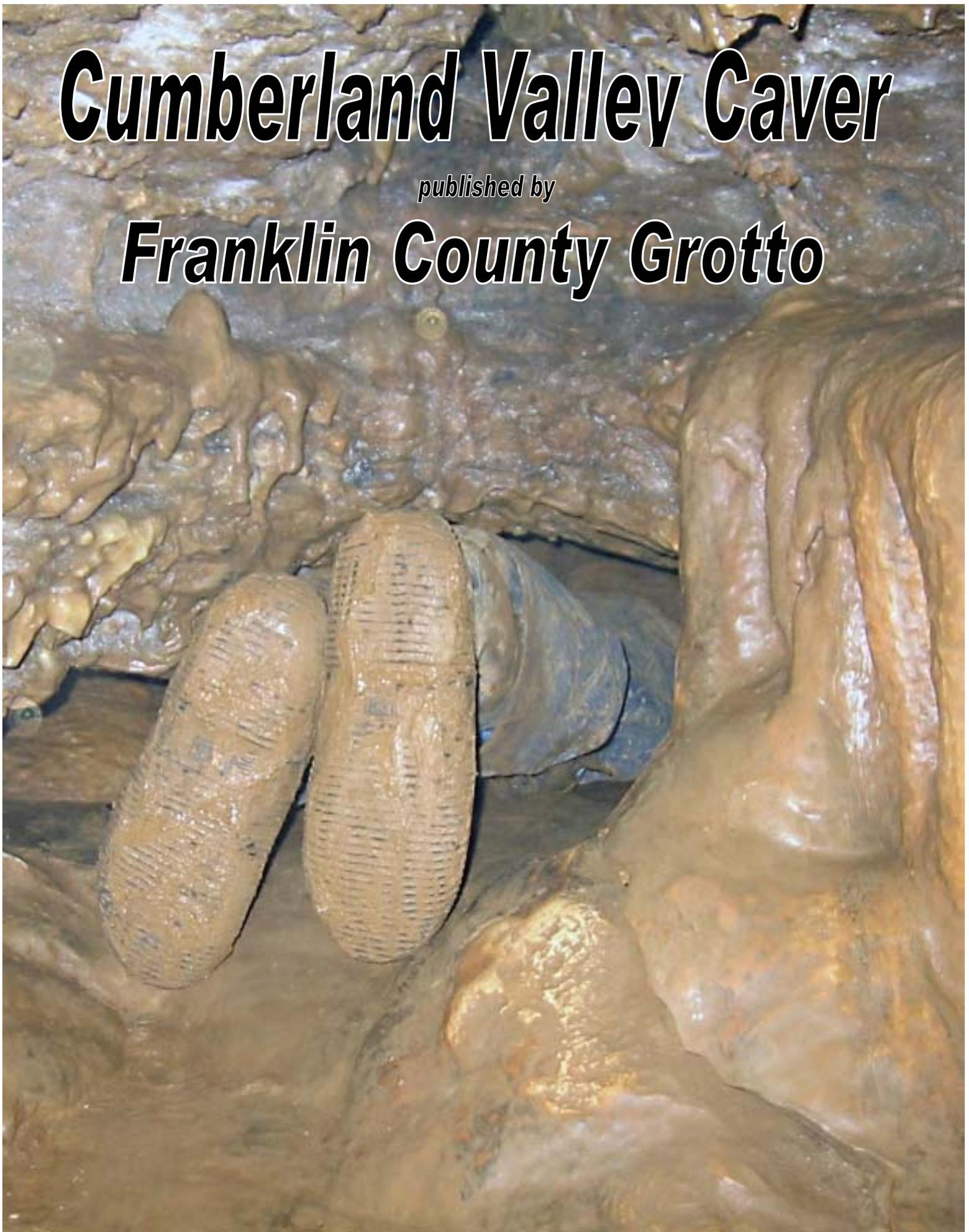


Cumberland Valley Caver

published by

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.

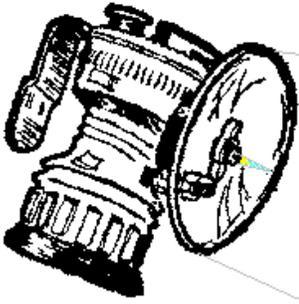
Guess that's about it for this issue.

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.***

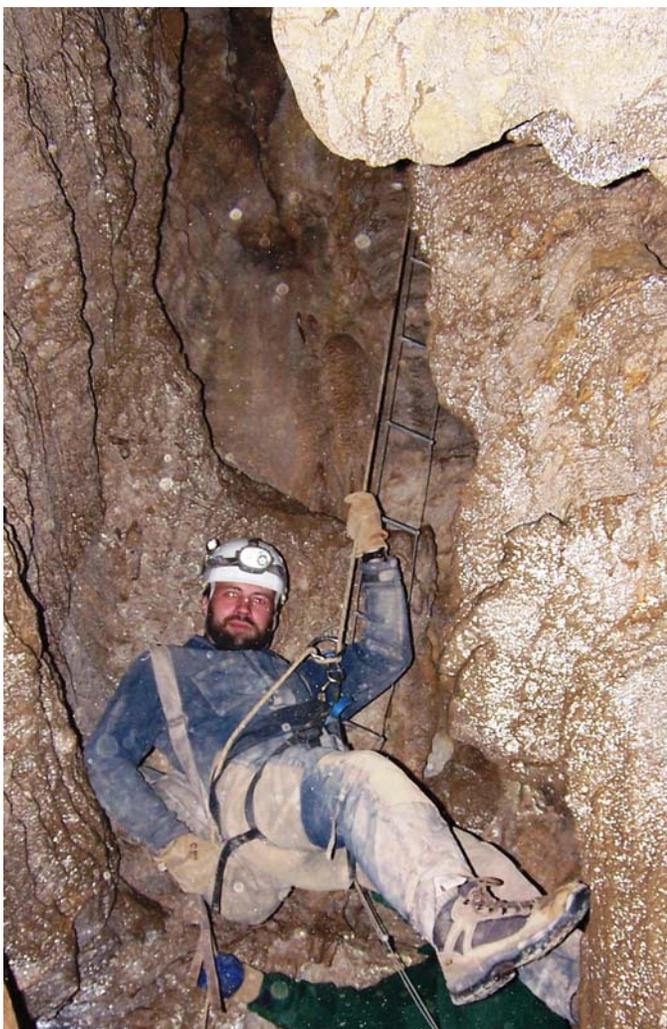
PS: It was hard to find a photo of Howard not flippin the bird.

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.□

Butler Trip

(Another perspective)
July 6-8, 2007

I met Pat and Tayman at McDonalds at 5 PM on the 6th. We loaded my gear into Pat's Subaru and waited for the rest of the group. Doug and Troy arrived shortly thereafter and J.P. rolled in at 5:15 making sure he was fashionably late to make an entrance. We then traveled to Hagerstown to J. P.'s place of employment to leave Jon's truck and my van, and then headed south. Troy and Doug passed up the stop in Hagerstown in favor of a beer stop further down the way.

Pat, Jon, Tayman and I stopped at Harrisonburg at a Mexican restaurant for feed before going on across the hills to Burnsville Cove. As we were busting through Churchville, Pat noticed a pickup at the fire hose and a couple guys which he quickly identified as Doug and Troy. They then joined our convoy the rest of the way to the BCCS field house.

When we arrived at the gate, Pat was surprised to learn that it was a green gate, not red as his directions to all had indicated. A guy named Scott from GAG arrived and directed us to the correct gate. We then proceeded to the field house. After some minor chit chat with Ed, and pitching tents and selecting bunks, we retired for the night.

All were up and moving by 8:30 am. We had breakfast and proceeded to organize out gear for the trip into Butler Cave. We waited around till 10 am for Todd, but he had not arrived. Jason, Gordy, Ish and Dawnett had arrived about 11pm Friday night. We all started wondering our way up to the "Historic Entrance." Boy did that hill get steep since I was there last. After some kicking and banging we finally got the door open and rigged the ladder. Most of the group elected to rappel into the 25' pit; however, I used the cable ladder as did Dawnette. She was just a little unsure of the cable ladder, but did well anyway.

About 11 AM, we were in the cave and moving along nicely. I had some hesitation at "God is My Copilot" climb and another climb down but made both with some coaching. We visited the Historic Section where the two Kens opted out of a hairy ledge climb in favor of returning to the window to wait the rests return

Shortly, they arrived back with us and we proceeded to look at the Bean Room from upper and lower observation places. Then it was down to Sand Canyon. After Jon went up to look at the new entrance and Doug went up to the new entrance for a smoke break, we headed for Sand Canyon and the Moon Room. After the Moon Room, we checked out the largest formation in the cave and took some pictures. Gordy Ley, I neglected to mention, was our photographer for the trip and did a fine job.

Then it was back to Sand Canyon and after crossing a Breakdown Mountain Range, on to the Natural Bridge! We looked at the "Tayman Rock" and then headed out. Ed usually led the trip in fine "Rabbit Fashion", which kept us all quite busy to maintain his pace. We split at the "Rimstone Dams" with some going back out the "Historic Entrance", while we wimps elected to go out the "Walk-out" entrance. We were out of the cave at 7:30 PM, and to our surprise Todd was waiting.

Ish volunteered to take him back in for a photo trip of, we thought, about an hour or hour and a half. By 9 pm a group decided that if they weren't out by 10pm, the group would attempt to find them. At 10 PM they were suited up to go in, when Troy hollered up from the entrance, "They are coming out!" Pat, Ish, Troy and Ed decide to go back in anyway. They went and visited the Rotten Rock Waterfall, and that gave Ish about 13 hours in the cave for the day. Everyone got out without any problems, and all agreed we had a fine trip. The bon-fire had little late participation as I believe most were kinda spent.

Sunday morning saw breakfast and packing to leave. Pat, Jon, Tayman and I went over to Aqua Cave before heading home. A short stop at a 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 he had never seen before. Hats off to everyone on the trip! I enjoyed the "Old Man" caving.

Respectfully submitted, Ken Jones

Peipers Cave GRAFFITI Clean-up Follow-up Trip

June 27, 2007 by Ken Tayman

Our trip on May 30 was a successful trip. Seven Franklin County Grotto cavers cleaned several spray painted areas located mostly in the first 25 feet of passage. Later when discussing the cleanup effort with Ed (the cave owner) we found that there was more paint further in the cave. So, a second cleanup was scheduled, this time, with more people and equipped to spend more time deeper in the cave.

Jon Peterson had previously scheduled a Wednesday evening trip to the P-caves in Williamson for some Tri-State cavers, so he would change their trip destination to Peipers and that would allow for more cleanup participants.

Franklin County participants included; Ken Jones,



Pat Minnick using cordless drill

Photo by Ken



Todd Roberts cleaning high ceiling ledge. *Photo by Ken*

Pat Minnick, Don Arrowood, Istvan Urcuyo, Todd Roberts, Chris Edenbo, Nick Stoner, Brian Hornberger, Jonathan Peterson and me. Tri-State cavers were: Danny Cumbo, Jeff (LNU), Shawn Wooten, Earl and Cheryl Suitor

The group split up into paint removal and sight seeing groups, some scrapped paint for awhile then toured the cave. At the top of the breakdown climb, on the left, was a large painted orange arrow pointing down to the only possible way out. The vandal who sprayed that arrow must have been a scared little wimp. It was so close to the entrance you could almost see sunlight. When Pat hit it with the cordless drill and brush it almost melted off. It had been sprayed on a thin layer of mud. Hopefully the rest turns out be as easy.



Ken Tayman scraping paint off ceiling ledge.

Photo by Istvan

All during the clean up the sight seers would crisscross our passage, crawling out of small passages low and high. Stick their face thru a hole say hi, pull back, only to show up again at another intersection. I didn't realize this cave had such a mazy nature to it. I will need to get back here and just do the cave sometime.

After the cordless drill batteries all went dead, and most of the removable paint was taken care of, Jones and I did a dueling joke contest, and Todd impressed us with his photography skills (including setting his tripod against the ceiling for a few shots. After the group shot of the cleaning team, about half of us headed out,

Todd climbed higher and was brushing off some stuff near the ceiling. There was no route finding purpose for this high stuff. Pure vandalism!

and the other half decided to check out the rest of the cave.

We continued in and found another area that had lots of paint, some directional stuff, plus a lot of useless, dumb stuff, including high ceiling paint that was hard to reach, some white and blue that was old and very difficult to remove, and some more orange that seemed to come off fairly easy.

On the way out we saw another orange arrow, pointing to obviously the only way out, but we decided we would get it on the next trip. Once outside, I passed out the latest issue of the newsletter to the FCG members present, with the idea of saving a few dollars worth of postage.

Brian had a second cordless drill that, along with Pat's, was used to focus on the hard blue and white stuff. The stuff on the 10 foot high ceiling was difficult and lots of effort was spent by the taller members to remove that. To really clean it up thoroughly, we would probably have to bring in a ladder, and work on it hard with the drills and wire brushes.

The cleaning crew, of about nine, spent 2½ hours scraping and brushing paint. □

I found a ceiling near a 6 foot high ledge that had more useless orange paint. I climbed up and spent 20 minutes on my back working on it with hand brush. It cleaned up well.



Cleaning Crew. Front row, L to R: Pat, Ken T, Todd, Istvan
2nd row: Chris, Don, Brian, Ken J, Rear on Ledge: Nick *Photo by Todd Roberts*

Karst-O-Rama 2007

By Gordy Ley



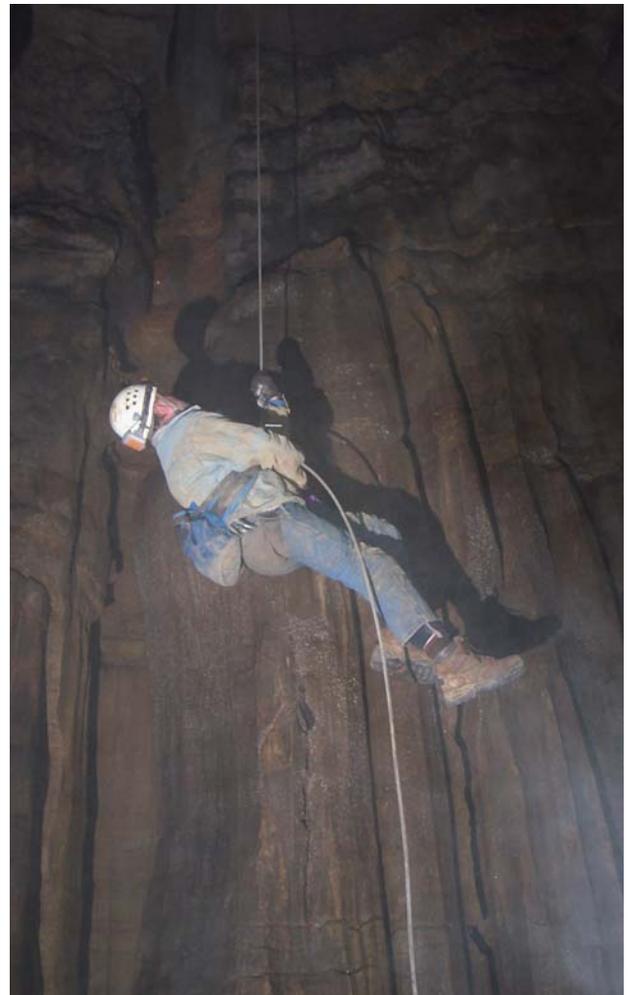
Dane Wagle rigging double breaker bars to drop Dead Dog Pit in Kentucky *Photo by Gordy*

For anyone willing to travel 530 miles to do some caving, Karst-o-rama might be of interest to you. It is held each summer near Mount Vernon, KY at the site of the Great Salt Peter Cave Preserve. (See NSS News, Dec. 2006) This is a former working salt peter mining site and commercial cave. The venue is centrally located to many other area caves. Within walking distance is Crooked Creek Ice Cave – also a former salt peter mine. Just down the hill from the entrance to the Preserve are some small pits named (to us) Dead Dog, and Popeye’s Pit. Dead Dog (aka Chisel) derives its moniker from the remains of said pooch (Chisel) found in the cave. Popeye’s Pit is my name for another pit due to the presence of numerous cave salamanders. “I’m Popeye the sal-a-man der”!

Great Salt Peter Cave has a very nice display of the extensive mining operation in the cave. The main room in the cave is HUGE! In past years, the room was used for the banquet, and hosted the band for

the party at an NSS Convention held there! Crooked Creek Ice Cave also has some nice relics of past mining activity.

Nearby are the heavily visited Sinks of the Roundstone Cave. This is similar to the Sinks of Gandy, although this cave has much bigger passage. Dane and I failed to make the connection from the upstream side when we had to lead out some partiers, and ended up popping out the upstream entrance that we had entered. We re-entered the cave at the Railroad entrance and missed the connection again, although we did get into an interesting flood passage from which we retreated when it sumped out! I think we may know where the connection is now; it probably is a low wide crawl at the top of a big mud slope before we dropped into the flood passage.



Dane Wagle near bottom of 120’ Sinks of Roundstone Pit in Kentucky *Photo by Gordy*



Gordy Ley rigging for rappel into Sinks of Roundstone Pit, KY. Photo by Dane

After several tries, we finally located the Sinks of the Roundstone Pit! This is a 120 foot free drop. The entrance is a rather non-assuming opening in the hill. It was very straightforward to rig; anchor to a tree outside the entrance, place your pads, and go! The actual pit is inside the opening in the hill. No passage to speak of, but a nice drop!

Some other caves in the immediate vicinity are Arthur Singleton's Cave, Across the Road Cave, Artesian Well Cave, and Ronny Mifflin Cave. Something left to go back for next year!

If you have extra time on your hands when you are traveling, you might enjoy visiting Carter Caves State Park. It is a pretty nice offering of mild, wild, and commercial caves. Great location and accessibility, but an interestingly different approach to caving! I think it will be a better place to take the grandkids, than to actually take seriously as wild caving! A good place for 'spelunkers'! This is the venue for 'Crawlathon'. Carter Cave State Park is 30 miles into KY on I-64. It takes about 8 hours to get there. Mount Vernon is another 3 1/2 hours.



Gordy going upstream in flood passage approaching sump in Sinks of Roundstone Pit. Photo by Dane

+Karstorama itself runs Friday through Sunday – like a MAR, but most folks roll in early. If I'm traveling that far, I'd like to have a few days to cave! There is a swimming hole used mostly by the kids, and a sauna area as well. The event is well-attended by caving vendors. They have rope climbing competition throughout the afternoon on Saturday. Everyone who wants to climb can give it a try. There is a guidebook which has some very good content, but unfortunately, the past two years, the printer has done a really lousy job on it! The maps were all digitized. This really should have been corrected after happening the previous year. As far as the 'banquet' goes, Dane

and I deferred from that experience this year. Last year, it was a total flop! Food not-ready and not-enough! The noodle wrestling is always a crowd pleaser! There is a party camp for the rowdies, and a 'family' camp along the creek for more sane individuals. It totally helps to have some knowledge of the area and a plan before you go to Karstorama. Dane was there first for NSS Convention and has returned several times, and I've come twice, so apparently it IS worth the effort to travel to Kentucky for Karstorama!



Mary on 55' drop

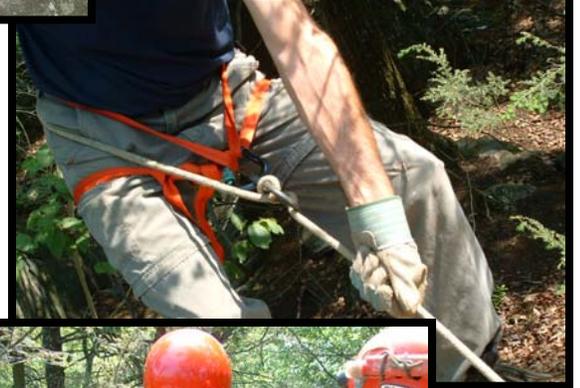


Gear



Tina

**Ropes-For-Slopes
May 26, 2007**



Rocky heading down



Charlie heading up



Kathy on rope



Rocky, Mary,
Charlie and
Kathy

Tina and Katie



Ropes-For-Slopes

or

What do Botanists know about vertical work?

By Jim Hart

Chapter 1

Several years ago I was discussing habitat assessment with one of our botanists at work. It seems that he had been called upon by Penn DOT to look over a bridge project for rare or endangered plant species. The habitat at the project site was mostly a steep shale bank about 80-100 feet high leading down to some wetlands paralleling a river. Because of the steepness of the shale slope and the exposure in getting down to the site, he decided not to attempt to descend and conduct the survey. He also remarked that the steepness of the slope would make getting back up hazardous and the habitat would likely be destroyed as he slipped and slid his way back upslope. I mentioned that I had just the ticket for this type of work and thus the “Ropes-for-slopes” training session was born.

The idea was to train some of the folks at the Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program in basic vertical techniques so that they could use a minimum of equipment to get up and down hazardous slopes when conducting ecological surveys. Interest appeared high when I announced this during our Heritage meetings at King’s Gap during November 2006. Approximately 10 people expressed interest so I began planning in earnest. I decided to rent the Hermitage Cabin below the rocks known as Schaffer’s Rocks in Michaux State Forest and have a two-day session where Saturday would be spent on the rocks and Sunday could be a day of hiking or biking. Things were set in motion as I enlisted Jonathan Peterson to assist me in the training.

Everything came together on the 25th of May or should I say got a little bizarre. My wife was up in the mountains at Patrick’s house where his girlfriend was expecting our 7th grandchild. I spent the day loading the Jeep with the necessary gear as well as food for Friday and possible Saturday night as I hoped that someone would stay over for Sunday. Upon returning from the grocery store, I found a message on the phone at home letting me know my wife was headed to the hospital where Crystal, Patrick’s girlfriend, was in labor. Well, just like a typical Grotto trip, things could get strange in a heartbeat. I headed up to the hospital where Connie, my wife, met me and signed me into the labor room, a place that, although really nice, you don’t want to spend a lot of time. I hugged Pat, waved at Crystal since she didn’t seem to want to converse much (she actually gave me a look that could quite possibly kill) and beat a hasty exit. I found out later that the baby, Savana, was born while I was changing a flat tire, which begins the next part of this saga.

During the previous 6 months I had experienced a spate of flat tires either in my own driveway or in nowhere, PA, a place where cell phones are the stuff of Buck Rogers. I wasn’t expecting to get another one for, say about 3.5 weeks. As I pulled into the parking area at the Hermitage thinking I was early enough to ferry food, etc. down to the cabin I heard a familiar psssst coming from a rear tire. Well, I never.... Got the jack out and lifted the Jeep. Now what did I forget to do? Come on people, what does every teenager learn when beginning to drive as per changing tires? Chocks under the tires of course. Yep, you guessed it. The Jeep slipped off the jack as it rolled toward me and I thought about the new grandchild I wasn’t going to see for awhile, if ever. Luck, however, was with me as the Jeep dropped and the studs on the wheel caught the rim of the spare that I had leaned on the Jeep. I should mention that the temperatures were well in the 90’s and I was cussing like a madman but someone watched over me none the less. After catching my breath (and having another cigarette) I finished changing the tire. This took rearranging the jack several times so I could get the Jeep high enough and going through about ½ of all the water I had brought. Time to break out the beer.

I made a run with a bunch of gear down to the cabin which I should say was quite pretty. I opened the windows, had another cigarette and decided to take a prolonged break. By this time I was feeling quite distressed. As I sat and tried to decide what to do next, I noticed someone coming down the trail toward the cabin. As he got closer, I thought I recognized him but decided that, no, it couldn’t be. I hadn’t said anything to this guy about the training so what in the world is Ken Tayman doing here. He said he was just taking a hike which he normally did

around this time of day and had accidentally stumbled upon me. Well, whatever the reason for his being here, I wasn't about to let him go without helping me get things down to the cabin. I mentioned to him that I had a couple of Yuenglings in the Jeep and we headed back up the hill. While you're here, Kenny, why don't we have that beer down at the cabin? Can't go down empty handed. Could you carry that cooler? Yeah, that one. Thanks.

We sat around the cabin chatting about caving and other, less interesting things than headed back up to the Jeep as Kenny stated that he should be heading home. This was about 2100hrs (9:00pm for those less military inclined). As we were chatting, a vehicle drove up. The contingent from State College had arrived including Kathy Gipe (herpetologist), Tina Walthers and MaryWalsh (both aquatic ecologists). I know what your thinking, where's the botanists. Seems they had all cancelled at the last moment. Anyway, here are three girls, Ken and myself. If you know Ken than you know he wasn't going to drive off before getting to know everyone. Back to the cabin for another beer. We all introduced ourselves and I decided to head back up to the Jeep to get my sleeping gear. Jonathan was unloading his gear as he had just arrived. Back down to the cabin for another beer and some more introductions. Finally around 11:30 or so, Kenny hit the road. The girls decided to get some sleep and Jonathan and I were left alone to do some quality relaxation techniques with Mr. Ezra Brooks. The moon was just beginning to show above the rocks so we grabbed Ezra, a couple cigars and headed up to the bottom of the rocks to chat, sip and relax. The real reason we headed up was that we caught he** for being too loud on the porch. What, me, loud? You've got to be kidding. Oh, you mean this isn't OTR and Section A noise levels do apply. Oh well... Since the next day would be a long one, I decided to get to bed early. After all, it was only 2:00am or so. Still early by both Grotto and OTR standards. I took the top bunk of the downstairs bunk beds and Jonathan headed upstairs. I wonder why. Girls, Jonathan? You be the judge. Well tomorrow would be the big day. Training Day, the movie.. Let you know what happens in Chapter 2

The 'Lost' Cave Trip

By Gordy Ley

The plan was to get back into Simmons-Mingo cave to do a recon and determine where the group had gotten off-route this spring, which had precipitated a cave rescue. We had tentatively organized a trip for June, but several members of the group backed out at the last minute for various reasons. Another trip was planned for August, and again several members developed conflicts. The August trip was opened to FCG folks and eventually we picked up a couple more to increase our ranks. Ish and his sister Dawnette would be meeting us in WVa for the trip. Doug Wilt expressed an interest since the Grotto trip had been cancelled, and Dane Wagle, who had been tentative, decided to join us as well. The week before the trip Ish pulled his back out and we were reduced to four. As the week progressed (read: went to hell), Doug found out that he had to work the weekend. This left Gordy, Jason, and Dane. We decided to still give a try. It would be cozy, but we thought we could all travel in my truck. As the time approach for Jason to arrive, I received a phone Call from him indicating that his dad had taken his car to work and failed to leave him keys to another vehicle. It was determined that his mother could ferry him to Fairfield. With Jason apparently on the way, I decided to pick Dane up first so we could get the truck loaded. When I started the truck, it made a (not so) funny sound, and I realized that my starter would not disengage! The only way I could get the truck to stop was to remove the battery cable! Augh! I immediately contacted my friends and we all agreed this series of events should be viewed as an omen telling us that we should not be in West Virginia this weekend. I shudder to think of the consequences of this happening as we camped in the wilderness of the Dry Branch/Elk River area. We still plan to try to do our recon. Perhaps we should not plan as much!

Membership Committee

August 20, 2007

During a recent meeting, I mentioned a letter I'd received from one of FCG's long time members requesting that a reminder be sent out to members whose membership was expiring. He is a member of several caving organizations, each with different renewal periods, and it is difficult to renew in a timely manner without receiving a renewal notice.

FCG responded in its typical manner and by moving, seconding and voting to make me, the person who surfaced the issue, chairman of the one man Membership Committee, whose responsibility it will be to remind members that their membership is expiring. I'd been doing it unofficially for the last couple of years anyway.

So, at years end, if your membership is expired, I will send you an email, with a blank membership application renewal form attached. Ken. □

Franklin County Grotto Picnic

August 18-19, 2007

The annual FCG Picnic happened again this year, as usual, at the Rouzerville Hunt Club. About 20 members, family and friends participated. The vertical practice at the rocks was a bust even though about seven people showed up. They just all showed up at different times. Pat did set up ropes at the camp and worked with Mark on change-overs. A few others climbed a little. Howard rocked the valley with his black powder canon and sufficiently harassed Ken for suggesting cheeseburgers and hot dogs as the meat for picnic. Don passed out updated copies of the Fantasy line map. No campfire due to high fire hazard. The midnight hike was cancelled, I think due to dangerous tick populations. Several people spent the night. Breakfast was served. A fairly quiet picnic. □

NSS Convention

July 23-27, 2007

Pat Minnick and Ann Shepard made it to the NSS Convention this year in Marengo, IN. They camped under their new (smaller) shelter and avoided getting blown away in the severe wind storm that mangled Tri-State Grotto's shelter. They attended a very interesting Culverson Creek Seminar put on by Phil Lucas. Pat got in a little caving. He did Parker Pit, Borden's Pit, Mauck's Cave and a wild tour in Wyandotte Commercial Cave. He and Ann also took commercial tour in Mammoth Cave. He bought a new Sten light and a new pair of coveralls. A very well organized convention. □

OTR '07

FCG was represented this year by its regular old and a few new "Coots". Same activities as every year: Beer, rain, Bon Fire, sauna, and rope climbing, beer drinking and sleeping bag contests. Mark got in his first vertical trip at Roadside Pit. Some also did Trout and Nelsons. Drew White got the "Long Drive Award" for coming down from Minnesota. Also note this was first year anyone can remember Bob of "Bob & Bob's" not being there. There was a caver fall in Sharps Cave, resulting in broken hip and rescue call out. Pat climbed 100' rope in 1:19 on Mitchell system. □

Cleversburg Sink

Current water level

As of August 22, 2007, the water level in Cleversburg Sink was:

up to old gate
in entrance room
top of ladder
mid-ladder
> 3rd rung 
knee deep
base of ladder
sand room sump
2nd crawl sump
dry

water is about 4' deep
checked by: **Jonathan Peterson**

Adam Stephen House Dig

Saturday June 16, 2007 (by Ken Tayman)

My plan for a survey trip in PA fell through at the last minute, so I decided to help out with the quarterly dig in the basement of Adam Stephen House in Martinsburg, WV. I had been to a previous dig a year or so ago” and had a great time. Tri-State Grotto has been working on this and other digs, in other basements, for a couple of years, in hopes of finding known cave passages previously used as part of the “Underground Railroad.

Today there were only three TSG cavers who showed up, Eric Armere, Todd Roberts and me. We would be working with a Boy Scout troop. These scouts had helped out on previous digs.

When I arrived at 09:20, I found Eric had already run the extension cord for the light and electric jack-hammer. He was pleasantly



Todd Roberts filling buckets

Photo by ken Tayman



Ken at bottom of dig.

Photo by Todd Roberts

surprised to have an extra caver to work with the scouts. Todd showed up and we were ready to start. The goal for today was to remove 100 partially filled 5 gallon Buckets.

I had missed the last couple of digs and was surprised as to how deep the hole in the basement was. It was now down to over 20 feet as measured from the pulley to the bottom of the pit. The front, top side of the pit was still solid ceiling, looking exactly like the top of cave passage. The dig was following this ceiling hoping it will lead down to the horizontal cave passage. It was deep enough now that we needed a hand line to get in and out, and we were actually digging foot steps into the wall at the bottom so we could get a leg up the first several feet coming out.

We wanted to both make our goal of 100 buckets and also keep the scouts involved more than just carrying out the buckets of dirt. Eric went down to the bottom to dig and fill the buckets, we put a scout about 5 feet down on a shelf to steer the buckets as they were pulled out, another scout was on the rope pulling the buckets up via the pulley rigged in the low beam rafter. The rest of the scouts formed a long bucket brigade to get the dirt outside and dumped.

Eric got us off to a solid start with fifteen buckets, and then Todd and I each got 10 more buckets. We then loosened up a lot of dirt with the jack hammer and let one of the scouts go to the bottom and dig. I believe we had about 40+ buckets by the time lunch was served.

After hot dogs and PB sandwiches, with chips, salad and drinks we started digging again. We had to really hump some dirt if we were going to make our 100 bucket goal by



Eric getting ready to go down and relieve Todd



Scouts hauling buckets

2:30 which was the scouts planned departure. By staging an extra ready bucket near the bottom of the pit, and a scout in a small alcove about, 15 feet down, enlarging the width of the pit a little, and having the bucket sitting in the projected drop zone of the dirt, Eric, Todd and I knocked out another 35 buckets fairly quick. The last 25 buckets were shared among some of the scouts. The countdown of the last 20 buckets helped maintain the motivation and everyone seemed happy when bucket 100 was hauled and dumped.

It was a fun dig with the new depth of the pit at the end of the day, set at about 25 feet. □

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