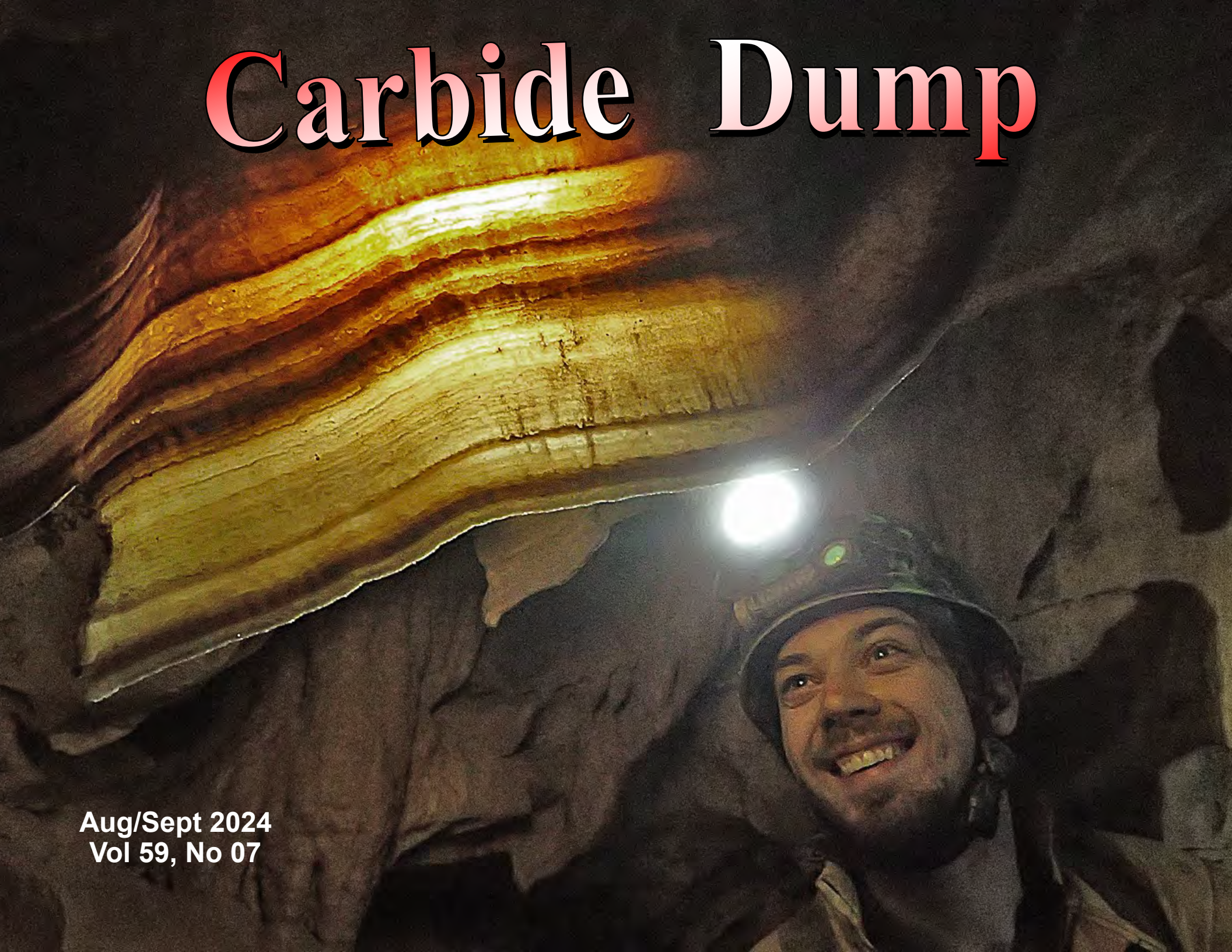


Carbide Dump

Aug/Sept 2024
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The **Carbide Dump** is published monthly by the Blue Ridge Grotto of the National Speleological Society in Roanoke, Virginia. Distribution date is approximately the second week of each month. An issue may be skipped if insufficient material is received. Contributions of articles and artwork are invited and will be gratefully acknowledged. Art work originals will be returned. Contributions should be sent to the editor. Regular and associate grotto membership (\$10) includes a **Carbide Dump** subscription. Subscriber rate is \$10.00. Exchanges with other grotto and caving organizations are invited. Direct exchange mail to Mary Sue Socky.

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The Blue Ridge Grotto holds its monthly meetings every third Friday of the month at 6:30p at Jersey Lily's Roadhouse, 1650 Braeburn Dr. Salem, VA 24153. See the Grotto meeting announcement in this issue.

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You can access the **Carbide Dump** electronically at: <https://blueridgegrotto.org/carbidedump.htm>

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Contributors: David & Mary Sue Socky, Marian McConnell, Susan Burr, John Pearson, Kelly Perkins, Helene Ferguson, Lauren Appel, Hillary Huffman, Joe Zokaite, Frank Binney, George Veni, and Jerry Fuller.

Cover: Nick Socky with Bacon in Maxwellton Sink Cave, WV (2016). Photo by Dave Socky

CAVERS CALENDAR

Sept 20: BRG meeting, 6:30p, Jersey Lily's-Salem, VA.

Sept. 20-22: Eastern Region NCRC is offering a weekend course, **Orientation to Cave Rescue (OCR)** held at Elkins WV Fire Dept.; camping at OTR site in Dailey, WV. See <https://ncrc-er.caves.org/> for updates on registration and class info. Questions: Larry Manning Larry.Manning@caves.org Registration is open.

Sept 27-29: **Fall VAR**, @ Hungry Mother Lutheran Camp, Marion, VA. Hosted by Eric Landgraf, John King, and members of **Out of Bounds Grotto**. See page 59.

Oct 3-6, 2024: TAG will be held at the Lazy G Ranch, Union Grove, AL. Registration will open soon. See [this link](#) for more info.

Oct 18-20: **CaveSim IS** returning to the Roanoke Valley during the annual **Roanoke GoFest!** Updates through the BRG Google Group.

Oct 18: BRG meeting, 6:30p, Jersey Lily's-Salem, VA. Officer nominations.

Nov 7-10: Karst Waters Institute 4th Appalachian Karst Symposium, Lewisburg, WV. Meetings, field trip on Saturday & Banquet Saturday night. See <https://karstwaters.org/conferences/appalachian-karst-symposium-2024/> for info. Questions: appkarst2024@karstwaters.org

Nov 9, 2024: WVCC Banquet, Lewisburg, WV in conjunction with the Appalachian Karst Symposium.

Nov 15: BRG meeting, 6:30p, Jersey Lily's-Salem, VA. Elections!

June 21 - 28, 2025: NSS 2025 Convention, Cobleskill, NY. See [link](#)



Bill Koerschner coming out of Grape Arbor Dig, VA.
Photo by Dave Socky

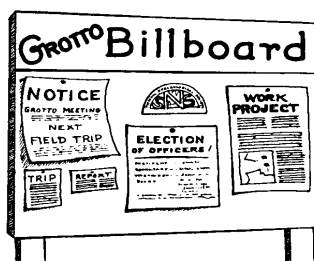
Long Cave Lists

A legacy of Bob Gulden, now maintained by Paul Berger

<https://cave-exploring.com/index.php/long-and-deep-caves-of-the-world/>

Treasurer's Report 09/02/2024

Cave Bucks	\$ 110.96
Conservation	\$ 2.00
Equipment	\$ 144.12
General	\$6,415.27
Total	\$6,672.35



ANNOUNCEMENTS

BRG Meeting Minutes – can be read on the BRG webpage at: <https://blueridgegrotto.org> under the 'BRG Organization' button.

NSS Membership: Would you like to join or renew with the NSS? See this [link](#) for details.

Cave Bucks are voluntary donations from cavers who have recently been caving. Most people donate a few dollars for each cave trip they have been on. Then send the money where it will do some good and buy some caves!

BRG Flyers and Stickers: See Treasurer Kelly Perkins for these goodies!



BRG T-shirts have been ordered! Total of 61 shirts and the estimated total, less shipping, is \$540.19. Extra T shirts were ordered. Estimated delivery is 9/13/24.

BRG PayPal. Thank you, Treasurer Kelly Perkins! BRG Payment Account: The goal was to add an option for BRG members to pay for their dues (and any other charges) online, through our Google group account. Per Kelly: The PayPal account has been set up. You will be able to pay for dues, t-shirts, etc. this way, or by cash or check to Kelly in person. More info on BRG PayPal coming soon.

BRG Data and Reports Digitized: Kelly suggested setting up a way to record, track, print out information such as the monthly Treasurer's report and Membership list. Dave Socky and Kelly will work on this project.

Blue Ridge Grotto Google Groups: Everyone has signed up for the new **Blue Ridge Grotto Google Groups**. All BRG members who have email should now be a member of the BRG Google Groups. Put this address in your address book: blueridgegrotto@googlegroups.com

In addition, any BRG Google Group member can post an announcement to the entire group – instantly, just like posting an email. Please use this feature to keep the whole group updated!

FUTURE VAR - Nick Schmalenberger asked if **BRG would like to host the Spring VAR 2025?** Susan Burr suggested the Fall one might be better, weather-wise.

- Who would be interested in helping (as leaders or volunteers) sponsor a VAR in Spring of 2025 in Bath County at the RASS property?
- We would need people to coordinate the various activities and logistics: dinner, treasurer, vendors, portapotties, registration, guidebook, social media; as well as volunteers to help in the various tasks.
- There is a handbook on how to host a

VAR (click on this [link](#)). The last one BRG hosted was in 2008.

- It was decided that Nick will hold an informational meeting at his house TBA, and all interested cavers who want to help with a VAR should attend.

Please let Nick Schmalenberger know if you are interested

nick@schmalenberger.us

VAR Closed Cave List can be found at this [link](#). Please send changes and updates to Brad Blase at blase@virginiacaves.org

Bat Cave Closures -

Transition month: WV is in winter hibernaculum closure. VA caves remain open until October. These closures do not affect all caves. Check the closed list, and please go elsewhere if your intended cave is closed. *There are thousands of caves in the Virginias.*

West Virginia—Closed Sept 1 - May 15 - for bat hibernaculum colonies. (Winter Closure in effect).

Virginia - Closed Oct. 15 - Apr. 15 for bat maternity colonies. (Summer Closure in effect.)

See [this link](#) for more WV closed cave information.

Please respect all cave closures.



BRG Meeting & Trip Notice

The **Sept 20, 2024** meeting of the Blue Ridge Grotto will be held at **Jersey Lily's Roadhouse 1650 Braeburn Dr, Salem, VA 24153**. Dinner, appetizers with socializing starts at 6:00pm with the meeting starting around 6:30p.

This month's program will be the Best of Show program from the 2024 NSS Video Salon. The title is "*Crypt of the Megafauna*" and is 14 minutes long.

Grotto Trip
To Be Announced

RIP Sid Perou

If you haven't already heard, Sid Perou died this morning (7/14/2024) in Thailand after a month's long hospitalization. He was 87 years old.

One of the greats of cave cinematography and a huge influence on me and many others. *Frank Binney*



RIP Michel Siffre

I'm sad to report that French caver, Michel Siffre, has died (Aug 24, 2024).

Michel made his mark on cave studies with his "Beyond Time" experiments where he, and later others he supervised, spent prolonged periods in caves with no reference to time as experiments on the diurnal cycle on the human biological clock. He made his mark in Texas caving history by spending over 200 days in Midnight Cave in 1972 as part of such a study by NASA.

Michel wrote several books on caves, his experiments, and his interests in cave use by the ancient Maya. I will miss him. *George Veni*

Old Caver Slow Trip to Island Ford

Article by *Marian McConnell*

Aug 17, 2024.

Cavers: Marian McConnell, Mary Sue Socky, Barry & Helene Ferguson, Nick Schmalenberger, Ben Johnson.

Of course we mean the CAVE is old, not us, right? A small group of six of us had a wonderful trip into **Island Ford Cave**, VA on Saturday, August 17th. Thanks to MarySue for coordinating it! MarySue, Barry & Helene Ferguson, Nick

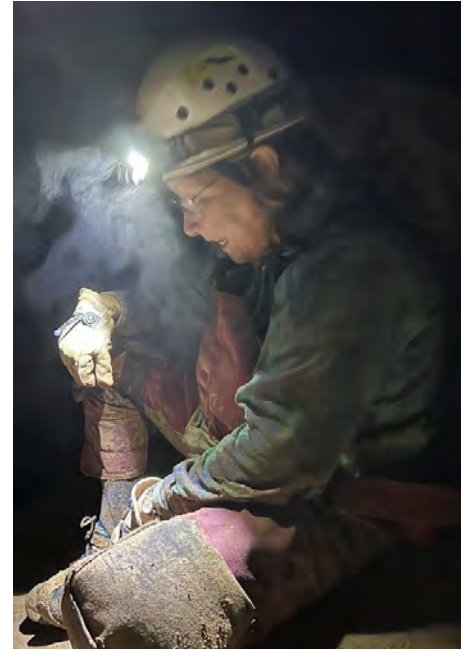
for Roanoke City Parks and Rec for over 20 years) led the way and went over the basics of cave safety and conservation. We worked as a team and did lots of aggressive spotting and helping each other along the dicey spots.

At the "step across", Marian and Nick stayed down in the creek to spot each person from below as they stepped across from one ledge to the other. Everyone, including Helene, did it perfectly! We worked our way back to a few more climbs and slides; making sure no one slid off the slippery sloped ledge into the creek. Helene, MarySue and Barry elected to turn around and start working their way back; making their way down the "butt-crack" slide to avoid the "step across". Nick, Ben, and Marian made sure they all made it safely, and then continued on to the back of the cave to see the natural spring.

They stopped to take a picture of Nick at "crocodile rock" and to see the passageway where the cave bear bones were found decades ago by Fred Grady. After a brief rest and refreshment break at the spring (the water was low, but still a pretty pool), they took the "canyon passage" back to the entrance. The goal was to avoid falling into the water; no one made the big splash.

They caught up with the rest of the group who had been fortunate to see a bat (what we used to call a "pip" (pipistrelle) but now it's called a tricolor), and a beautiful cave salamander. After some "after" photos of us muddy in all our smiling glory, and picking up a garbage bag full of trash, we had a delicious lunch in Eagle Rock at the "Iron and Oar." It is family owned, huge servings for very reasonable prices, and friendly staff.

Thanks to Mystik Miller



Mary Sue caving! Photo by Marian McConnell.

and Robin Bruns for granting us access — they are the Island Ford Cave Preserve managers for the WVCC. We all lived to tell about it, with smiles on our faces. As Helene said, the trip was great because of the teamwork and camaraderie! And thanks to all for sharing their pics!



Helene Ferguson caving! Photo by Marian McConnell.



Salamander in a pool. Photo by Marian McConnell

Schmalenberger, Ben Johnson and Marian McConnell carpooled to Island Ford for a nice, slow, day of caving. Helene was especially interested in becoming a BRG member, a step up from being a subscriber. The goal was just to get underground and have some safe and adventurous fun. We took our time and Marian (apologizing for lapsing into the mother hen mode from having led trips



After photo: L-R Nick, Ben, Barry, Mary Sue, Marian. Photo by Helene Ferguson

Lone Ash Cave #2 (aka Bertha Cave)

Article by *Susan Burr*

August 24, 2024

Cavers: Susan Burr, Doug Feller, Jeff & Hillary Huffman, Kelly Perkins, Nick Schmalenberger & Lauren Appel.

This trip was set up through the New River Trail State Park at Foster Falls, VA.

We were led by 2 interpretive rangers Lee & Bret, who drove us in the park van to the entrance. The cave is about 3.5 miles from the park next to the trail.

The cave sits up the hillside a short distance. The entrance is gated. You stoop walk through the gate & first short passage and come into a big room. There are a few formations in this room & in some tiny pools of water we saw some type of very tiny cave shrimp. We also saw several spiders & their egg sacs.

We first ventured off downhill to the right a very short distance to that end of the cave. Once we checked it out, we headed back up to the big room & then headed up to the left side. Midway, Lee pointed out the "Turtle" & "Dragon" formations. Continuing further up we got to the "Tongue" formation. That was



Group shot at the entrance. L-R: Kelly Perkins, Susan Burr, Hillary Huffman, Lauren Appel, Jeff Huffman, Doug Feller, and Nick Schmalenberger. Photo by Hillary Huffman.

my favorite. From here we climbed a short wooden ladder & then using a knotted rope climbed to the area above the "Tongue" formation. This was our end point for the trip. We were not allowed to go any further per the park rules.

After getting a few pictures we carefully got back down to the main big room & out the entrance.

It was definitely one of the smallest caves I have ever been in! We were in

the van longer than the cave trip I felt like. Lee did give us some fun facts & pointed out some sights about the park, the old railroad, furnaces, etc.

Once back to the park & changed we went to the river to check it out. Nick cooled off a little while there by getting his feet wet.



The Tongue formation. Photo by Lauren Appel.



In a passage. Photo by Hillary Huffman.



Doug Feller on the ladder. Photo by Lauren Appel.

Grotto Trip Log

March – May 2024: caving in Mexico – reports by Rolland Moore.

6/22: Island Ford Cave, VA. Participants included Susan Burr, Doug Feller, Kelly Perkins, Margo Soucek & Calvin Long. Margo may have seen a “rare salamander. Calvin fell but no injuries. Susan was glad it wasn’t Doug!

7/1-5: Sewanee, TN. NSS Convention – Nick Schmalenberger went caving during Convention in the **Widow’s Crack, Crystal Cave, Bible Springs, Adair Pit, and “No Cave.”** Dave and Mary Sue went caving in **The Caverns (Big Mouth Cave, TN).**

7/10: Dressler Cave, VA. Participants included David Socky, Joe Zokaite, Rick Lambert, and Jim Schurman. Rick, Joe, and I surveyed this whole cave while Jim kept watch at the surface. The down climb that I had left turned out to be pretty easy to climb down and just as easy to climb out again. It did bell out a little at the bottom, but not bad. The lower level ended up ending, except for one lead that was blowing a little bit of air. A tight 4" constriction hole opened up within a half-foot, so a couple of straws would open the way up. The passage past the constriction looked like hands and knees and about 2 to 3 feet wide. Looked good! Need to return to this. We surveyed 268 feet in about 3 hours.

7/10: Go Slow Cave, VA. Participants included David Socky, Joe Zokaite, Rick Lambert, and Jim Schurman. This was a little cave right on the side of Rt 220. An easy belly crawl going in and then the floor sloped down so you could stand up just inside. There was a floor channel. After 17 feet there was a slot in the floor which you couldn't fit into, but it looked like it opened up below. There was trash down below which had washed in. The drop was about 10 to 12 feet, maybe a little less. It looked good sized, but there was no air flow.

7/10: Rushing Waters Cave, VA. Participants included David Socky, Joe Zokaite,

Rick Lambert, and Jim Schurman. Joe and Dave went in to check the data logger and the second sump. The data logger was still in the water, but we moved it so it was a little deeper in the flowing water. The second sump was pretty much at the same level as when Dave was there last, but the water was clearer. Dave went in up to his neck and could see into the sump. The passage sloped downwards and looked to be 3 feet high by 3 to 4 feet wide. Dave couldn't see any back wall and it looked to keep going down. A promising dive.

7/17: Grape Arbor Pit, VA. Participants included David Socky, Joe Zokaite, Bill Koerschner, Jason Sargent, Tom McIntyre, Keith Sweeney, Rick Lambert, and Tom Whitehurst. Joe, Bill, Sarge, Tom McIntire, and Dave did all the digging. Rick, Keith, Tom W, and Sarge (for a little) put data loggers in Collins Cave and Rodent Hotel Cave on the hillside. They then did geology stuff. Dave did one 9-inch straw and then the drill broke. But the one straw did a good number and we spent the rest of the afternoon digging out the spoils and digging down. There didn't seem to be any air movement, but it must have been sucking a little because it was hot at the bottom and the smoke from the blast was gone almost immediately. Bill was down in the hole when a thunderstorm roiled in and it started to rain. We got half-way down the hill before the rain started in earnest. We got soaked, but it only lasted for 1/2 hour and then the sun came back out. We then went over to look at Triplet Cave.

7/17: Triplet Cave, VA. Participants included David Socky, Joe Zokaite, Bill Koerschner, Jason Sargent, Tom McIntyre, and Keith Sweeney. Sarge and Dave went in to look at the dig face. The cave is about 60 feet long now with two rooms (spaces) in which you can stand up. The floor is gravel and small rock and diggable. Might need to widen the passage after which we'll be able to see if it gets bigger or not. It was cold and blowing a little air. Bill really likes this dig!

7/12-13: CaveSim in Roanoke, VA (Washington Park & Wasena Park) – Dave

& Mary Sue Socky, Marian McConnell, Kelly Perkins, Nick Schmalenberger, Doug Feller, Susan Burr, and Carl Cornett volunteered and participated. All loved it and so did the kids!

7/16: La Pech Merle in France – Abbey Mays and Alexander Koch visited while in central France. Commercial trip; no photos allowed. They did see cave paintings 29,000 years old.

7/20: McClungs, WV – Nick Schmalenberger, Kelly Perkins, Logan Van Hon, Dave Socky, Ben nln – enjoyed the 5-hour trip, went in the historic entrance.

7/21: Patton’s, WV – Nick Schmalenberger went with Greenbrier Grotto.

7/27: Sunny Jim Sea Cave, San Diego, CA – Commercial cave Nick Schmalenberger went into with his Mom and Dad. Had about 200 stairs.

8/3: Bone Norman Cave, WV – Pick up trip with Lauren Appel (Mystik wasn't feeling well), Brian Williams, Riley nln, Susan Burr to the pinch.

8/24: McClung Cave, WV. Participants included David Socky, Paul Walko, Eli Meyer, Nick Socky, Gracie Cornish, Nikki Fox, Jason Delafield, Laurel Molloy, and Andy Bui.

8-24-2024: John and Lyn Pearson visited **Rock City, Lookout Mountain, TN.** See seven states. Took multiple trails through boulders, canyons and crevices. Ended with a trip through **Fairyland Caverns**, which depicts every imaginable Fairy Tale you’ve ever heard. I had forgotten all about ‘Jack Sprat’, for instance.

8-25-2024: John and Lyn Pearson visited **Ruby Falls, Lookout Mountain, Tennessee.** Took the 10 AM tour and beat the rush. Literally four tour groups of 20-40 people came after us while we were exiting the cave. Well lit, easy to traverse cave of approximately ½ mile of passage to get to the falls. Virginia has much prettier commercial caves. Waterfall was worth it though. 🐾



Dave Socky in Rushing Waters cave, VA.
Photo by Joe Zokaite



- Vertical and horizontal trips will be available.
- Permits for Cyclops and Salamander will need to be pulled by individual parties wishing to visit those SCCI caves.
- Limited trips available to Perkins Cave Preserve will be a highlight of anyone's trip to Fall VAR.
- Newberry-Bane System trip. Visit the cave where Vertical Bill pioneered many of the techniques we use to explore today!
- Float trips on the Holston or Clinch Rivers are within an easy drive.
- Visit the Marion Farmers Market on Saturday morning for any locally grown items you may desire for your own meals.
- Biking on the historic Virginia Creeper Trail is just minutes away!
- Engine 343 Wood Fired Pizza Truck will be providing dinner on Saturday. They also have a vegetarian/vegan gluten free crust option that will be available.

OUT OF BOUNDS GROTTTO

FALL VAR 2024

outofboundsgrotto.org

SEPTEMBER 27 - 29

Hungry Mother Lutheran Retreat
Marion, VA

[Click here for the
online registration
form](#)