

Carbide Dump



November 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 Taylor Masonic Lodge, 1200 Texas Street, Salem, VA 24153 (at least of Oct & Nov). 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, Nikki Fox, Carol Tiderman, Dave Jackson, Ernst Kastning, and Jerry Fuller.

Cover: Crayfish in Culverson Creek Cave, WV. Photo by Kelly Perkins

CAVERS CALENDAR

Nov 15: BRG meeting, 6:30p, Elections! NOTE– NEW meeting site— Taylor Masonic Lodge in Salem, VA. See page 71.

Dec 14: WVACS Xmas Party at their fieldhouse near Frankford, WV. Contact Kelly McCarthy at kellyrachelmcc@gmail.com or 419-303-1694 or info.

Dec. 20: NO BRG Meeting. See you at BRG party in 2025.

January 1, 2025: Happy New Year!

Jan 2025: BRG New Year's Party, location TBA

Jan 17, 2025: BRG meeting, location TBA

Feb 21, 2025: BRG meeting, location TBA

Mar 21, 2025: BRG meeting, location TBA

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

RIP Lynn Ott

NSS # 15257 RL FE

Rest in Peace dear friend and caving buddy Lynn Ott (on left below); may she rest in the arms of the angels. Such a kind and generous soul; she will be remembered fondly and missed. I'll never forget the surprise hoodies she had made last December for me and Mary Socky.

Marian McConnell



Treasurer's Report 11/11/2024

Cave Bucks	\$ 112.96
Conservation	\$ 2.00
Equipment	\$ 144.12
General	\$5,723.97
Total	\$5,983.05

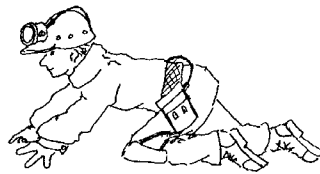
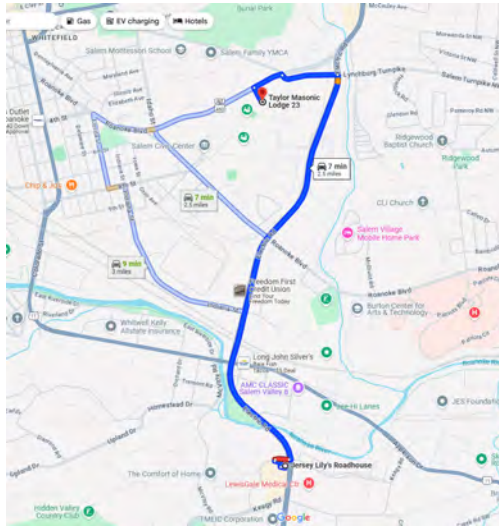
BRG Meeting & Trip Notice

Jersey Lily's restaurant has been permanently closed. Because of this, we need to find a new meeting spot. Thanks to Kevin Johnson and Marian McConnell, we have temporarily rented the meeting room at the **Taylor Masonic Lodge, 1200 Texas Street, Salem, VA 24153**. The meeting room has been rented for the **October 18th** and **November 15th** grotto meetings.

There is no food provided there, so either eat before the meeting or bring your own bag meal. The grotto meeting will start at 7 pm.

This month's program will be a video entitled "Hunting for Zebras". It is an 11 minute program on Wind Cave, which won a Merit Award in the 2024 NSS Video Salon.

[Click here for a Google Map Link for directions to new location directions from Jersey Lily's to Taylor Lodge](#)



Grotto Trip

Porter Cave, VA

Date & Time: Saturday, Nov 16, 2024. Meet at Hanging Rock Orange Market at **8:30 am**.

Leader: Susan Burr.

Coordination: Susan Burr 540-580-9409
pondlady97@gmail.com

Requirements: Beginner horizontal cave trip.

Limit: No limit

Description

We will do the normal "tourist" route. We will not be going through the "Keyhole" since we are taking a newbie for his very first cave trip! .

Porter's contains maze passages, big rooms, and crawls (mostly soft sand and dirt, except for one which has lots of mud and water). Wear your knee pads. There are also numerous pits (the bottoms can be reached without vertical gear) and lots of breakdown.



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.



BRG Dues are almost Due! It's close to that time. Dues are not due until the November 15 grotto meeting, but it never hurts to pay early. Dues are \$10 per year, or \$5 for additional family member. See Mary Sue Socky (sockymss@cox.net) to see if you've paid already.

Avoid Norman Cave, WV. The WVCC has told me that there has been an issue with parking at Norman Cave. It is advised not visit this cave entrance until this matter has been resolved. There are plenty of other Greenbrier caves that can be visited instead, so plan accordingly. Please share this information with others within your home grotto. Thanks, Nikki Fox

BRG Christmas Card: Submit your idea for a BRG Christmas card to Dave Socky (sockydr@cox.net) by the November 15 BRG meeting.

BRG Christmas party will NOT be on December 15th since the Socky's will be at a WVACS party, so we are looking at alternate dates; probably after Christmas. Will keep you posted.

BRG Officers: Officers Nick Schmalenberger, Dave Socky, and Marian McConnell met on Monday (10/28) and agreed to accept Nick's offer to step down as Chair of the Grotto. He will continue as our Safety & Techniques Officer, and plans to continue as a member and work on various projects (such as the squeeze box) which he can present to BRG for consideration. Dave Socky will serve as temporary Chair in the interim

Go Fest: It has been confirmed with Go Fest/Roanoke Outside that the BRG space for \$150 was paid for. So Nick's check was voided and there is no need for us to reimburse him. All of our obligations for BRG and CaveSim were met so that is all taken care of. Thanks for a great event and all who volunteered!

John C. Taylor: new email for BRG member John Taylor - johncrafttaylor@yahoo.com.

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 -

Bat Hibernacula Caves in VA and WV are now in winter closure: 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

Virginia: Closed Oct. 15 - Apr. 15

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

Please respect all cave closures.



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/>

JS Williams Cave Survey #2

Article and Photos by *Dave Socky*



Joe Zokaite part way down into the lower level



Jason Sargent checking high lead

Bob Alderson, Dave Socky, Jason Sargent, and Joe Zokaite. Photos by Dave Socky

Objective: Finish survey of JS Williams Cave in Allegheny County, Virginia

In: 11:00 AM and **Out:** 5:30 PM (6.5 hours)

Background: The initial dig and first survey occurred on September 25, 2025. The upper level was surveyed with only one non-viable dig. The lower level (near the entrance) was checked by Jason Sargent and deemed worth surveying, but it would wait for a future trip.

Report: On Wednesday October 25, 2024, Bob Alderson, Joe Zokaite, Jason Sargent and Dave Socky began the survey of the lower level of JS Williams Cave. Dave Socky did sketch, Bob Alderson was point, Joe Zokaite handled the DistoX, while Jason pushed and checked leads. The tie-in station was A4.

There were several ways down to the lower level, but the first downclimb was the largest and easiest. The way down was vertical but small enough with good footholds and handholds so vertical gear was not required. It was about 40 feet down before the floor was reached, although there were still further climb-downs. Total depth was about 60 feet.

At B3 there was a side passage on the

left (NW) which doubled back and paralleled the main canyon. But it was tight and ended in a breakdown choke after a short right-hand turn. At B5 was another side passage on the right (SE) which again doubled back to parallel the main canyon. Traversing this passage required stemming the upper section, both up and down, with dubious footholds. But at B7 a floor was gained with a small hole on the left which went up steeply for 20 or so feet before ending in mud and rock fill.

Continuing east north-east from B5, a narrow spot opened up into a cobble floored round room with a high canyon at the far end. At B13 it was possible to climb up into the canyon or continue down into an old stream crawl.

The stream crawl split into two ways (upstream to the southwest and downstream to the northeast). Upstream ended in a too tight crawl after only 15 feet and downstream was dug out until it got too tight after 20 feet. There was no air. It was not considered a good dig.

Back at B13, a near vertical climb of about 30 feet gained more horizontal passage. This section was somewhat decorated and also contained cave rat poop. There also was air movement in the passage. Around B24 Bob Alderson saw a live cave rat. It was conjectured that this level of the cave was close to the surface.

There were several small side rooms off the main passage. At B18 a tight crack was encountered which only Bob and Jason could fit into. But it opened up (a little) into about 40 to 50 feet of crawlways and tight squeezes before getting either too tight or ending in mud fill. The upper section of the lower level had been completely explored and mapped.

The total survey for the day was 438 feet with 23 feet excluded over 6.5 hours. The length of the cave is 834 feet. Depth is around 80 feet.



L-R, T-B: Dan McConnell, Doug Feller, Nick Schmalenberger, Bob Alderson, Dave Socky, Cyndi Hutcheson, Dave Jackson, Barry Ferguson, Marian McConnell, Susan Burr, Helen Ferguson, Trish Geiger, and Mary Sue Socky (10/18/2024)

CaveSim and Go Fest

Article by *Mary Sue Socky* and *Dave Jackson*

Thank you so much for volunteering with CaveSim at the Roanoke VA GO FEST on October 19 and 20, 2024!

Area cavers from VPI Cave Club, New River Valley Grotto, and Blue Ridge Grotto participated: Susan Burr, Carrie Doupnik, Kevin Johnson, Jason Sargent, Doug Feller, Trish Geiger, Jeff Huffman, Lauren Appel, Ernst Kastning, Lisa Graves, Nick Schmalenberger, Alex Thompson, Jerin Manalel, Gracie Cornish, Dave Socky, and MarySue Socky.

We were a small but mighty force!

The public's interest in CaveSim was amazing!

In addition, lots of people visited the BRG Caving booth and talked with friendly cavers and got information on area show caves and cave clubs.

Many copies of the *Virginia Cave & Karst Trail* brochure were handed out, as well as lots of toy bat rings.

Caver appreciation for Karst and Caves was evident! So was your positive caver enthusiasm and energy!

CaveSim does an excellent job of showing people how to "Cave Softly" and protect the cave environment.

Whether you were there for set-up or take-down, at CaveSim helping with the squeezebox, the vertical tower, inside the trailer, fitting helmets on thousands of heads, or talking with people at the Cave Booth – thank you for your participation. Dave Jackson and Jesse Rochette said they couldn't have done it without volunteer caver support!

Also, Dave Jackson Jessie Rochette of CaveSim send their thanks:

Hi everyone!

Thank you all so much for helping with CaveSim! Jesse and I could not have done it without you, and I'm especially grateful to Mary Sue for organizing the grotto to come out and help.

In case you're curious, the public took 603 trips through CaveSim on Saturday and 421 trips on Sunday for a total of 1,024 trips over the course of the two days. This is a very impressive turnout!

Thank you all, and I hope to see you again soon!

Dave Jackson
CaveSim LLC
www.CaveSim.com



Jeff Huffman & Susan Burr at CaveSim Squeeze Box.
Photo by Friend of Doug Feller



Lauren Appel adjusting a helmet.
Photo by Ernst Kastning



Susan Burr helping at the Squeeze Box.
Photo by Ernst Kastning



Lauren Appel and Jesse Rochette preparing explorers.
Photo by Ernst Kastning

Grotto Trip Log

10/9: Warm Springs Project, VA. Participants included David Socky, Jim Schurman, and Keith Sweeney. We toured around the area looking at several interesting Karst locations that Keith wanted to show us. We went to Grape Arbor dig and fixed the tripod for hauling buckets up for the dig. We looked into the entrance of Rushing Waters Cave and found no water coming out the breakdown and into the under the road culvert. We then went to the Ten Commandments property where the Coralberry dig is located, but worked on clearing the steep road up to on of the other digs that's right over Warm River.

10/11: Roppel Cave, KY. Participants included Bob Alderson, Jim Borden, Matt Balizo, and Lori Jarla.

10/12: McClung Cave, WV. Participants included David Socky, Nick Socky, Paul Walko, and Liz Alzubi. Long trip way past the 3rd Breakdown. We first surveyed a known lead which was right at the start of the 200-foot-long stream crawl that had been pushed a month ago (and led to a breakout!). We looked at the stream crawl and both Nick and Paul said the water was up. There was likely only 5 to 6 inches of air space for 200 feet. We waffled back and forth, but finally decided we wanted to get footage instead of a little bit of stuff in the breakout. If we did the stream crawl, we probably wouldn't last too long

because of getting cold. So, we headed to the end of the GOD survey which took off from a point just before the Meat Grinder. It was a walking passage, but pretty muddy. And the walking lasted for only a couple of hundred feet. It soon devolved into stoop walk, crawls, tight spots, and awkward moves with lots of slippery baby poop mud. The main way ended in breakdown. The second side lead on the left turned and paralleled the main way and quickly ended in breakdown. The first left side lead also turned parallel and went a lot further and was the more obnoxious of the passages. It went a lot longer, but eventually got really tight, and then ended in mud fill and breakdown. An upper-level passage at the first junction turned into a walking breakdown passage for 100 feet or so but ended in breakdown too. We killed all leads so no one will need to back to that muddy mess. The trip out was long and tiring. We got out at 1:13 am after 14 hours and got 700 feet of survey.

10/13: Sheep Cave, KY. Participants included Bob Alderson and others. This was a bolt climb.

10/16: Rushing Waters & Worm Wood Cave, VA. Participants included David Socky, Keith Sweeney, Jim Schurman. Dye Trace and Dig.

10/22: Lowmoor Cave, VA. Participants included David Socky, Dave Jackson, and Jessie Rochette. Took Dave

and Jessie on a great tour of Lowmoor. Went to the Capital Room, and then up to the left into the 'climby' route to the Iron Room. Up along the short nail climb and then around and down through the maze, down the little climb down hole, through the Bone Yard, and out from under the breakdown back to the Devil's Kitchen. We then went down the long finger passage to the far end where it connects to the mine through the little window. Then out. Good trip which everyone really enjoyed.

10/23: JS Williams Cave, VA. Participants included David Socky, Joe Zokaite, Bob Alderson, and Jason Sargent. Finished the cave by surveying the lower level. See article p.72

11/1: Kula Kai Lava Tube, HI. Participants included David Socky, Mary Sue Socky, Wm Shrewsbury, and Carolina Shrewsbury. This is a show cave (lava tube); Wm and Carolina took us on a tour of the noncommercial sections. Mostly walking, with a few crawls on *lava*. Neat formations and lava structures.

11/9: Lost World Caverns, WV. Participants included David Socky, Meredith Weberg, Joey Fagan, Janet Tinkham, Gary Feilden, and Karst Symposium group. Part of the field trip for the 4th Appalachian Karst Symposium. Toured the commercial part of the cave.

Future NSS Conventions

The NSS is looking for sites and host groups for the conventions for 2027 and beyond.

Did you know there has never been an NSS convention in Arkansas, Arizona, Georgia, Ohio, Utah, or Wisconsin? These are all states with caves and other attractions. When I ask about hosting I often hear, "our caves are sensitive". I believe all caves are sensitive. it's just a matter of degree. We never ask a host to allow access to any

particular cave. Wouldn't it be great to plan a vacation around Flagstaff, AZ, or Hot Springs, AR, or maybe Salt Lake City, Utah?

The last time we were invited to have an NSS Convention in Maryland was in 1952, Iowa 1974, Massachusetts 1979, Minnesota 1980, Wyoming 1984, Kentucky 1985, Oregon 1993, Virginia 1995, and Idaho 1999. These were great locations and folks had a wonderful time. Please give some thought to inviting us back.

If you have ever attended an NSS Convention and enjoyed the experience, please consider being a host

and inviting around 1000 of your friends.

You will be given guidance and support from first contact until the end of the convention.

For more information don't hesitate to get in touch with ctiderman@caves.org.

Carol Tiderman



