

# **CUMBERLAND VALLEY CAVER**

*Published by*

# **Franklin County Grotto**



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published by  
**FRANKLIN COUNTY GROTTO**  
an affiliate of the National Speleological Society

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Franklin County Grotto meetings are held the 3rd Monday of the month in New Franklin Fire Department, New Franklin, PA. The fire department is located on PA Route 316, 3 miles east of I-81 (exit #14). 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. Contact any of the above individuals for more information.

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 the secretary so the exchange list can be updated.

**Cover: Jonathan Peterson climbing out of pit in McAllisterville Cave” Photo: by Ken Tayman**

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***From the Editor.....***

Well, we seem to be on a roll! -Two issues, in two consecutive quarters. Thanks to Ish we will have a little variety of authors this quarter. I had mentioned something last issue about getting into WET cave this year. Ish and Todd got a taste of “wet” when they did the sump in Python Pit and got back to the “Monster Dome” and “Real Cave” Not a lot of people have been in that part of the cave, and even fewer have done the sump to get there. There has been a resurgence in week night evening trips, resulting in a couple trips to the P-Caves in Williamson, several weeknight vertical practice sessions and a Wednesday evening Graffiti cleanup trip to Peipers. Apparently, some jerk had more spray paint than common sense and decided to mark up the cave. Thanks to Don Arrowood for providing some of the pictures of the project. Also, thanks to Diane for researching “Cave Bucks” data.

A few of us spent the Memorial Day weekend working with some of Jim Hart’s cohorts at the rocks, showing them the basics of rappelling. They plan to use these new skills to drop roadside cliffs to study plant and animal life at some up to now unreachable sites. (waiting on write-up from Jim)

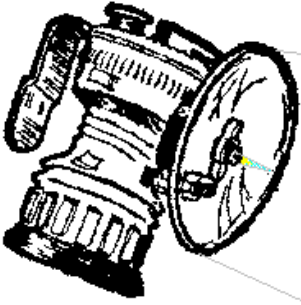
Planning for our July trip to Butler/Sinking Creek seems to have jelled pretty well. BCCS member, Ed Kehs, has agreed to take us in. It’s been over ten years since FCG has even attempted to get in, and that trip was SNAFU’d due to a broken key in the lock and we ended up doing a Crossroads trip instead. We will provide more info (camping, departure times, etc) regarding the Butler trip later.

Sincerely, Ken Tayman



# Speleo-Spotlight...

Barry Duncan NSS 24338



**B**arry Duncan is one of my favorite caving partners. Some of my best trips were put together by Barry. He took me on my first trips to J-4, Warm River, Porter's, McClung's, Ludington's, Pocahontas Poor Farm, Flower Pot and Roadside Pit. And when Barry takes you through a cave, you really get the full tour. All of the nooks and crannies, the out of the way climbs that lead to a nice rappel or small grotto loaded with pretties. It is never just the short route.

One of the reasons you get the **"complete"** trip has to do with the way he explores a cave. He keeps going back until he really knows the cave. His best favorite Cave is McClungs. Says he must have done it 50 times, each time, seeking out a new and different section, always learning more about the cave. He thinks he has probably done 90% of the cave. He was exploring his way thru McClungs working his way toward the Lightner's entrance. After several trips, he knew he was close, but hadn't actually found the connection to last couple hundred yards. On the next trip, he took several FCG members and we entered the Lightner's entrance and after a few climb downs and a crawl through a huge breakdown pile, he popped out into a passage he had done the previous week and we were on our way to a through trip. Barry is a Cave hunter, cave digger, surveyor, and Land Owner Relationship Cultivator.

His first wild cave was WSBA Cave, north of York, PA in 1960. It only had 500 feet of passage. One of the hardest caves he did was 4 ½ mile "Cave of the Dead" in New York. The entrance was near a cemetery. Soooo much crawling and climbing of pits thought he would die when he got out.

On one trip with him into Flower Pot, a bunch of heart wrenching YEECHKKKs and coughing and spitting alerted us that something was wrong. He had grabbed a bottle of dish washing detergent instead of drinking water, and only discovered the mistake after taking a swig. He remembers being scared once when climbing out of the 70' Hosterman's



**Barry ready to do drop in Ludington's** Photo by Ken Tayman

Pit, when nearly out, his roping started spinning, round and round and round, perhaps 15 times. He thought his rope was torn and was unraveling. He sped up and is still alive today. Other caves he remembers as special are: Sites (191'), long trip into Friar's Hole, Scott Hollow and a wild trip into Carlsbad Caverns.

Barry is also a TATTOO artist (Luke's) and had an article written up on his Tattoos in Easy Rider Magazine. He is currently employed Navy DDSP in Mechanicsburg, Pa. and is owner of Caver web store "Caver Connection" selling caving gear and bat Trinkets.

PS: Don't feed Barry any chocolate or soda that contains caffeine, it makes him real jumpy! ☐

## Spring VAR at Durbin, WV

*April 27-29, 2007 by Ken Tayman*

I hadn't been to a VAR for a few years, so when Jonathon asked if I was planning to attend this spring I said I wanted to go. There were several Franklin County Grotto members planning to go or at least considering it.

Jonathon and I planned to pull out of Hagerstown around 4pm, but by the time we both had taken care of a few last minute family responsibilities, it was 8:30 PM before we were on the road. It was raining, but the weather reports we had heard had everything clearing up by morning, and a nice weekend weather-wise. WRONG!

We pulled into the campground around 1:00 AM and met up with

Todd Roberts, who had a nice head start in the beer drinking department. Registration was closed for the night, so we would have to register in the morning.

At 1:30 we were all pitching our tents in the rain. We socialized until about 3:00 and then hit the sack. By the way, Jonathon is still using his Boy Scout era tent, which consistently lets him down in the rain. It appears this weekend will not be any different.

I got up around 8:30 and put some hot water on for coffee, woke up Jonathon. When we registered we saw our numbers were 255 and 256. Since the VAR was only providing 250 meals, we would not be eating the

chicken dinner and they knocked \$10 off the fee. I guess the 15 minutes we spent shooting the bull with Bob Bennett and a few others, was enough to cause us to miss out on the meal. I had brought some emergency rations just in case we couldn't eat for some reason or another, and there was also a bar & grill walking distance from the tents.

We bought a couple sausage, egg and cheese biscuits for breakfast from a local organization at the campground, and went looking for a cave trip. Most of the led trips had filled up and so we were trying to pull something together we could lead ourselves. We could always do Roadside Pit or Carpenters Pit, but I wasn't real sure I could still fit into Roadside, and I hadn't practiced any rope work since January and didn't



Ken Tayman in Tub Cave, near entrance passage.

*Photo by: Jonathon Peterson*

feel up to doing the multiple drop in Carpenters with 150 feet of rope to climb.

I wanted to get in a new cave and had never been in Tub Cave. It is basically one, gigantic room, with streams and during heavy rain a big lake. It is so big, that in several places, your light beam is only powerful enough to see one wall at a time. Jonathon thought he'd been in Tub before, but couldn't remember anything specific about it. We got directions from several groups, decided on which set we liked the most and the two of us headed out.

It took about an hour of relaxed driving to arrive at the parking spot, plus about a half mile uphill hike to the huge (and deep) sinkhole with the entrance down in the bottom.

It took several minutes for us to adjust to the size and darkness. Our beams just shot out into the blackness and faded away. Couldn't see anything except the floor, ceiling and the one wall. I ended up using both my Myo-5 and UK mini-Q lights at the same time just to throw a brighter

beam. We decided to go down the center then walk the perimeter of the cave.

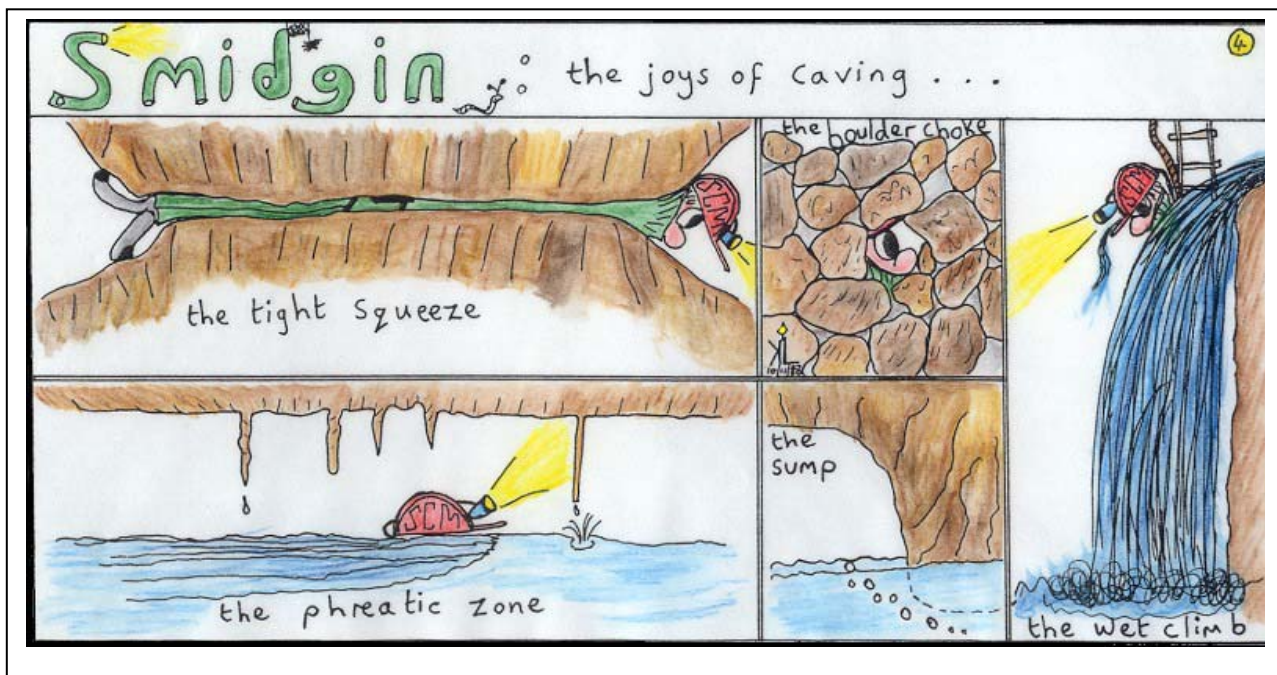
Several of the people who'd been in the cave on Friday, had mentioned a huge deep lake at the bottom. But it had drained by the time we were in. The stream was only couple feet wide and in most places was 6 inches to a foot deep. Down at the bottom where the lake would have been was just a stream with muddy banks and no foot prints. We took our time and toured around the cave, found the passage that goes behind the huge flowstone mountain and ended up spending about hour and a half in the cave.

The trip back to the truck was easy. On the way, we could see across to the next ridge where trucks were parked at Roadside and Carpenters Pit. We decided that after we changed, we would drive up, perhaps a mile, and see how things were going at those Caves. Roadside was really backed up inside waiting for their turn to climb out. The entrance had been rigged as a re-belay, apparently to keep the rope from sliding into a notch at the lip. It was causing really slow climbs.

When I did Roadside, we didn't use any re-belays and we didn't encounter any issue with the slot. I think I could probably still fit into the entrance slot. It might be a close call since I weight about 40 pounds more now than I did when I dropped it before. Just seeing that small slot has encouraged me to drop a few pounds before I get down that way again, just in case we have a chance to do it.

We headed back to the camp, in the rain. Neither one of us was paying much attention to the route back so we ended up making two wrong turns and killing at least an extra half hour. Got back and hit the Bar and Grill up for a nice cheeseburger, large serving of French fries and couple of beers. It was still over cast and actually getting chilly.

We visited with Barry Duncan at his vender stand for awhile. He seemed to be pretty busy. We stood around the small camp fire, competing for the warm places. When I mentioned something about this being a pretty small fire, I was told the Bon Fire was down near the end of the campground. So we headed down





that way and there was a Great Bon Fire, with benches and perhaps 60-75 people. Couple of people playing guitars and drums and singing. It was a very sociable atmosphere, and plenty of warmth.

We stood around, listened to the music, enjoyed the heat, listened to the talk about the days caving and really relaxed. Even the rain had let up for four or five hours. By 2:00AM, there were three guitars, some drums, a flute and a didgeridoo all going at the same time.

It started to rain again around 3:00AM, so we headed back to camp and sacked out. It was quite chilly, windy and rained almost all night. Jonathan had bunch of wet gear by morning, and continued to assure me he would be ordering his new tent by the end of the day.

A pancake breakfast was scheduled from 8-10 AM (or until they ran out of food) so we headed down to the eating area and found out we were almost too late again. They cut off service after us, until they could verify just how much food they had left. The Blue Berry Pancakes, Sausage Patties hash browns with Ramps, juice and coffee were really good.

We cleaned up, packed up and pulled out around 10:30 AM and had a nice easy paced trip home. I got home around 2PM which was early enough to clean up gear, dry out tents and cut the grass. I sort of wished I had trained up a little on my vertical work prior to going down there. If I had, I think I probably would have done Carpenter Pit which is more challenging than the cave we did. I guess I will have to do that the next time I get down that way. □



Jonathon at Tub Cave Photo by: Ken Tayman

## FCG Vertical Practice Sessions

by Ken Tayman

January 6, 2007

Jonathon Peterson and I decided to have a vertical practice at Schaeffer Rocks. We invited new to vertical caving, Tri-State Grotto member, Todd Roberts, to come along and test out some of our vertical gear before he purchased his own. He had only a few minutes of previous vertical practice at a grotto picnic, and was interested in checking out a Micro steel rack that Jon happened to have, before he actually bought his own. Everyone dropped and climbed the 55' cliffs a few times. Todd proved to be very capable and would soon be ordering his own frog rig. □

April 9, 2007

Pat announced a vertical practice at the March grotto meeting. Jonathon Peterson, Ken Tayman, Gordey Ley and Pat Minnick showed up. This practice would be the start of what is hoped to be at least monthly vertical practice session for the spring and summer. Doing it on weekday evenings makes it easy to squeeze it in without sacrificing a weekend. Everyone did the rappels and climbs and slowly stretch out those old tired muscles. □

April 23, 2007

FCG held vertical practice at Schaeffer Rocks. Pat Minnick worked with new FCG member Istvan Urcuyo. It turned out Ish was already an experienced and very capable vertical caver. Ken showed up later and provided moral support. Ish normally uses a "Frog" system, but gave Pat's "Mitchell" a try and did very well. It is nice to have a recent influx of active and capable cavers to the grotto. □

June 4, 2007

Pat, Ken and Ish showed up for the vertical practice at the rocks. The routine of trying to work in vertical sessions during the weekday evening a couple times every month seems to be working out pretty good. Every one got in a few climbs. Pat pulled out his rope walker rig, which he doesn't use very often, knocked the dust off, and made a few runs.

Ish hadn't used a rope walker rig before, so he gave Pat's rig a shot. He did a very smooth climb. I initially attempted a climb on Ish's Blue Water rope, but it was so soft and flexible, it actually looked like a larger diameter. My knee Gibbs was not sliding easily. I switched over to Pat's stiffer PMI and I made a "labored" climb without too much difficulty. Just reconfirmed the fact I need to lose about 20 LBS. □

