

Carbide Dump



December 2024
Vol 59, No 10

HAPPY

HOLIDAYS

FROM BLUE RIDGE GROTTO; ROANOKE VA

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 Logan's Roadhouse, 4740 Valley View Blvd, Roanoke, VA 24012 (at least for Jan). 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, Lauren Appel, Nick Schmalenberger, Bob Alderson, Doug Feller, Gene Harrison, Ernst Kastning, George Dasher, and Jerry Fuller.

Cover: Our December issue, as usual, features the BRG Landowner Christmas Card. Artwork is by Marian McConnell.

CAVERS CALENDAR

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

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

January 1, 2025: Happy New Year! Hug A Bat!!

Jan 11, 2025 – Caving Outreach, 11am – 2pm, Virginia Natural History Museum, Martinsville, VA.

Jan 12, 2025: BRG Winter Party at the Socky's (6572 Woodbrook Dr, Roanoke, Va). From 12 noon to 5pm. Friends & family welcome!

Jan 17, 2025: BRG meeting, 6:00 pm, location Logan's Roadhouse, 4740 Valley View Blvd, Roanoke.

Feb 21, 2025: BRG meeting, 6:00 pm, location Logan's Roadhouse, 4740 Valley View Blvd, Roanoke.

Mar 21, 2025: BRG meeting, location TBA.

May 9-11, 2025: Spring VAR, at Spruce Knob, WV, hosted by Out of Bounds Grotto.

May 11, 2025 — Spring WVASS Meeting, at 10 am the WVACS Fieldstation near Frankford. Contact Dave Riggs, Executive Director, at 304-685-7537 or driggs@speleo.us for more information.

June 21 - 28, 2025: NSS 2025 Convention, Cobleskill, NY. See link.

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

July 20 - 27, 2025: ICS 2025 in Brazil. See <https://speleo2025.org/>.

Treasurer's Report 12/12/2024

Cave Bucks	\$ 112.96
Conservation	\$ 2.00
Equipment	\$ 144.12
General	\$5,882.26
Total	\$6,141.34



Back of the 2024 BRG Landowners Christmas Card

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/>

BRG Meeting & Trip Notice

There will not be an official BRG meeting on Friday, December 20. Instead, **attend the BRG Winter Party on Sunday, January 12, 2025** at the Socky's place from noon to 5pm. The next BRG meeting will be 1/17/2025.

Grotto Trip

Island Ford, VA

Date & Time: Saturday, December 21, 2024. Meet at Hanging Rock Orange Market at **8:30 am**.

Leader: Susan Burr.

Coordination: Susan Burr 540-580-9409
pondladv97@gmail.com

Requirements: Beginner horizontal cave trip.

Limit: No limit

Description

Island Ford is a good beginner cave with mostly walking passage, a little crawling, and one place where a handline might be helpful. It is a sacrifice cave. It has a HUGE entrance, 50 feet wide and 20 feet high. Island Ford cave contains 1,400 feet of passage. Salamanders, crayfish, and invertebrates are found in Island Ford, and bats use it as a winter hibernaculum. A stream runs the length of the cave. The origin of this stream is a "sand volcano" or "boiling spring" in a

beautiful pool near the back of the cave. We will take our time and enjoy the mud and the boiling spring.



Entrance to Island Ford, April 2019.
Photo by Doug Feller

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 Winter Party — yes, there will be one! **Sunday, January 12, 2025. Noon-5pm** at Dave & Mary Sue Socky's place, 6572 Woodbrook Dr. Roanoke VA 24018. Potluck, BYOB, casual, friends and family welcome. Contact Mary Sue Socky 540-529-3954 sockymss@cox.net for more info. Click here for a [Google Map location](#)

2024 BRG Landowner Christmas cards. The grotto voted YES to send them this year. A new design is chosen each year. This year's design is featured on the cover and page 76. 70 cards have been sent for 2024.

New BRG Officers: Please welcome the new slate BRG Officers for 2025.

- David Socky — Chair
- Susan Burr — Vice Chair
- Marian McConnell — Treasurer
- Mary Sue Socky - Secretary

Thank you, outgoing officers, for your time served. **The rest of you, get back to work!**

BRG Needs a New Home. Jersey Lily's, the BRG meeting place, has closed. We are in the process of finding a "New Meeting Place".

We held two meetings at the Taylor Masonic Lodge in Salem, VA, but it requires either Kevin Johnson or Dan McConnell to be our sponsor.

Many other alternatives were considered until Trish Geiger found Logans Roadhouse. So, BRG will be meeting at Logan's Roadhouse. We have reserved the meeting room Friday, January 17 & February 21, 2025, 5:30pm - 8:30 pm. BRG meetings will start at 6 pm.

- Logan's meeting room is interesting. Private room, tables and chairs we can arrange as needed, a fireplace, a TV, and one wall is a clear plexiglass garage door. (This is their summer open-air dining area.)
- The room is cozy and warm for the winter.
- Parking lot headlight glare may be a distraction but we may be able to cover the doors.
- We do not have to pay or meet a minimum to use the meeting room.

So, Third Friday in January 2025, see you at Logan's Roadhouse, 4740 Valley View Blvd, Roanoke VA 24012.

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.



Porters Cave, VA Trip Report

Article and photos by *Susan Burr*

November 16, 2024

Participants: Susan Burr (Leader), Jeff Huffman, Lauren Appel, Trish Geiger, Alexander (Alex) Thompson, Robert (Bob) Balch.

We came prepared with a shovel & pry bar to make sure we could get the gate open. After some shoveling & scooping with our hands, we cleared the area around the gate enough to open it.

We did the normal “tourist” loop that did not include going through the

“Keyhole.” This was Alex's first wild cave trip. In fact, I am not sure he has even been in a tourist cave. He did very well and seemed to enjoy it. Hopefully he is hooked.

We did show both Alex & Bob the “Keyhole.” Jeff and Lauren went through and back to show them what it was like. We didn't have any others opt to go through it for fun. LOL!

Next we headed to the “Big Room” which I think is actually called “Grand

Blvd.” We played around in there for a bit and did get Alex and a few others through the tight little hole in the back.

Next stop was the formation room with lot of crickets and fossils. The final stop was at the “Slit.” Then we headed out via the dry waterfall to make the loop.

At some point on the trip I believe we saw 2 bats and a couple of spiders.

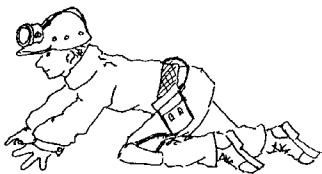
Our trip was about 3 ½ hours if I remember correctly. Afterwards we headed to dinner.



The entrance to Porters. L-R: Susan Burr, Bob Balch, Trish Geiger, Lauren Appel, Jeff Huffman, and Alex Thompson



Alex Thompson next to a formation in Porter Cave



Jeff Huffman chilling out on the Natural Bridge in Grand Blvd., aka the Big Room. His sexy pose!



Dressler Cave Dig and Survey

Article and Photos by *Dave Socky*

Wednesday, December 4, 2024

Dave Socky and Joe Zokaite. Surface support Keith Sweeney and Jim Schurman.

Objective: Dig open the lead in the lower part of Dressler Cave in Allegheny County, Virginia. Survey what was found.

In: 11:00 AM and **Out:** 3:30 PM (4.5 hours)

Background: Dressler Cave was first surveyed on May 1, 2024. The survey completed the cave except for a small lead which had good air and looked like it opened up. The lead was at the bottom of the cave.

Report: Joe and Dave met Keith and Jim at Keith's house at 10:05 am Saturday morning. Gear was loaded up in Keith's truck and the team headed to the Ten Commandments property. The team was able to drive right to the entrance of Dressler Cave.

Keith and Jim helped rig the entrance ladder. It was a cold, but clear day. Dave went in first and rediscovered, again, that he hates cable ladders. Dave and Joe had three packs between them. The heaviest one contained the drill, batteries, and digging stuff.

They made their way down to the lower room without any problems. The climb

down was not hard, but very grabby. The hole for the lead was not as large as Dave remembered it. It was about 2 inches high by about 5 inches wide, but it looked good on the other side. The first and second holes Dave drilled broke through to the other side, so he pulled back to take off an even thicker section of rock. The third one didn't go through. He put in a 9" straw and wired it up. They decided it was safest to climb up high, out of range of any ricocheting rock. The straw was extremely successful.

Joe mucked out, which was really easy since the lead was upslope a little, so it was just a matter of rolling the rocks down and out of the way. Fifteen minutes later, Joe drilled a hole for a two-inch straw just to make things big enough so they wouldn't have to squirm to get in. They didn't climb up this time since the dig was more around the corner.

Dave mucked out this time, which took 5 minutes. Before he knew it, he crawled in on elbows and knees and was standing up in a room. He could see the passage continuing, uphill, into breakdown. He'd seen enough to know that it needed to be surveyed, so he squeezed back through, where the team prepared to survey.

They ended up surveying a total of 135 feet (some of which was excluded). The new cave headed east-southeast. After an initial room (10 feet wide by 7 feet high), the passage turned up a mud slope with a high canyon on the left side. At B3 and B4 the passage was 20 feet high. There were several natural bridges and some old, dry formations. In front of B4 was a shelf with an upper alcove/room which was well decorated. It was about 7 feet high. There was also what looked like boxwork on the ceiling and one wall, but it was boxwork without the cross (perpendicular) pieces.



Joe Zokaite surveying

At B4 there was a left lead which Joe dug out. There were racoon claw marks in this area. This section was more or less horizontal with mud/clay floor and walls. There were more racoon scratch marks. After another dig, this section was pushed with a total of 6 survey stations. Dave finished sketching and then they headed back to the room with the initial dig, where they packed up to leave.

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Dave Socky in first room



Old dry formations

LYNN OTT, CAVER

March 23, 1953 – November 8, 2024
By Gene Harrison NSS-9268



Lynn Marie Wayshner Ott, of Salem, VA, passed away peacefully at Roanoke Memorial Hospital on November 8, 2024, surrounded by her family & friends.

Lynn grew up in Silver Spring, MD, and she graduated from Albert Einstein High School in 1971, attended Montgomery Jr. and Phoenix Colleges, as well as Colorado State University, plus Columbus State University with a Bachelor of Science in Liberal Arts.

Lynn was always kind, positive & constructive, and she lived life to the fullest, both above and below ground. She was revered as a mentor, friend, and virtual mother to everyone along her journey through life.

Throughout her life, Lynn was passionate about Cavers & caving, bats, environmental stewardship, bats, exploration and adventures, bats, philanthropy, bats, plus dedication to her personal and work families. Oh, and did we mention bats, too? ;-)

After innocently attending the Montgomery geology club, Lynn fell in with a dark (and muddy!) crowd!! She began caving in 1972 in the Washington DC area with SLIGO Grotto and joined the NSS in 1973 as NSS-15257. Lynn became an NSS Life Member and was honored as a Fellow of the NSS. Lynn was an Old Timer's Reunion (OTR) "Lifer" and ROOT (Really Original Old Timer), plus a Life Member of The Robertson Association (TRA), with many other awards, including caving, charitable & work.

Lynn was an active member of multiple grottoes and environmental organizations around the country and world, and she is famous as a leader and facilitator for caving groups, especially in the Washington DC area during the 1970s & 1980s, plus almost everywhere she lived and caved across the US.

The Early Days: As a key leader in SLI-



LYNN'S LAST CRICKET MAZE CAVE TRIP – 2019

GO, Lynn served as the Chair and also edited the Subterranean Sun. She led many Boy Scout caving trips, notably to Siler's, Moler's and Whiting's Neck caves in WV. Lynn was famous for promoting joint adventures among the many (otherwise very individual) caving groups in the area, plus arranging inclusive family flavored outings, like canoeing, hiking and camping. These included the NSS, VA Region & Mid Appalachian Region, SLIGO Grotto, DC Grotto, Potomac Speleological Club, American University Grotto, Baltimore Grotto, plus many in in AZ, CO, UT, and more. In her last years, Lynn was a dedicated supporter of the Blue Ridge Grotto (BRG) in Roanoke VA.

A Few Good Examples of Lynn's Positive Contributions: When disastrous floods hit our beloved West Virginia in

1985, Lynn organized Cavers and others to respond and assist in restoration. She loved to work Registration at the OTR, so she could greet her many friends from across the Nation and World, and make new friends. In addition, at the TRA site, Lynn loved to build and maintain the Caver Memorial Garden (despite hungry deer and sneaky poison ivy!). During the annual OTR events, Lynn always invited friends, both old and new, to enjoy her delicious outdoor meals at Lynn & Gene's notorious "Tent Mahol" (really big!) camp. As a skilled seamstress, Lynn would often create amazing tapestries & bedspreads out of recycled Caver t-shirts or other materials, and then gift them to friends, including a special donation to the OTR MedTent, er, First Aid as a fund raiser.

The Cricket Maze Cave Saga: Cricket Maze Cave is the longest cave in the Eastern Panhandle of West Virginia. In the mid 1980s, Lynn spotted a "Land for Sale" sign near historic Siler's Cave, near Hedgesville, WV. When she realized that it included recently rediscovered Cricket Maze Cave, Lynn decided to buy it! Of course, Real Cavers know that every Cavers Dream is to own their very own cave! However, since funds were a bit short, Lynn brow-beat, er, enticed several other Cavers to join her and buy it in 1985. They created the Cricket Maze Cave Association (CMCA). Lynn has always been the "spark-plug" for the organization, and she also served as Secretary for almost 40 years. One of her last dreams has been the transition to the new charitable Cricket Maze Cave Conservancy (CMCC).

The Wild Wild West! Several times over many years, Lynn went back and forth between East and West, notably CO, AZ & UT, and also enjoyed several marriages (one at a time, of course!).

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(Lynn Ott continued from page 80)

She leveraged both personal and professional contacts and capabilities to support not only Cavers & caving, but also Search And Rescue Teams and other outdoor and environmental activities, with many awards, both caving and professional.

The Australia Bucket List Trip! In 2017, Lynn & Gene spent three weeks in Australia! The first week was caving with the wonderful Australian Cavers, including exploring their beautiful caves (after an a**busting “get acquainted” hike)! The second week was the amazing SPELEO2017 International Conference. And the third week was visiting brother Mark & new wife Laura on their farm in New South Wales, before flying home.

Many Contributions in Many Domains: Lynn joined the Army in 1976 where she became a Military Police Officer, working with military guard dogs; served as an Administrative Officer for the Department of Agriculture Forest Service in Dixie National Forest; as an Environmental Program Specialist for the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality; as a Health Assistant for Mine Safety in the Department of Labor; was full-time caregiver for her mother

until her passing in 2019; and then the Virginia Tech Naval ROTC Department from 2019 until her own passing.

In the last years of her life, while working with the VT N-ROTC, Lynn enabled and supported at least a thousand young Cadets to achieve their dreams as Naval Officers. In grateful appreciation, the VT Corps of Cadets conducted a (very rare Honor!) Special Flag Presentation Ceremony, with the entire Corps in attendance.

Lynn is survived by her long time partner Gene Harrison, NSS-9268 RL FE, brother (& ex-Caver) Mark Wayshner, lots of cousins and other family, plus many hundreds of Cavers & friends world wide.

Lynn’s ashes will be spread at (and not in !! ;-)) her beloved Cricket Maze Cave in Spring 2025.

A special celebration of life will be held at the 2025 National Speleological Society convention in June in Cobleskill, NY.

In lieu of flowers, plants or other temporary things, those inclined are respectfully requested to please make charitable donations to:

➤ The Cricket Maze Cave Conservancy (CMCC)

- CMCC, c/o Kim Fleischmann, 115 Stoneleigh Rd, Bel Air, MD 21014

➤ The Robertson Association (TRA)

- <https://otr.org/tra-and-otr-donations/>

➤ The West Virginia Cave Conservancy (WVCC)

- <https://wvcc.net/donate/>

Lynn’s Lifetime & Caving Slide Show:

<https://www.tributeslides.com/tributes/show/7CPMWLJY39LKZT5W>

Lynn’s Recorded Streamed Services:

<https://webcast.funeralvue.com/events/viewer/106675>

Civilian (non-Caver flavored) Obituary:

<https://www.johnmoakey.com/obituaries/Lynn-Wayshner-Ott?obId=33656128>

Respectfully and sadly submitted,

Gene Harrison
NSS-9268 RL FE



(Dressler Cave continued from page 79)

They were back out of the entrance within 15 minutes. Keith and Jim helped haul the packs up and coil the ladder. While Dave and Joe surveyed, Jim walked the property and found 3 or 4 more blowing holes which were worthy of digging on. One of the holes was like-ly close to where our survey was and

could have been where all the air was going. *(The entrance was sucking cold air into the cave. There was definitely air going into the lead, but they could not find the air once they got to the end of the survey. They figured it was going up and out through numerous small cracks and crevices).*

After everyone packed up, they got GPS locations for the holes that Jim had found and then drove over to Coralberry and Hobbit Hole and got GPS locations for those digs as well. They then went to Keith’s house, where he treated everyone to some of his wife’s great chili. Perfect for a cold and blustery day.



Raccoon scratch marks



The formations were too small to sketch

Grotto Trip Log

10/8/24: Ernst Kastning attended Dr. Bill Halliday's (98) funeral in Cave City, KY, with the burial and ceremony at Campground Cemetery next to Mammoth Cave National Park that afternoon. Bill wanted to be buried as close to **Mammoth Cave** as possible. Several cavers were in attendance. It was not a funeral, more a Celebration of Life for a life well-lived. Dr. William Halliday, NSS 812 RL, PH, HM, FE, CM, AL.

10/9/24: Ernst Kastning visited the *American Cave Museum* in Horse Cave, KY and toured **Hidden River Cave, KY** at that site, back to Sunset Dome. Nice show cave, complete with swinging bridge!!

11/1/24: Nick Schmalenberger, Jerin Manalel, and Gary Hollandsworth visited **New Castle Murder Hole, VA**. They only did the entrance pit (60') and rescued a turtle and a snake at the bottom.

11/7-9: Ernst Kastning attended the *4th Appalachian Karst Symposium* in Lewisburg WV, including two field trips. The first one visited **Lost World Caverns**. The last time Ernst was there it was being developed by Cliff Forman in the late 1960s.

11/9: Germany Valley Karst Survey, **Shoveleater Cave, WV**. Bob Alderson, Mark Minton, and Vonn Droms returned to Shoveleater Cave, did a 50' bolt climb – using the old bolts in the cave. Some bolts wiggled. Bob re-drilled, re-rigged for the group. Did some stemming through the canyon, then another bolt climb, exploring fissures with good air. They need to go back.

11/13: Hobbit Hole, VA. David Socky, Joe Zokaite, Rick Lambert, and Jason Sargent. Worked on the dig in hole surrounded by a dead tree. 22 feet deep with a cable ladder, a nice feature to get down the last part. Dig face is now a small 5 inch by 4-inch hole going straight down. Blowing warm moist air. Very close to Warm River Cave. Going to take LOTS of digging to make progress.

11/17: Benedict Cave, WV. Participants included David Socky, Nick Socky, Bob Alderson, and Bill

Koerschner. Went to the back end of the cave to check a high lead that Kyle Mills had told Nick about. Nick dragged 35 pounds of bolting stuff through the entrance to the first large room where he decided not to drag it through the whole cave doing route finding. It was a good thing he did because we didn't find the lead. The trip included plenty of nice walking passage, but had its share of hands and knee, army, and belly crawls. One was an army crawl through pools of water over cobbles. There were a couple of tight spots with one being close to my limit. Some funky climbs, narrow canyons with obstacles throughout, and of course stemming high up in floorless canyons. It was a fun 7.5-hour trip. (I found out that my right wellie leaks).

11/20: Triplet Cave, VA. Participants included David Socky, Bill Koerschner, Jason Sargent, Marissa Loftus, Jim Schurman, Keith Sweeney, Rick Lambert, and Andrew Newton. We checked out the dig face with Dave and Bill Koerschner going in first. Rocks and dirt that got washed in from the last rain wasn't that bad, but the bucket had been washed in past the dig spot. Bill was able to just reach it. Dave had to help pull Bill out by his feet, but he got the bucket. We removed one bucket of rocks and dirt. Rick Lambert had already placed a 3-foot diameter blue barrel in the entrance (with the ends cut out). He wanted to cement it in place with concrete. We also built a rock wall along the inner bank. Fencing was put in place in front of the barrel entrance to keep sticks and stuff out. We'll see how it works. We finished at about 1pm. We moved to Grape Arbor Pit to work on the dig.

11/20: Grape Arbor Pit, VA. Participants included David Socky, Bill Koerschner, Jason Sargent, Marissa Loftus, Jim Schurman, Keith Sweeney, and Andrew Newton. We got all the digging stuff up the hillside to the entrance of Grape Arbor. Jason and Keith messed around setting up the bucket pulleys on the tripod. Marisa went in first and dug out five buckets. Andrew went next and did 6 or 7 buckets. Then Dave went in with the drill and put in one hole. Dave would have done a second one, but the drill stopped working. We found out later it was just the bat-

tery. Anyway, Dave put in one 2-inch straw, wired it up and he climbed out. It went off fine. Bill went in to muck out the rock. The 2-inch straw worked great. They took out 5 or 6 buckets from Bill and he finally came out. It was getting late, and a storm was coming. They got all the gear down to the cars, changed, milled about, and then the dark clouds moved in fast! Dave didn't have time to tie my shoelaces or button his shirt. Closed the door just as the deluge let loose.

11/28: Mammoth Cave, New Discovery Entrance, China Wall, KY. Participants included David Socky, Bill Koerschner, Bob Alderson, and Michelle Touma. We completed the replacement of the old F-Survey. Went down the steps at the New Discovery entrance and strolled down the borehole passage. Took the left turn at the first main intersection and just down a few hundred feet was the flowstone climb on the right. This is where we used the deer stand ladders to climb up the flowstone. There was a handline at the top which was used to get off the ladder. Between the four of us we had two sets of vertical gear - mine and Bills'. At the top of the flowstone climb was a comfortable sand floored hands and knees crawl. We followed this for about 100 feet or so until we got to the expected pit. It was about 20 feet deep. We used a natural rig point on the right hand wall. Bob used my eight ring to rappel down. He then free climbed up the other side. It was a scary, under-hung climb which no one else wanted to do. So we strung the rope across the pit and used that to pass him the distox2, white out, and my camera. He then did a solo survey while Bill took down the notes and sketched (Neither Bob nor I had our glasses, so Bill was the only one who could sketch!). After finishing the solo survey, Bob free climbed back down, which he said was easier than the climb up. Then the rest of us rappelled to the bottom of the pit. From the bottom was a low crawl back under the upper passage which led almost immediately to a canyon where the floor was 40 feet down.

(Continued on page 83)

(Trip Log continued from page 82)

Bob climbed all the way down but needed webbing to get back up. We did 3 shots, getting to the bottom, but there is probably another 30 or 40 feet of survey down below that will need to be done. Since no one else wanted to climb down, we all exited the cave, getting back to the field station by 7pm. Thanksgiving dinner was served at 8pm. It was very good. We ate too much!

11/29: Mammoth Cave, New Discovery, Roaring River, KY. Participants included David Socky, Bill Koerschner, and Bob Alderson. We went down the walking passage, past the turn off for the China Wall and finally to the right hand turn off toward the KW survey that we did last year. Lots of crawling along with a funky climbdown (which was pretty easy on the way out). The crawling seemed pretty long, but not bad on the way out. When we got to the KW survey, I recognized the passage. Cool potholes. We went past the point I had surveyed last year and continued down the canyon a long way. There were some climbdowns and step-across places, but nothing really hard or scary. There was one place where it was best "to just not look down". We finally got to the point where there was a handline down a steep mud slope. Bob cut steps with his trusty hammer, so it wasn't bad. We were now in Roaring River. To the left was deep water. Our survey was to the right where there were just puddles. I sketched while Bill did cross sections and profile and

instruments. Bob was point. It was nice surveying big passage. I used 8.5 x 11-inch paper with my new folding book and sketched at 20 ft/inch. About half way through, we surveyed through sections that had knee to thigh deep water. But that was the worst. The passage was typically 15 to 20 feet wide by 10 to 15 feet high. We surveyed till 8pm and then headed out. We took two hours to get out, exiting a 10pm for a good 11.25 trip with 1093 feet in the book. Nick and company went to Kemper Ave and got out at 3:30am. Two teams went to the NW Passage and got out at 5:30am - long trips!

11/30: Mammoth Cave, Carmichael, Emily's Puzzle, KY. Participants included David Socky, Rory Knight, Eugeniya Artemova. Bob Alderson, Gabriel (Gabe) Krammer, and Kat Jammer. We entered via the Carmichael Entrance and hiked the one mile to the Snowball Dining Room through strolling commercial borehole. We had to do this because the elevator next to the Snowball Dining Room was broken. The Carmichael Entrance includes a LOT of steps down through a mined tunnel. From the Snowball Dining Room, we continued down and into the cave until we turned off the tourist trail after about 200 feet. We went down and then to the left, around to the right until we got to a sturdy ladder going down into a canyon. The canyon was probably free climbable, but the ladder was nice. We then continued down the canyon a good long ways until

we got to around C125 or so. At this point, Bob and his two team members took the ladders to look for the high leads. I took Rory and Eugeniya to the actual Emily's Puzzle section. To find our leads, we needed to find the H, L, or K surveys. We split up and looked in different sections. It was a 3-dimensional maze. I found the continuation of the C survey but got far enough in I decided to come back. I decided to check one side lead to the right and stumbled on H4, which was one of the leads we were looking for. Looking around for the K survey, I found L7, which was exactly where one of the leads was. It was a low crawlway under L7. Rory and Eugeniya took the DistoX and white out and started the survey. I stayed out and took notes and sketched. The lead popped back out near X2, which was in a passage we used to get to H4. We spent the next hour surveying the maze of little passages between L7 and X2. I didn't fit in any of them, but they were short enough I could see enough to sketch. It was dry and comfortable. Just as we were finishing, Bob and group caught up with us. Since this was intended to be an easy and short trip, we exited the cave. It was a fun an easy 5 hour trip.

12/4: Dressler Cave, VA. Participants included David Socky and Joe Zokaite. Keith Sweeney and Jim Schurman surface support. See article on page 79 for details.



Virginia Museum of Natural History Outreach

The Virginia Museum of Natural History in Martinsville, VA is concluding their Bat exhibit.

On January 11, 2025, The Museum would like Blue Ridge Grotto cavers to have a display on CAVING, as part of their Bat finale, from 11a – 2p.

BRG will bring caving information boards, handouts, and information on show caves and NSS grottos.

Would you like to volunteer?
Please contact Lauren Appell
luvchikenft3@gmail.com 804-937-5409 for more information.

To Volunteer/Carpool: contact Mary Sue Socky
sockymss@cox.net 540-529-3954.

