

Minutes of the Fall 2014 VAR Meeting

OCTOBER 12, 2014

Meeting was called to order at 9:08

Reports

The Secretary - Carol Tideman

A motion was made by Pine Mtn. to accept the minutes as published in the Region Record. Tri-State Grotto seconded. Motion passed.

The Treasurer - John Fox

1. For VAR's participation with the NSS Convention in PA, we received \$600
2. Last VAR meeting it was voted that funds for Crystal Cave be transferred to the NSS for the purchase of New River Cave located in Montgomery County, Virginia

About the Host Bailout Fund. I don't think we need it anymore. It sends the wrong message to a host grotto and to anyone thinking of hosting a meeting. VAR will not bail some one out because they loose money. Hosts charge the people, but don't pay VAR. That changed this past year. I have used it twice to pay for printing the Region Record when no money was brought in at a meeting. Those lean years meant we "dipped" into past funds and did not contribute to JSS, or pay for Landowner award.

If we use that money for Cave Board Grant request, it would go to a better cause. The money market account requires a minimum of \$2500, that can be off set from the working checkbook.

Also of note, our NSF account has finally made us a profit since 1998.

The Vice Chair - Judy Fisher

No report

The Chairman - Craig Hindman

The vandals at the last VAR meet were handled by the WVCC BATS and the Chair have the video.

Those receiving awards at the NSS Convention were recognized

Conservation CO-Chair - Meredith Hall Weberg

Grand Caverns Restoration went well.

Meredith would like to be replaced.

VAR Outstanding Service Award - Meredith Hall Weberg

There were no nominations. Form is online

Meredith is willing to step down.

Landowner Recognition Awards - Janet Tinkhan

No report. There is a form online

Landowner Legal Support Committee - Bob Hoke

No news is good news.

Region Record - Jessica Reep & Kyle Mills

Jessica Reep & Kyle Mills are moving out of region. We thank them for their service.

A new editor is needed

Meredith will handle in the interim.

VAR List Server - Jim McConkey

Since Walt is probably not present, I will report that the Listserv is still alive and well, though traffic has been light. Organizers of VARs and VAR-related projects are especially encouraged to make full use of the ListServ to attract cavers to their events. Events heavily publicized on the ListServ tend to be by far the best attended.

We had considered moving the ListServ to the NSS servers along with the web site, but have decided against it as long as the current host keeps hosting for free. Walt says he is now well over 80, and if anyone is interested in helping run the ListServ, he would welcome the help.

VAR Web site - Jim McConkey

Since I am currently somewhere over the Atlantic and cannot remote in to the meeting, I sent my report to Carol ahead of time.

For years the VAR's web site has been hosted for free by an internet service provider (ISP) co-founded by caver Kelly Shaw. Kelly has since moved on, but by agreement with him, the ISP has continued hosting our site for free for the past several years. Just before Convention, a change of management or direction caused them to drop a bombshell on us - they gave us barely a week's notice before they started charging us several hundred dollars a year. After a flurry of e-mails just as everyone was leaving town, it was quickly decided to move the VAR's web site to the NSS servers ASAP. The annual \$15 fee is still far less than the ISP wanted to charge us per month, and will eventually be offset by losing the domain registration fee. The VAR's official URL is now var.caves.org, but the old www.varegion.org will continue to work for some time.

Thanks to mad dash by Alex Sproul and Charles Goldsmith just as they were leaving for Convention, the transfer was effected within a few days, and our site was running on its new home. I also took the opportunity to install a content management system (CMS), which makes maintenance of the site far easier, more like editing Word documents than coding web pages. It also gives me the

opportunity to enlist helpers to maintain specific parts of the site, if necessary. Most of the site has now been duplicated (and expanded) on the new CMS, and the old site is still available, at least for the time being. The only outstanding problem is that the contact forms are not currently functional. That will be corrected soon, but in the mean time, please use your Member's Manual to find the e-mails of the officers and committee chairs.

Along with the face lift, several other important changes have been implemented. First, by popular demand, and thanks to an enormous effort by Bob Hoke, the nearly-complete archives of the *Region Record*, and its predecessor, *VAR-FYI*, are now on-line as searchable PDF files. Please check it out, and if you happen to have any of the missing issues, please let Bob borrow them to scan. We haven't decided on a policy yet, but new issues will probably be posted a year behind when they come out so subscribers get exclusive, timely information. With all this information now on-line, we could really use an index. If you have entirely too much time on your hands, please contact me and volunteer to create an index for the *Region Record*.

After many years maintaining the VAR Closed Cave List, Bob has also decided to retire from that job. It only made sense to move it to the new VAR site, where I will be maintaining it for the time being. If anyone wants to volunteer to help, I would be glad to have an assistant. In the mean time, I challenge all VAR County Coordinators to review their own counties, check if all currently closed caves are listed, if any are missing, and if any need updates. The list is hopelessly out of date and needs updated information to remain relevant and useful to the VAR community.

And, as always, I add my plea to all member grotto's to check their current contact information and send me updates when their officers or contacts change.

Please give a couple hip-hip-hoorahs to Bob Hoke, Kelly Shaw, and Alex Sproul for all their help over the past many years and in this time of crisis!

Cave Bucks - JC Fisher

Tri-State has collected and spent over 6k.

VSS - Rick Lambert

No report The database is being reviewed for duplicate names.

WVASS – George Dasher

Going through the database and removing FRO's Please turn over data and maps not published

WVCC - Carroll Bassett

A surprise will be announced on November 8th.

Balfour working on Culverson Creek

SCCI – Walt Pirie
No report

Grand Caverns/Cave Hill - Jim McConkey
no report
Project continues

Virginia Cave Board – Meredith Hall Weberg
Cave and Karst Trail went live on the website/
Workshop at conference at VMI

|

Cave Conservancy of the Virginia's -Dave Socky
No report
Grant deadline 2/15/15

Spring Survey Project - Joey Fagan
No report

Youth Group Liaison – Joey Fagan
No report

New River Cave
Goal is to pay off 22k in the next 3 years. This is a good use for your cave bucks

Host Report – Mon Grotto
No report
RASS moved to thank

Old Business

VAR Hosts
Spring 2015 – no offers
Fall 2015 - no offers
Spring 2016 -no offers
Fall 2016 -no offers

New Business

Dominion Pipeline
Bob Denton is involved as an adviser.
Possible route through Mill Creek - west of the Tygart Valley. West side of Cheet Mtn cave, east side of Cheet Mtn pit
Do not see as a real threat in WV
50k from Joe Lovett is earmarked for water study.
Another pipeline is slated to run through the south end of Monroe County

Grant Requests

\$1400 was requested by the Cave Board to cover printing and mailing of their newsletter. This would cover the next three issues. It costs approx. \$900/issue
Bubble moves to grant \$400 to the Cave Board. RASS seconded - passed unan

Elections

The current slate was nominated by Bubble - passed unan

Announcements

Carpenter Swago needs remapping

Adjournment

RASS moved to adjourn, Pine Mtn. seconded. Meeting Adjourned at 10:03 AM

Respectfully submitted:
Carol Tiderman