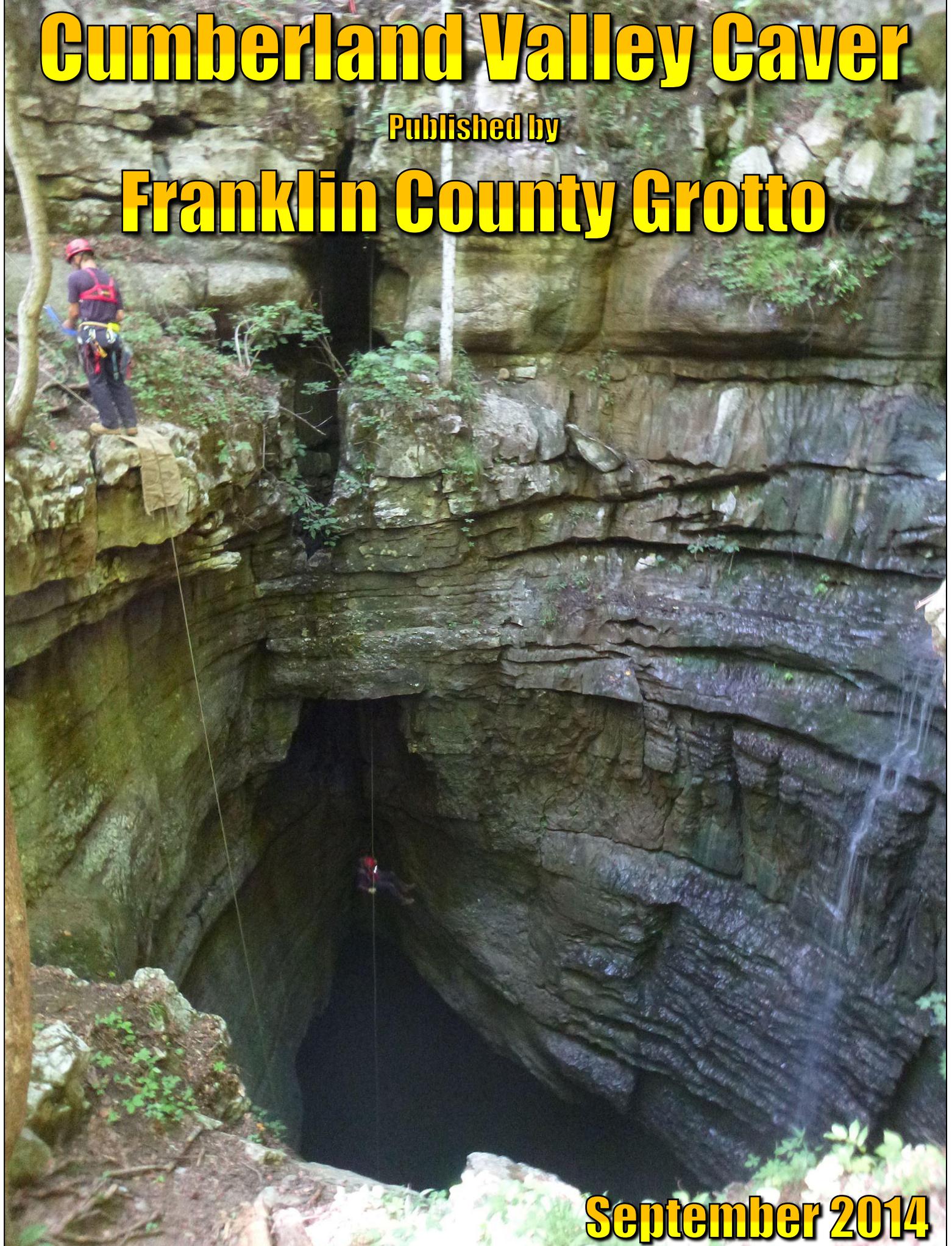


Cumberland Valley Caver

Published by

Franklin County Grotto



September 2014

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FRANKLIN COUNTY GROTTO

An Internal Organization of the National Speleological Society

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Franklin County Grotto meetings are held the 3rd Monday of the month. The location is at "**The Cottage Pub and Restaurant**" at 572 Wayne Ave, Chambersburg, PA 17201. The meeting starts at 7:00pm. 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 fccg@karst.org.

The Cumberland Valley Caver is published four 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 any way. Other interested parties must request permission in advance. Franklin County Grotto actively participates in a newsletter exchange program. All exchanges should be mailed to: John Boswell, 45 Manada Creek Circle, Carlisle, PA 17013. Information regarding exchanges should be coordinated with editor so the exchange list can be updated.

Cover Photo: Andrew "Stitch" Rentzel and Gordy Ley descend into Stephens Gap Cave, one of the many pits visited during the 2014 NSS Convention in Huntsville, AL. Photo by Mike Scafini

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See the entire newsletter in **COLOR** on the website
<http://www.karst.org/fcq/fcqnewsletters.htm>

From the editor:

Coming just on the heels of Franklin County Grotto's loss of Ken Jones March 20, the Grotto was dealt another horrific blow when we lost Ken Tayman unexpectedly on June 3. Ken was a huge part of our Grotto, serving as Chair as well as newsletter editor. Aside from the devastating personal tragedy of losing our dear friend, the loss to the Grotto cannot be overstated. Ken's expertise in putting together our newsletter, presiding over meetings, organizing as well as attending most of our cave trips, his easy way of communicating with landowners, and his enthusiastic willingness to share his time and knowledge with newcomers to caving will be extremely difficult to replace.

I'd like to thank Gordy, Mike, Stitch, Andy, Scott, and Don for articles, pictures, quotes, printing, distribution assistance and web support used in getting this issue out to our members and friends.

John Boswell, Interim Editor

Poking Around in Python Pit

July 5, 2014, by John Boswell

Rumors were circulating of a possible new passage in Python Pit, so on July 5, Gordy, Jeff Boyer and myself met up at the Greencastle McDonalds and headed out to the P-caves to check it out.

We parked at the normal spot next to a lovely field of wheat and suited up while watching the farmers working in tandem using their wheel rake and forage harvester to gather silage from the other field.

Arriving at the cave, we filed in with our tools and quickly made our way down to the stream passage to look for the new passage. The passage wasn't actually new, and is shown on the map as an unsurveyed lead. But it had indeed been washed open to larger proportions than I had seen it on previous visits. Gordy squeezed in first and began dragging sand out with his hoe. He was soon out of sight and Jeff and I busied ourselves digging out high spots in the stream in an attempt to lower the water level in the near syphon for a possible duck-under foray while listening to Gordy's continuing excavation efforts.

After about 20-30 minutes, Gordy reemerged out of breath and told us about the passage. Jeff went through next to check it out, and I went in last.

The passage is a sandy-floored belly crawl that trends upward slightly for about 25 feet to a slanted, narrow room that allows you to stand up for about 3 or

4 feet. Then the passage drops to an even smaller belly crawl tube that leads slightly downward for about 20 feet. Jeff pushed through this to a round room about 7-8 feet in diameter and maybe 4 feet high. It has a sand floor, but no real leads heading out of the room and no noticeable airflow.

I headed downstream to the Hopeful Sump, which I had not seen before. It was pretty impressive and "Hopeful" seems to be a good name for it. The stream goes from a few inches deep to a deep lake just as it heads under the low far wall. The roof becomes even lower and meets the water about 4 feet beyond. The flow of the stream doesn't appear to slow at all as it enters the sump, so it doesn't seem like there is much restricting the flow and the sump may just be another duck-under. It would be interesting to see what a diver could find out.

We headed back to the exit passage and shuttled the tools back up the drop and headed back to the entrance, saving the duck-under foray through the near syphon for another day.

Since we were already there and Jeff had not previously been in the canyon section of the cave, we decided to poke around on that side, too. We wound our way through the sinuous, python-y passage and chimneied high and low back to check out the colonnade and the 5-foot broomstick, which is actually now a

column with a skinny bent straw reaching its withered finger down from the ceiling to touch the broomstick. We looked around in the bottom of the canyon passage trying to find the Sally Forth

Passage, but had no luck. We headed back to the entrance room and made our way out of the cave after about a 2 hour trip.

American Student Ends Up Trapped in Giant Vagina Sculpture

MAINZ, Germany -- Call it a stimulating study-abroad experience. An American exchange student sparked an "extraordinary rescue mission" when his leg became trapped inside a giant vagina sculpture. "It was a dare," fire department squad leader Markus Mozer told NBC News. "The young man had tried to pose for an unusual photo and climbed into the artwork."

A total of 22 rescue workers with special equipment were deployed to the scene in the southern Germany city of Tuebingen on Friday to free the 20-year-old but a "forceps delivery was not necessary," local newspaper Schwaebisches Tagblatt noted. "We were able to pull the victim out with our bare hands after about 30 minutes," Mozer added. The six-foot replica of female genitalia was installed 13 years ago outside the microbiology and virology department of the city's university clinic. It is worth nearly \$200,000.



German firefighters extract a 20-year old American student after he got trapped inside a giant vagina sculpture.

Big Ridge Cave

June 21, 2014 by Mike Scafini

With the cancelation of MUDfest this year, planned to be held at Lincoln Caverns, a group of us decided it would be a good idea to continue with at least one of the proposed trips and visit Big Ridge Cave, located in McVeytown, to see a new cave for a number of us and get some extra vertical practice in before the NSS Convention in Huntsville next month. After some greatly appreciated coordination between John Boswell, Ed Kehs, and the landowner, it was concluded that the trip would be a GO for Saturday, June 21st. Andy Filer, Amos Mincin, Giani and Irina Eftime met in the morning at my house in Carlisle to ride up with Amos to the property in McVeytown. What appeared to be a gloomy and rainy morning soon broke into quite a pleasant day. Upon reaching



Preparing to enter the cave

the gate, we followed Pat Minnick, Ed Kehs, and his friend Zach McKeehan as far up the steep, muddy road to the cave as we could, before we had to park Amos' car and carpool the rest of the way to the top of the ridge. After gearing up, and some quick last-minute rigging instructions from Pat, Andy and I headed into the cave with our ropes to begin setting up the various drops. I took this opportunity to shadow Andy, an experienced rigger, for the afternoon. Reading about knots, ropes, and rigging is certainly a lot different than actually doing it, and I'd say I learned a number of new techniques on this trip in this regard. After reaching the bottom of the first drop (a muddy, slanted cliff barely wide enough to rappel on your knees for most of it's roughly 120 feet), Andy and

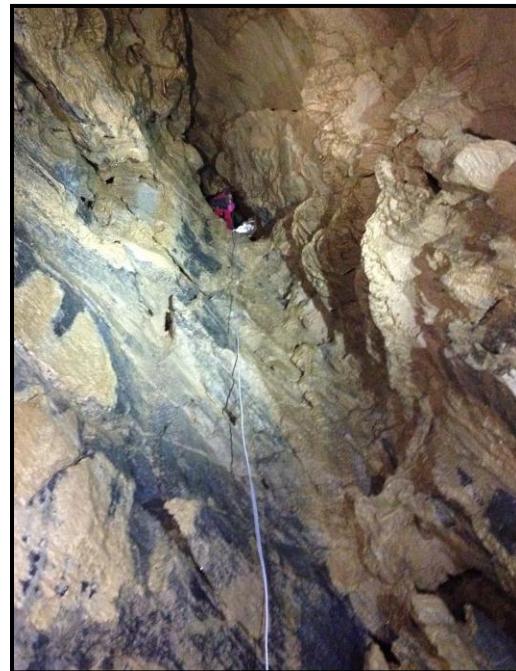


Andy rigging a drop



I debated which direction to take next. We assumed the phone line running to the bottom of the cave marked the route, and after a little more crafty rigging by Andy, using some webbing and a few carabiners, we were on our way. Shortly thereafter, Pat came along and de-rigged this drop, since the crawling route that was behind us was the route we would end up taking to exit the cave. After two more drops (about 55 and 80 feet each), both rigged from Andy's new rope, we all soon reached the bottom. All seven of us then dropped our vertical gear in this room and began through a few crawls and tight squeezes to eventually empty into a large, decorated room full of milky-white flowstone and popcorn-style rocks. We all quickly went to work taking photos of these from all angles. This was definitely one of the nicest (and most interesting) caves I've been to in Pennsylvania in quite some time. After this room, we all crawled under some large breakdown and down-climbed a tall ledge, to come to a narrow channel half-filled with

water. With no one wanting to get soaked before the long ascent out of the cave, we opted to turn back at this point. Andy climbed the bottom two drops last and stuffed his rope as he went. I did the same for the first drop to pull mine. This proved to be a lot more difficult (not to mention inefficient) than I had originally planned. Next time I will just pull the rope upon reaching the top, like any normal person would have done. After everyone safely exited the cave, we all drove over to Ed Kehs' project dig, a good distance away on the property. We helped move some buckets of soil before calling it a day and beginning our drive home. After all, Amos, Giani, and Irina still had another three hours to go even after reaching Carlisle! I'm sure everyone would agree that this cave was well worth the travel to see though.

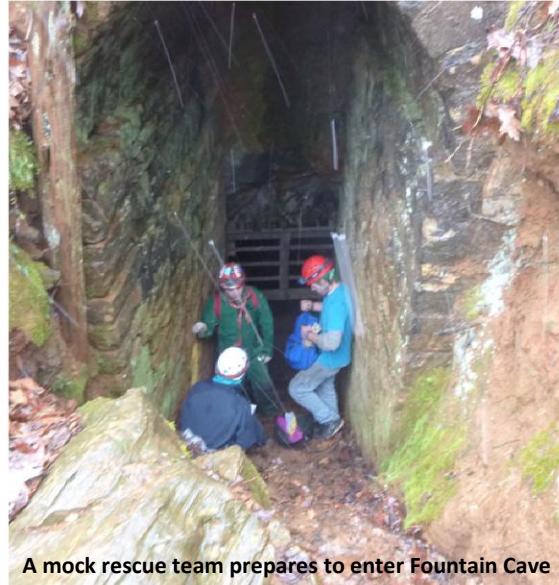


Rescue Training

By Jason Ross

We started the morning by meeting at Grand Caverns 9:00 sharp. It was raining with some snow. Three of us from FCG, Ish, Steve and myself, got there early. We were instructed to meet under the pavilion to sign in and wait for more info and instructions. The scenario started with two friends caving and Heather came out to call for help for her friend Victoria. So we were looking for two people.

The leaders started us out by getting two people to be entrance control since there were two possible caves that we had to check out. Next, they went down the sign-in list for the first search teams. We had four people on each search team. Our team consisted of Steve, Steve, Chris and me. We got going to the cave with one of the leaders. When we got up the hill, the path was starting to get white from the snow. Once at the cave, we checked in with the person at entrance control and started into the cave. It was very interesting that there were steps leading down into the cave. We were told that at one time this cave was commercial. At the beginning was very easy walking on the path, even though a lot of places where damp and wet which made them slick (what's new - we were caving). Lots of formations all around with a good bit of markings from the last time they were surveying the cave. I think most of the marks said 10-2013, so finding clues if people were in this cave was not easy. We looked around



A mock rescue team prepares to enter Fountain Cave

and yelled a few times and got back past where the commercial part ended and up around the corner Steve found Victoria.

Steve started checking out Victoria and we were writing down the info to take it back out to entrance control to radio down to base. Chris and I took the note and headed back to the entrance. Chris was in the front and at one point I asked him if he remembered how to get back out and he said yes. I then told him well I think we want to go this way and not the direction he was heading. It did not take long to get to Victoria so it was very quick to get back to the entrance. We gave the note to entrance control and they radioed the information to base.

We were instructed to wait for the medical group to take them to the patient. While we were waiting for them I went back outside and found that all of

the ground was totally white like it was winter time or something. The medical group then showed up and got signed in with entrance control and back into the cave we went. We got back to the patient and then

medical

took over, but the other half of our first group had some updated medical information that needed to go back out to entrance control.

The other Steve started

heading out and I yelled for him to wait up so there were always two people together. We got back out to the entrance and by then coms was at the entrance so they followed us back into the cave.

When we got back to the patient the medical team had everything all packed up so we started hauling the patient out of the cave. It was much better moving a

patient in the cave than trying to do the practice we had done the day before. You now knew where you needed to go and what you could and could not do. Half way out of the cave and I was asked to take over coms.



Approaching the entrance in the spring snow

We tried to radio out with updated info, but coms stopped working, so the person in charge said forget it because we would be out by the time we tried to fix the coms.

The group got out no problem and when we got out of the cave you could not even tell that it had snowed earlier, but it was a lot windier than before so it felt much colder.

We had to wait a little while for the other group to get out of the second cave and then there was a debrief of the day's activities.



2014 NSS Convention Notes

by Stitch Rentzel

Natural Well

Was a hike to get to. Parking was not the best. We had passed some other cavers on the way down to the cave. Made some contacts for later in the week. Also learned how they rigged it. The rigging is not the best. There is a huge tree, but there is a hiking path between the tree & the edge of the drop. Then the rope has to go over a rock wall which is partially falling apart, there is an old ass fence around the outside of the sink. Gordy, Mike, Andy, and me were there. It was the first 100+ foot pit we did at convention. The climb out wasn't too bad. Standing at the bottom was so awesome! It was my first open air pit. It was Epic! I just stood there and was like "O.K., this is what TAG is!" Such a rush. Right before we left, Mike stepped in dog shit right outside of his car door. It was pretty funny!

Neversink



Andy Filer rappels into Neversink

What a great cave! It is a classic. I was so excited to get to do it. Amos joined us for this cave. There was a bit of a hike involved with this one as well, with plenty of poison ivy to go with it. We rigged off the bolts just below the clearing at the top of the sink. There are some other bolts around the edge of the sink that other people used. It was a picturesque rappel. So beautiful! The light just came in the opening so nicely for photos and the water was running down the far side spraying mist. Very cool experience.

Stephens Gap



Stitch negotiates the lip at Stephens Gap

We saw a rattlesnake on the hike up to the cave. There were a lot of people at the cave when we got there. We were told not to rig the keyhole due to the fact that it was unstable. It was rigged by another group when we arrived. We first checked out the walk-in entrance

and decided who wanted to do what. Gordy wanted to just drop it and walk out, so he used the keyhole rope and dropped to the pedestal and walked out from there. Andy, Mike and I chose another spot to rig off of because we wanted to go all the way to the bottom and then climb out. I personally liked it better. I dropped it first, then Andy and Mike. We dropped to the very bottom of the pit and explored around a little. We didn't have much time because we were trying to hit Pipesides on the way out and still get back for the Howdy Party. I forgot to mention that Glen joined us for the hike up and did the walk in entrance to Stephens Gap.

Pipesides

Small 60 foot pit. Andy had rigged it low. Gordy walks up and says "Why did he rig it so low? Well that sucks!" Mike and I were dying! We rescued a snake out of there. Mike got some great pictures of salamanders and frogs.

Vertical Competition

Everyone participated. It was great. Pat got first place in his division and Gordy got second.
I got second place.
Mike and Andy?
Red Shock did awesome on 100m.

Three Turkey's Plunge

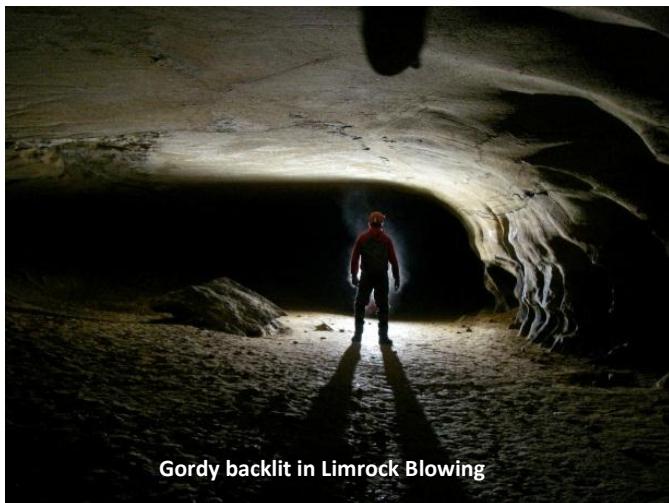
We did this after the vertical

competition. It was in the middle of nowhere. We did some good cave finding to locate the pit. Really a team effort. Red and Pat joined us. They were a lot of fun to have along. Andy rigged it and we all dropped it. We believe that the passage to the other drops was washed shut. It was a good 200-footer. There was some water coming down that was really a pain in the ass, but it made me climb probably the fastest I ever had that week! The hike out provided a rattlesnake and many cobwebs. After we got back to the parking area, Gordy ran out onto the road and got a road-kill armadillo. Mike and Gordy then started dismembering it. Such a thoughtful Grandpa... It smelled very bad.

Pretty Well

Was a nice cave. Long hike. We met Bill and Cathy Schultz from Philly Grotto who were going to rig it for us. But when we got there their rope was not long enough. So Andy and I hiked back down and got his rope and hiked all the way back up. The cave was really cool. Very large room with some great photography opportunities. We had initially rappelled right past it all the way to the lower level. I found a passage that got us up there and Bill took some great photos. There was also another dead armadillo in there, but Gordy decided that he would leave this one alone.

Limrock Blowing



Gordy backlit in Limrock Blowing

Is one of the only horizontal caves we did all week. We spent 3 hours in there. Took some cool pictures and explored a lot of passage. We had a map, but somehow we took the route that did not have any of the reference points that were on the map. So for the majority of the time we were not a 100 percent sure where we were. But we eventually found a passage that had a reference point on it and we figured out where we were very quickly.

Valhalla



Mike Scafini on rope in Valhalla

We drove Gordy's truck up to the cave entrance. It was pretty rough terrain. Mike spotted most of the way up and Andy and I rode on the tailgate. We made it up pretty quickly. Andy rigged the drop and rappelled first, then Pat, Gordy, me, and Mike. We explored a little at the bottom. There was a 200ft dome that seemed a little sketchy with fresh breakdown. It was a sobering experience to see the school bus sized rock that had fallen on those cavers. Even more so to know that they were still under there. Then we climbed out in the same order as we rappelled in.

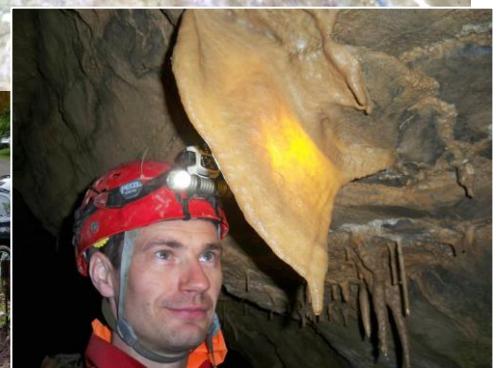
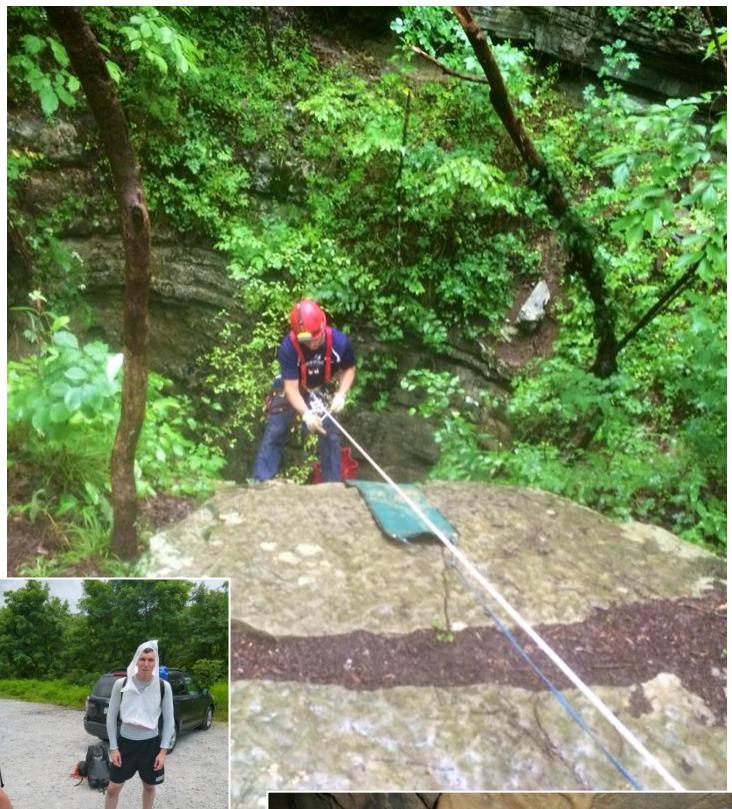
War Eagle

Was a drive to get there. We lost reception many times. Dave Morrow was along for War Eagle. He said it was a good cave to knock the rust off. It was a pretty extensive cave after you dropped the pit. There was a lot of passage to explore. Big borehole stream passage. Some really nice formations, too.

Cagle's Chasm and Jeepside

After packing up, we hit Bojangles for breakfast. Dave Morrow's treat. Then we headed for Cagle's. It was on the way home for most of us so we all drove separately. That made for a lot of cars at the parking area. The neighbors were less than thrilled to see us, but we were polite. The dog kennel was another obstacle to go past. Every dog seemed to

hate us! The hike up wasn't too bad, but there was definitely some discussion on what poison oak looks like. We got up to the entrance and Andy rigged Cagle's and then headed over to Jeepside. I rappelled first into Cagle's with the rope. We had to do some clever padding, but everyone made their way down. Gordy just wanted to take some photos of the entrance of each. From Cagle's you then do a 70 foot climb from the bottom of Cagle's to the bottom of Jeepside. Andy rigged an awesome Y hang for this one. Then you climb 130 feet out of Jeepside. There is a re-belay on the way out of Jeepside, which adds a little bit of a challenge to the whole thing. It is a really nice multi-drop cave system.



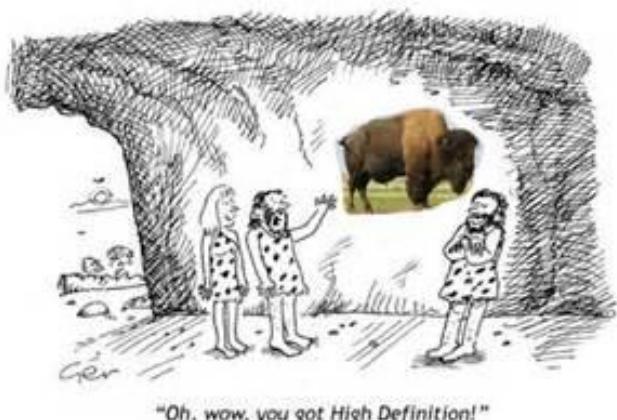
Conodoguinet Cave Clean-Up

Saturday, September 6 was the agreed-upon date for the cleanup of Conodoguinet Cave. The turnout was pretty good with the following participants in attendance:

John Boswell	Gordy Ley
Justin Boswell	Dane Wagle
Pat Minnick	Glen Sarvis
Anne Shepard	Gretchen "Red" Shock
Mike Scafini	Ben Mummert (Preserve Manager)
Audrey Broucek	Jon Foster (Ben's friend)

We met at 11:30 and headed down to get started. The team spread out and gathered up trash and lots of broken glass. We used wired brushes and drill-powered abrasive disks to attack the graffiti around the cave entrance and on the cliff that contains the entrance. Gordy brought his pressure washer and a gas-powered pump that siphoned water directly out of the creek. We quickly discovered that as the pressure washer blasted away the spray paint, it uncovered older layers of paint underneath. We did the best job we could do to remove as much paint as possible. Ben, the preserve manager, suggested a technique he had used before that worked with good result. He mixed lime, water, and mud from the cave to form a sort of stucco slurry and used a paint roller and sponges to apply it over the remaining graffiti. It was very effective and matched the existing rock pretty well due to the mixing in of the cave mud. It not only covers the paint we could not remove, but acts as a very thin protective barrier so that when future vandals spray new paint, it will be much easier to remove. It worked very well and the cave was effectively restored to its former glory.

We took breaks from the heat to cool off in the creek, and several people took turns playing Tarzan and swinging into the creek on the rope swing. I brought my little grill and we had a lunch of hotdogs, sodas and chips. It was an enjoyable and productive way to spend an afternoon, and we got several comments from boaters and fishermen that the cave looks great.



"Oh, wow, you got High Definition!"

CONODOGUINET CAVE CLEAN-UP

Before



Before



After



Before



After



Bat Ranch Trip, Blacksburg, VA

By John Boswell

Pat Minnick, David Briggs and I carpooled down to Blacksburg on Friday August 22. We arrived in the early afternoon and set up camp between rain showers. We chatted awhile with the owner while we waited for Jake Troup, Jeff Boyer, Josh Popper, Mike Scafani, and Andy Filer to arrive and get situated.

Everyone went for a quick trip into Links Cave, a small but highly decorated cave which is right there on the property. I stayed behind at camp to visit with my daughter Regan and her husband Charles who live just up the road. We had a candle campfire and enjoyed several



Flowstone in Links Cave



Dave Briggs in New River Cave

beverages and everyone turned in fairly early. Minutes after we all went to bed Scott Markley, Emily Lepley, and Stitch Rentzel rolled in. It rained off and on all night, which made for nice sleeping.

Saturday morning we all awoke, ate a quick breakfast (except for Mike and Andy, who ate like hogs the whole weekend), geared up, and headed to New River Cave with its 5.3 miles of passage. At the parking spot, we met a camper who owns the lot across the street who generously offered us the use of his port-a-john. We made the arduous, obscenely steep hike up to cave. We



could feel cold cave air tumbling down the mountain well before reaching the entrance. We paused at the entrance to enjoy the view of the river (young guys) and to catch our breath (fat guys). We broke into two groups - fast and slow. The fast group wanted to try to find Attic Room and some other less-visited and highly decorated areas of the cave. The slow group would head straight for the waterfall.

We started in to the cave and encountered many formations right away. Most were damaged, but the cave is still very beautiful right from the start. We proceeded through several different rooms and then came to the Big Room with its steeply sloping ceiling and large

columns. The fast group was ahead and making their way up the sloping room to search for passage. It was cool to see their headlamps across the large space. Aragonite balls, crystals, and helictites were tucked everywhere in nooks and crannies as we made our way across the lower right portion of the room.

Working our way down to the right, we climbed down through breakdown to the stream. We followed the water upstream, going up, over, and around various passages. We again ran into the fast group, who could not find their way to the hidden rooms and decided to head to the waterfall, as well. The passage that leads to the Attic Room, Forest Room, and the other lesser visited rooms is hard to find without a guide, which is probably they are still so beautiful.

The two groups recombined and following the stream passage we eventually came to the waterfall. It was about a forty foot



dome with a shower head at the top. We rested here, enjoying the sight and sound of the water and tried to get photos before making our way back out to the entrance. There were MANY passages we left unexplored, and a return trip would definitely be worthwhile. We were in the cave just over four hours.

Arriving back at the Bat Ranch, most of the group went in Smokehole to poke around. They tried to enter from the outside stream resurgence, but the water level was high, so they were unsuccessful. They went up to the hillside entrance and explored around, splashed around in the water, and went to the Big Room.

Pat, John, Dave, Josh went tubing on

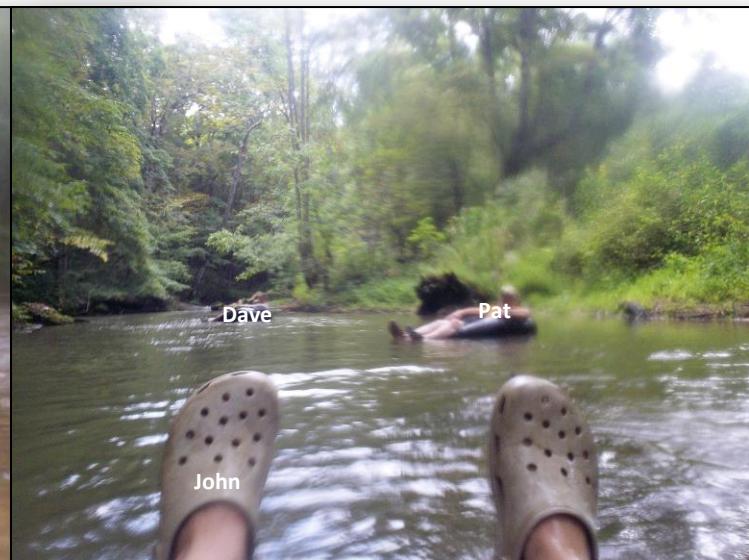
Sinking Creek instead of visiting Smokehole. Josh's tube exploded immediately when he tried to sit on it, so he had to do the walk of shame back to camp as Pat, Dave and I bobbed merrily down the stream. Pat floated into a tree across the river to bump off the trunk, but a small branch just under water sent his tube to the bottom in a hail of bubbles. He had the walk the second half of the way back to camp. Luckily, the water is not deep. For me and Dave, it was a lovely, enjoyable way to cool off and relax on a hot afternoon.

Dave, Josh, Jake, Jeff, and I went up the road to Riviera Mexican Restaurant for a leisurely, fun dinner. After dinner, we came back to camp and marveled at the



voracious appetites of Mike and Andy as they devoured yet more massive quantities of meat. After darkness fell we hung out with some other Bat Ranch visitors around a really large bonfire they had built. We learned to play a game called Stump, and some of us enjoyed alternating visits to the 255 degree sauna and the cool creek. The evening culminated with the burning of a full-sized piano on the bonfire. Pianos burn HOT!

Saturday night brought more rain and Sunday morning dawned on a palpable lack of enthusiasm. Most of us packed up and left early. Scott, Stitch, and Emily went and met the owner of Pig Hole and did the through trip. They did the 140(?) foot entrance rappel, and were able to avoid the in-cave 180 footer somehow and cave out the excavated back door. It sounded like an awesome trip, and will be at the top of the list on a return trip. Alas, Tawney's Cave went unvisited. Next time.



Quotes of the Quarter:

"That's why they invented beer - it makes everything easier." - S.R.

"I was emerging from the later stages of social ineptitude." - P.M. re early dating technique

"Franklin County Grotto - embracing the socially inept since 1981." - J.B. re P.M.

"Is this LEGAL?" - E.L. re bonfire

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Franklin County Grotto

Franklin County, PA