasm and has encouraged us old-timers to get out and redo some of the local caves.*

*Don has been busy updating and improving the website. The calendar now will present the Speleo-Schedule and the MAR page has been updated with registration form and general information. We have been getting positive feedback and are already taking registration for the MAR. Good Job Don!*

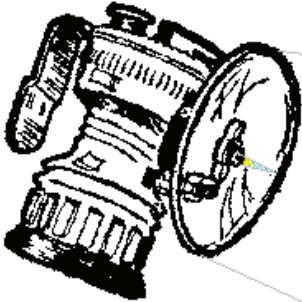
*A new and improved Speleo-schedule now has a cover photo and a couple of pages on upcoming events and some general information. Be sure to check it out when you receive it every month soon after the meeting. Also, the MOU with WASCO for access to Corker Hill/Frustration Pit has been approved by PCC and is being forwarded to WASHCO for their review/approval.*

*I'd like to thank, John, Gordy Cherie Alan, and Prof. Feeney for their articles, pictures, charts and information they provided for this issue.*

*Ken Tayman, Editor*

# Speleo-Spotlight...

Alan Horn    NSS # 45259    FCG # 180



Alan is a "Hard Core" caver who pushes hard and has been known to carry a lot of heavy photo gear. He works as a photographer and truck driver. I have done Fleming Trough (wet) and an Organ trip with him.

Alan joined the Army at age 17 in 1975 as a mechanic and later trained as Special Forces Recon. The mountaineering and rappelling skills he learned there would later be put to use in his civilian caving activities. He continued his education with the Army and University of Maryland in Germany.

He did his first "wild" cave, West York Cave, in 1979, as a "flashlight carrying Spelunker". He used the book "Caves of South Eastern Pennsylvania" written by Jay Reich that included descriptions, locations and directions and lots of maps by Bernie Smeltzer, both York Grotto cavers.

He had a rappelling accident at 100' cliff near Pretty Boy Dam in Maryland. Using military techniques and equipment he became disengaged from the rope, and completed the last 40' with just thinly gloved hands on the rope to slow his fall. He hit hard with back, shoulders and arms on mostly flat rock. With the wind knocked out of him, he realized he had survived the fall. His arms hurt and he was relieved when he found he could move them and they weren't broken. Ended up with blistered hands and deep gash in his back

This accident inspired him to seek more modern equipment. At Wildware Adventure sports store in Harrisburg he bought a fig-8, and found a York Grotto flyer on their bulletin board placed there by Jay



**Alan after trip into Kooken.**    *Photo by Gordy Ley*

Herbein. He joined York Grotto in 1995 and NSS soon after. His first organized York trip was with Barry Duncan to Hipple and John Long Cave. He has worked on a map project at "Secret Sunday" cave near York. His worst cave experience was at a dig in Mt Joy, near Lancaster. It looked too unstable and he quit because of the danger. Later a caver was killed there when it collapsed. This still haunts him.

His caving specific vertical training was with Pat Minnick at Franklin County Grotto, currently his primary Grotto. He has done Cass Cave 165' and Sites Cave 197'. His favorite cave is Bone-Norman. Alan is a micro-blaster, and likes blowing things up.

*by Ken Tayman*

# 3rd Annual Greenbrier Co. Winter Trip

January 21-23, 2011



Ice formations just inside Haynes entrance. *Photo by Gordy Ley*

FCG cavers planning to go except for a couple of us, and since we didn't desire to get hip deep into a cold stream fed by surface runoff, we were going to do a high section with 3000' of dry passage that would have been new cave even for us. At the last minute prior to our departure, an alert was sent out advising of positive WNS sighting in the entrance of Norman caused us to change our plans and look for another cave.

Another factor that came into play was a severe winter storm that was roaring across our area, and had the potential to force us to cancel the trip. Who wants to start out a five hour trip into the mountains of West Virginia, at 25 MPH, headlong into blinding snow storm.



Danny down climbable portion of shaft. *Photo by John Boswell*

This is the 3rd year we've taken our winter trip to Greenbrier Co. WV. The idea is to go in the middle of winter, but stay in the WVACS field house. Its location near many large cave systems, its bunk house with a kitchen and showers, and a woodstove that really cuts into the single digit cold temperatures, make it an ideal cold weather destination. This year, like the first two found the station snow covered.

My choice of caves is geared toward trying to get "new" cave for the majority of the group. Norman cave would have been a new cave to all



**John on first in-cave rappel. Very Confident. Photo by Gordy**

Gordy kept a close eye on the weather and made several updates through Thursday up till Friday morning.

After a few dropouts, the four FCG cavers on this trip was Gordy Ley, Danny Cumbo, John Boswell and me, Ken Tayman. We would all pile into Gordy's truck, throw caving gear in the back of the truck and sleeping stuff into his small trailer. A very comfortable arrangement.

Our first stop would be Haynes Cave. Gordy and I had visited the cave earlier in the year, but a deep shaft in the rear had stopped us and we were going to take rope and cable ladder and try and drop that shaft. (by the way, I hate cable ladders with a passion). This was John's first trip to WV, so any cave he did would be new to him, it was new for Danny, and the drop would be new cave to Gordy and me.

Gordy rigged the rope and ladder and dropped to shaft, and determined it was deeper and wider than we'd anticipated, and the last 25' was actually freefall. I guess in the "old saltpeter mining days" those guys used to climb down free hand, staying in the corner and using a couple of 4 inch diameter climbing poles (tree branches). Once we were all down we knew it could be a bigger challenge to get back up than we'd anticipated.

Danny had his frog system and climbed out easily. John got on the ladder and self belayed with a Jumar attached to his seat harness. He did well for his first time on cable ladder. Gordy and I held tension on the ladder and rope. He did get twisted around as he approached the ledge, but we got him untwisted and he was out.



**Danny first out using his frog system. Photo by Gordy**

I was torn between using a sit-stand jerry rig, or using the cable ladder. I hate cable ladders, but I decided to try it for the first time since I'd climbed one in 1995 in Butler Cave. It was just a nasty as I remembered. It seems I always run out of arm strength too quickly. I need to work on a neat system other than my rope walker for short climbs like this.

Gordy seems to like cable ladders and made quick work of the climb. All up and safe.

We exited in the dark, glad we had left some extra parkas and hats just inside the entrance. It was a VERY COLD walk back to the truck.

We ate Chinese in Lewisburg, then headed up to John Pearson's to obtain access to the WVACS field house. John followed us over, let us in, and we quickly started a fire in the stove. It was still cold, and our initial plan was to sleep in the main room, on the floor around the stove. When



**Gordy at entrance crawl to Higgenbothem #4**

a few WVACS cavers showed up later that night we moved back to the bunk room.

Gordy did a great French Toast and Bacon breakfast for the group and we were getting ready for our Saturday trip. (which we had not nailed down 100% yet)



**Formations along the way in Higgenbothem**

*Photo by Gordy*

John Pearson, had suggested Higgenbothem #4, as a really good trip. Even considered tagging along with us. He said the 400' entrance crawl was not as bad as it sounded in the description. I had also got high recommendations from FCG Roman Barvinchack. In fact, he had been suggesting this cave for years and years but we never got around to it. The entrance crawl, nicknamed "The Nerd Filter", kept quite a few people out.

We stopped by John's, but his back was not cooperating,

so he drew a map to the entrance and we headed out to Higgenbotham #4.

We found the cave easily. The funny part is, we brought John to WV to see some big cave and we end up looking at the 18" entrance crawl, with 100 yards of belly crawl.

The crawl was not too bad. There were a couple of streams that took a little effort to cross without getting wet and in less than 10 minutes we were in good size stand up passage.

Lots of big passage, not much route finding, a meandering stream, eventually a lot of pretties, and a few climbs here and there. All together a friendly and pretty cave.

We erroneously turned the trip a little early, thinking we had arrived at "The Waterfall". Continuing past that point would have meant getting wet at least hip deep, and with the temperature in the low teens. We turned at a deep pool which could have been circumnavigated by following some cut foot step up the left wall. I guess we always say it's an excuse to return in



**Large stalactite hanging into stream.** *Photo by Gordy*  
warmer weather and revisit the entire cave.

The crawl out was quick and easy. Our clothes froze up on the hike back to the truck. We headed back to the field house to cleanup and head out for Mexican in Lewisburg.

It was a fairly casual weekend (by design), with lots of new cave for everyone and we never got wet above our shin bones (also by design). Did a little running around Sunday morning and were headed home by 12:30 *By Ken Tayman* □



**Not quite smallest part of entrance crawl. Gordy was having issues with slaves not being synchronized. John and Danny in front of Ken should have been illuminated by two slave flashes that went off, but too early.** *Photo by Gordy*



## Winter trip photos on page 9

Clockwise from top left: Two-tone draperies in Higgenbotham #4, Flowstone wall, also in Higgenbotham #4, Gordy at Flintstone Cave mailbox, old climbing poles in Haynes shaft, used by saltpeter miners to get into/out of pit, Ken Tayman on rappel into Haynes shaft.

## Indiana Department of Natural Resources

February 1, 2011

The Indiana Department of Natural Resources and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have received confirmation that a bat found in a southern Indiana cave has tested positive for the fungus that causes white-nose syndrome. The case is the state's first for the WNS fungus, believed to be responsible for the deaths of more than one million bats in the eastern United States. □ *MAR-List*

## New Year Party 2011

January 8-9, 2011

It was a cold, cold winter evening. A couple inches of fresh snow covered the ground set the perfect atmosphere for our new year party at the Rouzerville Hunt Club. Not sure why, but I had the feeling it would probably be a quiet evening. That's why I encouraged Gordy to bring his carbide canon for a little noise making after dinner.

We had ham, chicken, some potato casseroles, salads, cookies cakes, pies plus other odds and ends. It went well with the 2 liter bottle of Sangria I brought.

The "White Elephant Auction" was a success. Gordy performed the duties of auctioneer. Sometimes he kept forgetting the high bids but got the job done. The bottle of windshield washer fluid made its 3rd appearance and went for \$8.00 this time. (Thanks Jim!) The auction brought in \$262.50.

The carbide canon had one successful blast, but further attempts didn't even fizzle. We need to work on the carbide to water ratio. Next year we will make sure Howard brings his black powder canon. That thing can rattle windows!

We continued the tradition of the "Midnight Hike", except we did it at 10:30 pm. The temperature was nine degrees.

We had 20 members and friends for dinner and 14 slept over the night. Another year, another new year party. □

*By Ken Tayman*



Midnight hike gang: L to R: Dave Scamardela, Jim Schweitzer, Jin Hart, Pat Minnick, Gordy Ley, Howard White and Ken Tayman.

*Photo by Cherie Schock*

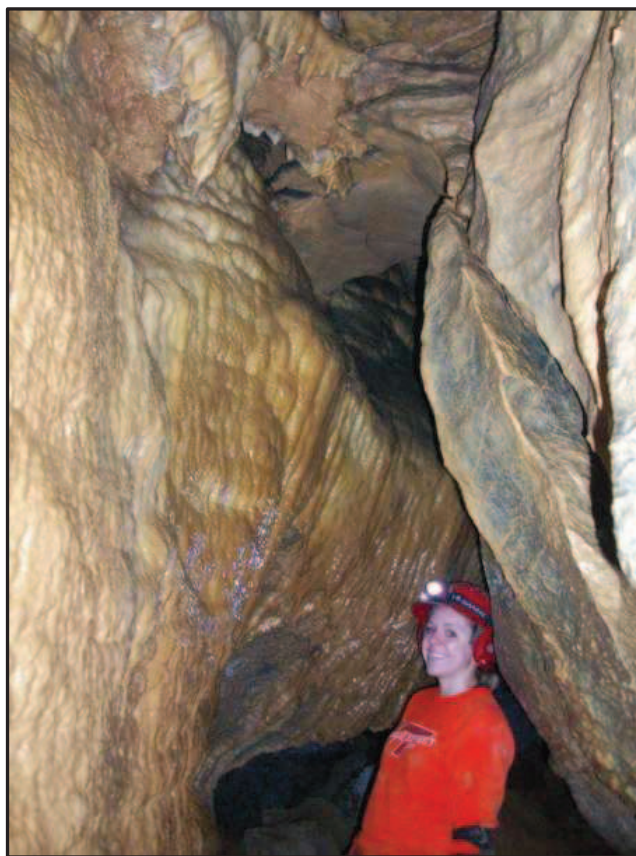
**Peiper's Cave Trip, 1/7/10, by John Boswell**

I decided that while my kids were home from college on Christmas break I would introduce them to caving with a beginner trip to Peiper's Cave. My high school stepson decided he would take a sick day from school and join us. My daughter had previously been on a cave tour through a very dry and rocky wild cave during a visit to Slovenia, and she and my oldest son have prior rock climbing experience. My oldest son had never been in a cave of any sort, and my high schooler's only previous cave exposure came on a trip to Penn's Cave as a little kid.

I outfitted them as best I could with materials lying around the house, which consisted of skateboard knee and elbow pads and a variety of Wal-Mart headlamps attached to a batting helmet, a Harley skid-dome helmet, and an imitation Nazi biker helmet. I stuffed their pockets full of backup flashlights, batteries, and a few granola bars and off we went.

We arrived at the designated parking area, dressed, and shuffled our way through the snow to the entrance door. All the kids were very excited as we entered the cave and were met by a couple of scenic column formations in quick succession.

We arrived in the first room past the entrance passage and decided that we would explore the shorter passage to the right. We wound our way a short distance down that passage, passing several damaged



**Regan checking flowstone in off-the-beaten path room.**

formations that must have been quite impressive when the cave was first explored. The passage closed down to a very low crawlspace in short order (probably 60 feet or so) and I didn't feel that they were up to going through such a tight crawl quite yet. I didn't know if I would fit through it, either. So we reversed direction and headed back out to the first entrance room.



**Zack, Regan and Jake at column not far from entrance.**

We climbed up a large pile of breakdown boulders and began exploring the main part of the cave. We crawled, climbed, and walked our way through the many maze-like, intertwining passages and I was pleased with the amount of "ooh's" and "aah's" I was hearing at every turn as we negotiated tube-like connections between main passages and crawled under huge hanging boulders. The kids thoroughly enjoyed the interesting structure of the cave and the bats they passed here and there. Every time we



**Zack- in-a-Crack**

thought we were getting into a deeper and newer section of the cave, we would round a bend and realize we were back in one of the main passages. Peipers Cave is truly a labyrinth.

When we finally arrived at the section of the cave I recognized as the catacombs, I dropped down about six feet through a small round hole in the floor which leads to a series of very low belly crawl passages connecting lots of miniature rooms in the lower section of the cave. The kids were a little apprehensive about going into the tight spaces at first, but they got used to it fairly quickly and seemed to have a good time slithering through the mud with the roof touching their backs.

Eventually we made our way back out to the first entrance room where you have to choose the right passage or the main left passage. The map showed some interesting formations and a flowstone floor accessible through “the slot” and “the hidden passage”. We all decided we would give that a shot and began looking for “the slot”. I believe we found it behind a large section of rock broken away from

the back wall and sitting in a “knife-edge” orientation. Portions of the narrow section behind this rock were polished smooth, so I assumed that must be from people sliding their way across is to get to the hidden passage. I could not even come close to fitting through this section. My high-schooler gave it a try and got behind it, but then was unable to figure out how to proceed from there. He didn’t see a clear path and I didn’t really encourage him to explore unknown passages where I couldn’t accompany him on his first cave trip.

While we were poking around looking for a way through the slot, we found another small hole that dropped down between two sections of rock on the back wall of the same room. I fit through it with minor difficulty and as we explored the passage that trends to the west down there we came across a large section of flowstone wall that I had not seen before. It was probably 40 feet wide and covered the cave wall from top to bottom of its 15-20 foot height. Numerous small passages continued upwards towards the surface and all of them had flowstone and curtains hanging down from them. It is definitely the most decorated portion of the cave that I have seen. At the end of this passage was another tight squeeze that the boys got through with some difficulty. It opened into a little room and they couldn’t find another way out from that room.

At this point, we had been climbing, crawling, and exploring in the cave for about 5 hours and we were all thoroughly tired so we made our way back out to the cave entrance and shuffled our way through the snow in the darkness back to the car.



**Zack -in-a-Tube**

All the kids really loved this intro to caving and I think they are probably hooked like I am now. My daughter showed some interest in attending some of the VPI caving club meetings when she gets back to school at VA Tech, and my oldest son was looking for a grotto near his school in Montana. It was quite a thrill to turn some young people on to an activity I love.

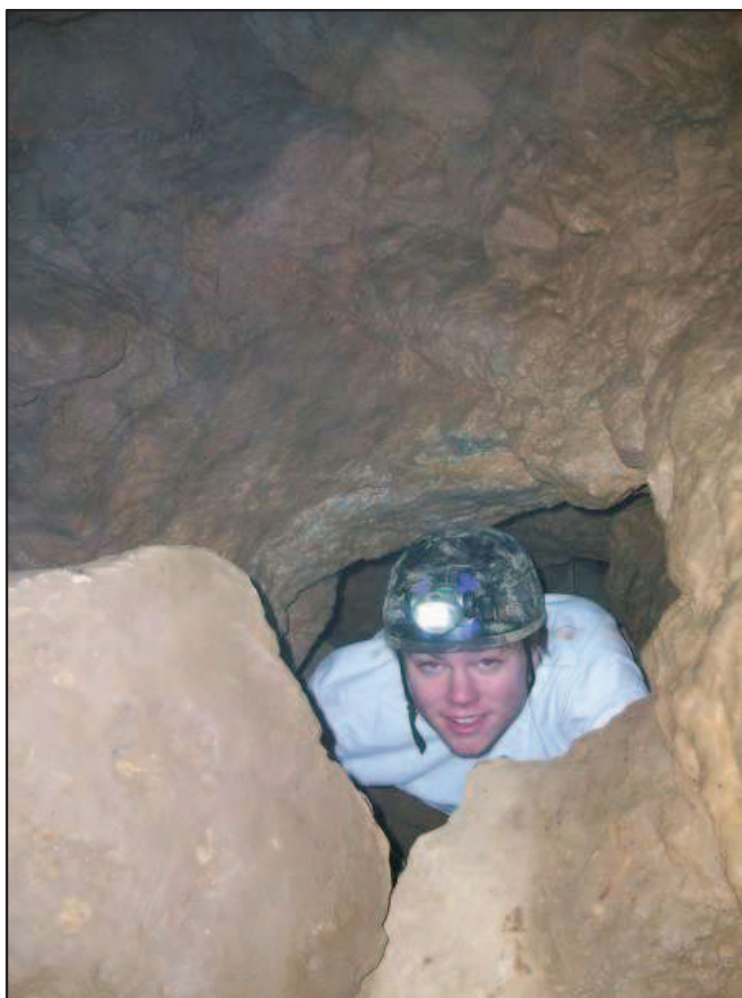
**Python Pit Trip, 1/10/11** *by John Boswell*

My kids Regan and Jake had such a great time visiting Peiper's Cave on January 7<sup>th</sup>, they begged me to take them into another cave before they had to leave to return to college. Ken Tayman, Gordy Ley, and Jonathan Peters had recently taken me to the Williamson P caves for some GPS waypoint mapping and a trip through Python Pit, so I chose to revisit that cave.

We arrived at the sink hole entrance and I backed my way through the flat entrance area feet first and waited halfway through the entrance tunnel in order to guide them in as their feet appeared. Very quickly we were all in the entrance room, which sports a fairly large column and several other smaller formations, as well as numerous soda straws. The kids said they liked the entrance to this cave better as it was more natural than walking through a doorway like at Peiper's.

We chose to explore the passage that leads to the stream first. After a short section of duck-walking passage, we came to a section called "the funnel" on the map. To make your way through this section you have to straddle-crawl over a boulder that fills about half the passage, and then immediately at the end of the boulder you have to make your way through a round window-like opening. We shimmied our way through this obstacle and regrouped on the other side, where the floor begins to slope steeply downwards on its way to the streambed. Here there is a very nice collection of soda straws hanging from the roof above a stalagmite about two feet high and coated lightly with sparkly calcite. Gordy referred to this as the frosty stalagmite. The pictures I took of this formation don't do it justice. I need some better cave photography skills! As you make your way past this pretty formation, there are several small columns and other formations to the side of the passage. This sloping section leads to an area of boulders within a large dome pit and a

climb down of approximately 15 feet or so that leads to the stream passage. Someone has thoughtfully rigged a section of knotted rope here to aid in the climb up and down the muddy rocks. I descended first with the aid of the rope and then helped Regan and Jake make their way down. This climb down in the large dome pit was very exciting to them, and they were also fascinated with the little pebble-bottomed stream that runs through it. I showed them the area of the stream passage that is sumped and prevented us from exploring the area of the cave beyond it which includes the intriguingly named "monster dome". I hope to be able to return in warmer weather and explore beyond this sump. There are many interesting formations in the stream passage area including some pretty large curtain formations, a large flowstone slope, some very large and ominous rocks hanging overhead, and a few ribbons. We did not crawl down the stream passage because the outside temp was in the 20's and I thought it a bad idea to get soaked.



**Jake exiting crawl above the stream passage. (Python Pit)**

We climbed back up with the aid of the knotted rope and made our way back out through the funnel and into the entrance room.

The other passage in this cave consists mainly of a high vertical fissure canyon that leads to a large group of columns about twelve feet tall and rippled like a stack of poker chips called the Colonnade, and a five foot tall broomstick with a soda straw connecting at the top of it.

We dropped into the entrance to this broomstick passage and very quickly came to a step-across pit thirteen feet deep. This pit is actually a little bigger than step-across, and requires about a three foot length of canyoning to get across it. This was the first time Regan or Jake had been forced to try canyoning and the pit directly below added quite a sense of danger to it. After some furtive attempts, they both successfully crossed it and we continued on. I told them it was good that they had succeeded, because almost the entire length of the passage ahead must be negotiated in that fashion. As we rounded the next bend, the passage became too narrow to continue walking and we had to climb up to a wider section and begin canyoning our way along. The going was pretty slow at this point, but there were lots of stalagmites and stalactites along the way to admire as we took breaks to catch our breath. During this section of canyoning above a significant drop, Jake had some unpleasant memories of a recent rock climbing fall in which he broke his kneecap into three pieces and had to spend a few months in a wheelchair after some surgery, so I made sure to keep a slow pace and help assure him along the way. I guess the first time canyoning with muddy cave walls is a bit daunting to all of us.

We made it to the Colonnade formation and the five foot broomstick slightly beyond it and everyone agreed it was

well worth the work it took to get there as they are quite beautiful and impressive and unlike anything that can be seen above ground. Jake and Regan remained at this point and rested as I continued my way to the end of the passage, which is covered in mud the consistency of peanut butter and just gradually narrows down to a dead end.

On our way out of this broomstick passage, we decided to climb down to the floor of the cave below the section we had just canyoned over. We had to eventually chimney back up and over the narrow section, but climbing down and walking was definitely faster than the way we had come in. I was looking for the extension of this lower passage that is referred to on the map as the Sally Forth passage, but I didn't see it.

We exited the cave and made our way back to the car. The kids said they enjoyed Python Pit more than they had Peipers because of the more challenging nature of the cave and the wide variety of formations they got to see inside. They are hoping to make it back in warmer weather and be able to explore beyond the sump and also drop into some of the other "P" caves in the area. □



**Regan climbing up from the stream passage (Python Pit)**

## Historic Photo Reenactment by Gordon Ley

Prior to attending Spring 2010 VAR at Fairlea, WV, I was looking through Davies' *Caverns of West Virginia*. I noticed the photo of the dripstone-covered trough in Haynes Cave. I had seen this trough before... but where? It finally occurred to me that I was thinking of the picture of 'Vertical Bill' Cuddington standing over this same trough in *On Rope*. Haynes would be nearby, so I determined to stage my own photo at the trough.

The original photo was taken in December 1952 by Tom Barr. The cave is multi-level, but mostly horizontal. When I asked Bill why he was carrying so much rope, he informed me that he carried that around 'most everywhere in those days, 'just in case!' There is a pit in the cave from which saltpeter was removed, so I suppose Bill's rope got used that day! The trough is a shallow receptacle receiving water falling from the ceiling, placed atop a dripstone mound. This presumably would have been an on-site water source for the saltpeter refining, which may have occurred a very short distance away toward the entrance.

On my first visit, I was disappointed to find that the trough was no longer present. It had been vandalized and removed sometime around 1967 after a feature in *National Geographic*. I did take a few shots with the help of my friend Dane Wagle. I succeeded pretty well with the posturing, but I was not satisfied with my modern helmet/light combination and the absence of the trough. This could have turned into a photo-shop project, but I determined to do another take with appropriate gear. I also re-created the trough from Styrofoam with dripstone simulated with spray-on urethane foam.

I got another opportunity to make the shot during the fall. On the trip down to Fall VAR, I had Ken Tayman along to push the button this time. I am pretty pleased with the results!



*Fig. 6-4. Bill Cuddington was a significant influence during the vertical caving developmental years. (From Cave of Tennessee, by T.C. Barr, Jr. Used with permission.)*

## “Quotes of the Quarter”

“I hate #&!\*\$% cable ladders”

*KT re using ladder to climb out of shaft in Haynes.*

"Don't buy any Petzl gear in China!!"

*Petzl dealer re Chinese counterfeit equipment .*

“Is the garbage bag with my gear still in your car? I hope they haven't picked up the garbage from the township dumpster yet?”

*GL to KT re garbage bag of missing dirty cave gear.*



### Frustration Pit /Corker Hill Update

The Pennsylvania Cave Conservancy (PCC) approved the proposed draft MOU with WASHCO, at their Annual Business meeting on February 26, 2011. Only change needed was requiring minors under 18 years, to have waiver signed by parent or guardian. These changes have been made and a draft copy has been forwarded to WASHCO for review and hopefully approval. □

# Williamson, PA



Gordy



Dave



Steve & Drew



Dane



John

# Persistence-Platter

February 26, 2011

We recently signed up several members new to caving and we felt the need to get them underground so they could get a good taste of their new found hobby.

We set up a day trip to do Persistence-Platter cave system in Williamson. This system is two small connected caves with over 1000' of passage, at lot of it crawling.

Our plan was to let them see the small crawlly stuff first before getting into some of the Big Trunk passage in West Virginia.



Drew making the Hartman Handshake connection look easy. Photo by Gordy

FCG members on this trip were Pat Mouldan, Drew Welicka, Steve Isch (all from Ship Univ), John Boswell, Gordy Ley, Dane Wagle. Dave Scarmardela and me, Ken Tayman. This would be new cave to all except me.



L to R: Dave, Pat, Steve, Drew, John (top cen), Ken and Dane. Snow is all mucked up with entrance climb slop! Toughest part of the trip was climbing up entrance shaft. Photo by Gordy

The cave was quite wet from recent rains and all the little pools and puddles were full and we quickly got wet. The breeze was blowing through the cave all day and the entire cave was chilly.

The first obstacle is the Hartman-Handshake which is a fairly small connection slot that connects the two caves. I have been through it many times but it looks smaller and smaller every time I do it. Plus there was a nice pool of cold water



Pat, sleazed from climbing out entrance shaft

in front of it that I got the privilege to absorb as the first one through.

It had been awhile since I was in this part of the cave and I hand and kneed my way through the mud floored room without realizing it, and spent the next 1`5 minutes looking for it. I thought I had missed a turn or something! Eventually Gordy pointed up a side crevice about 20 feet where he could see daylight peeking in and we determined it was the old Platter vertical entrance shaft which is no longer used. It just looks like a little crevice on the surface side.

Now that we realized where we were, we kind of explored our way back out toward the connection then headed back into the Persistence half of the cave. More crawling through pools and puddles.

Made our way to the back of the cave and checked out the big room and the Sarcophagus, a huge rectangular shaped chunk of breakdown that looks like a coffin.

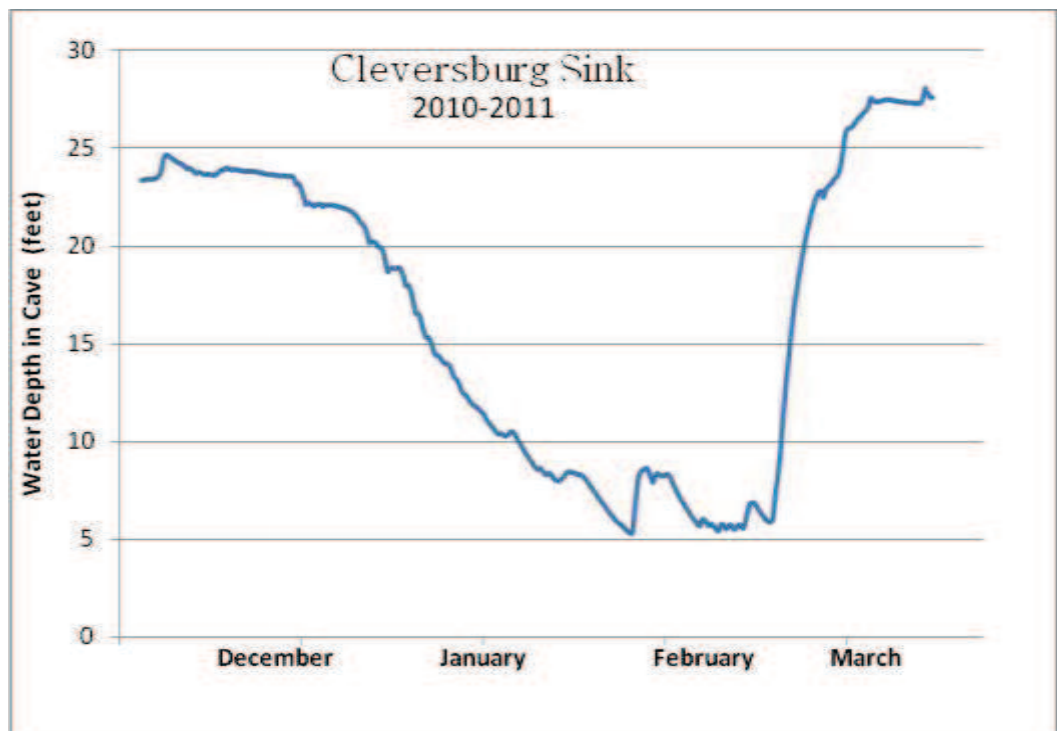
We worked our way back out through the puddles and "struggled" as we scratch and clawed our way back up the 12' entrance slope. Lots of muddy slop! No foot holds! Toughest part of the trip! *by Ken Tayman* □

## Cleversburg Sink Water Level Project

*March 5, 2011*

Ken T. and Prof. Tom Feeney stopped by Cleversburg Sink to dump the data collected since December 10, 2010.

During that 3 month interval, the water level worked its way down from 23 feet to about 5 feet in late January, then quickly climbed back up to 27 feet on March 7. The chart indicates a lot more action than monthly or quarterly checks would indicate. □



## Vertical Practice

March 5, 2011



Regan on rope at Shaeffer Rocks Photo by Dad

We had our first vertical practice in several months. The weather cut us a good break with warm temperatures and the rain holding off till late evening. There were 6 members and 3 guests which is a large turnout. At one point we had 4 ropes rigged.

Pat placed emphasis on Scott and Stitch from Messiah because they were planning a vertical trip during their spring break. Scott and Stitch had done vertical work with us before at Crookshank (97') and needed to hone up a little on their climbing rigs and changeovers.

Gordy focused on Nicole and trained her up on rack and rope-walker for the college trip.

I worked with John and his daughter with rappelling racks and John got to test a frog system he is putting together. Even got Johns son, 6 year old Justin, on rope and let him do a ten foot rappel. "Made His Day!!!!"

Got in about 5 hours of practice □

## In Memoriam

### ROBERT HALL HANDLEY

Robert Hall Handley, 82, of Renick, W.Va., died Saturday, January 15, 2011. He was born April 21, 1928, in Thomasville, Ga., and was a son of the late Charles Overton Sr. and Nelle Hall Handley.

Bob was driven by his interest in preserving a clean environment for future generations and he supported this interest in many ways. He was the president of The Greenbrier River Watershed Association and held a director position with the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy. He was a life member of the Greenbrier Historical Society, where he followed a family interest in maintaining local history. He is most noted for exploring the underground and spent most of his life helping others share his passion. He was a founding member of the West Virginia Association for Cave Studies and the West Virginia Cave Conservancy. He is the oldest person, at 81, to rappel the New River Bridge on Bridge Day. He retired from Union Carbide, Institute, W.Va., as a senior engineer.

Survivors include, one brother, John Handley and his wife, Julie, of Jacksonville Fla.; two sons and their spouses, Scott and Meri Handley of Vancouver, Wash., and Todd and Julie Handley of Parkersburg; four grandchildren, Meghan, Quinn, McKellam and Austin.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by one brother, Charles Overton Handley Jr.

*A celebration of life will be on Saturday, May 28, at Lost World Caverns.*

The family requests that memorial contributions be made to any of the following interests in the name of Bob Handley c/o Todd Handley 116 Brentwood Heights, Parkersburg WV 26104: WV Cave Conservancy, Greenbrier River Watershed Association, Greenbrier Historical Society Inc., or WV Highlands Conservancy.

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

## **FRANKLIN COUNTY GROTTO**



**Dane Wagle at top of 125' entrance drop to Lost World Caverns (AKA Grapevine)**

*Photo by Gordy Ley*