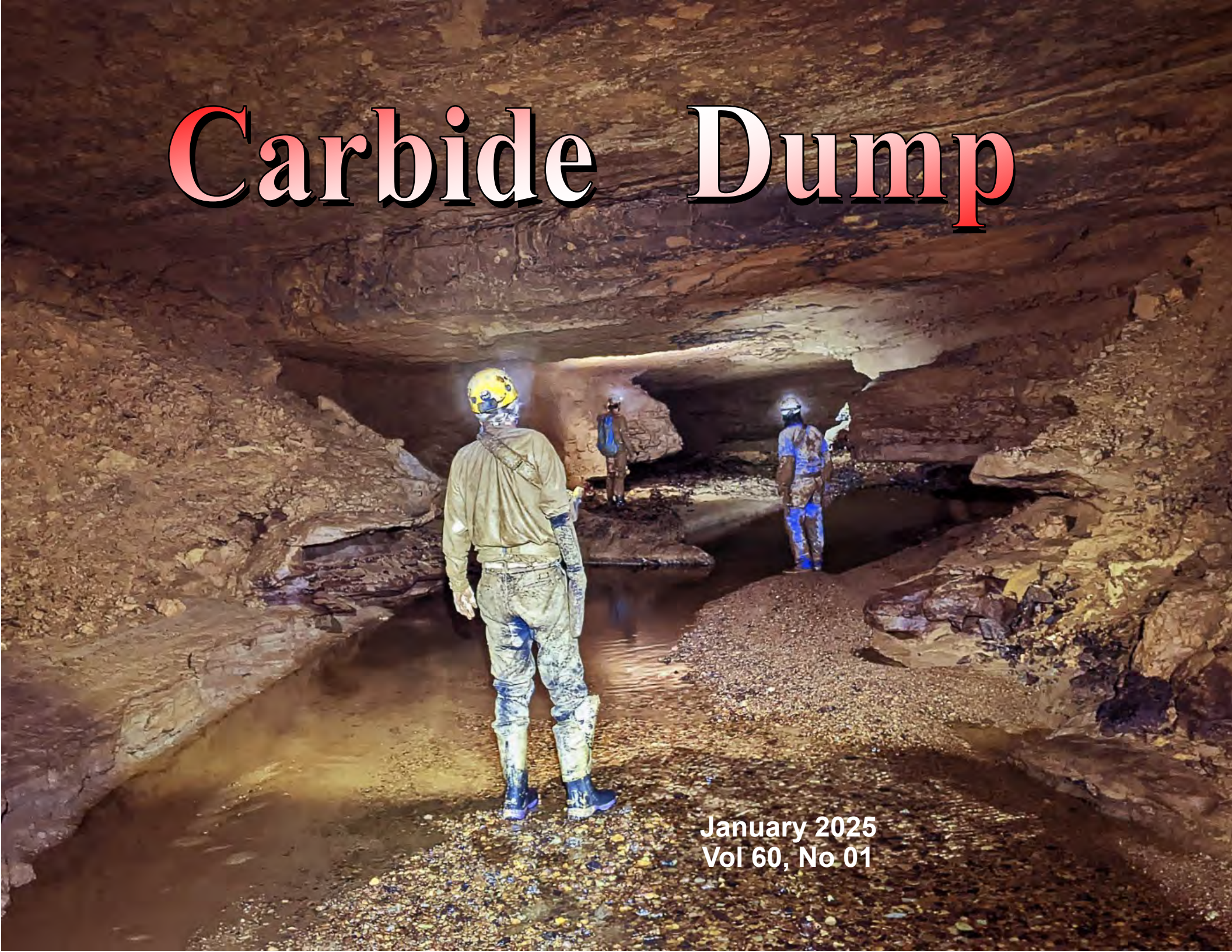


# Carbide Dump



January 2025  
Vol 60, No 01



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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 & Feb). 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, Carol Tiderman, Nikki Fox, Pieter Lips and Jerry Fuller.

**Cover:** Borehole in Benedicts Cave with Bill Koerschner, Nick Socky, and Bob Alderson. Photo by Dave Socky.

# CAVERS CALENDAR

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

**Jan 12:** BRG Winter Party @ the Socky's (6572 Woodbrook Dr, Roanoke, VA). From 12 noon to 5pm. Potluck, BYOB. Friends & family welcome!

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

**Jan 23-26:** Carter Caves KY State Park Winter Adventure Weekend <https://parks.ky.gov/events/winter-adventure-weekend-8363> Limited camping this year.

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

**Mar 21:** BRG meeting, location TBA.

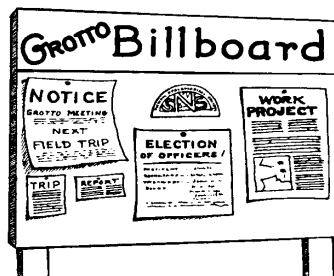
**May 9-11:** Spring VAR, at Spruce Knob, WV, hosted by Out of Bounds Grotto. See page 7 for more info.

**May 11:** Spring WVASS Meeting, at 10 am the WVACS Fieldstation near Frankfort. Contact Dave Riggs, Executive Director, at 304-685-7537 or [driggs@speleo.us](mailto:driggs@speleo.us) for more information.

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

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

Near China Wall in Mammoth Cave, KY. Bob Alderson on ladder, Bill Koerschner, and Michelle Touma. Photo by Dave Socky



## Long Cave Lists

A legacy of Bob Gulden, now maintained by Paul Berger

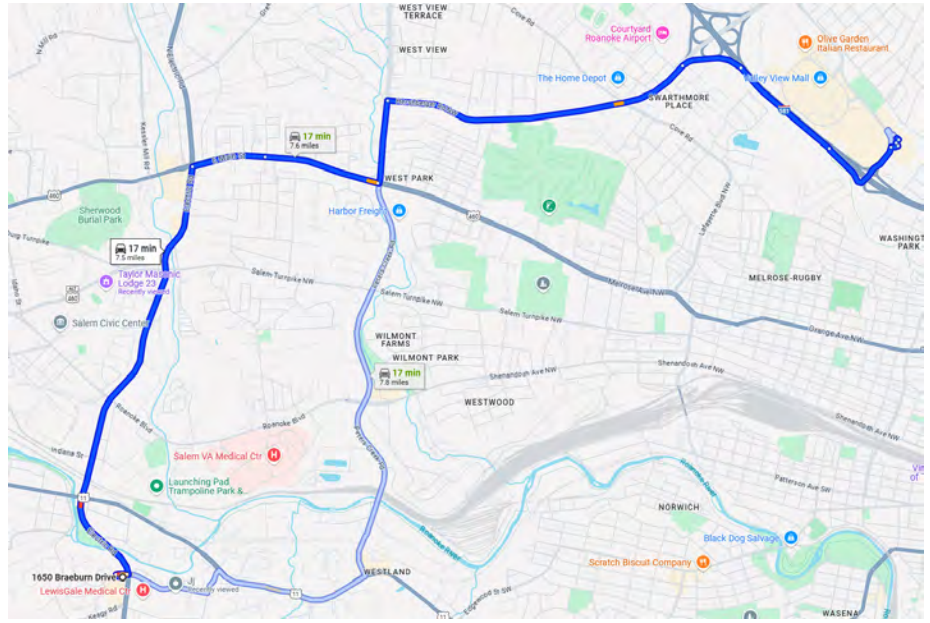
<https://cave-exploring.com/index.php/long-and-deep-caves-of-the-world/>

## BRG Meeting & Trip Notice

The January 17, 2025 meeting of the Blue Ridge Grotto will be held in a private room at **Logan's Roadhouse, 4740 Valley View Blvd, Roanoke VA 24012**. Dinner or appetizers with socializing starts at 6:00 pm with the meeting starting around 6:30 pm. This is a new location for BRG, so a map (to the right) is shown and/or click [here for direction from Jersey Lily's to Logan's Roadhouse](#).

The program will be a slide show of recent cave trips by grotto members.

**Grotto Trip**  
TBD



## 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](mailto:sockymss@cox.net) for more info. Click here for a [Google Map location](#)

**BRG has a New Home?** at least for the next two months. Jersey Lily's, BRGs old meeting place, has closed. After holding two meetings at the Taylor Masonic Lodge in Salem, VA, thanks to Trish, we came upon **Logan's Roadhouse** near Valley View Mall.

It was decided to try Logan's Roadhouse for two months. We have reserved the meeting room Friday, January 17 & February 21, 2025. Just like at Jersey Lily's, BRG meetings will start at 6 pm with ordering meals and/or appetizers and then the official meeting will start at 6:30pm.

- Logan's private meeting room has tables and chairs we can arrange as needed, a fireplace, a TV, and one wall is a clear plexiglass garage door (parking lot headlight glare may be a distraction but we may be able to cover the doors).
- The room is cozy & warm in winter.
- 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.

**From the Carbide Dump Editors:** Dave Socky, co-editor of the *Carbide Dump*, will be off romping around in Africa to climb Mt. Kilimanjaro with Nick Socky and company in mid-February. Because of this he will not be around to help publish the *Dump*. Thus, there will only be email notifications for the month of February. The *Carbide Dump* will resume publication in March 2025.

**NSS Vertical Training Commission May 5-8, 2025:** Save the Date! A VTC Level One Course is being planned for May at the Spruce Knob Mountain Center. The Spring VAR will start right after the course ends, so if you want to spend a week caving in one of the prettiest spots in WV get in touch! <https://caves.org/vtc/>. Contact Kyle Mills [kmills@caves.org](mailto:kmills@caves.org) for more info.

### RIP - Charlotte Lucas

NSS # 46427 FL.

*Charlotte Lucas* died Dec. 31, 2024. Charlotte and Phil Lucas owned and created The Water Sinks Preserve in Highland Co, VA (Owl Cave, Water Sinks, the Subway, Helectite Cave) before moving to Waynesboro, VA in late 2023. Charlotte was a dedicated caver, landowner and a wonderful "friend of the karst". She will be missed.

**12/18/2024: An Injured Italian Caver** was lifted to safety after a four-day rescue operation. See this [link for details](#).

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

(Continued on page 5)





## Island Ford Cave, VA Trip Report

Article and photos by *Susan Burr*

December 21, 2024

Susan Burr (Leader), Alexander (Alex) Thompson, Jessica Hester, and Ben Hester.

It was windy & freezing cold, but we did a quick trip into Island Ford. Once inside the cave we almost immediately saw a flying bat. That bothered me since I knew we had not disturbed it. We also saw 2 more very early on but sleeping. We went to the back of the cave to the spring where we discovered someone/people had been back there drinking. We found a Smirnoff bottle & in the stream

a beer bottle. Both were of course broken. We did not have anything with us that could transport all the broken glass pieces out safely so we left it. One large piece is in the deep part of the spring & another large piece was in the stream we saw when we were heading to see the baby salamanders. On the sitting area near the spring is LOTS of tiny broken pieces of glass. Hopefully one day someone, maybe our group, will be able to go back to clean that up & use something to get the larger piece out of the spring.

After hanging out in the back for a bit we headed over to the salamander nurse-

ry. There was probably 30-40 babies in that section. Next we got into the stream passage & headed out. We did this passage without getting in the water. It is a lot more work, but we stayed dry. We also saw a couple more bats.

By the time we finished the trip we had seen a total of 6 bats. I couldn't get pics of all of them.

Once we were back at the entrance area, Alex was kind enough to use an extra garbage bag he had & clean up all the trash there. I brought it home to dispose of.



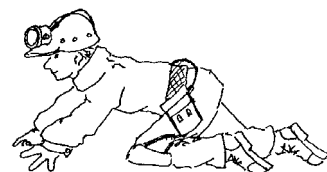
**Ben and Jessica Hester at a formation area in Island Ford Cave, VA.**



**Alex Thompson in the canyon of Island Ford Cave, VA**



**Alex Thompson cleaning up garbage at the entrance to Island Ford Cave, VA**



(Announcements continued from page 3)

### Bat Cave Closures -

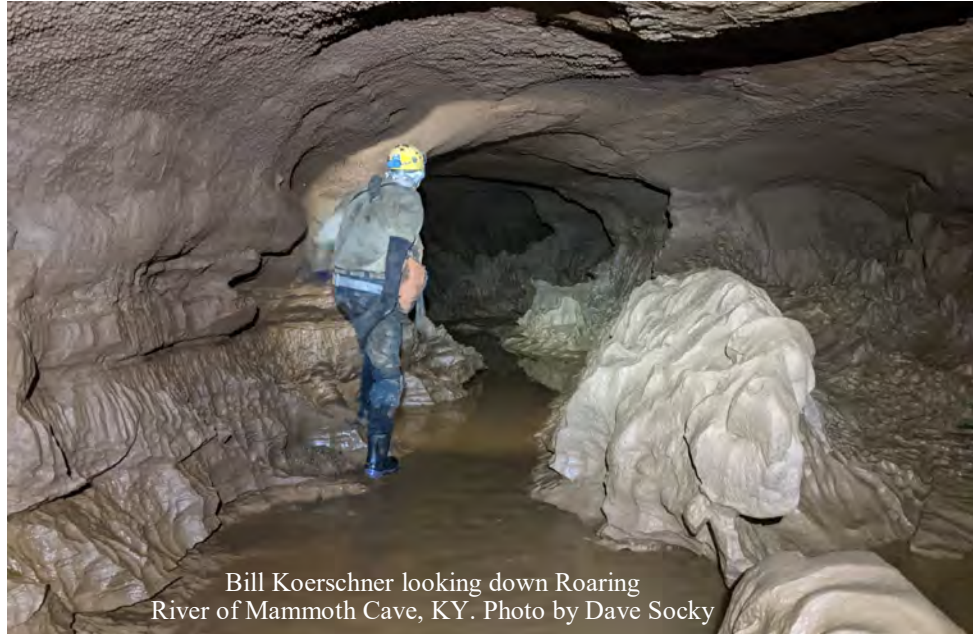
**Bat Hibernacula Caves in VA and WV are now in winter closure:** These closures do not affect all caves. Check the closed list, and please go elsewhere if your intended cave is closed. *There are thousands of caves in the Virginias.*

**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.**

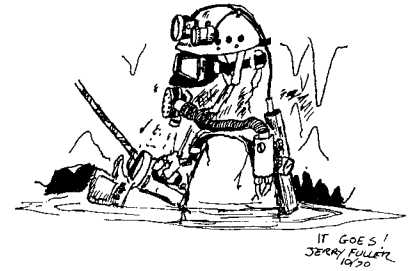


Bill Koerschner looking down Roaring River of Mammoth Cave, KY. Photo by Dave Socky

## Grotto Trip Log

**12/21/24: Island Ford Cave, VA.** This was the December BRG Grotto trip led by Susan Burr, and included Alexander (Alex) Thompson, Jessica Hester, and Ben Hester.

This was a slow month for caving. Between the holidays, traveling, colds, and weather, there are no other trips to report on the BRG Trip Log. Oh my.



## 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 [lucchikenft3@gmail.com](mailto:lucchikenft3@gmail.com) 804-937-5409 for more information.

To Volunteer/Carpool: contact Mary Sue Socky [sockymss@cox.net](mailto:sockymss@cox.net) 540-529-3954.



## Treasurer's Report

01/09/2025

|              |                   |
|--------------|-------------------|
| Cave Bucks   | \$ 112.96         |
| Conservation | \$ 2.00           |
| Equipment    | \$ 144.12         |
| General      | \$5,838.26        |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>\$6,097.34</b> |

**BRG Financial Audit:** Chairman David Socky has done an audit of all BRG's accounts and finances. He reports that everything is in agreement; everything balances, and passwords have been updated. All grotto T-shirts and money are accounted for.

**Lynn Ott:** Lynn died in November 2024. Lynn had 'paid ahead' her BRG subscriber/dues until 2032. Lynn's partner Gene Harrison requested that the balance of Lynn's BRG dues be sent to Cricket Maze Cave in her memory. This has been done.

**BRG Online payments:** There was a discussion during the November 2024 meeting about BRG's current PayPal account and online payments. There were objections to the fees PayPal charges, although they are small. It was suggested BRG tack on a surcharge to cover the cost. Other services like ZELLE were discussed. Dave Socky tabled the discussion and will report in January after further investigation. In the meantime, the BRG PayPal account can still be used to pay dues and such. Use the following to make PayPal payments to BRG:

[blueridgegrottoofficers@gmail.com](mailto:blueridgegrottoofficers@gmail.com)

**Pay Your Dues:** Have you paid your 2025 dues yet? If you don't know if you owe dues, just ask Mary Sue Socky ([sockymss@cox.net](mailto:sockymss@cox.net)). We have the records! And we have PayPal - see above.





## Membership

In 2024, BRG had 53 members and 5 subscribers.

For 2025, we currently have 38 members & 5 subscribers. Thank you!

Please pay your 2025 BRG dues.

As for the "Forgetful Fifteen" – you know who you are... We'll go caving with you anyway!

Attention former BRG members in good standing – to rejoin BRG, you only need to sign a membership agreement and pay your \$10.

Know of a potential caver? Bring them to a BRG meeting, sponsor them on a BRG activity, do lots of fun things with the best cavers around ~

## Membership Proposal

**Helene Ferguson**, NSS 60182. Helene is sponsored by Barry Ferguson, NSS 12436, and Marian McConnell, NSS 37358. Mary Sue Socky NSS 24206 motioned that Helene's membership letter be accepted. Susan Burr NSS 53888 Seconded the motion; **Helene's membership is tabled** until the January 17, 2025 BRG meeting.

## Cave Softly



## Area Cave Closures

**The Caverns at Natural Bridge** (orig. Buck Hill Cave), Rockbridge Co. VA Show Cave closed in 2024. CNB has new owners. No other details. It is unknown if CNB will open in 2025.

**Catawba Murder Hole**, Botetourt Co. VA is closed to visitation.

**Giant Caverns, Giles Co.** VA is in the process of being purchased by West Virginia Cave Conservancy. Stay tuned!

**Norman Cave**, Greenbrier Co, WV. The WVCC (cave manager) has announced 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.

**Moler's Cave, WV**, is currently closed until the property's legal matters are resolved due to Dr. Latterells's passing. Any attempt to visit the cave could negatively impact the outlook for future visitation. There is a working group on the property keeping an eye on the property.





### Basic Info

- **Dates:** Friday, May 9, 2025 - Sunday, May 11, 2025
- **Location:** Spruce Knob Mountain Center, [18 Woodlands Way, Circleville, WV 26804](#)
- **Pre-Registration:** \$50 (includes dinner). Individuals under 18: \$20.
- **Contact:** Email Out of Bounds Grotto (OBG) at [outofboundsgrotto@gmail.com](mailto:outofboundsgrotto@gmail.com)
- **Proceeds:** Proceeds support the Virginia Region (VAR), Out of Bounds Grotto (OBG), Germany Valley Karst Survey, Vertical Training Section of the National Speleological Society (NSS), and Central Appalachian Cave Rescue Team.

### Camping and Accommodations

- **Camping:** Ample space available with bathhouses (toilets & showers).
- **Dorms:** 40 beds per dorm. Additional \$30 per night.
- **Yurts:** Guest yurts available (sleep 4). Additional \$70 per night.
- **Pets:** Not permitted on-site.
- **Fire Policy:** Fires allowed only in designated fire rings with local wood.
- **To Reserve Dorms or Yurts:** Contact OBG at [outofboundsgrotto@gmail.com](mailto:outofboundsgrotto@gmail.com).

### Caving Opportunities

### Vertical Caves:

- Shoveleater Cave: Technical skills required. Includes rebelay, J-hangs, traverses, and drops up to 215 ft.
- Ruddle: Vertical with tight spaces
- Thompson Pit: Vertical
- Con Cave: Vertical
- Harper's Pit: Vertical
- Sites: Vertical
- Sites Attic: Vertical

### Horizontal Caves:

- Hamilton Cave
- New Trout Cave
- Kees Cave (optional easy vertical)
- Stillhouse Cave
- Sinks of Gandy
- High Meadow Cave
- Cave Rat Cave

### Other Activities

**Meteor Shower:** Eta Aquariids – Perfect viewing location at the campsite.

### Hiking:

- **Whispering Spruce Trail:** Easy, ½ mile, stunning sunset views
- **Seneca Creek Trail:** 5.5 miles, waterfalls, natural springs, and bridges (expect wet feet)
- **Huckleberry Trail:** 11 miles, high meadows and backcountry vistas
- **Piper Apache Plane Crash Site:** 10 miles, easy hike on old logging trail
- **Seneca Rocks:** Hiking (1.5-mile ascent) & rock climbing (400+ routes)

### Event Schedule

#### Friday, May 9, 2025

- Registration Opens: 2:00 PM
- Self-Guided Cave Trips
- Trip Sign-Ups: 8:00 PM
- Campfire: After Dark

#### Saturday, May 10, 2025

- Guided and Self-Guided Cave Trips
- Dinner: 6:00 PM
- Evening Program: 7:30 PM. Presentation by Kyle Mills: *"Three Carabini-ers and a Whole Lot of Guts: Early Vertical Exploration in Pendleton County"*

#### Meteor Shower Viewing

#### Sunday, May 11, 2025

- VAR Business Meeting: 9:00 AM
- Site Closes: 12:00 PM
- Self-Guided Cave Trips Continue

### Additional Information

- **Vendors:** To Be Announced.
- **Waivers:** Must be signed on the OBG website.
- **Stay Updated:** Follow OBG or VAR on Facebook for the latest updates.

Registration: <https://www.zeffy.com/en-US/ticketing/2025-spring-var>

Info: <https://var.caves.org/index.php/events/spring-var>

