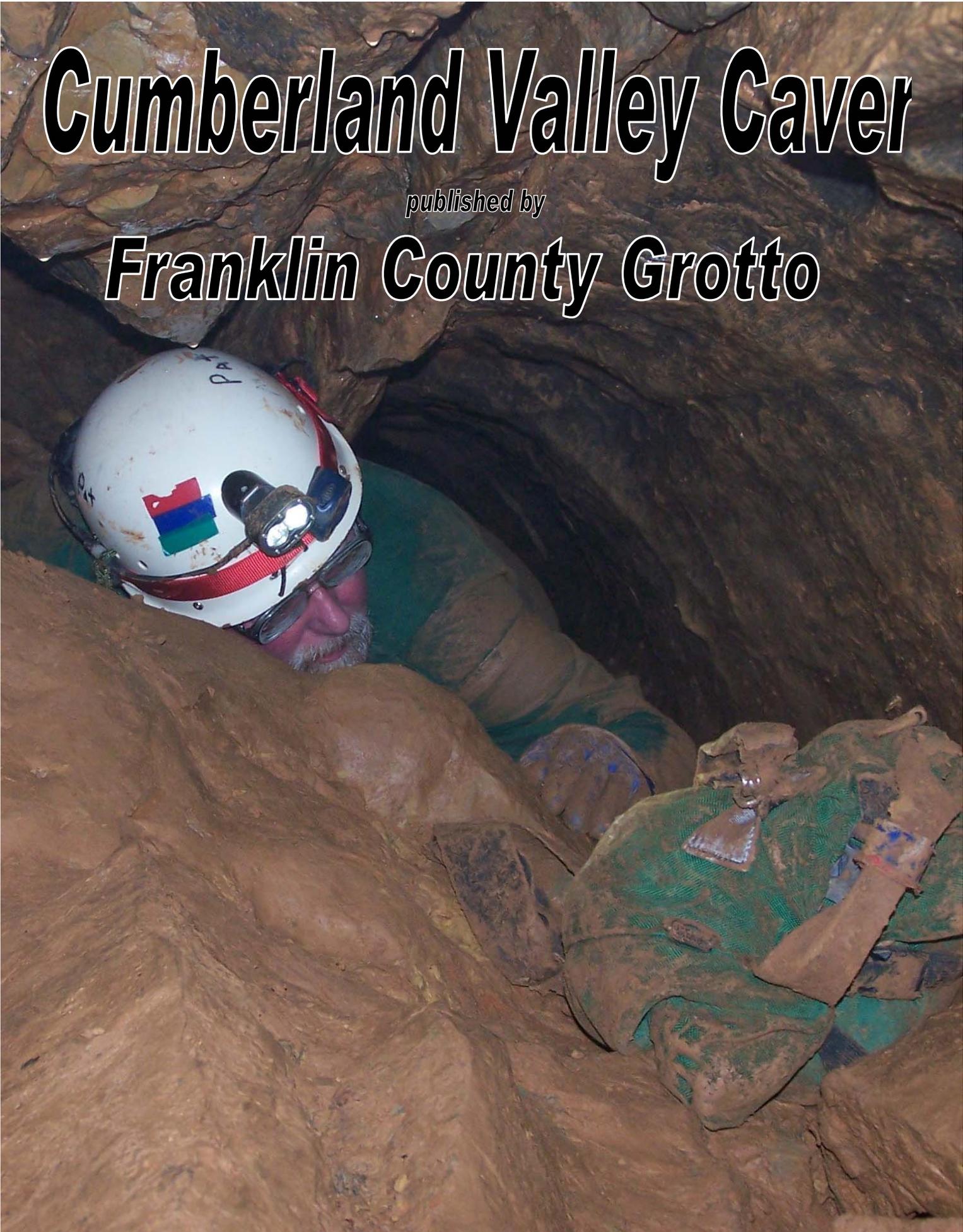


Cumberland Valley Caver

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 editor so the exchange list can be updated.

Cover: Pat Minnick in long, tight crawl in Corker Hill Cave

Photo by Gordy Ley

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Well here it is the end of another year. We actually completed a few of our projects this year. We got the new ladder built and placed in Cleversburg Sink, updated the kiosk with a new map and current management and contact information, and got the Carnegie Cave user project into motion. Howard was a major contributor to these projects. We also got the ball rolling on the Corker Hill / Frustration Pit project. If things go the way they usually do, we should have that project nailed down solid by 2015.

We voted to raise the grotto membership dues for first time in about 15 years. The new rates are effective January 1, 2009. The regular membership has gone up to \$10 and the associate membership is now \$12. We needed to raise the dues in order for us to continue various projects and continue to publish and mail out the newsletter. Just this year we spent over \$200 on the Cleversburg ladder and kiosk. We also supported the effort save Sharp's Cave.

This newsletter makes eight consecutive quarters that that it has been published. Thanks to Terry, Mark, Edwin, Kerry, Allison, Gordy, Doug and Jim for contributing articles and/or photos to this issue. Let's keep sending in stuff so we can have a good variety.

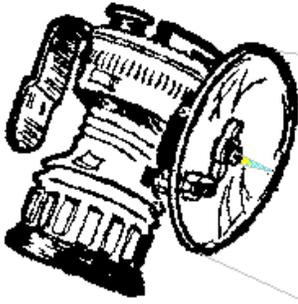
For 2009, I plan to make an effort to schedule a few cave trips, new to most of FCG cavers, and also get back into a few favorites. Don't forget the Lightner's trip (vertical) on January 24-25, 2009. It is the backside of McClungs, and has a lot of stuff including three foot high rimstone dams we will have to wade through. I am looking forward to it.

Ken Tayman, Editor

Speleo-Spotlight...

Mark Guiffre

FCG# 126



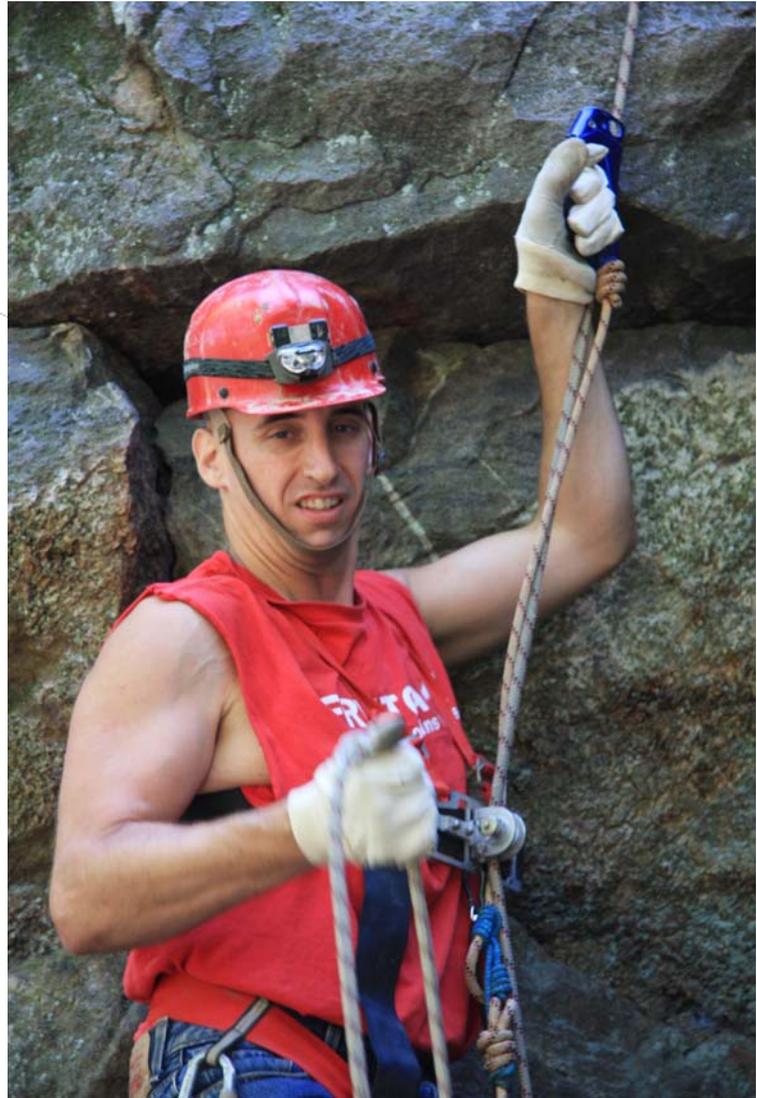
Mark's first cave related experience was OTR in 1990. Five years later his first cave trip was a Bowden's through trip. He is one of the people who actually caves at OTR. He has only missed one OTR since 1990. I guess he'll be an old "Coot" soon.

His first vertical cave was Flower Pot. They did the drop and just caved around for a short time and then climbed out. He didn't really explore much of the cave. This year's Carpenter-Swago trip was his most challenging trip. The long rappels, traverses and waterfall climbs out make him wonder why it took so long to really get into some good vertical caving.

His most disappointing trip was a Randy Gandy trip that got cancelled because of rain and cold weather. I don't know if he ever made that trip up, but he should.

One of his most worried moments was in Bowdens. He and Jim and a few others were doing a thru trip when they came across two lost cavers. Jim invited the lost ones to follow him and Mark out. After a low crawl they came to a 17' rope climb. Everyone was at the top of the climb except the lost one and Mark, and this guy was not going to do it, and wanted to return 4 hours back the way he'd come. By now he was cold and shivering. Jim was going to leave a very lonesome Mark at the bottom of the climb with the stranger and go get help. It was frightening. Not one minute after they left, a couple more cavers crawled out of the passage with rope ladders. Up they went and 15 minutes later they were all out.

He recently got a chance to help FCG survey passage in the "Glop Slot" in one of our Pennsylvania Caves.



Mark makes his living driving a school bus and painting brass model trains. Other hobbies include running model trains, checking out real trains and beach volley ball. He likes the women's outfits. (not sure if he likes to look at them or wear them). Other caves he's done include Simmons-Mingo, My Cave, Roadside Pit, Sharps, Scott Hollow and several Pennsylvania Caves. He's a regular fixture at the grotto New Year Parties and summer picnics.

Currently, Mark is attending Queens College in New York and is studying to be a math teacher. □

Cleversburg Sink Kiosk Update

October 26, 2008

It took about a year to pull it all together, but after several meetings, document submissions, review, resubmission and Howard's dedication and great quality of work, and about \$90.00 we finally updated the information on the kiosk to reflect the current status. FCG cavers participating in this event were Howard & Diane White, Ken Jones, Todd Roberts, Jim Schweitzer, Don Arrowood, Ted Valcis, Jonathan Peterson and me (Ken Tayman).

The kiosk was installed around 15 years ago, primarily under the stewardship of Roman Barvinchack, and still reflected Ken Goshorn as the owner, along with outdated guidance as to key access. Also the original map with its acetone cover had cracked and deteriorated beyond repair. Recent vandalism also made it more unsightly. Additionally, since becoming part of the Southampton Cave Park, the trail now approaches the kiosk from what used to be the back side, which was blank, except for some spray painted graffiti.



Ken Jones working on final layout of various charts, maps and bulletins. Photo by Ken Tayman

Key Access for Cleversburg Sink Cave

June 16, 2008, 2008

Access:

Keys will be made available through regional caving organizations that are knowledgeable of proper and safe caving practices. If you are interested in exploring this cave, you should contact someone in one of these organizations. The Franklin County Grotto web page www.karst.org/fcg has links to several regional organizations that have access to the cave and will also indicate current water level in the cave. The water level will vary from dry to more than 30 feet. If there is more than 3 feet of water, there is a very limited amount accessible cave passage.

Contacts for key:

Primary: Jonathan Peterson email at cleversburg@karst.org
Alternate Ken Jones email at cleversburg@karst.org or call (717) 267-2669
Gate/Lock Maintenance: Howard White email at hwhite@karst.org

Key User Responsibilities:

The person obtaining the key agrees to exercise his/her discretion as to the suitability and/or competence of any individual entering the cave with them. They will also ensure that participants are properly equipped with lights and helmets, and that the cave, formations, cave life and gate are not damaged.

With the recent arrangement between Mid-Atlantic Karst Conservancy (MAKC), the Southampton Township and Franklin County Grotto, most of the guidance displayed on the kiosk regarding the cave was obsolete.

We all met up in the parking lot behind the Shippensburg Travel Plaza at 1:30 PM. With nine members eventually showing up, it was a better than expected turnout. There wasn't much stuff



Howard White installing Plexiglas cover over the new “Front” side of the kiosk
Photo by Ken Tayman

that needed to be carried to the cave, so we all grabbed something and headed down the path.

Howard spray painted the inside frame green to give it a nice background behind the bulletins and map, and also cover some of the recent graffiti. We organized the charts, maps, notes and bulletins one last time and then taped them to the frame. After “eye-balling” them and using a tape measure to verify the alignment, we placed the Plexiglas covers over everything.

The new kiosk now reflects the new management plan, how to gain access to the keys and the cave. It also describes parking, rules for use of park facilities, safe caving guidelines, and contact information for local, regional & national cave organizations and a short history of the cave. The front (used to be the rear) now has an updated map including an extension that was not on the original map.

Howard’s new design will allow for periodic updating of documents as necessary. We hope the vandals will not target it too quickly.

On the way back to the cars we picked up a little trash along the way. When we departed, Jonathan and I stopped by the farmers who lives across from Carnegie Cave and dropped off a map of the cave and a few editions of the Cumberland Valley Caver. We then swung around to the recently approved parking area just west of I-81 and verified the distance at about 1/10 of a mile. Also, we dropped of the most recent issue of the newsletter to the owner of the Shippensburg Travel Plaza.

The current arrangement seems to be working very well and survived a heavy period of cave use from October 2007 until March 2008. Keys were passed out to several groups taking advantage of the dry status. Since March 2008, the water level has risen to as high as 30 feet and just recently has been receding finally getting down to seven feet on October 15, 2008.

Thanks to all who assisted with planning, documentation, and moral support. A special thanks to Howard for design, construction and successful implementation of this project. □

SSS - FULLER TRIP



Fall VAR 2008 SSS-Fuller Trip

September 19-21, 2008 by Ken Tayman



Cave owner and host, Cliff Lindsay, guided our trip
Photo by Jim Schweitzer

at his Dad's and pulled out around 2:30 PM. We were planning to meet up with Doug Wilt, Danny Cumbo, Jim Schweitzer and Todd Roberts at the VAR. We arrived and got our camp set up just at dusk, ate dinner in Covington, and socialized around the pavilion and campfire.

The plan was to meet Cliff at the cave at 10 AM. In order to do that we needed to pull out of camp by 9 AM. Pat did coffee and eggs for me and Jonathan. The rest were on their own as far as food was concerned. We managed to stay on schedule and pulled out a few minutes early so we could make a quick stop along the way for some snacks. As we pulled up to the gate at the farm, Cliff was just stepping out of his car. Timing couldn't have been better. It was a "beautiful" day.

We were planning on about a five hour trip, half of which would be new cave for everyone except Pat and me. We would be in new passage when we started the connection between SSS and Fuller. I think we were expecting that to be a couple hours of caving.

I had been looking forward to the Fall VAR at Covington, VA for several weeks, mainly because that is when we had scheduled our SSS-Fuller through trip with the owner of the entrances (Cliff Lindsay). It was going to be difficult to schedule two trips to that area so we decided to do the trip as a VAR trip.

I drove to Pat's house loaded up and then we met Jonathan



Jonathan and Danny getting ready for trip

Photo by Jim Schweitzer



Heading down to SSS entrance

Photo by Jim Schweitzer

The pace was quite reasonable. Cliff showed the way and explained some of the exploration tales as we strolled through. Once we got into the Peterbilt Section, Cliff would have to check out a few climb-downs into the canyon to find the connection.

I think he got it right on the second attempt, and then we were in new cave.

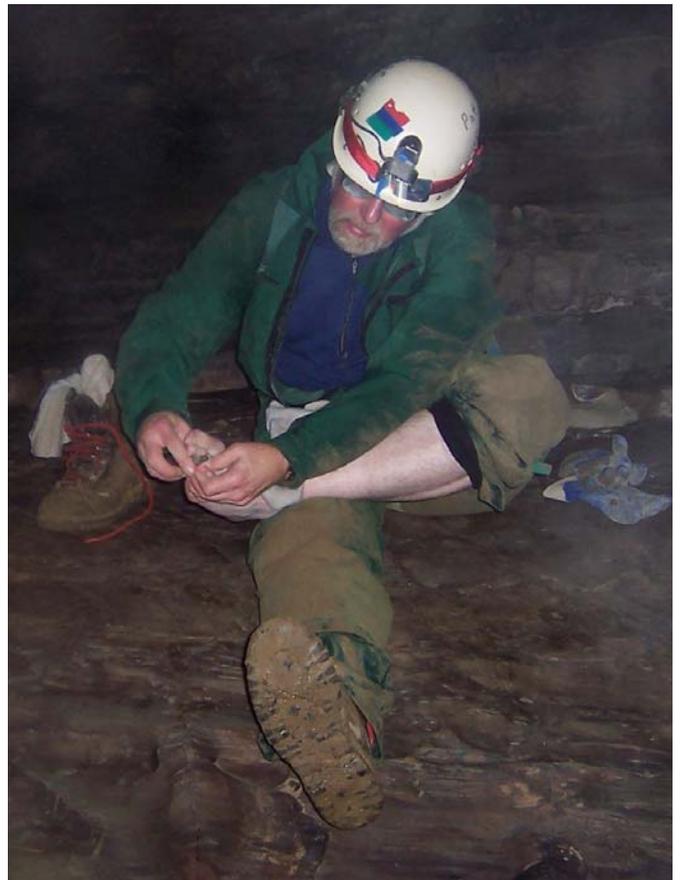
There was a little concern regarding the “Chasm of Death”. Here we would be chimneying an area that was 20 or 30 feet high and would be “Not the place to slip”. It turned out to be easy for everyone. One more duck under and.....we were in the Fuller stream!!!

I think it was perhaps 20 minutes instead of the 2 hours to do the connection. Before sliding down into the stream, Pat did a little toenail maintenance. Then we headed down stream toward the 20’ waterfall. Pat and I had done the part of the cave before 13 or 14 years ago. We anticipated getting into water perhaps crotch high. The plunge pools and pot holes were deeper than we remembered. Soon we were waist deep in the cold water, and eventually I went chest deep when I stepped into a deeper pot hole. “Brrrrr”

It also took longer to get to the falls than I remembered? We all got a chance to peer down the 25’ water falls into the depths of the cave.

I had miscalculated where the SSS passage joined the stream and didn’t start to look for the high, dry bypass until we had retraced our steps back to the SSS-Fuller junction. All of a sudden we ran out of walking passage and were down to crawling. I knew this was a different route from what we’d taken before. I back tracked a ways searching for the high dry bypass that would have exited the stream to the right (walking upstream), but did not find it.

This meant we would be doing the sump crawl, which wasn’t too bad this day at all. Most of the passage was around three feet high. And the water wasn’t very deep. Last spring when we were here, it would have been completely sumped. Once we reached the walking passage again I noticed the passage was narrower, and longer than I remembered.



Pat doing toenail maintenance at stream. *Photo by Doug Wilt*



Me, Jonathan and Danny waist deep in cold stream passage just upstream from the waterfall

Photo by Doug Wilt

That seems to be true of most of the caves I have been revisiting lately. Eventually we made it to the entrance sink, and climbed up, which probably was the toughest part of the trip.

I became pre-occupied with how come we'd missed the bypass and spent a lot of time thinking about it. I have determined that the SSS junction with the Fuller Stream must be a lot further up stream than I thought it was. And as we worked our way down toward the falls, we probably passed the bypass and didn't notice because I wasn't looking for it. Same thing on the way back out.

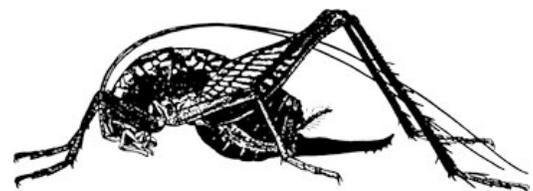
I do remember seeing a rock cairn and piece of flagging tape on the right side about 4 feet up the bank on the way out. I even checked and saw some foot prints heading in what would have been the right direction. Perhaps this was the bypass?

We hiked over the hill back to the cars, got cleaned up and headed back to camp. We were all doing our own dinners. I was doing Chili for Pat and Jonathan. It turned out really well. Had some cherry pie for desert. After dinner we went to the Pavilion where I lucked out and won a nice Stanley filleting knife set door prize. A little later Phil Lucas gave a presentation on a cave he was exploring and mapping. It was an "Excellent" presentation. And, if his calculations are correct, there is a "LOT" of cave still to be discovered in Virginia.

Then the beer was served, the bon fire was started, the midnight snacks of quesadilla were grilled. Cap it all off with a freight train side tracked all night with its pressure valve releasing every couple of minutes. Lots of dew on the tents and a generally chilly night.

We decided not to do a Sunday AM cave trip. Packed up and did a nice leisurely trip home, stopping in Grand Caverns Park for a lunch.

All in all it was a very relaxed VAR. Our three hour trip into SSS was a little shorter than we anticipated, but we learned quite a bit about the cave and are prepared to do another more aggressive trip at our own discretion any time. □



U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 18, 2008

Safety Alert: Petzl America Warns of Burn Hazard from Headlamps; Product Should Only Be Used with Non-Rechargeable Batteries

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, in cooperation with the firm named below, today announced a safety alert for the following consumer products. Consumers should immediately stop using rechargeable batteries with any of the products listed below.

Name of Product: "MYO", "MYO3", "MYO5" and "MYO Belt" Headlamps

Hazard: If the headlamp is used with rechargeable batteries, the cable connecting the battery pack to the lamp can spark, melt, or catch fire. This poses a burn hazard to consumers.

Incidents/Injuries: Petzl has received 13 reports of sparking and/or melting, with 2 reports of flames. One consumer received a minor burn to the hand, and another experienced singed hair.

Remedy: Consumers should immediately stop using rechargeable batteries with the headlamps and contact Petzl to obtain a new warning label. Consumers can continue to use the headlamps with non-rechargeable batteries.

Consumer Contact: For additional information, contact Petzl America toll-free at (877) 740-3826 between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. MT Monday through Friday, or visit the firm's Web site at <http://www.petzl.com>

See complete warning at:
<http://www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/prerele/prhtml08/08403.html>

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Vice-chair: Ken Tayman
Secretary: Pat Minnick
Treasurer: Diane White
Member-at-Large: Howard White
Member-at-Large: Todd Roberts



"Quotes of the Quarter"

"Which state were you caving in?"
"I don't know!" *PM & TR discussing TAG trip*

"One of our fellow cavers left an ASS-print on Pats windshield. Yes, an ASS-print. Laughed all the way back to OTR."
MG re Carpenter -Swago Trip @ OTR

More Adventures in TAG

by Terry McClanathan

In what has become an early June tradition, I once again found myself in the hospitality of Marion O. Smith for a weekend of TAG pitting. The objective, another significant vertical trip, meaning I must climb a minimum of 800' of new-to-me pits (no repeats allowed). Marion warned that he had used up all the nearby pit clusters the year before. This time we would have to concentrate on a lot of parallel pits in a small number of contact caves. Contact caves refer to those located where the sandstone cap of the Cumberland Plateau overlies the limestone. Such caves are usually small dimension, mazy, and sometimes have shallow pits dropping from the same level. He cautioned me not to expect anything great, just a lot of pits in the 40-90 foot range.

We started as soon as I arrived on Saturday morning, after an all night drive from Maryland. Our target area was White County, Tenn., about a half hours drive from Marion's house. Sharon Jones joined us for the first pit, called Dunlap Drop. Marion already had obtained advanced permission, so our early hour did not inconvenience the landowner. This pit taped at 92'. Sharon left us to go to her nursing job, and Marion and I headed to our next stop, Rocks Drop Well. This proved to be rather involved. A climb over steep breakdown led to a 94' pit. Marion said there were a couple of other drops in the cave, but to reach them I had to rappel back into the pit to a narrow ledge and "claw" my way over to a window about 30' down from the top. Easier said than done. I repeatedly fell off the ledge (while attached to the rope of course) into the main pit. The "clawing" concept wasn't working well for me. Next I tried to pendulum across the pit which was about fifteen feet in diameter. At least this seemed a little less nerve-



Caver rappelling the 146' pit in Indianapolis Cave, White Co., Tenn.

Photo by Elliot Stahl (Indiana)

wracking. I just have an aversion to falling off ledges into pits even when attached to a rope. After a few tries I managed to grab hold of a fist sized projection and was able to pull myself up into the window. From here a 21' drop lead to an alcove with a body sized hole at the far end. The small hole popped into the top of what appeared to be a fairly deep pit. This drop we taped at 99'. We spent about two hours in Rocks Drop Well playing around with all the pits.

Next we went to a cave Marion said was named Heart of Gould. I don't recall if he

indicated it was a recent discovery or not, in fact I don't remember much about the cave at all (it was over four months ago that I was there). My log says we did drops of 59, 31, 52, 47, and 58 feet, for a total of 247' of rope work. You'd think I'd remember more, but I don't. The total for the first days pit bouncing was over 600' of vertical so we were off to a very good start.

Sunday saw the two of us bouncing along in Marion's old 4-WD truck as we headed back into Big Bottom, which is a part of the Caney Fork River valley, in White Co., Tenn. for a couple of miles of rough 4-wheeling. Our destination was Indianapolis Cave. Marion said he had found it the previous January (08) on a solo ridge walk because his partner for the day had to be in Indianapolis, Indiana, hence the name selection. Marion said he already had ropes in the cave and we would be derigging it. A short, but very steep hike, took us to the entrance which was a body sized hole in jumbled breakdown filling a sink.

The sink was just down hill from a logging road which Marion told me he and others had hiked on several occasions, but no one had ever noticed the hole before. It seemed a typical contact cave, starting as a crawl and never really attaining any sizeable dimensions. After a hundred feet or so we did a tricky climb-down into a stand-up room and Marion picked up a stashed rope hidden there. He wanted me to set a couple of bolts to improve the rigging on a pit he had found on an earlier trip. I did so and we each bounced this pit which I taped at 67'. Marion said we were going to drop an undone pit next. He thought this pit would be a shortcut to another part of the cave previously accessed by a different route. He gave me the honor of being first person down the virgin drop which we taped at 51'. Marion verified that it did indeed lead into the expected passage, but said that particular section had a lot of crawling and we were not going to tour it. We derigged and I thought we were finished with Indianapolis. I was wrong.



Formation borehole at the bottom of 146' pit in Indianapolis Cave, White County, Tenn. *Photo by Indiana caver, Elliot Stahl*

We dropped off one rope and Marion lead me through a squeeze into an adjoining maze of passages where we grabbed another stashed rope and rigged an awkward 71' pit. This dropped into a dome with a small hole beneath a ledge. Marion suggested I go first. Once I negotiated the not too friendly entrance to the pit and was safely in free-hang he asked me how deep I thought it was. There was a lot of blackness below me, and I thought it seemed pretty deep compared to the other pits we had bounced. The rappel seemed like it was more than a hundred feet. I started thinking Marion had been holding out on me. When he came down I asked him the depth and he told me 98'. I said I thought it was deeper than that, but his reply was it only seemed deeper because we had been bouncing shallower pits all day. There was some nice decorated borehole at the bottom so I toured about a thousand feet of this while Marion climbed. When I got on rope I thought it seemed pretty bouncy for just a 98 footer. I climb about a foot per step, so I started counting steps. When I got to 98, I still had a good bit of pit left.

"Okay, Marion, just how deep is this "98" foot pit", I asked, as I neared the top.

He couldn't contain himself any longer and burst out laughing, "I've been keeping this special for you since January", he confessed. "Everyone involved with the mapping project (about a dozen cavers in all I later learned) was sworn to secrecy until I could bring you here. Now I can finally turn it in to the TCS (Tennessee Cave Survey)."

The "98" footer was 146' deep, freefall, and about 10 feet in diameter until it enlarged as it dropped into the borehole near the bottom. I found it hard to believe that Marion was able to keep this secret from me for nearly six months. It was a fine pit, and I sure did appreciate all the effort Marion went to in order to preserve the surprise.

We removed all the ropes from Indianapolis Cave and hiked half a mile further along the ridge to two other small pit caves. The first was aptly named Expect a Horror Hole. It had short drops of 28 and 39 feet and was full of scary breakdown, you know, the kind that tends to move around a lot. I was glad to get out of that one. Our last stop for the day was called Great Reason. We did three

drops of 33', 44', and a broken 64'. There was some air flow at the bottom so we left the last drop rigged. Marion said he planned to return at a later date to see if it went.

That was it for the weekend. As usual Marion did a great job of setting up the trip. The vertical total was 1,117 feet in six different caves, including a nice new-to-me hundred footer. I bade farewell and had a smile on my face the whole 600 mile drive home. Many thanks to Marion for another really fun trip. □



Carpenter-Swago

OTR '08 by Mark Guiffre

It was supposed to be a trip to Sites cave. I really wanted to do a serious vertical cave trip. Last year I went to Road Side and it was fun, but I wanted to do something more challenging. Over the summer, I suggested to Pat and Jonathon to go to Sites and a tentative plan was put together. However Jonathon did not show for OTR and when I asked Pat about Sites, he gave me the “I’m not really interested” Pat face. I understood. I was lucky enough to overhear members of Bald Eagle Grotto talking about a vertical caving and Carpenters-Swego through trip was being mentioned. I wanted to go and I most likely would not have gone with Bald Eagle if Pat did not go. I wanted Pat to go because I trust him with my life and I was not familiar with any of the Bald Eagle caving skills. I wasn’t sure Pat would be interested but Pat was friends with one of the guys (Bob?) and had never done the through trip. Plans were put together and we left the next morning with a group of ten.

Upon arrival at the cave, we split up into two groups of five. I do not remember the names of the fellow cavers that went except for JD. Our group entered on the Carpenters (I believe) side the other group entered at the Swego side. The plan: each group rigs up each side of the cave; we meet in the middle, and then head out the opposite side cleaning up the rigging as we left.

Pat did most of the rigging and was first into the cave, I was to follow. The cave has a vertical entrance. I was hoping Pat wouldn’t be the first down because he was the only one that I was comfortable with but now he was underground. I was quick to notice that Pat

bounced when he slid off the edge of the rock ledge because there was some slack between his rack and the wall anchor, this did not excite me in the least bit. In fact, it put some fear in me.

“OFF ROPE” echoed from the hole. I had no problem getting rigged on the rope. I made sure there was no slack between my rack and the wall anchor, make no mistakes about it, I did not want to bounce. I knew I was going to need some courage to allow myself to slide off the ledge and onto the rope. Rob (?) helped me check my gear and I think he knew I was having difficulties getting myself off the edge. He finally said “trust your equipment”. I said that in my head and finally got off the ledge. The rest was easy. I hung there at the top for a minute or so to calm my insides and relax, then down I went. (Even at the rocks, I always get nervous and it takes me time to get my senses together when I am going off a cliff.)

When my feet hit bottom, Pat was already heading down the second rope. I believe there were three rappels to get to the bottom and the problems I had



*Pat Minnick, Jeff Hajenga, Larry Fisher, Gordon Cole, *Mark Guiffre, *Steve Shawver, *Rob, and *Carrie Shafer. (* denotes members of through trip team.)

on the first rope did not occur again on the next two. I unrigged yelled out “OFF ROPE” and started to rig up to head down the second. It took about an hour for all of us to reach the bottom of all three verticals. It was a rush, just like the other verticals caves I’ve done, I wanted more. The difference between the other vertical trips and this trip was, we were actually going to do some caving.

What was new to me was carrying the cave pack with all the gear packed in it. At the other vertical caves that I’ve done I left my vertical gear behind because we returned to the same point to climb out. Not on this trip. The pack was somewhat heavy and cumbersome and places where I would normally just slip by, I would get stuck. I tried making deals with the group to get someone to carry my pack, but of course no one was interested.

After a little less than an hour of caving we met the first group. The first guy that we met told us that he had to move on because he was cold. Then I realized we were already at the end and bottom of the Swego entrance. The second group just reached the bottom in the same time it took us to climb down and cave to the same spot. Could they be that slow? Not the case at all. The climb out was awesome.

The first climb up was in the small pretty waterfall. Again, Pat was first up and I followed. Rigging on rope was a little comical. A little history lesson: Jim brought Cindy and Lou into a cave (either Bowden’s or Sinks) a few years back. Lou told us he was not going to get his feet wet throughout the trip. If I remember correctly, we had to swim out and ever since then I used Lou’s “feet” comments every time I go caving. Back to Carpenters: the rope was in the middle of a pond. So out came the comment “I will not get my feet wet”. I reached for the rope and pulled the rope back out of the very large puddle. The puddle/lake was about the size of a large kid’s pool, not deep, maybe knee high with the water fall spilling into the right hand side of the lake halfway into the middle. I started to get on rope and again, I said I will not get my feet wet and then a comment came from Rob: “this ought to be good”. The three of them knew what was about to happen. If Pat was there, he would have seen what was coming. I started to climb up and when my

weight left the floor, I swung under the water fall, back and forth two or three times like a swing, getting wetter with each pass. To make matters funnier, the rope becomes a little longer when it gets closer to center and my feet were totally submerged. Needless to say I got my feet wet.

At the top of the first climb was a traverse, my first! Wasn’t sure what to do, but Pat was there to help. I took my time and over I went. That was cool and gave me a rush again. Pat stayed behind to help the others up and over. My memories may be shady here; I know there were at least two more climbs and one of them had another transverse. I decided to go without Pat up one of the climbs and it was the climb with the other transverse. When I reached the traverse I was thrilled to be the first person up. It took some time for me to think my way over the line. I just followed what Pat told me on the first traverse. Once over I waited for others to climb up. I started to get cold and then I realized why the other man I met from the first group was cold.

There was a lot of rigging of rope for the Swego side. It wasn’t as difficult to de-rig as to rig, everyone helped, Pat doing most of the work and the rest of us carrying the rope and bags. As we drew closer to the entrance, the wetness, gear and rope was slowing us down. As we reached each climb, we had to wait for each other to get up and off rope before we tied on to the rope. It took much longer to climb up than it did to climb down.

This is also where I learned why some cavers like the frog system better than the rope walking system. I had to get out of my gear every time between each climb, ARGH! The rope walker makes it very easy to climb up. I exerted more energy carrying, getting in and getting out of my vertical gear.

One of the climbs we had to stand in a keyhole passage, knee deep in water, waiting for each other’s turn to climb up. If I remember correctly, the rope was in the middle of the vertical passage and it was the longest climb. I was second to last up. I don’t remember being cold except for my hands. Rigging my gear hurt because of the water. The water was muddy, up to my knees and I had to try to balance myself with one foot out of the water to get my foot straps on. It was a nice climb once I

was finally all geared up. The rope was centered and was not close to the walls of the cave so I did not have to use my hands to stay away from the sides.

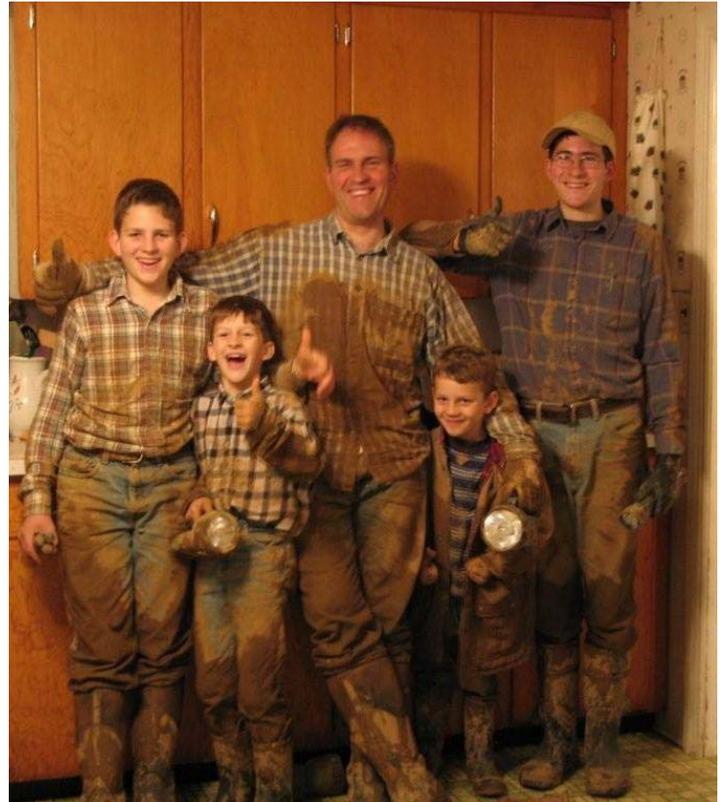
Finally the last climb up and once again I had to get my gear on. Pat was first up and I wish I had a camera. It was about a thirty foot climb with daylight showing at the top. The sunlight made it look like the entrance to paradise or something that was put at the end of a disaster flick and Pat was heading up through it to safety. It was camera worthy shot. The top of the climb might have been the most dangerous part of the trip. The entrance was made of huge slabs of rock or slate and it was very wet. I had to slide to my right on my butt, rig in my safety and get off rope. I was warned by Pat that it was slippery and I as walked over towards Pat I almost fell on my booty. Rob was last up and we de-rigged the rope, got our self's together and headed to the cars. The other group was there and some had already left. Pat and I were the last to leave. However it wasn't over yet.

Heading back to OTR, the sunlight hit Pats windshield and the windshield looked dirty, or fogged over, but it was on Pats side only (Pat was driving). "What the hell is that?" Pat said. I took a closer look at it. It was not dirt or fog; I wasn't sure what it was. Pat used the wipers, but no change; "it" was still there. "Is that an ass print?" Pat said. I started laughing because it was most definitely was an ass print. Pat started laughing and he had to pull over and take a closer look. We had been assed! We checked for foot prints and such trying to figure out how they got a naked ass print in the middle of Pats windshield with no footprints or dents. It was and still is funny. Please keep in mind the reactions from others when we returned from OTR.

Carpenters-Swego through trip was a lot of fun and I am grateful for everyone's participation and help, especially Pats. I look forward to more vertical trips in the future. The trip had everything I wanted from repelling in, to climbing out, the surprise treat of two traverses, not getting my feet wet, showering, learning how to swing all over again and finally someone making an ass out of Pat and I. With a little luck and some persuasion, maybe I can talk Pat into Sites for 09 OTR. □

Birthday trip to Carnegie

November 20, 2008 by Edwin Shank



After-trip portrait of good "CLEAN" Shank family fun!!

Last Thursday was my 39th birthday and the boys thought I needed to prove that I was still young so they suggested that we go caving. Since FCG had just sent us the map we decided to give Carnegie a shot. The cave registry was in good shape. We signed in. The attached photo pretty much explains the conditions of the cave!

In spite of the mud, we did have a lot of fun. We were in for approx two hours. Was plenty of lubrication for the tight squeezes! It was the first time I have ever been in a cave with a map. We defiantly went through some places that we would not have if we did not know from the map that it opened up beyond. □

Cleversburg Sink Wet Trips

September/October 2008 by Allison Comfort (MAKC)



Kerry hauling raft thru the crevice near the top of the ladder.

There it was, a rainy Saturday morning on October 25, 2008, and I was headed to meet Kerry for trip #3 to Cleversburg Sink. It was four weeks after our rafting adventure in the cave, and we estimated that the water level should have dropped 3-4 more feet since our last trip. In an attempt to be prepared, we each decided that we would wear our wet suits under our cave suit on this trip. We spoke and decided that this was most likely as low as it could get until next year.

We arrived at the Shippensburg Travel Plaza and drove through the parking lot. Due to the pouring rain, we decided to change as much as we could in Kerry's Xterra.

This may not sound too difficult, until you factor in the wet suit. Try pulling up a rubber suit when you're already half sweaty, not so easy.

After all caving gear had been donned, and life vest in hand, we headed to the entrance. Once again, Kerry unlocked the gate with amazing speed (I think he's been practicing every night and not telling me). As always, Kerry asked if I wanted to descend first. He knows that I won't, and he knows the reason why, but he still offers with a smile. As usual, Kerry descended first and all I hear is "don't look around, just look straight forward". I ask him if he's sure some of what he's seeing is not crickets rather than

spiders; he assures me that there are very few crickets.

Once inside, we were both happy to see that the water level had dropped several feet. Unfortunately, there were still areas that were too deep to touch bottom. Kerry donned the life vest (we only had one to share) and did a fabulous job of making it to dry land by chimneying down the passageway and only getting wet up to his waist. While Kerry is much taller than I am, I decided to give it a go.

I made it approximately 15-20 feet before I lost my grip and slid into the water. It was cold and it was deep. I couldn't touch, but managed to tread water and only get wet to my chest. Still, I freaked out a little bit! Kerry turned at my splash and asked if I was ok. He thought I had just decided "the heck with it, I'm swimming through". I assured him that it was by accident and I freaked myself out.

After my dive into very cold water, Kerry met me where I was and handed off the life vest to me. This was like a Superman costume to me...I could do anything! Once I clipped myself in, I swam the rest of the way to dry land. Unfortunately, that left Kerry to once again chimney over



Allison exiting cave after September raft trip. Looking forward to the “GIANT” spiders near the gate

Now, when I say we got to dry land, “dry” would be the operative word. It’s not sumped, but it’s a muddy mess with lots of puddles. We proceeded through a section to the left (past the Sand Room) which was quite a lot of belly crawling, in mud, uphill. Now, I’m not talking about the old “I walked to school, uphill both ways”; I’m telling you this was belly crawling uphill. It’s very interesting and extremely tiring. Once again, I’m reminded that my evening gym jaunts have still left me very out of shape. I was huffing, puffing and complaining the whole way...and I was loving it! We made it to Sump 2 and there was over four feet of water. That ended our

exploration to that section of the cave.

We spent a good deal of time exploring (two hours), but did not see nearly all we wanted to because of being tired and knowing we had a to go back through the water to get out. I, once again, just decided to swim it on the way back while Kerry chimneyed.

While I waited for Kerry to give me the ok that he was up and out of the cave, I dreaded the large spiders on the walls near the entrance where I had

to brace my back. I noticed a steady stream of water running from the filled in sinkhole entrance into the first

room of the cave and thought, well the cave is probably slowly filling up now. I was tired, wet and already feeling some soreness but I wanted out so I just climb out into a pouring rain, ignoring the spiders the best I could.

Getting changed back into our regular clothes, without getting mud everywhere, was a real challenge. We were both disgusting messes and looked like we’d been swimming in pools of mud all day, but we managed it. Kerry did have a wardrobe malfunction with his boxer shorts which was, perhaps, the highlight of the trip...

(In order to include the raft trip pictures with the wetsuit trip, this article by Allison was condensed and edited for space by Kerry Speelman and Ken Tayman) □



Kerry in raft not far from the ladder. Got to see the ceiling formations from different perspective with 15 feet of water below the raft.

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FRANKLIN COUNTY GROTTO



Copperhead at Vertical Practice

photo by Jim Schweitzer