

Cumberland Valley Caver

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Franklin County Grotto



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CUMBERLAND VALLEY CAVER

Published by

FRANKLIN COUNTY GROTTO

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Franklin County Grotto meetings are held the 3rd Monday of the month. The location has been changed from the New Franklin Fire Department, New Franklin, PA, to the Franklin Fire Dept at 158 W. King Street, Chambersburg, PA 17201. The meeting starts at 7:30 PM. Both grotto caving trips and smaller individual trips are planned at these meetings. All members are invited depending on their ability to safely participate. You must attend at least one vertical training session in order to participate in vertical trips. Visitors are welcome. Contact any of the above individuals for more information or email fcg@karst.org.

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: Andy Filer on rappel in 70' Nelson's Pit at MAR in Shade Gap, PA Photo by Maria Andrews (Nittany)

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From the editor,

Thanks to: Dane, Susan, Tom, John B, Anne, The Shocks, Dave, Chris, Steve, Drew, Andy, Gordy, Howard, Jim, Barry, Pat, Gary, Kerry, Stitch, Scott, Diane, Ken J, Jerry, Don, Karen & George, Mark, Garrett, Bryan, Dave, PCC, MAKC, John McFadden, Frank Fleming, Mr. Kretzer, The Newbakers, Shade Gap Fire Dept & Auxiliary, Merle, Mr. Parsons, and Mr. McMahon,

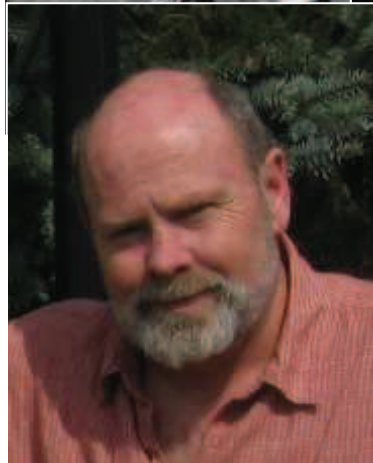
For MAR: pre-registration, printing, vertical practice, trip leading, guidebook, band, firewood, breakfast, decon, registration, door prizes, photo board, site clean-up, dinner, maps, cave descriptions, sodas/water, T-shirts, logo, fire bricks, squeeze box, donations of time, money & door prizes, campfire, cutting firewood, cave owner coordination, familiarization trips., trash collection, financial accounting, coffee, website updates, vendor, volunteer trip leaders, name tags, cave owners, parking & access, supplies, facility coordination, guest speaker, NSS updates, first aid kit.

During the last four months, I have coordinated some aspect of the MAR with each of these people or groups at least once, if not five times, and all have contributed in some way to the success of our MAR Spring meet at Shade Gap, PA.

Ken Tayman, Editor

Speleo-Spotlight

Franklin County Grotto
MAR Crew



Thanks for your contributions to MAR, big and small!

MAR 2011, Shade Gap, PA



Fleming Trough Spring running hard



Vertical Practice



Nelson Pit



Cave entrance photo board



Squeeze box



Decon Station

MAR @ Shade Gap, PA

May 13-15, 2011 by Ken Tayman

It was FCG's turn to host the MAR spring meet. We do it every five years. We thought we'd move into a different area that would give access to different caves from those in the Chambersburg area where we had it on the last three or four meets we'd hosted. In March, we got an early start (unusual for our grotto) and made arrangements with the Shade Gap Fire Department to use their camp ground.

Nine months later, in typical FCG fashion, we still had no MAR committee chair, no t-shirt person, no guidebook person, no registration person, and only had two trips approved (Kookan and Hesston). At the January meeting I offered a suggestion that perhaps we should cancel the MAR due to lack of interest. This did wake up one or two people. Had a comment that York Grotto's last MAR didn't have any cave trips and that cave trips were not essential to hosting a MAR. I disagreed.

When I suggested we just forget about t-shirts, someone said "You gotta have t-shirts!!" I wouldn't move to the next subject until we decided either to not have a t-shirt or got a t-shirt person. We ended up with two T-shirt people. Registration was the same, if no registration person- then no MAR. I refused to move on until we had registration volunteers.

We continued to have meetings, with no chair, no guidebook person, T-shirt prices agreed on at meetings then remembered incorrectly, familiarization trips for new trip leaders didn't happen, verbal cost arrangements with campground became more vague and confusing all the way to the very last minute while writing the check. This was not the way to run a MAR.

In spite of ourselves, and with a lot of behind the scene prodding, things started to come together in April. Dane's pre-registration went well, pre-registering nearly 75% of eventual attendees. Gordy's T-shirts ended up making about \$200 which helped offset other expenses. Anne held down the registration booth the entire weekend. Howard's campfire was great. Dane's band, "FLOWSTONE" was really great. Professor Feeney's talk on the Fluctuating water levels in Cleversburg Sink was lively, educating and interesting. Door prizes were fun. Barry's cave goods store served the attendees well. Gordy's Cave entrance photo board always had a few people hanging around.



Gordy and Steve at the vertical practice. Photo by Howard W.

The weekend got off to a surprisingly good start when our new members, Steve, Drew and Andy guided three Friday evening trips to McFadden Cave. It was the closest cave to the MAR site, but is a small, tight, crawly cave described as "everyone should try it once, but most won't do it a second time". We had anticipated perhaps there might be a request for a Friday trip and perhaps one Saturday trip. All together there were five led trips to McFadden. the most visited cave of the weekend.

Another surprise was the last minute owner approval of trips into Nelson's Pit. It was so short notice we didn't have any leaders set up for this nice, classic 70 foot free-fall dome pit. We checked around among the MAR attendees and came up with a couple trip leaders who were familiar with the cave and ended up with two Nelson's trips. (see cover photo)

Karen and George Bange had originally authorized a single, six person, trip into their "Rupert Cave". When a seven caver contingent from Central Connecticut grotto showed up and asked if they could arrange a trip they could all participate in, Karen and George agreed to make it happen. In the end they ended up combining three groups (eighteen cavers) and everyone got in. Thanks Karen and George!

Gordy set up a vertical practice session with ropes, gear and cable ladder. He was busy all weekend. We even used it to clear a few new (to us) cavers for the vertical trip to Kookan. Saturday night it was still busy at midnight. Good Job Gordy!

The Pennsylvania Cave Conservancy (PCC) sponsored a Pancake and Sausage breakfast on Sunday morning. The fire dept allowed the use of their kitchen facility for serving the breakfast and things went smoothly. Served a lot of people.

Most of the comments we received were that it was a great MAR. John Pearson, from Greenbrier County, WV, (and co-chair for NSS 2012 convention) said it was the best MAR site he'd been to.

STATISTICS

108 attendees including primary, family and kids
13 grottos (and cavers) representing 8 states & Ireland
15 led trips to seven different caves
First FCG sponsored MAR with band
First FCG sponsored MAR with Squeeze Box
First FCG sponsored MAR to use pre-registration
Trips to Kookan, 2 Flemings Caves, McFadden, Rupert, Hesston, Long Quarry & Nelson's Pit



Dane Wagle offered to have his musical group," Flowstone", perform a short program after dinner. Their acoustic sounds transitioned us from door prizes to a comfortable campfire evening. Great Job!! Thanks!!!!

Spring MAR Trip Report

By Andrew Filer

One cliff and five caves in two days was the plan going into MAR. The trip started out Friday with myself and Will Hepp driving up to the newly reopened Donation Rocks. Luckily the predicted rain never came and we spent several hours climbing. The cliff was recently purchased by Stone Mountain Adventures who by way of a liability waiver have opened the land to the public. This secured a classic local crag that most Penn State climbers know well. As a note to vertical cavers, there are several overhangs that could be rigged to allow for 20-30 foot free rappel to practice on. For those who have never been here, the cliffs have many trees to rig top-ropes, and several ancient (and unsafe) ¼ Star Dryvin bolts you should avoid using



Will On Belay at Donation Rocks

After getting our fill of climbing for the day we drove down to the MAR site at Shade Gap and set up camp. We rounded up Lauren Isch and traveled to the nearby Fleming's Caves. We decided to start with



Will Crawling out of Flemings Water Cave

Fleming's Water Cave in a vain attempt to stay dry (which didn't work). The cave had a gradually deepening stream cutting through sand slopes running perpendicular to the entrance. We traveled to the deep pool in the north-western section of the cave, and notice an old rope that disappeared under the water, perhaps remnants of past cave diving.

Not wishing to do any diving, we turn around and visited the southern section of the cave. With only 8-10 inches of airspace in the 2 foot tall passage we opted out of visiting the small room at its end.

Next up we walked the 73 yards downhill to Fleming's Trough Cave. After a previous trip to dig out the entrance to Fleming's Water cave last month, I was excited to come back and visit Fleming's Trough. As we expected it was going to be wet, really wet of airspace in the 2 foot tall passage we opted out of visiting the small room at its end

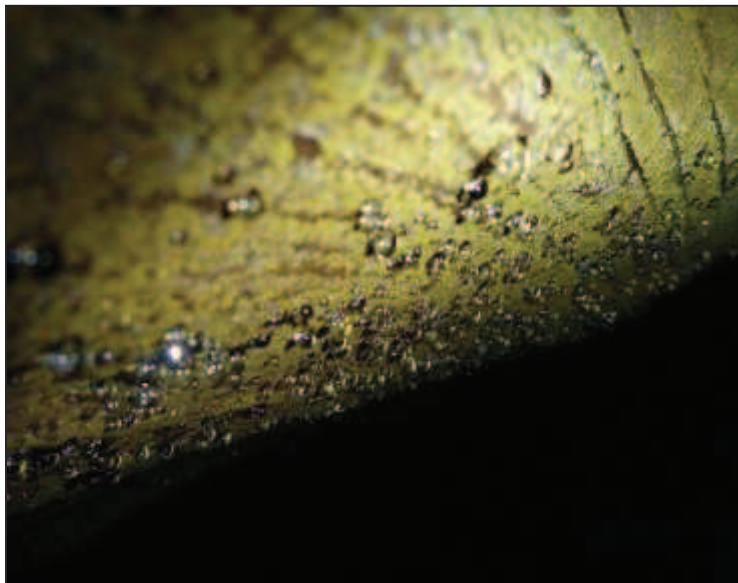
The entrance to the cave sits five feet upstream from a small cascade. A four foot tall oval, with 2 feet of gently flowing water welcomed us to come in. As soon as we entered the cave we noticed the first of several dozen salamanders that live in the cave. These bright orange creatures were everywhere; we had to coax them out of our way as we crawled further in. We traveled to just before the end of the 1951 Bernard Smeltzer map ended and noted the 4 inches of airspace leading into the new section discovered by Franklin County Grotto in 1993. A Several nice features were in this section of the cave, the best being the large drapery and golden colored walls. Upon leaving the cave we talked with the homeowner's son, who did not realize the extent of Fleming's Trough, and was interested in exploring the cave in the future. We then grabbed a quick pita bread snack and headed back to the MAR campground.



Lauren and Will Trying to Stay Dry in Flemings Trough



Drapery in Flemings Trough



Water droplets



A Very Photogenic Salamander

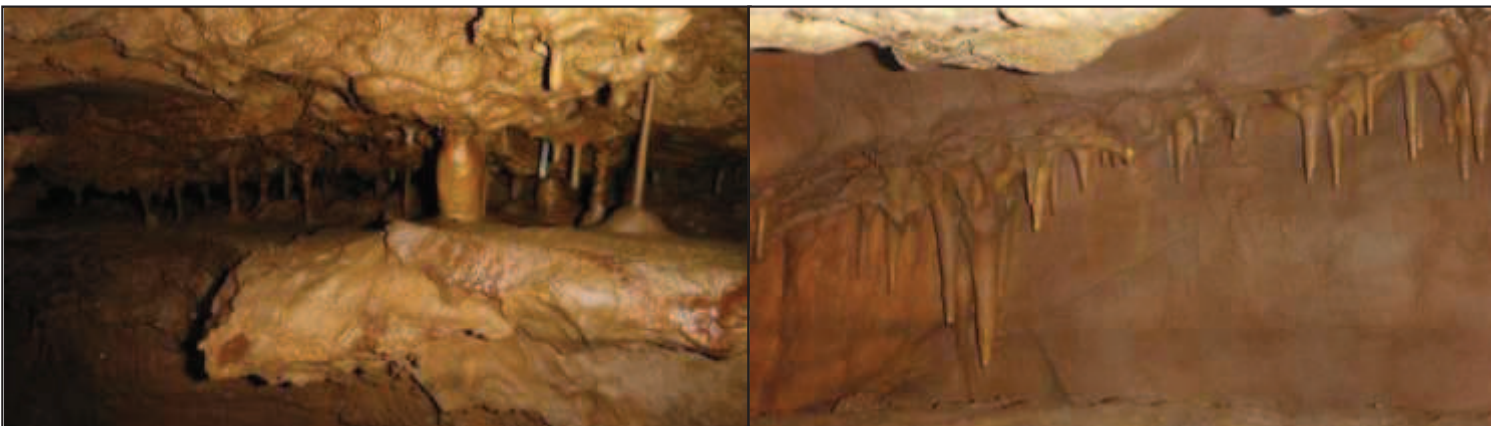


John Chimneying in the "New Hall"

After talking to Drew Welicka and Steve Isch I decided to run a trip to McFadden's to ease their workload.

So at 7:00 we set off, on the trip were Amos Mincin and Allen Maddox from Philly grotto, Cynthia LaCoe, John Groh, and Maria Andrews from Nittany grotto, and Will Hepp. Given our groups past caving experience I expected a quick trip, boy was I wrong. When we got into the cave we soon came to the "razor back keyhole", a particularly awkward vertical "S" shaped squeeze. Despite a commendable attempt Allen couldn't make it through, and decided to explore the rest of the cave before the keyhole. Our remaining group moved fast, but explored every nook and cranny in that cave (Ok, not everyone, but most of them). The cave was significantly dryer than my last visit which unfortunately didn't allow us to enjoy the foot tall mud and stream crawls. After reaching the New Hall we explored many of the intricate tunnels that run high above the hall. After spending a few minutes we headed back before Drew and Steve's next group came in. We ran into them in Debby's attic, and crawled into the attic to let them pass. It

was then we discovered a connection not listed on the map. Excited we followed several long passages, not sure if we had discovered virgin passage. Many nice formations were in this area, including a 2 foot long stalactite and the end of the passage. We finished the cave by visiting the portions of the cave we had skipped before the keyhole. Amos and Cynthia were the only two brave (or small) enough to squeeze into the extension of the "First Hall". After that we were all ready to head back. Upon reaching our vehicles we realized it was 11 PM, we had spent 4 hours in the cave. Back at the campsite we discussed with longtime FCG members and found that the "new" passages had been explored, but not mapped as of yet. Then we finally got off to bed at midnight.



Seldom Seen Formations in Unmapped Passage East of Debby's Attic (Mcfadden's Cave)



Dave at the Entrance of Long's Quarry Cave

Before we racked out Friday night, Will and I signed up for the trip to Longs Quarry that Dave Scamardela was leading Saturday morning. Before leaving I scrambled around camp trying to drum up interest, and directions in a trip to Nelson's Pit later in the day. A tenuous plan was made right before we headed out to Long's Quarry. After the 45 minute drive down to the cave we were all ready to start another long day of caving. Our group was a mix of Franklin, Nittany,

and DC grotto cavers. After telling us some interesting historical facts about the cave, and the trail to it (which had been the main road through the valley a century ago) we started into the cave. We were welcomed by 'Coon scat seemingly too big to come out of such small animals. The caves unique slanted geometry had us all walking through leaning to our right, trying to keep the sticky red clay mud from sucking our boots off. Noting the time Will and I took off in front of the group in order to make the long drive to Nelson's Pit. We cruised back to the register and final breakdown pit and then turned back. After sprinting back to the entrance we bid farewell and headed to the car. We talked with the homeowner for a bit, who mentioned "the cave is a little muddy" with a wry smile on his face. We packed up, snacked, and drove the 45 minutes up to the MAR campground, De-conned our gear, and drove another 45 minutes up to Nelson's Pit

We got up to the Pit after many wrong turns just as the crew from Nittany grotto was gearing up. Cynthia, John, and Maria who had been along at McFadden's the day before made the drop. As promised by Gary Dunmire the night before, the entrance to the pit was awkward on rappel, and even more difficult on the ascent later. The four of us poked around the little bit of cave that was below the pit and took some photos. The second dome and animal bones were the only notable parts of the cave. We then frogged out of the 60 ft Pit and headed out. On the way back we talked with the owner of the right of way who knew very little about the cave. We showed him the map and he excitedly called all his family over to talk about the Pit. They were shocked that the second dome was only 8 or so feet under the road next to the cave. We established a good relationship with them that will hopefully continue in the future. We all jumped in our cars and headed back for Chicken BBQ. Will and I ate our very delicious dinner, bid farewell, and headed back home since I had a very busy summer semester at Penn State Harrisburg starting Monday. So there it was 1 cliff and 5 caves in two very long, but satisfying days. Life's Good☐

Hesston Cave

May 14, 2011 by Kerry Speelman

Prior to the spring MAR, hosted by the Franklin County Grotto (FCG) in Shade Gap, Ken Tayman asked me about the possibility of leading a Hesston Cave trip on which I agreed to. This would be the first recreational cave trip involving organized cavers since the cave closure in the early 1990s and since the Mid-Atlantic Karst Conservancy (MAKC) leased the cave in 2003. The owner of the cave was happy to see the organized caving community's interest in seeing what the cave had to offer.

Currently, I'm the sole access contact for Hesston Cave through the MAKC and the owner is currently only allowing lead trips. On May 13, 2011, the sign-up sheets were placed out for all the lead cave trips and Hesston quickly filled and on May 14, 2011, the cave trip left the campground a few minutes later than scheduled.

Due to the group size, Mike Schirato of the MAKC, who has helped with the cave survey, volunteered to help lead the trip. We would split the group up into two and part ways near the entrance to do a loop trip where we would meet up in the Celebration Room of Hesston Cave to allow the group to see most of the cave with the least amount of overlap. The trip went off without a hitch though I found some areas where I have not been in years being tighter than I remembered. Everyone managed to negotiate all pinches and tighter areas and saw the majority of the cave. All had a great time. □

THANKS, to Barry Duncan and "Caver Connections" for providing several door prizes at cost. Also his early commitment to attend the MAR allowed us to advertise that we would have a vendor on site selling cave gear and other cave/bat related items.

Kooken

May 14, 2011

The Kooken trip was one of the first trips set up for the MAR. Dave Bookhammer agreed to lead the trip and coordinated permissions. This was supposed to be the "premier" vertical through-trip for the weekend.

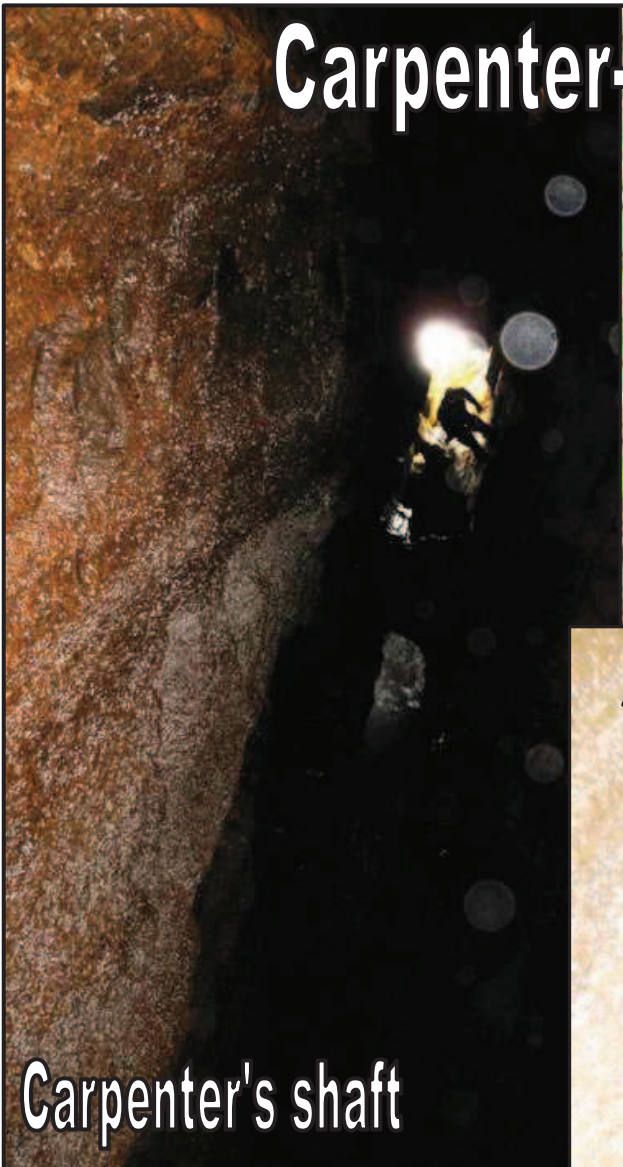
In mid-March we received word that the cave was flooded with 25 feet of water in the big room at the bottom of the entrance drop. This would effectively cancel the through trip, leaving the only possibility of bouncing the entrance, and perhaps, if time allowed, the cavers could do the greenhouse entrance which is nearly horizontal, until they hit the water from the other end of the cave.

Since there were cavers on this trip not known to us, Pat and Gordy worked with them on the vertical practice rope to determine if they were capable of safely doing the trip.

Pat assisted Dave and LG Evans with trip leader responsibilities. He started cautiously down the drop, watching for a high water level and was prepared to change over if he encountered high water. The water seemed to be extremely clear and calm. Then he realized there was no water. In fact, the water had drained and they accomplished the through trip and made it back for dinner. This was FCG Chris Edenbo's first vertical trip and was the highlight of his weekend. □



Carpenter-Swago at VAR



Carpenter's shaft



Swago Pit

Andy



Carpenter Pit



Spring VAR Trip Report

Apr 29-May 1, 20011 By Andrew Filer

As usual the best laid plans of mice and men tend to go awry, or so it seemed as VAR approached. I had planned to meet up with Charles Savel of Frederick Grotto to climb at Seneca rocks on the way down to VAR. On Friday morning we started the long drive with storm clouds and a sixty percent chance of rain looming overhead. After an hour or so we pulled into the mostly deserted parking lot at the trailhead. Despite the rainclouds we decided to go for it. We geared up, and walked a whole hundred feet until stopped by a sign stating the trail was closed. Puzzled we jumped back in the car and drove to the ranger station. The nice little old lady working there literally told us "Just climb over the sign, it's not for climbers". We did just that, all the while being given the evil eye by a group of kayakers that showed up. The climbing was good, and the rain held until we started the hike down. Not bad.



Closure Sign

Let's get back to caving. Prior to VAR Charlie got us scheduled for the Carpenter-Swago trip. With the long drive no one felt like caving Friday night, so we chilled for the evening. It was really cold, so we really did chill. Anyhow, Saturday morning we rolled out on our nine o'clock trip around ten, and made the short trip to the cave. Given the large group we had the hardier folks decided to do the drop



Charlie Posing for the Camera

into the Swago side, which had a rather sporty amount of water flowing into it. I decided to try and stay dry, so I traveled over to the Carpenter entrance.

We rigged up and started to drop the pit. I got out my HD video camera and filmed Andy Fields and Amos Mincin of Philly Grotto make the drop. John (Boswell) was so excited to make the drop I completely missed him on film unfortunately. The drops consisted of a nice 75 foot drop, followed by a wet 15 foot, and a final 40 foot drop into the cave.

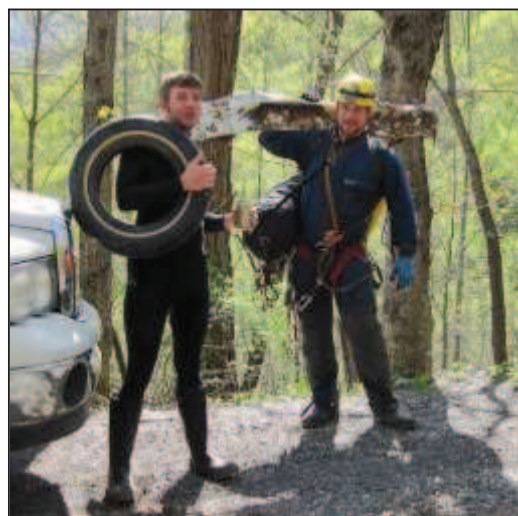
We started on our way through the cave. The first notable sight was a shoe suspended by rope. No one has worked up the courage to ascend the skanky rope in recent years, so the cave above is a mystery to us. We surmounted several exposed traverses on the way towards the Swago connection. As we got close to the Swago falls we could hear the roar, and feel bad for those who decided to drop them. Right before the falls we came on a rather shady traverse that I decided to pass on.

After that we headed back and explored some passage we had avoided on the way in. I started the ascent out of the cave, and John followed next. The water dumping on us on the second drop made for a refreshing shower, and cleaned off all the mud we acquired in the cave. An earlier challenge to remove a tire and a bumper had been issued, and both parties stepped up to the plate. John Harmon made a tremendous effort to drag that bumper out of the cave, and was rewarded with a cold on. After changing we visited the entrance of nearby Roadside Pit and made a promise to return in the future. Later in the day an excellent history of Cass cave was presented at the campground and the event wound down. We decided to get an early start on the drive home Sunday.

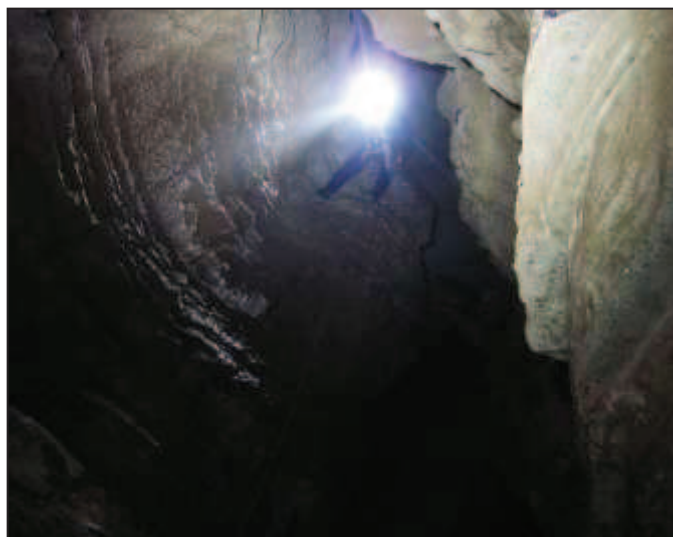
Despite going to VAR, my finals on Monday morning went well. Another well spent weekend.□



The Mysterious Shoe



Cave Booty



Myself on the 3rd Drop



Andy Fields Topping Out

Stamps in a Cave

Some call it the Ft. Knox for stamps. It's the Stamp Fulfillment Center in Kansas City, Mo., and it's where some of the nation's most valuable stamps are housed. It's also located underground in a cave.

Khalid Hussain manages the center and says the place is "friendly" for stamps because it's under the ground in caves that are about 270 million years old.

There is approximately 5 million square feet of underground space here in this facility, and . . . close to 1,500 employees work in this complex. We are three-quarters of a mile inside, as you come into the entrance, and we are 150 feet underground. The temperature remains 72 degrees. There are some humidity controlled areas for certain stamps, but, for the most part Hussain says they really don't have to expend much energy because the conditions in the cave are so pleasant.

There are about \$400 - 600 million (yes, million) worth of stamps stored in the facility at any given time.

He says they have customers from all over the world who buy stamps for their collections directly from the cave. (If you're a collector yourself, Hussain says you can visit usps.com or call 1-800-STAMP-24.)

Since some of the stamps are very valuable, there is a lot of security in and around the cave.

"The security is there -- both in a physical presence and there is also an electronic presence. This is a very secure place."

As far as working in the cave, Hussain says it has its advantages and disadvantages, "There are days [when it is] 105 degrees outside, and it's wonderful [in the cave]. Same in the winter time. *"gleaned from web "*

"Quotes of the Quarter"

"Trip was fun, but HARD AS HELL. I have a bruise on my sternum and both shoulder blades"

JB re Rupert trip

"I'll pay at OTR"

JH re T-Shirt

"I'll write the 30 year history, pickup the squeeze box and bind the guide book"

LP re MAR planning

"Yea Right"

Rest of MAR committee re above

Cleversburg Sink

Current water level

As of May 26, 2011, the water level in Cleversburg Sink was:

Up to the old gate

>>In the entrance room

Top of ladder

Mid-ladder

3rd rung of ladder

Base of ladder

Knee deep

Sand room sump

2nd crawl sump

Dry



Water is about 27' deep, starting to creep downward from record setting rains of April

Checked by: Ken Tayman and Gordy Ley

Rupert Cave

by Jon Boswell March 12, 2011

Saturday, March 12th I made the delightful drive up to scenic Mifflin County for a guided trip through Rupert Cave courtesy of George and Karen Bange. I arrived at 10:00 am and was immediately met by the smell of a fire smoking away in the woodstove inside the entrance building. I introduced myself to George and Karen and their dog Iris. We were to be joined on this trip by Ricky Obanion from Cave Hill Grotto and several members of his family (Cristal, Dustin, and Tressa). After the introductions and some small talk, we geared up and got a basic overview of the rules of the cave and the route we would be taking. George opened the magic door to the cave entrance and we filed in.

There was a collection of bats in the entrance passage and in order to not disturb them we hurried past as quickly and silently as we could. The historic section of Rupert Cave has been known and visited for over 150 years, as evidenced by the names and dates scrawled onto portions of the walls. Nearly all of the modern graffiti has been removed and the old writing doesn't seem nearly as offensive and garish as the ugly spray paint found in many heavily visited caves. It gives the cave an aura of history rather than abuse in my view. Many of the formations in the historic section have been damaged or removed entirely over the years, but it is still an interesting series of passages with very dark stone making up the bulk of it. I had a limited tour of parts of the historic section due to a squeeze called Fat Man's Misery. It is a low, oval hole with a bit of a ridge in the center of the bottom of it, kind of like a spine. I could squeeze my head and shoulders in through the opening, but that spine pressing on my sternum wouldn't allow me to pass. So I did the walk of shame back to join the group who had opted not to attempt this squeeze

and together we waited for the others to make the circuit back around to meet us.

After regrouping we continued our way through the historic section, navigating several up and down climbs and a few ducks through low holes until we arrived at the junction of the historic section with the new section. The new section was discovered and dug open in 1987 (I think) and is somewhere around 5000 feet long and contains many delicate and beautiful formations. Access is only allowed via guided trips, and this policy has allowed the new section to remain in a pristine condition.

In addition to the limited access policy, the new section is guarded by a sentinel known as The Keyhole. It is a relatively small tube about two feet off the floor of the cave and it curves its way through the wall between the historic and new sections for a distance of three to four feet. The bottom of the tube is an open slot six to eight inches wide so the profile resembles an old-time keyhole. This slot tends to want to suck you down into it as you wriggle through the tight, curving tube. I watched the first few members of the group struggle their way through successfully, and then it was my turn. It was a tight fit and once I was fully into it, I had to struggle to get the leverage to gain an inch or so at a time. It was exhausting. After several minutes of alternating between struggling like crazy and resting to catch my breath (and not making much headway) Dustin propped his boot against the sole of my boot and that gave me just enough leverage to get through enough to free my arms and I pulled myself exhaustedly into the new section. Without that helping foot and George talking me through, I think I might still be there like a lump of meat in a sausage stuffer!

The new section is a series of heavily decorated rooms connected by some long, and in some cases pretty tight, crawls interrupted by the occasional sporting squeeze. The floor of these crawlways is mostly a fairly dry mud that is more sticky than wet. It is almost soft, which is a good thing because our knees and elbows were in contact with it for some extended periods! Many of these crawlways were made much more bearable because they were interrupted by various slots and shelves along the way that were just chock full of beautiful white soda straws. Some of them were even clear, which I hadn't seen before.

One section of crawl passes a blast area and the formations just past it are brown on the side facing the blast site and white on the side facing away from it. George told us this was a result of the mud and debris that splattered them when the blasting occurred. I found that interesting and it really drove home how hard it must be to keep a cave in pristine condition and still allow human visitation. George and Karen have done an excellent job in balancing this equation.

Each room we entered seemed more beautiful than the last with TONS of fantastic broomstick formations (some over six feet tall), huge flowing draperies, sparkling flowstone walls, columns of white and shades of yellow, and even a collection of cave pearls. It is an amazing and beautiful cave. We continued on past sparkling pools with crystals growing in them, shimmering rimstone pools, Christmas tree formations, and everywhere white stalagmites and stalactites and the ever-present army of soda straws. We eventually reached our destination near the back of the cave; an amazing room called the jewel room. This room contains some of the largest and most beautiful formations I have ever seen. And there are a lot of them! My eyes had a hard time taking in so much beauty in one place. Each time I tried to look at one formation, I was distracted by the one next to it and had

to look away to check that one out. It was like sensory overload and all I could do was stand there slack-jawed and say "Wow!"

After taking in as much as we could of this overwhelming beauty, we began to make our way back towards the entrance. As we left the jewel room, George pointed out a beautiful ledge of wild helictites. They were bunched very tightly together and spiked out in all directions. Spectacular!

We navigated back towards the entrance through some of the same routes and some new ones. Some of these limestone avenues contained interesting fossil collections of crinoids and others. There was also a portion of unusual finely detailed flowstone called the Beehive that actually resembled (duh!) a big beehive.

Of course, during the whole trip through the new section the Keyhole and the fact that I would have to try to squeeze through it again never left the back of my mind. Now that we were exiting, I was getting a little apprehensive about facing it again and finally, there it was. My old nemesis. George had assured me that it was easier to exit than it was to enter, but I'm sure he has to say that in order to keep bigger guys like me from freaking out. I tried to relax and focus my concentration as the first few members of the party made their way out. I entered the Keyhole to make my exit and it actually was a little easier because on the way out you can leave one leg down in the slot portion at the beginning and get a little better leverage for the first part of the squeeze. I wriggled my way through in the same inch-by-inch fashion and Dustin again gave me a hand, giving me a nice arm lock pull that helped me along and before I knew it, I was out!

Karen then led us the rest of the way out of the historic section, back through the gate and into the entrance building. We were all exhausted and muddy, yet exhilarated. It was an awesome five hour trip and our hosts put

the cherry on our proverbial caving sundae by providing us with that healing, rejuvenating golden elixir of the Pennsylvania caver: Yuengling Lager!

A huge thanks goes out to George and Karen Bange for inviting me along on this trip, for their gracious hospitality, and for the great job they do protecting and sharing this amazing natural resource. □

CAVE BUCK\$

As of May 16, 2011

Franklin County Grotto sponsors a "Cave Bucks" program that solicits voluntary contributions from its cavers of \$1.00 per cave visited during the month. The money collected is then forwarded to a Cave conservancy or other organization for the specific purpose of buying or leasing caves.

On May 16, 2011, FCG approved \$25 a cave buck contribution to Appalachian Cave Conservancy to assist with acquisition of Gilley Cave, and \$67 to Mid-Atlantic Karst Conservancy.

Since starting in February 1998, FCG has collected and donated \$1035.00 Cave Bucks to the following organizations:

Tytoona Cave Preserve	\$ 40
Southeastern Cave Conservancy	\$ 54
Pennsylvania Cave Conservancy	\$232
West Virginia Cave Conservancy	\$271
Mid-Atlantic Karst Conservancy	\$413
Appalachian Cave Conservancy	\$ 25
Total	\$1035

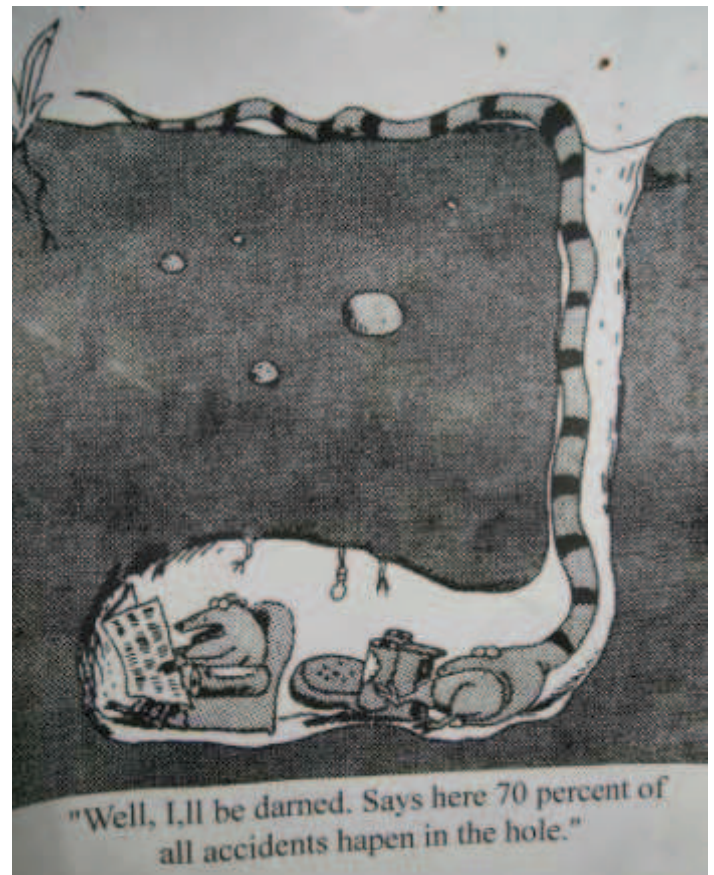
"Little Brown Myotis Persist Despite Exposure to White-Nose Syndrome"

From the Abstract:

"Although colony numbers have continued to decline, we determined that a minimum of individual banded female little brown myotis survived over multiple years despite exposure to white-nose syndrome. Our results also provide evidence that 14 of 20 recaptured female little brown myotis were able to heal from wing damage and infection associated with white-nose syndrome within a given year, and seven of eight recaptures from both May to August 2009, and May to July 2010 showed evidence of reproduction."

<http://www.fwspubs.org/doi/pdf/10.3996/022011-JFWM-014>

Above article to be published in next issue of "Journal of Fish and Wildlife Management." □



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