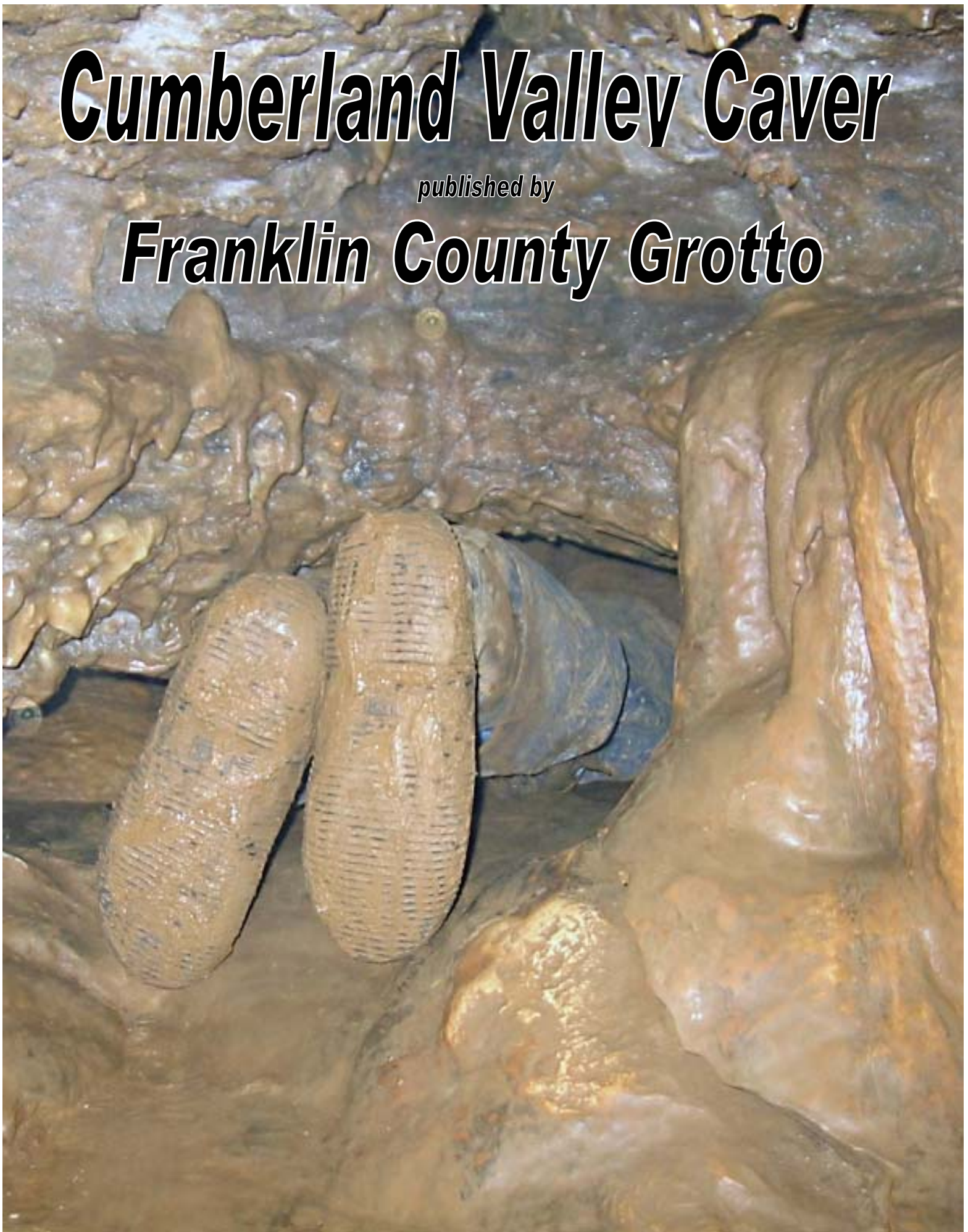


Cumberland Valley Caver

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Franklin County Grotto



CUMBERLAND VALLEY CAVER

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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: Nick Stoner pushing thru Hidden Passage, Peipers Cave *Photo: by Ish Urcuyo*

Back Cover: Brian Hornberger in Hidden Passage, Peipers Cave *Photo: by Ish Urcuyo*

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From the Editor.....

I have been getting some feedback regarding the last couple issues of the Cumberland Valley Caver. Almost all of it has been very positive. However, I did recently receive a comment from a friend that described it as a “personal chronicle of my caving activities.” I can see where he is coming from if I am writing 90% of the articles. It is hard to write about trips that I didn't participate in, and the articles I write regarding my trips will be from my perspective. There are a lot of grotto trips happening that I don't go on, and even small, short articles, from these other trips, would contribute greatly to the variety of stories and scope of the newsletter. So far the participation has been getting better with each issue. I'd like to thank, Gordy, Ken Jones and Jim Hart for their contributions for this issue.

In my previous life as editor of this newsletter, I used to spread the exposure of grotto members via the covers of the newsletter, the cover of the hardcopy Speleo-Schedule we used to mail out every month, and by doing a Speleo-Spotlight on some. Most of the active cavers in the grotto (except for recent new members) have been featured somewhere on at least one of these venues, some multiple times. The cover photos I select depend mostly on the availability of an interesting photo that prints well, and when I write the Spotlight, I usually draw on my personal caving experiences with that individual. While contemplating this issue's candidate for the Spotlight, I went back through the old issues and noticed one of the grotto's core members had never been spotlighted. I would have bet \$20 he'd been covered. He had made the covers of both the newsletter and Speleo-schedule. He is spotlighted in this issue.

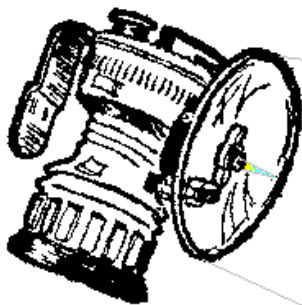
Guess that's about it for this issue.

Sincerely, Ken Tayman

Speleo-Spotlight...

Howard White

NSS# 33287



I was checking through some notes I'd made at my very first Franklin County Grotto meeting, and there was a comment I made to myself to help match new faces with names:

Howard, the quiet guy in the corner, with a beard.

I didn't realize it at the time, but he would be one of the best people I would have the pleasure to cave with. He was just starting his caving career and it didn't take long for him to get into the "vertical" swing of things.

His first vertical cave was Conley Hole, TN. It was a daytime rappel with no lights. I think he was Hooked! Some of his trips include Cass, Baines Springs, Newberry-Baines, Neversink, Fantastic Pit in Ellisons, Dorton Knob, Paradox, and many, many Tag Pits. He remembers chimneying around in top of Ellison's 500'+ Fantastic Pit as one of his more precarious spots. Actually he didn't realize the depth of the canyons until after he'd negotiated them.

I have many personal memories of trips with Howard. Like when he pushed me thru the connection squeeze in Sinnett-Thorn Mountain, after which I suffered from bruised ribs for a month. Then there was the long tight crawl in the back of Cleversburg Sink, when he made a special trip just to coach me thru. And our trip through Crabtree, where the group abandoned me in a tight sleeze crawl, and he got the chance to see the aggravated side of me. Our Friar's Hole-Croonkshank through trip, where I tried to get out of carrying an extra bag of vertical gear up the 97' climb. That night he was yelling up to see if I'd had a heart attack on rope.

Hosterman's Pit was a 3'er: He tossed the rope down to me at the 15' Clay Bank, and when I didn't immediately get up, accused me of waiting to be pulled up (he was right). Then there was the 'Head Up' he gave me at the "New Found Climb". I thanked him with face full of mud off my boot. Then I believe the single most helpful situation was when I got stuck half way up 'West Hall Falls', straddling a 12 foot pit, when he tossed me a belay line and got me the rest of the way across.

Oh Yea, actually he still owes me for hauling his pack through a long sticky clay crawl in Glade cave. I was dragging my pack along the stick clay floor behind me, and I didn't realize he'd attached his pack to mine. I thought it was unusually heavy! Howard is also our equipment maker/designer/enhancer. I am



Howard after Fantasy sleaze trip. Photo by Ken Tayman

still using the chest roller he made for my rope walker system. He designed the PVC battery holder for Pat to take on the NSS Expedition to Iceland (White Light). He designed and fabricated the cave gates for Cleversburg Sink and Fantasy Cave. He made the potato canon for the picnic, brings his black powder canon to wake up the neighbors. He's pretty good at tossing water balloons with the 3-man sling shot. He is always doing behind the scenes work, frequently not getting the credit he deserves. There is the work for MAR camps, OTR sight selection and setup, the grotto tarp, etc, etc.

It is hard to put down all the good experiences from 18 years of caving with someone like Howard on to one page, but I am not into writing books so it will have to do for now. The FCG motto is: ***If you want it done right, get Howard to do it.***

PS: It was hard to find a photo of Howard not flippin the bird.

Butler/Sinking Creek

6-8 July , 2007 by Ken Tayman

Well, it's been over 10 years since our failed "broken key" attempt to get into Butler Cave, but we finally made it, and it was definitely worth the wait. I had been trying to get this trip on the calendar for several years and finally, thanks to Ken Jones' coordination with BCCS member Ed Kehs, we had an excellent 7+ hour trip.

Franklin County Grotto members and guests on the trip were: Pat Minnick, Ken Jones, Jonathan Peterson, Troy Lewarchick, Doug (aka Dave) Wilt, Gordy Ley, Jason Ross, Istvan and Dawnette



Jason rappelling entrance shaft

photo by Gordy



Top of 30' entrance shaft

Photo by Jason

Urcuyo, and me (Ken Tayman). Todd Roberts arrived later and ended up taking a shorter trip. Ed Kehs was the BCCS representative who took us in and did a really GREAT job. Thanks Ed!

I believe my last previous trip into Butler was when I retired from the Army in 1994? WOW, that would make it 13 years ago. I seemed to have a good recollection of the passage and route finding came easy for me.

Instead of using the recently opened "Dave's Gallery" entrance, we chose to enter via the original 30' entrance shaft. Some of us rappelled in while a few used a cable ladder to climb down. This entrance is a lot of fun because of the multiple climb-downs and the huge room at bottom of "God is my co-pilot" chimney. Once we got everyone into the big room, Gordy set up

some slave flashes and attempted to get everyone one coming down Drag-Ass Mountain.

This cave was new to 6 of the group. I had told them they could do 6 hours and not crawl more than 10 feet. So, when we took a detour into the “historical section” and had to crawl 25’ (each way) I caught some flack about it. I told them this was a detour to see extra cave and didn’t count against the 10’ crawl limitation. We spent over an hour in this section. Worked our way down to the top of Mike’s shaft and continued to poke around in what Ed told us was the largest room in the cave.

We continued inward and as we approached the Bean Room Overlook, we sent a few out so they could see the 150’ plus drop which used to be a main way into the cave. As we approached the “Step Across” I asked Ed if he’d ever been down to the medium size room about half way down the “Bean Room” where you see the whole room from a little perch on the side. He had not been there and this little trip turned into another hour plus detour, a great little diversion. Ed took about 6 people out of the back side of this room and explored their way partially through a loop. Jonathan, Jones, Doug and I continued on the main route and waited at the Rimstone Dam passage. When everyone got back together we continued on to “Sand Canyon”.

Sand Canyon is one of the major junctions in the cave and is where we meet up with Sinking Creek. We chose to go downstream to the Moon

Room and Hanging Dong formation. This was fairly easy, dry stream, cobblestone passage. The only route finding challenge is where to get out of the stream. If you choose the correct exit point, you will come to a limestone slab sitting vertically in the sand with a solution hole in the end known as “The Eye of the Needle.” From here we continued upward over some very large breakdown. The Moon Room impressed everyone. The large lake on the floor is not water; it is a calcite floor that reflects light like water would. Took a few group shots here and continued up to the “Hanging Dong”, a large stalactite and stalagmite, not yet quite forming a column. I am not sure, but I would guess it is the largest formation in the cave.



Group coming down “Drag-ass Mountain”

Photo by Gordy

We then backtracked to Sand Canyon and headed upstream Sinking Creek to visit the Natural Bridge”. This is my 3rd trip to the Natural Bridge, never taking the same route twice. We seemed to be doing an awful lot of up and down climbing over huge breakdown! Thirty-two minutes later we all arrived at the bridge and I got

to revisit the 800 pound boulder that followed me down a slope on my first trip to Butler in 1990. It was huge! When most people see it they don’t realize its history of almost crushing me.

When we left, we made an attempt to stay lower in the breakdown and soon found the stream passage. We followed it out, much easier than our way in. It did have a 3’ crawl where I again caught flack regarding my “no more than 10’ crawling comment.

It was time to go out. Ish convinced Pat and Ed to take him out via the 30' shaft. This would entail going back up Drag-Ass Mountain, up the chimney and climb-ups, and then 30' up the cable ladder. Since I was planning to take the new exit out via Dave's Gallery, I spent all my reserve energy on the detour out to the Natural Bridge and back. Ed, Pat, Ish, and Troy headed out to the Historical Entrance, and the rest of us took the new, more direct, passage out. It still had over a 200 foot elevation gain in 600 feet of passage.

We were surprised to see that the other group got out about the same time as we did. I was impressed. When I exited I was surprised to see Todd Roberts in the camp. He was the late

arrival. He had missed the start of the trip and had spent the day fishing.

Ish agreed to take Todd back in on a quick and dirty trip. I thought perhaps it would be a 30 minute to one hour trip down to Sand Canyon, perhaps the Bean room and then exit. Two hours later people were starting to worry. Thinking perhaps Ish had gotten confused or something. At 10:15 pm 6 people were gearing back up to see if they needed help. Just about the time they were getting ready to go in, Ish and Todd exited in good spirits. They had been taking photos, and Ish had taken Todd on a quick tour to the Big Room near the original entrance, a peek at the Bean Room, Sand Canyon and back down to the Moon Room. I was surprised as to how much cave they had covered.



**Front row; Dawnette, Pat, Gordy. Second Row: Jonathon, Ed, Ken J. Back Row; Ish, Troy, Doug, Ken T & Jason
In "Moon Room"**

photo by Gordy



Troy and Jason on the “Natural Bridge”

Photo by Gordy

Since people were all ready dressed, and Pat had Not been through the “Dave’s Gallery” passage yet, Ed, Pat, Ish and Troy decided to go back in and ended up doing the “Rotten Rock Waterfall” passage, new passage to most of them.

Meanwhile.....

Back on the surface, I pulled out some of the Pepsi-can homemade alcohol stoves I’d made during the winter and was going to demonstrate them. It was now dark and it would be easy to see the pretty blue flames. I set out the “Penny Stove”, poured in an ounce of denatured alcohol and lit it. While it was heating up I grabbed my Coke and was taking a swing, only to realize I had just taken a mouthful of denatured alcohol. I immediately spit it all out.... Right into the flame on the stove. While trying to clear my mouth of the nasty stuff, I saw this beautiful, blue flame crawling its way across the ground toward my crotch. So, amongst all the laughter, foul tasting, nasty stuff still lingering in my mouth, blue fire chasing me down, I was

scooting backwards and trying to get away from the fire. I went over to the kitchen area and rinsed my mouth about 30 times with water. I did complete the demonstration. The laughter lingered awhile; I double checked my drink before sipping it and the stoves functioned great.

Sunday morning several groups pulled out to check out Breathing Cave, Marshalls and Aqua. It had something to do with equalizing driving hours with caving hours. Also, knowing the location of the entrances had a lot to do with it. Walking 45 minutes up the hill to Breathing just to check out the entrance then back down to check out Aqua was more work than I was willing to do. Pat, Jonathan, Jones and I did swing by Aqua to check it out. COLD air was rippling across the spring. It gave us all goose bumps just standing there. Saw several trout. We did pick up some trash and hauled it out. Everyone seemed to enjoy this trip a lot. Sort of hooked some of newer cavers who had never been in big cave before.□

Sunday morning saw breakfast and packing to leave. Pat, Jon, Tamy and I went over to Aqua Cave before heading home. A short stop at Sheetz for a snack, a gas stop later, and we were back in Hagerstown.

Ed, you did a very good job as trip leader, but Ken T, your memory got us into areas that Ed confessed had never been before. Hats off to everyone on the trip! I enjoyed the "Old Man" caving.

Respectfully submitted, Ken Jones