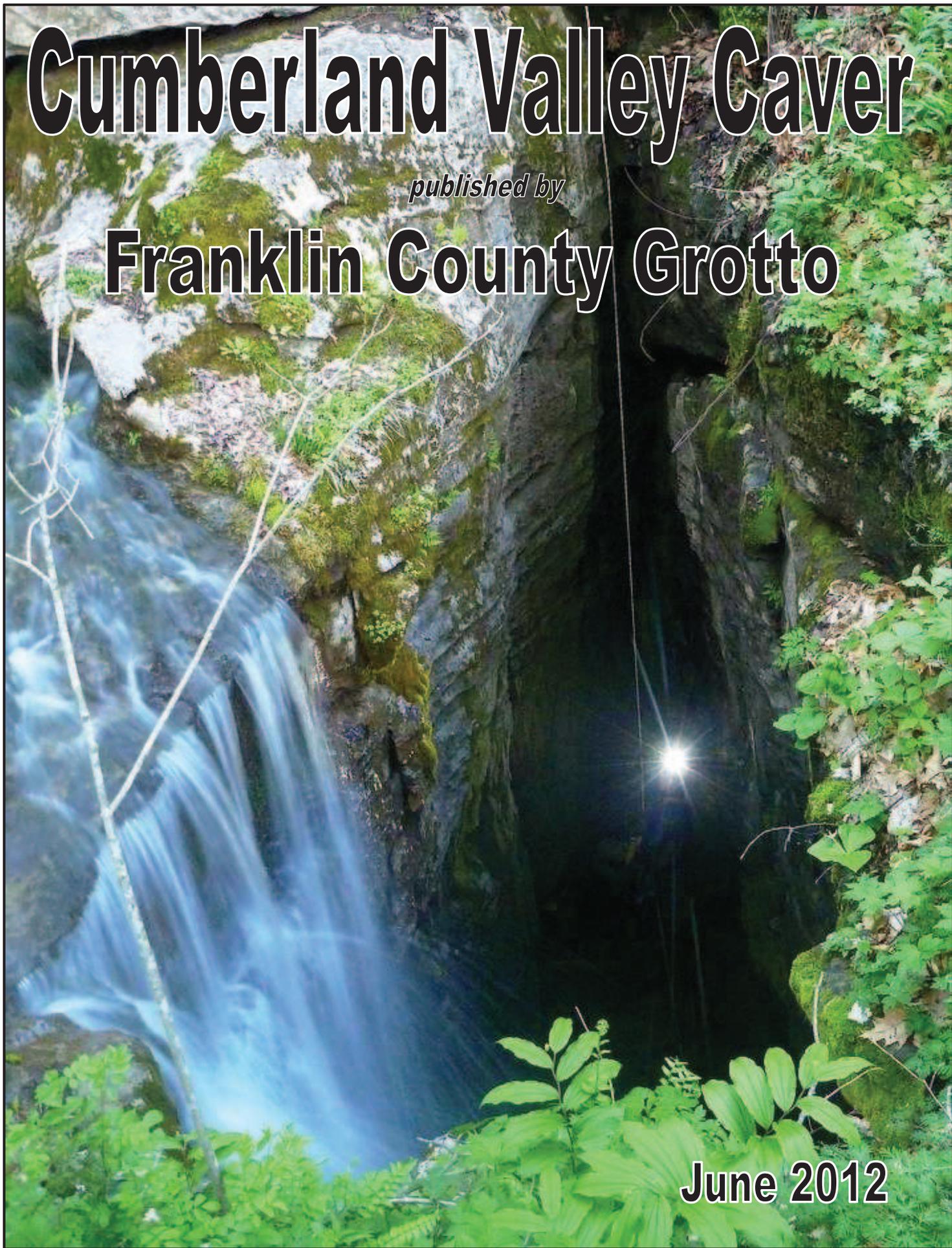


Cumberland Valley Caver

published by

Franklin County Grotto

June 2012



CUMBERLAND VALLEY CAVER

Published by

FRANKLIN COUNTY GROTTO

An Internal Organization of the National Speleological Society

Vol. 13, No 2

June 2012

2012 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE



CHAIR

Kenneth B. Tayman
13373 Sunrise Drive
Blue Ridge Summit, PA 17214
(717) 794-2069

MEMBERSHIP DUES

REGULAR (NSS MEMBER)	\$10
NON-NSS MEMBERS	\$12
FAMILY MEMBERS	\$ 3
LIFE (NSS ONLY)	20 x Reg

SECRETARY

Pat Minnick
14220 Blue Mountain Rd
Waynesboro, PA 17268
(717) 765-0521

VICE-CHAIR

Gordy Ley
34 North Miller St
Fairfield, PA 17320
(717) 642-8970

TREASURER

John Boswell
45 Manada Creek Cir
Carlisle, PA 17013
(717) 386-5397

MEMBER-AT-LARGE

Ken Jones
4446 Duffield Rd
Chambersburg, PA
(717) 267-2669

EDITOR

Kenneth B. Tayman
13373 Sunrise Drive
Blue Ridge Summit, PA 17214
(717) 794-2069

MEMBER-AT-LARGE

Glen Sarvis
1602 West Lisborn Rd.
Mechanicsburg, PA 17055
(717) 766-5003

WEB SITE: www.karst.org/fcg

Webmaster: Don Arrowood

darrowood@comcast.net

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 climbing out of Swago Pit!, WV, (VAR)

Photo by Giani Eftimie (Philly Grotto)

Table of Contents

From the Editor.....	3
Speleo-Spotlight: Andy Filer.....	4
Spring VAR 2012 <i>by Jon Boswell</i>	5
Upper WV - MD Trip Report <i>by Will Hepp</i>	10
Underground Tsunami / Cave BUCK\$.....	11
Carnegie Cave Update / Cleversburg Sink Depth Gauge <i>by Ken Tayman</i>	11
Porters / Blowing Caves <i>by Ken Tayman</i>	12
PA Windmills to Shutdown at Night.....	15
Northeast Bat Working Group 2012 Annual Meeting <i>by Glen Sarvis</i>	15
"Quotes of the Quarter" / Cavetoon / Diakon Wilderness Trips.....	16
Cleversburg Sink Water Study <i>by Professor Tom Feeney</i>	17
McDowell <i>Dig</i> <i>by Ken Tayman</i>	18

See the entire newsletter in **COLOR** on the website
http://www.karst.org/fcg/fcg_newsletters.htm

From the editor...

While putting together this issue I had the unusual problem of having too many possible cover photos to pick from. Good problem! The pictures not selected for the cover, are included within the issue. Andy's two runners up are the backlit shot of Pat in Blowing and the shot inside Swago looking up to the entrance slot.

We did some digging this quarter and got back into McDowell after analyzing Mike Houpt's notes from the '60s. This was a fun project and the land owner is quite interested. After we check out a few more leads, there should be an opportunity to do a little bit of survey and make a map for the owner.

As you read through the issue be sure to check out the couple of embedded videos of the Swago Pit waterfall, and a peek at the inside of McDowell.

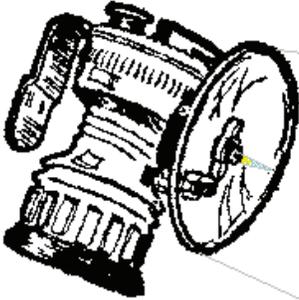
I'd like to thank Andy, Gordy, John, Don, Barry, Pat Glen, Chris, and Prof. Feeney for articles, pictures, charts, quotes, printing, distribution assistance and web support used in getting this issue out to our members and friends.

Ken Tayman, Editor

Speleo-Spotlight...

Andy Filer

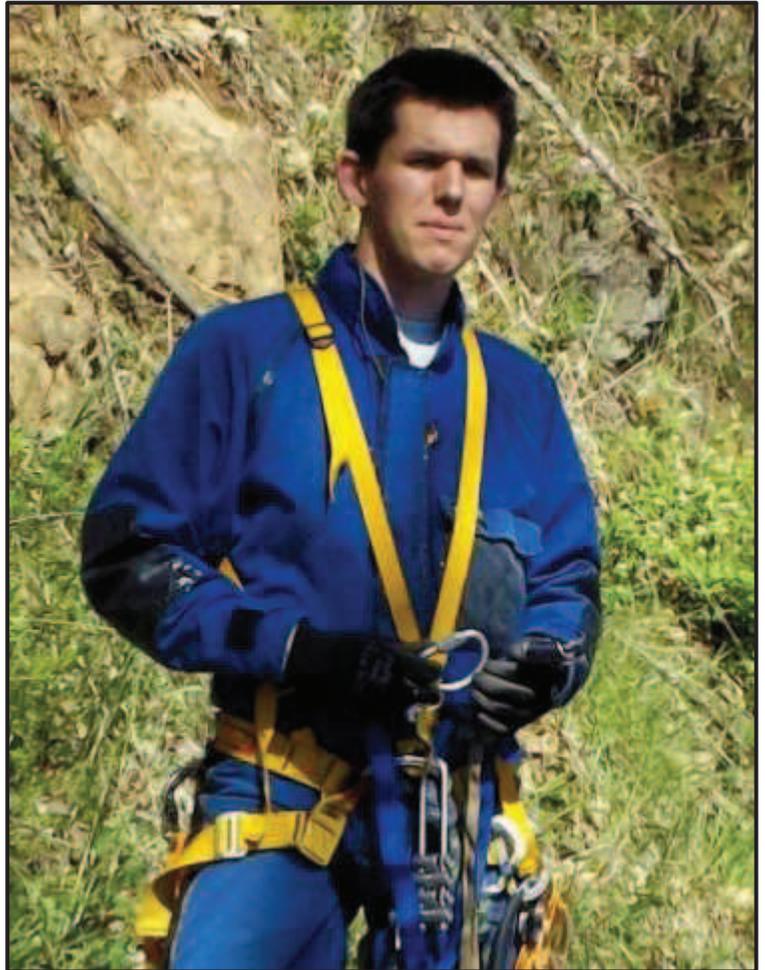
NSS #58513 FCG # 247



A couple of years ago when Franklin County Grotto discovered the average age of our cavers was really getting pretty old, we decided to make a conscious effort to recruit some younger cavers into our group. We focused our hunt on people who were already caving but not affiliated with our group. Andy's membership in FCG is the result of such an invitation. While Pat Minnick was instructing an OCR class in 2010, he met Andy and invited him to check out our grotto. Ever since Andy has been a strong force in getting us out into more caves.

He gets in a lot of days caving every year. Likes to do the "couple extra caves" on the way down or back from a weekend trip. He is a very "useful" guy to have on a trip. Young, energetic, has some rock climbing skills that frequently come in handy, and is willing to haul gear, dig and go first into the small not-so-inviting holes we come across. He hasn't done a lot of project caving but did get involved with the surface survey at Corker Hill, help dig open an old cave in McDowell, assisted with the re-gating of Bootlegger Sink near York, and help with dig in Butler-Sinking Creek.

Andy has contributed to our caving schedule by pulling together some of the active cavers from York and Philly Grottos, and along with FCG cavers this new group has generated in a lot of caving trips and increased the inter-grotto activity significantly. His interest in cave photography has contributed greatly to FCG newsletter including some great shots in this issue. Some of the caves he has done include: Carpenter-Swago, Roadside, Kookan, Sharps, Norman, Nelson's



Andy at Roadside Pit, WV

Photo by John Boswell

Pit, Butler, Sinnett, Aqua, Greenbrier Poor Farm, Porter's. Blowing, Grapevine, Alexander's and many, many other caves

He was in a Long Range Surveillance unit in the Army, completed Airborne School, was a Blackhawk helicopter crew chief where he flew in Southern Iraq and Kuwait. He is currently working on his Masters at Shippensburg Univ. He also likes rock climbing, shooting and biking. Great guy to have on a cave trip!!

by Ken Tayman

Spring VAR 2012

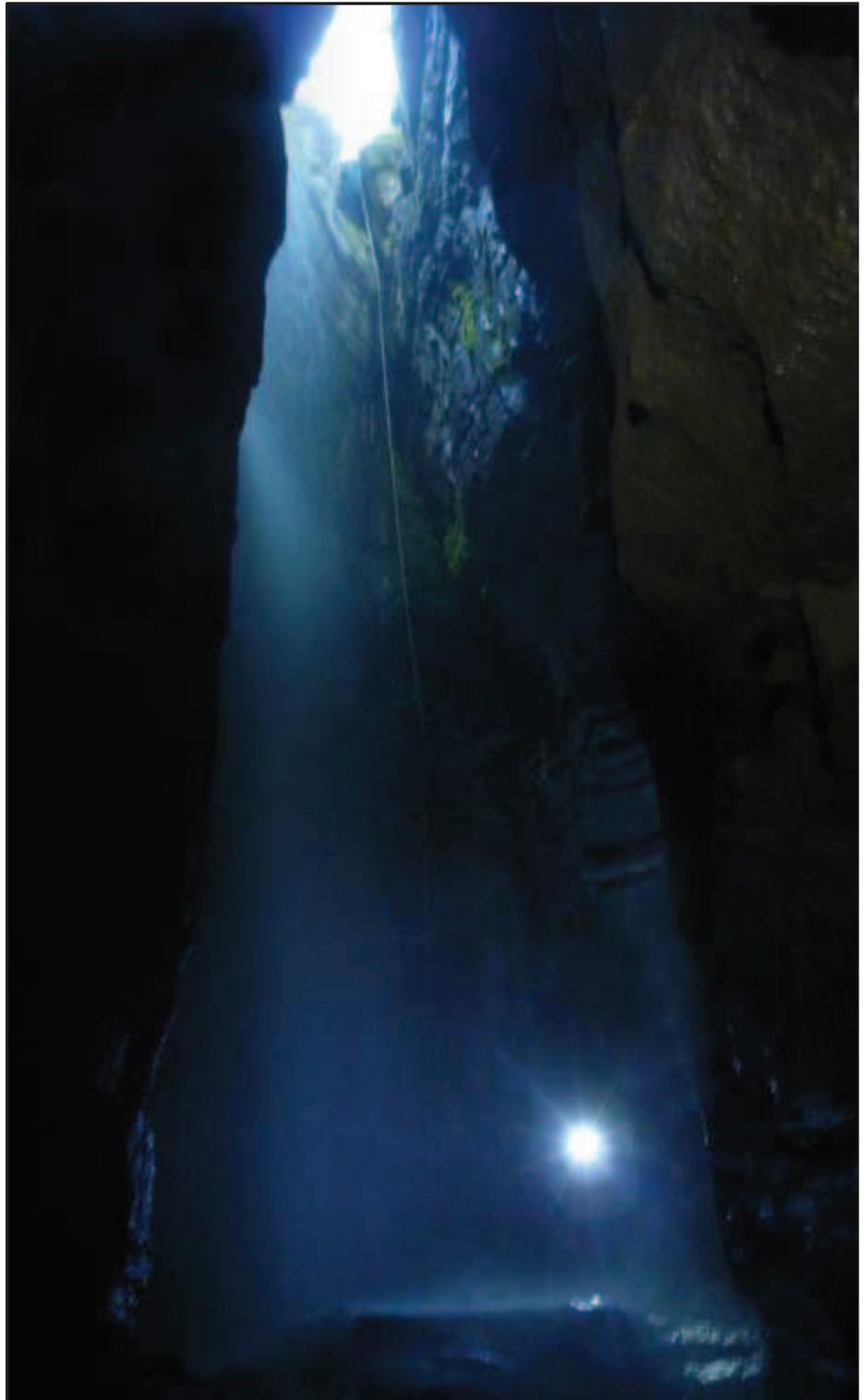
April 27-29, 2012 by John Boswell

As Tennyson famously wrote: In the Spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of.... Caving!

Andy Filer and Matt Saltzer met me at my house and we began our trek to Greenbrier County WV to attend the Spring VAR. We rendezvoused in Marlinton with Amos Mincin, Andy Field, and their friend Gianni from Romania and proceeded to our first stop: Roadside Pit.

We geared up while Andy rigged the rope and dropped it through the very small entrance hole about 18 inches off the edge of the road. Andy descended, followed by Gianni, Matt, and Amos. My turn came next and since my chest is about the exact size of the opening, I clipped my QAS onto the rope and free climbed down about 5 feet to where a small ledge with room to stand offered a bit more space than the entrance. I rigged my rack at this point and rappelled the rest of the 70 foot entrance drop without incident.

Once were all safe and sound at the bottom of the entrance shaft, we stowed our vertical gear and made our way into the main cave. We climbed up and down through some breakdown and past several pretty pools of water until we came to a small crawlway to the right which lead into the Big Room. At the far end of the Big Room is a hill covered with stalagmites below a ceiling decorated with many beautiful stalactites of interesting shape and loads of white soda straws. We spent quite a while here poking around and taking



View from inside Swago Pit looking up toward entrance and stream. Photo by Andy Filer

pictures before returning to the main passage to continue through the cave. We came to a lovely waterfall about 7 feet tall. Climbing past the waterfall we encountered a very high dome with a lot of water cascading down and then the passage split to the left and right. Andy crawled into the right passage and said it didn't seem to go and was tight, so we all followed him into the tight, wet crawl on the left which lead into a more canyon-like section of the cave. This passage continued upward until we reached a dead end in a very tall and narrow dome pit with a rope dangling intriguingly from somewhere in the dark heights above. We retraced our steps back to the Big Room in order to find the connection to the extension.

The extension is reached via a slot on the back side of the formation hill. It is a narrow smooth slot that slopes down about 10 feet into a low crawl. You have to stay as far to the left as possible at the bottom of this slot to avoid a pit. Continuing to the left leads through a bit of a pinch and into the extension. I slid into the pinch and it was a bit of a chest compressor. I think I probably

could have made my way through by exhaling and inching forward, but it was at a downhill angle and promised to make coming back up and out very difficult. At this point, I decided that was as far as I would go. Matt is a pretty large guy and he made it through with little difficulty and told me later that he found getting out to actually be a little easier than going through because there were lots of ridges in the floor that made good footholds for pushing up and out. Maybe next time I'll give it a go. Andy and Gianni decided to exit the cave with me in order to drop the entrance to Swago Pit down the hill before it got dark on us. Matt, Amos and Andy Field continued on and explored the extension in Roadside Pit. They said it consisted of large stream passage and was very interesting. Andy, Gianni and I made our way back to the entrance drop. Andy frogged up and out first. I was next and had little trouble ascending with my improvised Mitchell system. I found it suited my top-heavy body type much better than the frog system. I made it up to where my head was above ground and then was stuck. Since the entrance hole is snug on my chest, I couldn't use my elbows to wedge myself up effectively. I also couldn't get my leg raised up enough to reach a foothold or to stand in my footloops. I struggled and huffed and puffed and cursed for what seemed like a half hour before I finally worked my way out, much to Andy's enjoyment. He offered several times to pull my arms to give me some help, but I wanted to do it myself if I possibly could. My inner arms are black and blue from the struggle as I write this. I think if I go back, I will rig an etrier at the entrance, or wear boots with about a 6 inch heel for the extra boost I needed. Gianni scurried up the drop and we walked down the hill to Swago Pit.



Stitch At top of climb out of Lightners

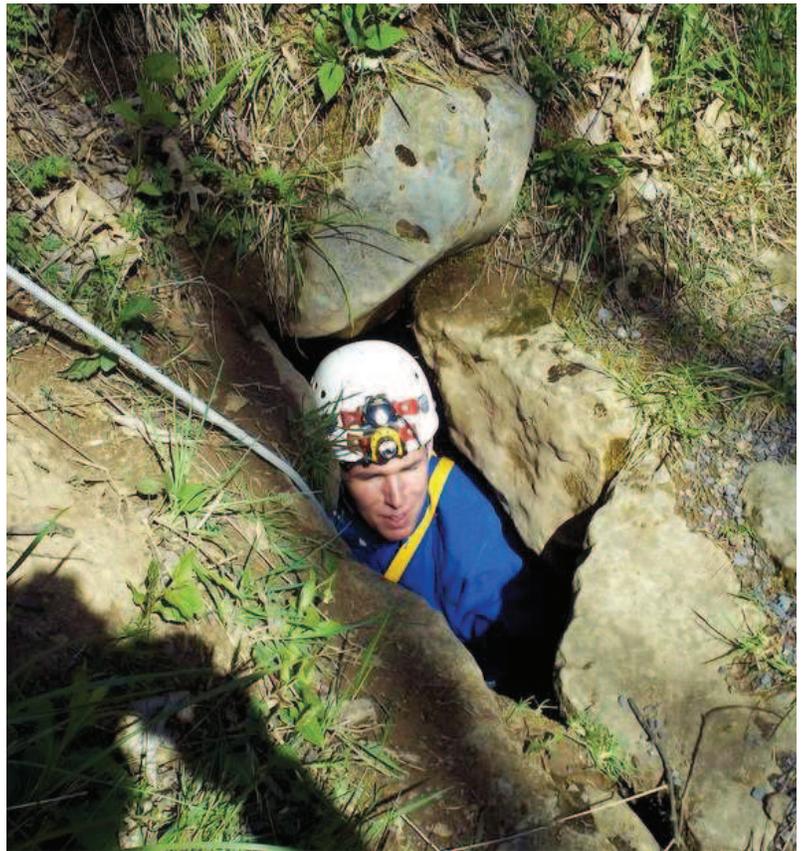
Photo by Andy Filer

Swago is a classic West Virginia pit with a sinking creek forming a very scenic waterfall that disappears down the 55 foot entrance pit. The entrance is wide enough that a rope can be rigged to keep the climber completely out of the water. I was so bushed from my struggle getting out of Roadside Pit that I decided not to drop Swago and to just take pictures instead. I relaxed by the waterfall and watched swifts coming to roost for the night on the pit walls while Andy and Gianni rappelled and ascended the entrance drop. We then met up with the others who were coming out of

Roadside and enjoyed a dinner in Marlinton and then drove on to Williamsburg to the VAR site at Greenbrier Poor Farm. We arrived around 10:45 PM and set up our camp at the top of a bluff at the far end of the pasture. I never realized the myriad of noises that cows make at night, and all night. I drifted off to sleep to the sounds of their bovine lullaby. Matt wasn't as lucky, as my freight train snoring kept him up most of the night.

Saturday dawned bright and early and we creaked and groaned our way out of our sleeping bags. I thought the cows sounded much closer, so I unzipped the tent to take a look and was surprised to see a group of cows walking past the car next to the tent. There was a fence by our campsite which in the dark I had naively believed was there to separate the pastures, but in the daylight I could see that the fence just came to an end and the cows were free to come and go as they pleased. Maybe the reason they made all that noise all night was because they weren't happy to have all these people camping in their bathroom. We tiptoed around the cowpies as best we could to eat our breakfast and get ready to go on our lead trip to Pocahontas Poor Farm.

We caravanned about an hour up winding Route 219 in a driving rain to Hillsboro to a sheep farm that is the site of Pocahontas Poor Farm Cave. After a bit of a search through the woods, our objective was found. The entrance is an opening about 12 feet wide and 3 feet high. At the back of the round, shelter-like entrance is a small gate that leads into the very smooth, round main passage of Pocahontas Poor Farm Cave. The passage is about 20 feet wide and probably 12 feet tall with a flat, mudpack floor. Textbook strolling passage. There were 15 people and a trip leader on this trip, many of whom were 60 years old or older, moving very slowly, and chit-chatting a lot. We checked out a short passage on the left that led up a breakdown climb past a pool of water with a steady stream of water pouring into it from the ceiling like a faucet that had been left partially on. This passage ended in a round room with a pretty flowstone mound topped by a column. Continuing along the main passage, we quickly came to a major



Andy Filer exiting Roadside Pit.

Photo by John Boswell

intersection of passage. The main group continued their way slowly through the main passage and Andy and I decided to make an exploration of the passage to the left. We were joined by Vidas and Ed, whose last names I don't know. This passage continued as strolling passage for a short distance, and gradually became more canyon-like with sharp ledges protruding into the passage above the stream which had appeared below us. We climbed up and down these ledges and through some crawls until we came to a very long and wide section of cave high in the passage that was probably 2.5 feet tall with a perfectly flat ceiling and floor. The floor in most places was soft and wet mud, and the ceiling was covered with white soda straws and several white ribbons. The section eventually ended in a series of two small round rooms with nice decorations.

We turned around and made our way back to a climb off the start of this side passage. We climbed it and found really huge borehole that went a few hundred feet with some breakdown to another very large passage that lead to the left and was divided into an upper and lower level by some large breakdown. We took the low section and

followed it down into a very dusty area where we saw the stream again at the bottom. There were lots of sparkly areas along the rock here (maybe gypsum crystals?). Apparently, if we had chosen the higher route in this area it would have eventually taken us to the back of the cave where a very beautifully decorated gallery is located. We didn't know that at the time and had been separated from the group for a long time, so we went back. We met the rest of the group waiting for us at the first intersection and headed out. We were disappointed that everyone was ready to leave so soon as we had really hoped to see the entire cave. The flock of sheep was very entertaining as we changed out of our muddy clothes for the ride back to camp. They belched at us relentlessly as the little curious lambs, who didn't know enough to be sheepish yet, wobbled and jumped around like they were putting on a show for us.

Pat Minnick, Stitch Rentzel, and Scott Markley spent Saturday in Culverson Creek Cave.

Back at camp, we hung our stuff to dry and then decided to walk across the pasture to Greenbrier Poor Farm Cave. We walked down the steps into the sinkhole entrance and were immediately in a very large room, maybe 60 feet high and 60 feet wide, with passage leading off in both directions. The floor of the entrance room was littered with bones, including a very large cow skull. We took the passage to the left and worked our way up and down past some breakdown blocks and past a very impressive stalagmite. The passage became narrower and meandered past numerous lovely formations, sparkling flowstone, and many rimstone pools. You couldn't walk more than a few feet without encountering something pretty to look at. We came to a large flowstone mound that nearly filled the passage and left only a narrow space between it and some large white draperies. One by one, we climbed the flowstone mound and eased our way past the draperies, which rang very resonantly when touched, and down into continuing passage on the other side. We saw about 10 bats in this



Robin, Stitch Terry and Scott at Lost World Caverns (AKA Grapevine)

cave as well, the only bats seen the whole weekend. The passage at this point has several twisty, crawly passages that either end or double back into the main passage and are covered in very grabby popcorn. It was a little bit tight in places, but just enough to be sporting. We worked our way back out to the big entrance room and briefly explored the passage to the right, which was more muddy and not as nicely decorated as the other side. Then it was dinner time, so we all beat a path back across the pasture to change and clean up.

The rest of Saturday evening consisted of dinner, door prizes, a very interesting presentation on the Caves and Karst of West Virginia, lots of beer, and a DJ who was largely ignored by everyone who gathered around the bonfire and listened to music from someone's truck instead. Of course the young guys (Andy Filer, Stitch, and Scott) were still full of energy and enthusiasm and ignored the partying and instead made an impromptu trip to Lightner's. Lightning flashes beyond the mountains gradually increased in brightness, frequency, and proximity, so we returned to the tents exhausted around midnight. Thunder, lightning and rain provided Saturday evening's lullaby.



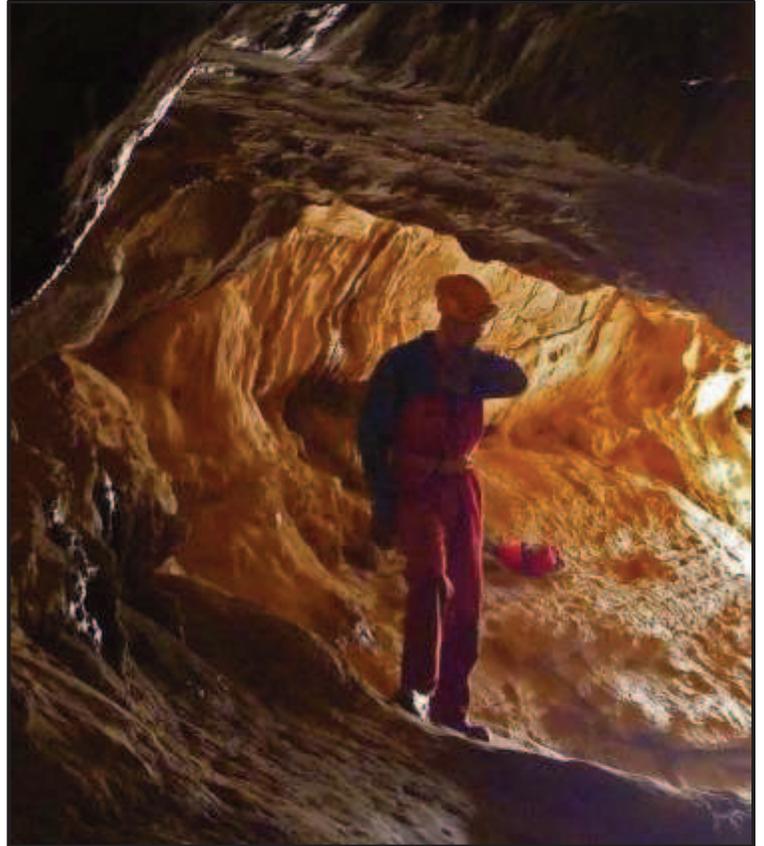
John's self portrait in Roadside Pit

On Sunday morning we got an early start in breaking down the camp and were headed out the gate by 9:00. Amos, Andy Field, and Gianni decided to visit Friar's Hole while Andy Filer, Matt, and I headed to nearby Lost World Caverns where Terry McClanathan had rigged the originally discovered entrance, a 120 foot shaft known as Grapevine Pit. We were joined at the cave by Pat Minnick, Stitch, and Scott. After signing waivers in the gift shop, we huffed up the hill to the pit entrance, which is now covered by a concrete pad with a 2 foot square hole in the middle of it. Matt descended first, followed by Andy, and then me. I rigged my rack, sat on the edge of the hole and then popped in. The shaft was very lovely clean limestone with a few sections of flowstone and several well-defined ledges at points around the perimeter. Very near the top of the drop I managed to kick loose a toaster sized rock. I yelled "ROCK!" as it bounced off a ledge and rocketed towards the landing zone where it landed with a very loud crash and ricocheted off and passed right between Andy's legs. He was taking video, so I hope he got that on tape and I'm glad it didn't hit him. I continued my slow rappel down and noticed how hot the aluminum bars on my rack were becoming, despite my slow rate of descent. I was intimidated by the height of the drop, so I didn't look up to see how far down I had come, and I didn't look down to see how high up I still was. I just stared at the walls in my immediate vicinity until the shaft broke through the ceiling entrance about 60 feet off the floor of the big room of Lost World Caverns, which was completely lit up in all its commercial cave glory. What a fantastic view! It was really a beautiful sight to behold. The best part was that after the rappel I got to walk around and tour the cave and then exit through the gift shop rather than having to climb back out 120 feet. Andy and Pat both ascended back out the way they came. Terry McClanathan had already rappelled and ascended the pit at least once before we got there, and he ascended the pit again and rappelled back down again in the time it took me to walk out the gift shop and back up the hill! That guy is something else. I made sure to buy something from the gift shop and thank the owner before we all piled back into the van and made the trip back to Carlisle. ([Click here for video of Swago Pit Drop](#)) ☐

Upper WV-MD Trip Report

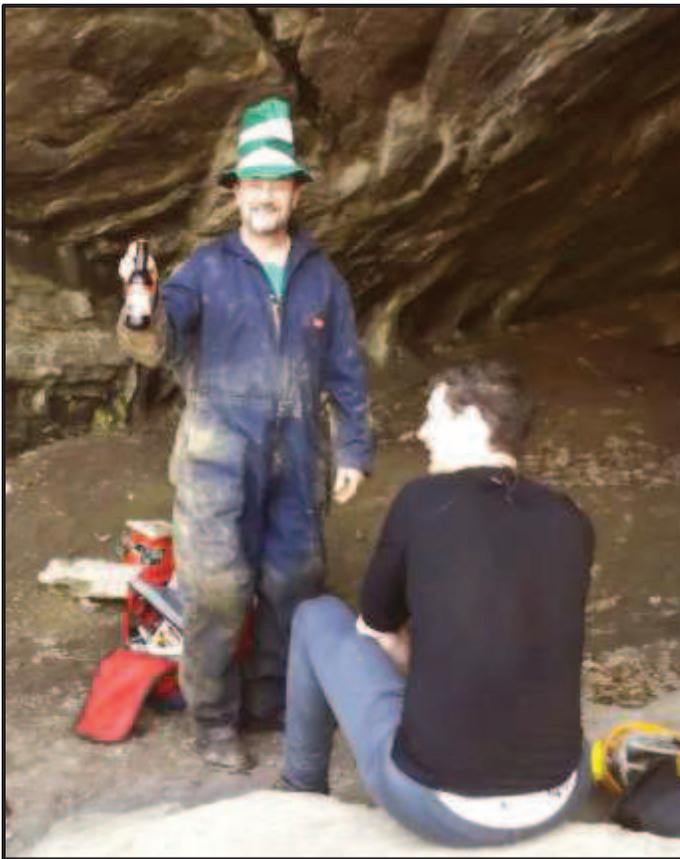
By Will Hepp

On March 17th a small group composed of me, Andy Filer, Dave Morrow, Gordy Ley, John Boswell, and his son Justin went on a marathon trip to five small caves in the West Virginia Panhandle. The first cave we visited was Donaldson's located next to a cemetery. A short walk led us to the gated entrance with a particularly nice view of the countryside. The cave had 3 main passages one of which was filled with water. The next cave we visited was Dam 4. The cave had a small stream flowing from the entrance, and some scary looking upper passages. The cave was also long and strait with a few small rooms off the main passage.



Dave Morrow in Dam #4 Cave, C & O Canal Photo by Andy Filer

Snyder's Landing 1 was the third cave we visited. This cave was just a long straight passage, with a small room at the end. Justin only made it halfway due to concerns the spiders and crickets would eat him. This cave was located close to the last two caves we then visited, Killiansburg Shelter Cave and Snyder's Landing 2. Killiansburg shelter cave was a large shelter at the top of a hill, and a smaller one near the bottom. The cave was up a hill and had a large entrance. Snyder's Landing 2 was the last cave we visited, its located around 500 feet from Killiansburg Shelter Cave. This cave has 3 entrances in a triangular pattern (2 on the ground one you have to rappel to). This cave was the longest of the day and had the serpentine passage which was fun to squeeze through. Even though the caves weren't all that big it was a nice relaxing day. I got to check off 5 more caves I've done, and as always you get to eat a ton after you're done. □



Being St Patrick's Day, Gordy smuggled some Irish Beer in his pack, and provided some refreshments at end of day at Killiansburg Cave Photo by John Boswell

Underground Tsunami Witnessed at Nevada's Devil's Hole

April 5, 2012 / [Nevada](#), [United States](#), [North America](#)

At team visiting Nevada's [Devil's Hole](#) recently were lucky enough to witness an underground tsunami.

On March 20th, while monitoring the population of endangered [pupfish](#) that call the collapsed cave home, the team noticed water level begin rising and sinking. It began first with quarter-inches fluctuations, then inches, then feet. By the time they made it out of the 9 meter (30 foot) deep hole, the pool was almost completely sucked out of the hole. After a few more cycles of filling and emptying, the pool of water returned to a normal level.

It was later discovered that the cause was an underground tsunami that had resulted from a 7.4 magnitude earthquake 19 kilometers (12 miles) deep and 3,200 kilometers (2,000 miles) away in southern Mexico.

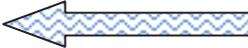
This is only the third time that tidal effects of earthquakes have been observed at Devil's Hole since it received protection in 1976.

Extra exciting is that the folks were able to take a [video of the underground tsunami](#) with their pocket-size video cameras, so anyone can experience the rare occurrence. □

Cleversburg Sink

Current water level

As of June 18, 2012, 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 feet deep, about the same as in March. Checked by Ken T and Jake Troup

Carnegie Cave Update

May 2012, by Ken Tayman

Gordy Ley and Ken Tayman replaced the PVC tube cave register with an ammo box in hopes of keeping the register itself a little drier.

Also Howard White replaced the plaque at the entrance with updated guidance regarding parking. (removing comment regarding parking in the park's soccer parking area and directing cavers to the gravel parking area just down the road from the cave.

Analysis of the register indicates the cave is still being heavily visited with more than 113 visitors recorded in the register between February 27 and May 13, 2012. Approximately 2/3 of these cavers were already represented on the Carnegie Cave User e-mail list. Will be adding 7 new email addresses to the list which will represent 37 of the recent, newer cavers □

CAVE BUCK\$

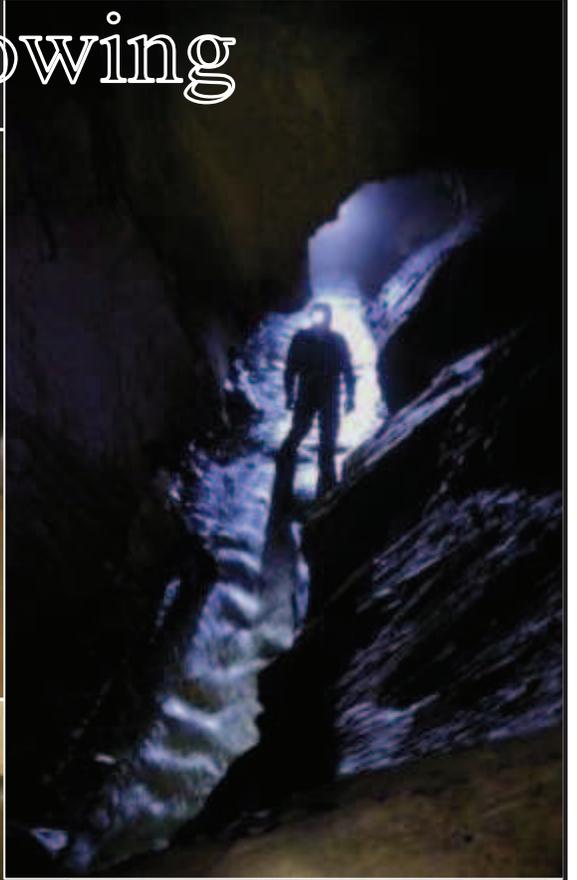
As of June 18, 2012

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 21, 2012, FCG approved a \$50 cave buck contribution to Mid-Atlantic Karst Conservancy. Since starting in February 1998, FCG has collected and donated \$1182.00 Cave Bucks to the following organizations:

Tytoona Cave Preserve	\$ 40
Southeastern Cave Conservancy	\$ 54
Pennsylvania Cave Conservancy	\$282
West Virginia Cave Conservancy	\$318
Mid-Atlantic Karst Conservancy	\$463
Appalachian Cave Conservancy	\$ 25
Total	\$ 1182

Porters/Blowing



Porters/Blowing Caves

March 23-25 by Ken Tayman

Barry hadn't been caving for a couple of years, and now that he was retired, and had his knee worked on, he was interested in getting back underground. Nothing too demanding, like vertical, and not too much crawling that would put a lot of stress on his knee. He suggested a trip to Porters and Blowing, in southern VA, not from Clifton Forge.

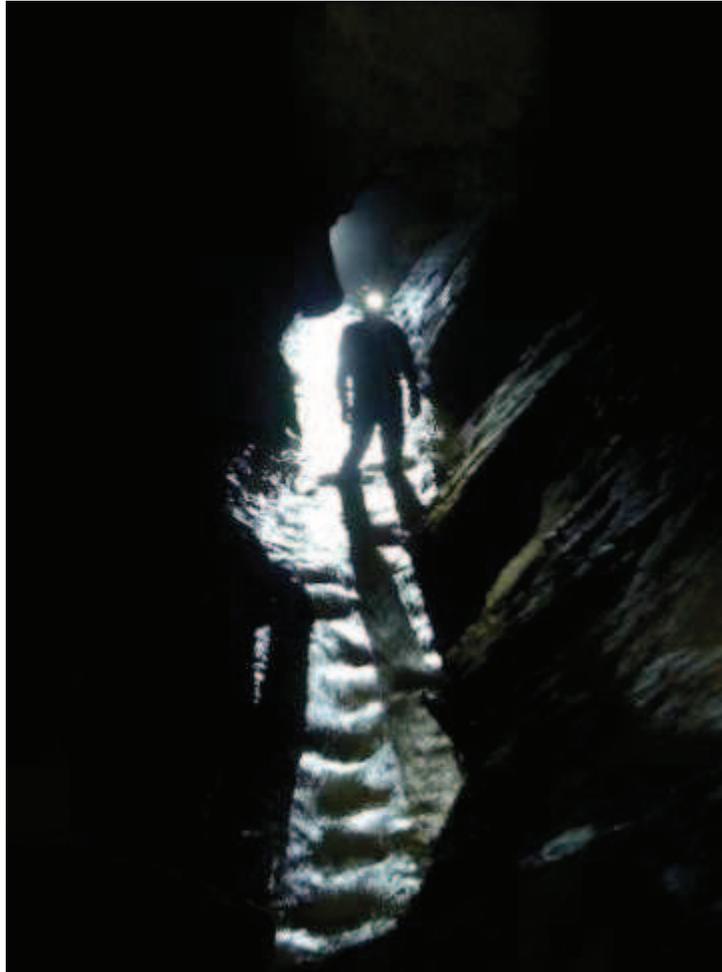
After a record setting number of FCGList emails during the planning process, we ended up with seven FCG members and guest. Barry, Pat, Gordy, Ken T, John, Andy and Marvin were cavers on these trips.

We arrived early enough on Friday to do Blowing first instead of waiting till Sunday AM. We stopped by the owners and watched Barry hobble up the sidewalk and we were all wondering if his knee would hold up for the entire weekend?

Just a short distance into the cave, we found the tight "U-Shaped" crawl slumped shut. Barry had anticipated this possibility and had brought an entrenching tool and hand pick to dig it open. Barry and Andy worked on it for 15 minutes and then we all headed in. This was new cave for Andy, Gordy and John. Not much route-finding required. mostly walking and crawling, just following your nose.

There were a few interesting mud slopes and some sloppy, soupy mud floor passages, and a few short, tight spots, but nothing really too bad. We worked our way to the back of the cave where a big steep, mud slope leads down to a stream. This stream winds its way around a bend and ends in a deep pool.

On my previous trip to this cave, we arrived at this spot without a camera. I made a mental note at that time, that if I ever made it back here, we would have to have camera equipment and take a few minutes to get a shot. I asked Gordy to get around the bend and backlight the scene with his Sten. I asked Pat to stand in the stream, and then had a couple of cavers take several shots. The photo in the center of this page is the result of our efforts.



Pat standing in stream at bottom of Blowing. Photo by Andy Filer

We retraced our route out, got changed and stopped by the owners to let him know we were all out safely. The funny thing was, now after three hours of digging, crawling and climbing, Barry's gait up the owner's side was much better than before the trip. Looks like a little cave mud can work healing wonders on a knee.

Spent the night at Buckhorn Campground.

Very close to the caving action. Ate at a crowded sports bar, enjoyed a nice campfire, had a lot of rain, sacked out.

Saturday morning Barry and Marvin pulled out first to swing by Porter Cave's owner and pick up the key. Later the rest met up at the cave. The hike up the ravine was steeper than I remembered from 20 years ago. (aren't they all steeper?)

A stream was running hard into the entrance next to the ladder. We had anticipated a fairly dry trip, but were thinking after last night's rain, it might be pretty wet. Unlocked the gate and climbed down the ladder.

Once in, we noticed the water channeled off to the left. I had forgotten about the significant climb-down just inside the entrance. It just reminded me about how many details you can forget after a few decades. we roamed around awhile checking out some obvious passage, then headed toward the main section of the cave.

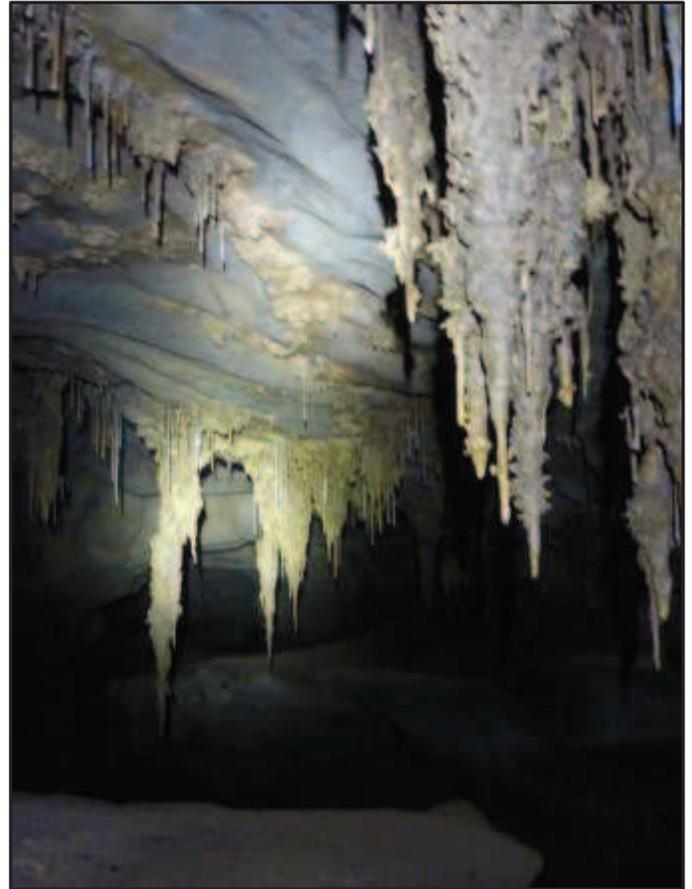
After a long crawl I didn't remember, we arrived at the "Keyhole" which can be a little scary if you are a "large" caver. It's about a 20 feet long notch, with a crevice below it just big enough to suck you down into it and trap your foot or leg. Once through, the fact you had to exit through it on the way out was always in the back of my mind.

Just beyond the keyhole, Barry got a little disoriented and we weren't sure how to continue on. We got side tracked into a room where the only way out was some tricky climb-ups. We knew this wasn't the "standard" way in. so Barry and I kept looking around, while the rest did the climb up. The climb was too bad, but Barry said he was having a hard time getting his knee up for the climbs. We waited about an hour for others to return.



John inching his way into the "keyhole".

Photo by Andy Filer



Ceiling formations in upper rooms

Just after they rejoined up with Barry and me, we found the passage that led to the "Big Room". After listening to the description of what they'd been exploring, we think they all made it there via an alternate passage.

We started heading out. The Keyhole seems to be easier going out. Perhaps it's because you have no choice when leaving. Just guide yourself in and keep shoving, pushing and inching you way through.

As we worked our way out, we noticed the pits with showers seem to have a lot more water streaming in. Perhaps it was the water from the entrance stream working its way down into the lower section. Perhaps it was raining hard outside. It would be *fun* hiking down to the vehicles and changing in the rain. **Surprise!** When we climbed out of the entrance it was sunny with blue skies.

Another night in camp. nice campfire and more rain. Headed back home Sunday Morning. Nice trip. Good to get Barry back underground after few years!!☐



October 17, 2011

Windmills to shut at night following demise of rare bat *Kathy Mellott*

LILLY — Night operation of the windmills in the North Allegheny Windpower Project has been halted following discovery of a dead Indiana bat under one of the turbines, an official with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service said Monday. The finding marks only the second location where an Indiana bat has been found dead under a wind turbine. Two Indiana bats were found under turbines in the Mid-west, said Clint Riley, supervisor for Fish and Wildlife's Pennsylvania field office.

"While finding the dead bat is not good news for any of us, it does show the monitoring works," Riley said from his State College office. The find is significant because the Indiana bat is an endangered species and is protected by the federal Endangered Species Act.

The 35-windmill farm was built by Gamesa Energy USA in Portage, Washington and Cresson townships in Cambria County and extends across the line into Blair County. It became operational in September 2009 and was purchased by Duke Energy in July.

According to Duke Energy spokesman Greg Efthimiou, "We take our commitment to wildlife and the environment very seriously. The bat was discovered during volunteer daily monitoring of the farm on Sept. 26, and Duke immediately brought in an Indiana bat expert for confirmation. We have not operated at night (the span beginning before dusk and ending after dawn), since the confirmation of the bat. Mere hours after discovery, we entered into collaborative discussions (with state and federal officials) how to move forward. A part of those discussions was to stop nighttime operation of the farm". The daily monitoring is part of a cooperative agreement between the wind farm owner and the state game commission. □

Northeast Bat Working Group

2012 Annual Meeting

January 11-13 by Glen Sarvis

Thanks to Jim Hart and Howard and Diane White for the opportunity to attend this meeting.

When I arrived I overheard conversations asserting the depressing state of the WNS mortality from 2011 hibernacula surveys. Estimates from 80 to 90% mortality were being reported in various state presentations. Mortality was highest for Little Brown bats and Indiana bats. Total decline of all bats in PA was reported as 82%. All states in the Northeast US now have WNS. "We are in the Post WNS era."

Infected colonies have also been discovered in North Carolina, Tennessee, Kentucky, Indiana, and suspected in Missouri and Oklahoma. It has also been found in Canada in Quebec, Ontario, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia.

Several presentations emphasized that we need to know where the survivors are and what they are doing. Acoustic monitoring and beam-block population estimates are less disrupting to the bats. However, there is still a need for hibernacula and maternity observations as well as mist netting, and harp netting to ensure the accuracy of the protocols used in analyzing these less invasive methods. Jim's presentation "Can Changes in Bat Population be Detected Using Summer Netting Success?" addressed some of these issues. He emphasized that "We're using the same guidelines across the state, but from a variety of habitats" for example, no netting under 50 degrees Fahrenheit, or during high winds. He also said that large-scale projects are carried out and data is maintained long term. "We can model to get around unequal sample to real population".

WNS was not the only subject, there were sixty presentations. Some of the topics reported were: Acoustic Monitoring, GateKeeper beam break system, Mist netting, Harp netting, Estimating mortality at Wind Facilities, Bats, Fruit and the Amazon Forest and the importance of taking photographs. Leslie Sturges reported on the "Save Lucy Campaign"... including live rehabilitated bats. She encouraged us to "Use the Cute", choose the photographs of bats that look friendly, not frightening. Greg Turner in a presentation "Caving in a Post-WNS World" emphasized that "organized cavers are our allies", and exhorted that bat workers should direct casual cavers they meet to join NSS affiliated groups. □

"Quotes of the Quarter"

"5 over 55"

PM describing FCG members on Porter's trip

"I sharted myself awake **this morning...**"

JB re not making it to vertical practice

"After I go caving, I feel for like a bigger man!"

7 yr old JB after trip to Nisewonder Cave

"I've been having a hard time getting it up..."

BD re using his bad knee to climb in Porters

"hahaha you dirty ol' sonofa bitch!"

SI to KT re April Fools joke about new cave discovery

Diakon Wilderness Trips

by Chris Edenbo

Diakon Wilderness students have been using Carnegie Cave for the past two weeks:

Nov 12 - 11 students 3 staff, Chris Edenbo trip leader. Safe trip. Everyone stayed dry. Saw 1 bat.

Nov 19 - 11 students 3 staff, Chris Edenbo trip leader. Safe trip. Several people got wet up to their knees. Saw same bat in the same place.

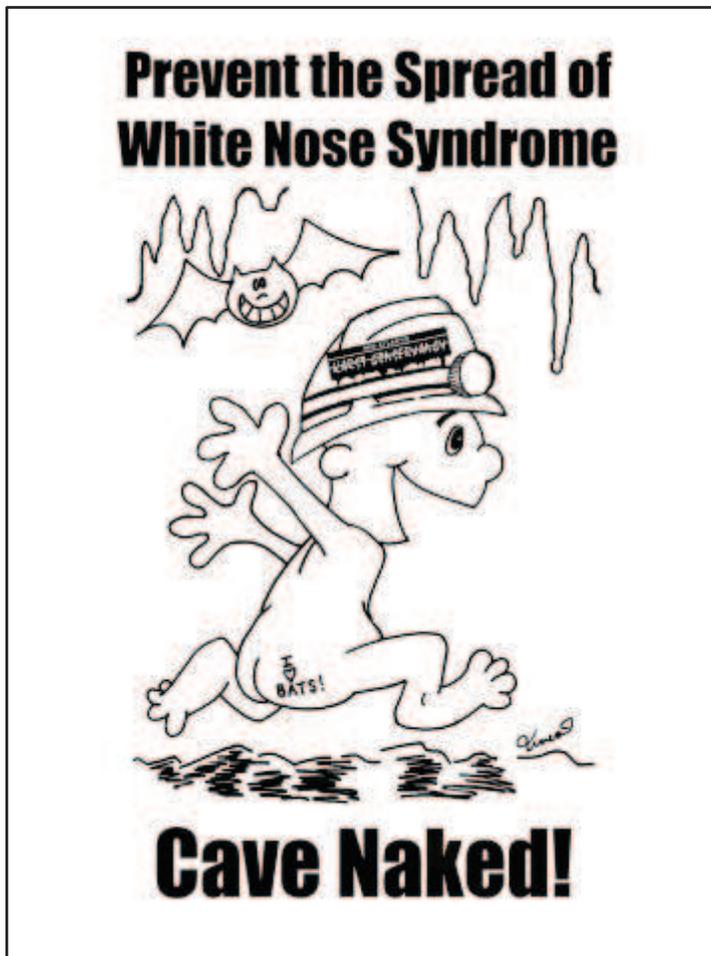
Nov 26 - Cancelled due to wet weather

Dec 3 - Cancelled due to wet weather

These trips are short. We are entering the cave, upon reaching the first hallway we turn left to go through the breakdown / old entrances section. There is an intermittent lake there that is flooding through one of our favorite squeezes that we call, "The Mail Slot." The students are let loose in this area for approximately 30 minutes during which time they poke their head in every hole and try several squeeze passages. Then we pull together as a group, do a lights-out experience, talk for a bit, and ask for student leaders who can lead the group out of the cave.

The students at Diakon Wilderness Center are under 18 and court-ordered to attend, often for some or several small crimes such as truancy, drug possession / paraphernalia, fighting, etc. Emphasis is placed on working together, cave safety, maintaining emotional safety (say nice things. say supportive things), and leadership. During these caving days we often see a struggling group step up and pull together to overcome the perceived risk. We have included Carnegie Cave in our curriculum for the past six years. I have taken staff there without students as training. Tyler, is one of the staff who has been on many trips and through several of my trainings.

Several of the students from the first three trips have gone out of their way to tell me how much they liked the first intro trip to Carnegie (even just to the small section there) and that they would love to go back, or do another trip. □

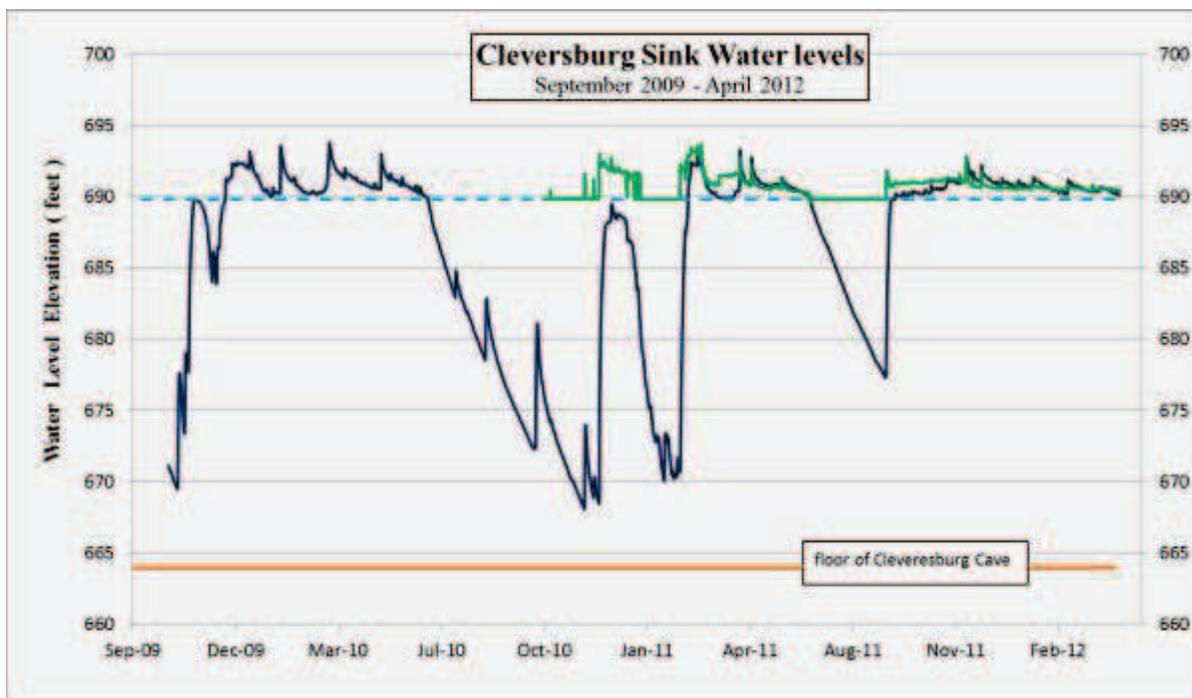


Cleversburg Sink

Thomas P. Feeney, Ph.D.
Department of Geography and Earth Science
Shippensburg University

Every 15-minutes since September 2009 a small instrument in Cleversburg Sink Cave has made an observation of water depth, temperature, and the amount of dissolved material in the water. Initial data in the fall of 2009 confirmed what we all knew, that the water levels fluctuated roughly 20 feet (dark blue line). The winter 2009/2010 data also revealed a curious pattern: after the cave filled it seemed to remain high and fluctuate just a few feet, much like a surface stream. Then in July 2010 water levels began to drop sharply. This rapid decline suggested that the flow in nearby Burd Run had dried up, and that a major supply of water to the cave had been removed. At this point we installed another instrument in the channel of Burd Run, and surveyed the elevations of the cave floor, Burd Run's channel (dashed line), and both instruments so that water levels in the cave and the stream could be compared. By October 2010 we were confirming the idea that when Burd Run was dry, water levels in the cave were falling below the 690 elevation of Burd Run. In contrast, when water was flowing in Burd Run (Green line above the dashed line), the cave filled, and the two water levels mirrored on another.

Perhaps the two most important events occurred in July 2010 and June 2011 when Burd Run dried-up and water levels in the cave began to drop much more rapidly. These two events demonstrate the hydrologic connection between the stream and the cave water levels. Ideally, the next step is to perform a dye trace that physically connects water flow from Burd Run to the cave. Such a trace would have to be conducted at the precise time when Burd Run is going dry. Stay tuned!



McDowell



McDowell Dig

June 2, 2012 by Ken Tayman

This project started when Don brought some old trip reports from back in the '60s, written by Mike Houpt. They were documentation from field trips with notes and locations of caves he'd found in the area. It offered the opportunity for those interested to track down and perhaps rediscover some caves.

Back in February, Gordy Don and I had searched out the location and spoke with the owner about looking for this small cave. He showed great interest and offered us on-site parking and permission to dig any time.

On June 2, Gordy, Ken T and Andy stopped by with shovels, crow-bars and buckets. I had sent an email the night before just notifying the owner we would like come out on Saturday. When we arrived, no one was home, so we drove down to the sink hole. Andy started at one location where you could hear an underground stream running. Gordy started at another nearby sink. Within ten minutes Andy was seeing dark voids and feeling cool air.

We kept pulling clean rocks. Void getting larger and closer. I wouldn't let Andy slide in until the hole was almost large enough for us bigger guys to fit. He offered to slide in and enlarge from the inside. It would be easier to pull the rubble down and in. Andy is a digging machine!!

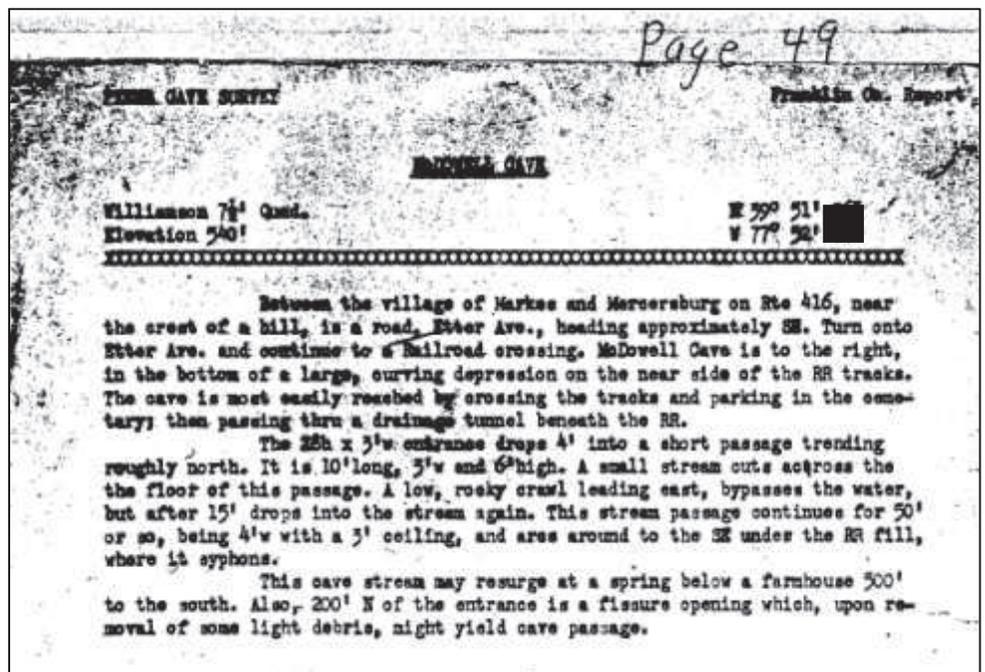
The stream was several inches deep and flowing really hard. It had really poured the day and night before. He moved a few rocks to the side and cleared a few others and channeled the water to an undercut channel on the side of the passage. Now there was very little water to crawl through. The passage was four feet high just inside the entrance and continued downstream as a 2' x 2' crawl.

He went down stream several feet and around a 90 degree bend to the right. He continued to redirect the water and move rocks to the side.

I had lost sight of him around the bend but could hear him pushing something back upstream toward me. I thought he was manhandling a slab of rock. It turned out to be a fairly good sized tire. I am constantly amazed at how water can move objects through small passages.

I took the tire and pushed it up the slope to Gordy at the entrance. Then we all crawled downstream and met up with Andy. It was kind of cool cave with lots of water flowing after 100' (+/-) the ceiling comes down to near the water. At this point the water is about two feet deep. we will need to come back when the weather is drier to see how much further we can go if the water drops some.

In the meantime the owner came home and seemed excited to see us. He said he wanted to go in (when a little drier) We'll go back and check another fissure and do a survey and map. Neat Lead Mike!!! ([Click here for video-clip peek inside](#))



Mike Houpt's field notes

**Kenneth Tayman, Editor
13373 Sunrise Drive
Blue Ridge Summit, PA 17214**

FRANKLIN COUNTY GROTTOS



Gate to Porters Cave, Va

photo by John Boswell