



# *The* Region Record

Vol. XV No. 3 Summer 2002

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## Chairman's Column

It's that time again to start thinking about the upcoming Fall VAR., to be held at Endless Caverns. It sounds like there is a lot of planning going on for the event. At the last VAR we had a good turnout, thanks to the location and the many conservation projects at Grand Caverns and Fountain Cave. It was reported that, this time, there were more formations repaired than had ever been cemented together before. Thanks to all who made this possible.

Since the VSS report of surpassing the West Virginia total number of reported caves, there has been a report that West Virginia is in the process of having caves collapses to form multiple caves. It is reported that this will only work if the cave has multiple entrances. We now will have Bowden #1 and #2. The report from WVASS is West Virginia has one more cave than that of its neighbor Virginia. I expect we will see revised cave counts for both at the Fall VAR.

As this news letter is going out, people are heading for the NSS Convention in Maine. It's not too late to come on up and join in the fun and meet cavers from around the country and the world. Share you knowledge and brain storm with others. So come on up and see what all the talk is about.

*Craig*

## Silers Cave Owner Receives VAR Landowner Award

by Jim McConkey

Silers Cave received a lot of attention in VAR last year because of the joint Sligo-Baltimore Grottos re-gating project. Cavers from all over VAR participated. Some who had forgotten were reminded that Sligo Grotto has been managing the cave for over 25 years now. Mr. Robert Wyly, the landowner, has supported Sligo's efforts for over a quarter of a century. He is grateful that cavers have shown such long-term interest in maintaining the cave. He is also happy to have someone looking after his property, since no one lives there. The VAR voted last Fall to award the VAR Landowner Recognition Award to Mr. Wyly for his long-term support of cave conservation and friendliness to cavers.

Landowner awards are usually presented in person, but due to the distance involved, a personal trip was not possible in this case. I called Mr. Wyly, told him about the award, its origins, and its meaning, congratulated him, and thanked him for the many years of cooperation. I mailed the award right afterwards, and Sligo Grotto added a check so that Mr. Wyly and his wife could enjoy the nice dinner that we would have provided if we could have presented the award in person. A week or so later I got back a very nice note from him, thanking VAR for the award, and

Sligo for our diligence in protecting the cave. He is glad to hear we still greatly enjoy the use of his land, and take the efforts to conserve it.

## VPI/SIVTAC Fund Drive For Valhalla

by Walt Pirie

I think by now most cavers know that the SouthEast Cave Conservancy, inc. (SCCi) has pulled off another coup and purchased another (maybe THE) major TAG icon, Valhalla cave. It's mind boggling what these folks have managed to accomplish in the past few years. I believe they now own or have management control over 30 caves, ensuring continuing access to cavers and sound cave conservation policies. Valhalla in particular is a spectacular cave that has been closed to cavers for the past 10 years, but no longer.

Cavers from the VPI Cave Club have been caving in TAG as long as anyone can remember and many older VPI members have strong memories of Valhalla. Now the younger members will also have the chance to experience the thrill of one of the most spectacular pits in TAG. In support of the SCCi, the members of VPI and SIVTAC (Several Independent Virginia Tech Affiliated Cavers) mounted a fund drive similar to the one we did for the WVCC purchase of the Lightners entrance to McClungs

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## The *Region Record*

The *Region Record* is the quarterly publication of the Virginia Region of the National Speleological Society. Any articles, announcements, or other materials of general interest to cavers in the Region are welcome. **Send all material to Bob Hoke (6304 Kaybro St., Laurel, MD 20707 (301) 725-5877, e-mail bobhoke@erols.com)**. Electronic submissions (e-mail or disk) are encouraged, but any form of input is welcome. Non-copyrighted material contained in the *Region Record* may be reprinted by organizations that are affiliated with the VAR or the NSS, provided that proper credit is given to the *Record* and the author. The opinions expressed herein are those of the individual author, and do not necessarily reflect those of the editors, the VAR, the NSS, or their internal organizations.

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### Region Record Subscriptions

- New NSS members in the Region receive two complementary copies of the *Region Record*.
- Current NSS members moving into the Region from elsewhere receive two complementary copies. Current NSS members who move within the Region get no freebies.
- When a subscription is going to expire the last issue will be stamped "Time to Renew." No renewal notice is sent.
- When a person attends a VAR meeting he/she is automatically added to the list to receive the next four issues. If he/she is already on the list, four additional issues are added to the subscription.
- When multiple people live at the same address only one copy of each issue will be sent to the address unless a box requesting individual issues is checked on the VAR registration form or a request is sent to the Circulation Manager.

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## Regional Calendar

Aug. 15 Deadline for submitting material for the Fall issue of the *Region Record*.

Aug. 29 - Sep. 2 **Old Timers Reunion** near Elkins, WV. You must be a TRA member to attend. See additional information in this issue.

Aug. 31 Annual **WVASS Meeting** at the Mon Grotto campsite across from the pavilion at 7 pm. Anyone interested in WV caves is welcome to attend.

Sep. 7 **Trout Rock Conser-Vacation**. Help clean these popular NSS-owned caves near Franklin, WV. See article in this issue for info.

Sep. 27-29 **Fall VAR meeting**. Hosted by BATS at Endless Caverns, Virginia. See article and preregistration flyer in this issue. Deadline for preregistration discount is **Sept. 7**.

May 9-11, 2003 **Spring VAR meeting** at the Old Timers site near Elkins, WV. Hosted by DC Grotto and PSC. More info later.

Aug. 4-8, 2003 **2003 NSS Convention** in Porterville, CA.

### LIST YOUR CLUB EVENTS HERE!

If your club is hosting events of regional interest, send a notice to the *Region Record* editors and have the event added to the next *Record's* calendar. There is no charge for this valuable service.

## Vahalla

(continued from page 1)

Cave. As a result of the generosity of 56 current and past VPI cavers, the club is sending over \$3,000 to help with the Valhalla purchase, which incidentally cost \$100,000.

The SCCi will be producing a map of the Valhalla Cave Preserve similar to maps they've done with other major caves they have purchased, naming various features after donors. The VPI name will appear prominently on the map. To learn more about the SCCi, the cave purchase, and naming conventions, take a look at [www.scci.org](http://www.scci.org).

Organizing a Grotto fund drive for important projects like this is a rewarding, fun, and productive process. It gives the Grotto the chance to have a major impact that would not be possible with limited Grotto budgets and produces sizable contributions for things that we really care about. If your Grotto hasn't tried it yet, this is a good time. I think you'll be as pleasantly surprised as I have been.

## Bowden Cave Clean-up April 13, 2002

by Bob Hoke

*[Editor's note: This cleanup trip was done about 10 days before the discovery that there had been a major collapse in Bowden Cave. The article following tells about the cave being effectively closed due to the collapse].*

This is a recap of the Bowden Cave cleanup trip that seems to have become an annual spring event sponsored by the DC Grotto and Tri-State Grotto (based in the eastern panhandle of West Virgin-

ia). This year we had about 28 people come to help clean this very popular, and very abused, cave near Elkins WV. Unfortunately, the cave is quite well known to the local party crowd, and the entrance is easily accessible, so it sees a lot of non-caving visitors. It seems

scrubbing graffiti off the ceiling with that spray painting is one of the favorite pastimes of these visitors, so the cave needs to be cleaned a couple times each year to keep up with the graffiti. This spring's trip was organized by Pauline Apling with help from J. C. Fisher.

### Cave Law Sign

Many West Virginia caves have metal signs in the entrance telling visitors that the cave is protected under West Virginia law. For some reason a sign had never been installed in Bowden. A couple years ago I talked to one of the nine owners of the main entrance and he got all of the other eight owners to sign a letter saying we could install a sign. Charles Kahn came out with his battery powered hammer drill and this made quick work of installing the sign near the old gate into the cave.

The back entrances are on U. S. Forest Service property so we need to get their permission to install signs at these entrances. This is in the queue for the Spring 2003



scrubbing graffiti off the ceiling with a soft bristled scrub brush. This technique was invaluable for removing names etched in the soft mud or spray painted on. The strange circles are camera artifacts. Photo by Jerry Bowen

cleanup.

### A Nice Through Trip

Most of the folks went into the main entrance to clean the area back to the Shower Room (the end of the cave for many visitors, and the site of much graffiti). However, Dusty Gulden led a group of six folks (including me) in the Third Entrance to clean our way toward the front of the cave. Our party survived the Hairy Traverse and Pauline's Crawl and we did not start seeing significant graffiti until after we reached the stream.

The trip through the cave was not terribly difficult (especially since Dusty knew the way and we didn't have to waste time finding the route) so we were able concentrate on cleaning the spray painted and finger painted graffiti we encountered.

### Cleanup Tools

The wire brush is the tool of choice for removing most graffiti. However, in addition to the increasingly common spray paint, Bowden visitors who venture beyond the Water Course seem to like to write their names in the mud on the ceiling in several places. The mud is very soft and when you try to rub off a name you usually end up with a face full of mud.

A few years ago we used squeegee and a long handled scrub brush to clean the ceiling. Last year I forgot these tools and ended up with a face full of mud. This year I remembered these tools and we were able to do a very good job of either removing the graffiti or covering it up with gooey mud. I felt pretty stupid hauling a mop through the cave, but it was well worth the effort.

### Bat Murder

We encountered a splotch of red spray paint on the wall and an unpainted area in the middle that was exactly the size and shape of a hanging bat. We concluded that

some upstanding visitor had probably sprayed a bat.

A bit later we encountered a similar splotch, but this time there was another splotch on the floor below and there were bat bones in the middle of that splotch. Our fears were confirmed. There were lots of bad things said about the jerks who did this. On the good side, there seemed to be more bats than usual in the cave this year, and we only ran across these two murder sites.

### **Vandals Almost Caught**

As we emerged into the front section of the cave from the Water Course we encountered three guys with baseball hats and flashlights (typical attire for many Bowden visitors). Dusty then noticed that one guy was wearing a clear plastic backpack containing two important caving aids: a six-pack of beer and a can of spray paint.

I think there was a secret ballot among our party and I seemed to have been elected to confront our visitors about their paint. I did, and the guy said that they had not used it and just brought it along "in case they got lost." I didn't bother to ask him how it would help after he was lost. He also acknowledged seeing the new cave law sign in the entrance.

The three guys left to head for the entrance and our group headed the other way to see how the Shower Room looked. About 50 feet later we noticed a perfume smell and then saw spray painted initials on the wall. I sniffed the paint and it was clearly fresh. Since our other cleanup team had just cleaned the area we could only assume that our well equipped cavers had left their mark.

I raced back toward the entrance to confront them and inadvertently yelled at a couple other cavers who were in the passage. While I apologized for accusing them of being vandals the three guys headed out of sight.

I rejoined our team and we headed for the entrance, using the scrub brush to clean a few hard to reach places that the earlier crew could not reach.

I was the tail in our group when we got to the entrance crawl and everyone was milling around the start of it, including our vandals. It seemed that the vandals had missed the turn to the crawlway and that I was again elected to hassle them.

This time I told them that they were really lucky that we didn't see them paint the walls since they were on USFS property at the time and they could face Federal prosecution. Of course they pleaded innocence. I continued to rant at them about cave conservation and the law, but it was pretty obvious I was getting nowhere. They followed us out of the cave and headed to their car. I don't think I've ever seen anyone leave a cave site so quickly so I assume they really did get the message that they had done something wrong.

If we had emerged from the Water Course a couple minutes earlier we might have nabbed the vandals in the act. Oh well, maybe another time.

### **Participants**

Pauline Apling, Bob Bennett, Lewis Bolt, Becky Bolte, Steve Bolte, Jerry Bowen, Doug Brown, Alan Carpenter, Andy Dick, Judy Fisher, J. C. Fisher, Joe Flaig, Evan Flint, Doyle Garvin, Bob Gulden, Dusty Gulden, Richard Hand, Bob Hoke, Charles Kahn, Eric Karch, Doug McCarthy, Steve Mossberg, Kenny Patrice, John Pearson, Andy Privee, Pat Seiser, Darshan Sheth, Jason Thomas. Caving groups represented included Baltimore Grotto, DC Grotto, Monongahela Grotto, Parkersburg Area Grotto, Potomac Speleological Club, Standing Stone Grotto, Tri-State Grotto, and the WVU Student Grotto.

*[Reprinted from the April 2002 issue of the DC Speleograph]*

## **Most of Bowden Cave Closed by the Forest Service**

by Bob Hoke

Most cavers are now aware that there was a major passage collapse in Bowden Cave sometime between April 13 and April 26. The collapse is at the upstream end of the Water Course and makes through trips impossible. The collapse is also very unstable and the U. S. Forest Service (which owns most of the cave) is very concerned about someone getting hurt trying to push or dig their way through it.

The vast majority of the passage in Bowden Cave is owned by the Monongahela National Forest. Only the main entrance and a few hundred feet of the main passage are privately owned.

Due to safety concerns about the collapsed area, the Forest Service has decided to "temporarily" close most of the cave that they control. I talked to the Cave Specialist at the USFS office in Elkins on May 21 and here is a summary of what I was told:

- All entrances to Bowden Cave on USFS land are closed.
- The first 600 feet of the main passage are still open, but all passage beyond that point is closed. The Water Course and Shower Room are included in the closed area.
- The passage beyond the Agony Crawl is still open.
- The closure is "temporary" and will be evaluated sometime in the future to see if the collapse has stabilized.

- All of the small caves in the Bickle Hollow are still open.
- Signs have been placed at all the closed entrances and in the main passage to notify cavers of the closed area.
- Parking near the Main Entrance is on private land and is still legal (as is access through the Main Entrance).

It appears that the USFS is serious about keeping folks away from the collapse. Everyone should comply with the closure (which is fully enforceable) and hope that the cave is reopened sometime in the future.

## Recreational versus Project Caving

By Phil Lucas

Recently in the Cavers Digest (No. 5760), a caver from Arizona explained, how disappointed and embarrassed she was that the Arizona Regional Association (ARA) voted not to host an NSS Convention because they don't want cavers from all over the country coming to see Arizona caves or for cavers from other states to come to help either. She says that at the ARA meeting where this vote was taken, that some were saying, "the NSS shouldn't let anyone join who is not a project caver." Perhaps I'm wrong in my assumption but this is telling me that most of the caving that takes place in Arizona is not recreational caving but project caving.

When I read this, I could not help but to consider and compare how things are done here in our Virginia Region. Certainly there are differences between the Arizona Region and the Virginia Region. Most VAR caves are privately owned, I would guess we have more caves, many of which have been known and visited for a long

time (in modern terms) and published, many of our caves are dynamic (active stream passages, flooding) and I would guess that we have more caves that have been vandalized. We certainly have had a number of NSS Conventions in both Virginia and West Virginia.

With these differences a number of questions come to mind. Is the VAR primarily a recreational caving organization? As far as that goes, is the NSS a primarily recreational caving organization? Is recreational caving a bad thing? What role does project caving play? Don't recreational and project caving go hand in hand? Or does there need to be a balance between the two? Does the VAR have the right balance?

Most of us can quickly answer most of these questions without a lot of forethought. But it is that last question that I wish to elaborate upon for just a bit. First, my definition of what is meant by project caving is "those activities that gather new information that is recorded and adds to our knowledge of caves and cave resources." This would include cave and surface surveys, locating new caves or cave passages through field investigations or a dig project, collecting, taking measurements such as air temperatures, air currents, size of formations, etc., or the recording of careful observations. Under this definition, just one caver alone can do project caving. I am not advocating solo caving but rather to explain that the word "project" is perhaps misleading by implying that it involves a group of cavers.

The key to this is that data is recorded! In this regard, all of us can be or should be "project cavers" at one time or another. This doesn't mean that we can't have fun while "project caving" in fact, project caving can be the most rewarding of all. If we, the cavers of the VAR, had as our culture, to always return from every caving

trip with some new data such as an interesting observation and then to record that data, our database of cave resources would be tremendously enriched. Enriched is often translated into conservation and preservation. And where is a good location to record cave data? The VSS (Virginia Speleological Survey) and the WAVSS (West Virginia Speleological Survey) are the natural repositories for our data collections.

VSS's web site (<http://www.virginiacaves.org/>) has e-mail and report forms to make reporting as easy as possible.

## VAR Outstanding Service Awards: Time for Nominations

By Meredith Hall Johnson

Please submit your suggestion for the annual VAR Outstanding Service Award. When you nominate someone, please put in a decent paragraph or two as to why that person deserves recognition. If you really don't know that much, then send what you do know and also send names and e-mail addresses of anyone who might know more, say a caving partner or best friend of the nominee. Generally the nominees should be cavers in the Region who have contributed to the Region over the years through cave exploration, survey, administration, whatever. Last year's winners were Evelyn Bradshaw, Bob Handley, and Jim Hixson. All of these cavers have dedicated years of effort to promote the Virginia Region in a variety of ways. This is the kind of caver we want to award recognition to.

There are many worthwhile cavers in the Region, folks who give tirelessly and without expectation

of personal gain. We cannot, unfortunately, recognize them all. But we can sure try! We do have a maximum of three awards to be given out each year. We do not have to give out any, IF none of you write to me to let me know who should be considered. Include your e-mail address along with your suggestion and supporting write-up. Send to me via e-mail at [mercaver@wildmail.com](mailto:mercaver@wildmail.com), or to my home address, 8061 Kittiwake Ct., Springfield, VA 22153.

The deadline for future VAR Award Nominations will be two months before the next Fall VAR. Nominations for the Fall 2002 VAR Awards are due to me by July 31, as the Fall VAR is September 27-29, 2002. Thanks.

## Jim Hixson

by Carol Kelly

*[Jim Hixson has been a fixture in the Virginia Region for many years and was the recipient of the Region's Outstanding Member Recognition Award in 2001. Please take the time to drop Jim a card wishing him the best. By the way, according to George Dasher Jim's real name is George Paul Hixson, and they call him Jim. Ed.]*

I am writing this letter hoping to gather a few folks together in spirit, if nothing else. I presently take care of Mr. Hixson, and I think he could use some words of encouragement from his NSS family. His health is declining these past few years, and he has not been able to go caving, although he spends many an hour remember the trips he has taken.

I recently came across a website on Windy Mouth Cave, which had a nice article included in it with a photo of Jim. He is not computer literate, and actually shows little

interest in today's technology--but he did brighten up when I showed him the picture of him soooooo many years ago. Mr. Hixson would love to hear from the folks he has crawled through the water with, only to find the space wasn't big enough to get through. He can be contact at: George Hixson, c/o Virgil Kelly, P.O. Box 182, Williamsburg, WV 24991.

Thank you for your time.

*[Reprinted from the June 2002 NSS News.]*

## West Virginia Speleological Survey

by george dasher (sic)

The West Virginia Speleological Survey (WVASS) was founded by Roger Baroody in 1967 with the intent to have an organization that could continue the work begun by William E. Davies in 1949 with the Caverns of West Virginia. When the West Virginia Geological Survey decided not to publish any additional updates to Davies' book, even though much more new data was available, WVASS was created as a study group of the National Speleological Society. Since then, WVASS has compiled a great deal of information on West Virginia caves, both in hard copy and on a computer database. Each person who finds a new cave within West Virginia or discovers new information on an old cave should report that find to either the appropriate county coordinator or to the overall Database Coordinator for inclusion in the WVASS database.

WVASS is your, the cavers of West Virginia, survey. It works because of your participation and support -- so please report all finds. If you have any questions about the survey and its work, or if you wish to contribute to our files, please

contact us at the addresses listed below.

At present, Bill Balfour is the Executive Director and the overall Database Coordinator, Ray Garton is the person to order publications from, and I'm the *de facto* secretary. I also have a hundred or so of the West Virginia Cave Protection signs (paid for by VAR) that say "This Cave is Protected by West Virginia State Law, Code of West Virginia 20-7A," etc., and which list those things that are illegal to do in a cave. These signs have been placed in many of the cave entrances around the state. If you need any for a cave in your area, then please contact me.

Your best bet, as the reporting caver, is to report any new cave, FRO (For Record Only) feature, spring, or insurgences to ALL the relevant coordinators. The list of reporting criteria should include the type of feature, location coordinates, directions to the entrance, a written description of the cave, map of the cave (if one was produced), and any important hydrological, geological, biological, historical, etc. aspects of the cave. Also, if the cave is sensitive and the information should not be given out, then a note to this effect should be included with the report.

WVASS also maintains a Significant Cave List that was started by the WV Department of Natural Resources in the early 1980's. This includes almost 200 caves listed for 11 categories: archaeological, biological, depth, economic, aesthetic, geological, historical, hydrological, paleontological, length, and recreational.

We have two definitions that we used to determine if a karst feature is worth reporting. These are:

A FRO (For Record Only): Any underground hole that is less than ten feet long and enter-able, any underground hole with a pinch and going passage beyond, and any

underground hole with a good breeze or stream.

**A Cave:** Any underground opening that is more than ten feet long.

WVASS has only one meeting per year, and this is on the Saturday of Old Timers. The meeting is at 7 pm and is at the Monongahela Grotto campsite that is across Vendors Row from the OTR pavilion. It is an open meeting, and anyone can attend.

The various WVASS publications, which include 15 bulletins and two monographs, can be ordered from Ray Garton. A full list (as well as additional information on WVASS) is available on the WVASS website at: [www.pipeline.com/~caverbob/wvass.htm](http://www.pipeline.com/~caverbob/wvass.htm)

#### **State-wide database and Greenbrier County:**

Bill Balfour  
HC 81 -- Box 98  
Lewisburg, WV 24901  
304-645-5461 home  
bal4karst@hotmail.com  
WVACS (which is not a part of WVASS) weekends are the second weekend of every month, but you must have a sponsor to attend.

#### **Tucker County:**

Doug Moore  
P.O. Box 205  
Shinnston, WV 26431  
304-592-2610 home  
doug@karstsports.com  
Project weekends are the third weekend of every month

#### **Preston, Mon, and all counties northwest of Tucker:**

Ray Garton  
P.O. Box 200  
Barrackville, WV 26559  
304-366-6035 home  
304-366-1810 work  
garton@mammoth-geo.com

#### **Grant County:**

John Ganter  
1408 Valencia Drive NE  
Albuquerque, NM 87110  
505-265-5007  
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#### **Hardy County:**

Pete Penczer  
551 North 22nd Street  
Arlington, VA 22205  
703-536-7804 home  
penczer@hotmail.com

#### **Mineral, Hampshire, Morgan, Berkeley, and Jefferson Counties:**

J.C. Fisher  
P.O. Box 276  
Berkeley Springs, WV 25411  
304-258-1822 home  
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#### **Pendleton County**

George Dasher  
63 Valley Drive  
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(ascii only--no attachments)

#### **Germany Valley:**

Gordon Brace  
2028 Cherri Falls Drive  
Falls Church, VA 22043  
703-288-3889 home  
braces@ioip.com  
Project weekends are the second weekend of every month

#### **Pocahontas & Randolph Counties:**

Doug and Hazel Medville  
11762 Indian Ridge Road  
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703-860-0314 home  
medville@patriot.com

#### **Ludington-McClungs area:**

Joseph Caldwell  
P.O. Box 892  
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804-848-4182 home

#### **Culverson Creek Basin:**

Phil Lucas and Bill Balfour  
Phil Lucas  
HCR 03 -- Box 104  
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540-396-3584 home  
vss1lucas@aol.com

#### **Monroe County:** (doesn't include Scott Hollow)

Jeff Bray  
P.O. Box 101  
Renick, WV 24966  
304-497-3509 home  
jbray31706@aol.com

Project weekends are the first weekend of every month, but call ahead--as this sometimes varies.

#### **Mercer and Summers Counties:**

Nick Schaer  
451 Kanawha Avenue  
Madison, WV 25130  
304-369-1749 home  
scc0552@wvnet.edu  
Project work days are the last Saturday of every month

#### **Raders Valley**

Mark Passerby  
Aaron Bird  
P.O. Box 359  
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304-296-9437 home  
arb8@cdc.gov

## **VAR FAQs**

by Meredith Hall Johnson

### **What is VAR?**

The acronym stands for Virginia Region, an entity of the National Speleological Society (NSS). It is also what we in the region call our biannual weekend gathering that concludes with the VAR Business Meeting. Most cavers who "go to VAR" don't go to the meeting. I've always liked to because you get to see firsthand how decisions are made that affect the region and possibly some of the caves you frequent. You also get to hear about some of the major caving projects that are going on, as well as find out the latest total of caves in the states that make up VAR. Virginia and West Virginia have a friendly rivalry going on, it seems.

### **Why did I get this newsletter?**

If you have attended a VAR lately, you're on the VAR Mailing List. Part of the fees you pay for a generally-great-fun weekend is a small (\$3) VAR fee. This helps pay for the Region Record, a quarterly publication that contains VAR news. You're holding one. It also goes toward VAR projects such as



conservation projects the region funds. For three bucks, you get a great deal.

If you are an NSS member who just moved to one of the states comprising VAR (VA, WV, MD, parts of NC, TN, and KY, though cavers from many other states cave in our region and come to VARs), then we put you on the VAR Mailing List to receive two free issues. You will have a 'P' for Prospective Member in your mailing label. This should give you time to either mail in a dues check or attend the next VAR.

### Why should I attend a VAR?

First, because it's another chance to spend a generally-great-fun weekend with cavers. Usually the host Grotto has set up guided trips to local caves. This gives you a chance to see caves in areas you may not normally cave in. There may be self-guided trips arranged also. Often there are other activities scheduled on Saturday. That night is the big feast. This meal is included in the price you've paid, as is camping. Sometimes after dinner, a speaker will show slides and discuss a cave project of interest to VAR cavers. Then the big party begins. You've already partied on Friday, but not in such an organized manner. Cave milk is usually in ample supply and sodas abound for kids and non-drinkers. Sunday morning rolls around and then comes the VAR Business Meeting. You can come and go as you like since they're usually held at an outdoor gathering of picnic tables.

### Are you done yet?

I think that pretty much sums up VAR. It's a Region of the NSS and a very fun weekend twice a year. If you have a 'P' in your mailing label, please come to the next VAR. I'm sure you'll be glad you did.

## Fall VAR 2002

By Meredith Hall Johnson

If you really have been hiding in a hole in the ground lately, then you might not know that the Fall VAR will be held at Endless Caverns, near New Market, VA, the weekend of September 27-29, 2002. Battlefield Area Troglodyte Society (BATS) is the host grotto.

We plan to have plenty of led cave trips to local Shenandoah Valley (mostly) caves on Saturday. These will range from beginner to vertical. Yes, there are vertical caves in Rockingham County! Early sign-up for these trips is one incentive to pre-register. Another incentive is lower cost of the VAR and lower cost of the really cool t-shirts. (See Pre-registration form elsewhere in this issue.) A vertical class will be held on Saturday morning with in-cave lip practice that afternoon. We will have a speaker/slide show (TBD), door prizes, and a live band on Saturday night, after a delicious all-you-can-eat buffet-style meal. Plenty of 'caver milk' and sodas will be available both nights.

Judging from the attendance at the Spring VAR, we anticipate the Fall VAR to be well attended. PLEASE pre-register so BATS will know better how many cavers to expect. Any of you who have helped host a VAR knows how vital pre-registration can be.

See Web site at [www.varegion.org/var/theVar/fallVar.html](http://www.varegion.org/var/theVar/fallVar.html) for more information.

## Trout Rock Cleanup Coming Sept. 7

by Bob Hoke

The last eight years have seen very successful and popular *Conser-Vacations* at the NSS's Trout Rock caves near Franklin, West Virginia.

Trout, New Trout, and Hamilton Caves are in surprisingly good shape considering that they are some of the most heavily used wild caves in the State. However, all visitors leave marks of their passing. This year's cleanup day will be on Saturday, September 7.

Major activities will include graffiti removal, trash pickup in the caves and along the road, fence and sign repairs along the trail, and assorted other stimulating and challenging activities. No special skills are required and no backbreaking tasks are planned. The organizers promise perfect weather.

*Conser-Vacation* is suitable for cavers of all experience levels, including novices. There will be at least one graffiti removal trip to the rear reaches of Trout Cave and novices are welcome to experience the subtle beauty of Trout Cave on this trip. There may also be a trip in Hamilton if there are enough people (and graffiti) to justify it.

Activities will commence at 10 a.m. For additional information contact Dave West at (410)366-5038 or e-mail [d270@bellatlantic.net](mailto:d270@bellatlantic.net). Novices who need equipment (helmets and lamps) must contact Bob Hoke at (301)725-5877 or [bobhoke@erols.com](mailto:bobhoke@erols.com) to make sure adequate equipment is available.

## Next Region Record Deadline is Aug. 15

The deadline for submitting material for the Fall issue of the *Region Record* is August 15, 2002. Please send any material that is of regional interest to the address shown on page 2.





Any scandals, smut or underhanded activities in your closet? We know there's dirt out there--we want it!

(Provide your OWN paper for this one and try to keep it to less than 4 typewritten pages!)

The "History Part II" will include "**Cavers in Profile**", "**Lost Souls**" and "**Obituaries**."

The "**Cavers in Profile**" will feature thumbnail sketches of some of the more prominent, creative, constructive, radical and subversive individuals who have left their mark, for better or worse, on the Region's History between 1971 and 2000. Certainly, your organization has sired its share! Who might they be so we can interrogate them? Include e-mail addresses if possible.

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The "**Lost Souls**" section will be dedicated to the Great Ones who have drifted off... either dropped out of caving or relocated to another planet or, perish the thought, another region! Had any of them in your organization? List them below and we'll send them another of our spiffy forms! Include e-mail addresses if possible.

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Sadly, many of our caving comrades have passed away. The "**Obituary**" section will be dedicated to their memories. Kindly submit a short biography or eulogy...or refer us to someone who can! If such a thing appeared in a grotto newsletter or on the Web somewhere, make a copy and send it.

Finally, we ask you to submit as many tales of camaraderie, warfare, good times, memorable trips and/or adventures that your organization finds worthy of immortalization... that you feel just MIGHT be of interest to the rest of the Region. Again, cheap bastards that we are, you'll have to provide your own parchment.

**REMEMBER...WE NEED AS MANY BLACK AND WHITE PHOTOS AND/OR COLOR SLIDES AS YOU CAN MUSTER UP! THEY'LL BE COPIED AND HALF-TONED AND RETURNED TO YOU PROMPTLY\*!** Obviously, we want these to have been taken during the time frame of 1971-2000.

**AND...Please forward an example of your club logo that can be used as a lead-in graphic for YOUR CHAPTER IN THE HISTORY OF THE VIRGINIA REGION, PART II !!**

Thank you.

MarySue Socky and Meredith Hall Johnson  
(and of course Tom Spina in spirit!)

\*Caver time applies.

# Old Timers Reunion ♦ OTR 2002 ♦ Informational Update

The 53rd Old Timers Reunion will be held Thursday, August 29, **12 Noon** – Monday, September 2, 2002, **12 Noon** at the TRA/OTR campsite. To attend OTR you must either be a TRA member or a guest of a TRA member.

## TRA/OTR Website – [www.Otr.Org](http://www.otr.org)

Check the website to stay informed on the upcoming event, including a schedule of work weekends at the site.

## Theme – **OTR 2002** - A Look Back

We've come a long way in our 53-year history. The tales that our cavers will spin are many. Recreate your own version of *OTR 2002-A Look Back* with remembrances of grotto contributions of the past. Bring along your toga and join in Friday night's party at the pavilion. Prepare to limbo with Big Al! Think of a doo-dah entry that was a WOWer! And let's ALL have a good time.

## TRA Membership

TRA membership costs \$10 for a Lifetime Membership. To join, you must be a caver in good standing, sponsored by a TRA member, or be a family dependent member of a TRA member. For further information, you also have three options -- go to the OTR/TRA website at [www.otr.org](http://www.otr.org), contact Tim Brown, TRA Membership Coordinator at his e-mail address, [tim@timcoinc.net](mailto:tim@timcoinc.net), or send a SASE by July 15<sup>th</sup> in order to obtain the necessary information to submit to Tim by July 31st. Tim can be reached at: 57051 Marietta Rd., Byesville, OH 43723. NOTE - TRA memberships are not available at OTR. To apply for membership, your completed TRA membership application must be received by Tim no later than July 31st, ... so get cracking.

## IMPORTANT!!!! Early Arrival Policy in Effect

In 2002, the Early Arrival Policy will be enforced. Unless you are listed on the official OTR staff or TRA worker list, do not arrive at the OTR site before **12 Noon on Thursday**. Early arrivers will be advised of other campgrounds or the local Wal-Mart (if it's early Thursday) that they can go to until the official opening of OTR at 12 Noon. We are not prepared to offer accommodation prior to 12 Noon on Thursday. This timeframe will be enforced in 2002.

## Pet Policy

*Pets are not permitted at the OTR site during the week of the Old Timers Reunion.* Sadly, it is a fact that the few irresponsible pet owners have made it difficult for those pet owners who appropriately care for their pets. With limited space, the campsite has enough animals of the 2-legged homo sapien brand as it is. Check the website for a list of kennels in the area.

## 2002 OTR Registration Fee Schedule

Arrival Day *	TRA Member		Non-Member	
	ADULT	JUNIOR	CHILD	GUEST
	18+	12-17	3-11	
Thursday	\$30	\$27	\$17	add \$15
<i>(Opens @ 12 Noon)</i>				
Friday	\$28	\$25	\$15	add \$15
Saturday **	\$25	\$22	\$12	add \$15
Sunday **	\$20	\$19	\$10	add \$15

\*Day starts at 4:00 a.m.- there is NO Pre-Registration  
Infants (Under 3 Years of Age) are FREE

\*\* Reduced Registration Staff on Duty-Arrive before 6 p.m.

## Day Passes

Passes are good for the day purchased until 6:00 p.m. to visit with caving friends. Passes do not permit the bearer to attend the evening OTR party festivities or to camp on the site. If you'd like to stick around past dusk, purchase a regular registration.

## OTR Guests

Guests are most welcome at OTR when invited and sponsored *at registration* by a TRA member who then becomes responsible for that guest's conduct at OTR. TRA Regular members can sponsor up to 2 adult guests. Guests of all ages, except infants, pay the regular registration fee PLUS a \$15 Guest surcharge. Family companions 18 years of age & over are considered guests. TRA members should choose their guests carefully – invite only cavers!

## Children of TRA Members

Accompanying children of TRA Regular members up to the age of 17 are not considered guests and thus do not pay the Guest surcharge. As stated above, family companions 18 years of age & over are guests. **To avoid this charge, join The Robertson Association (TRA) before OTR as a lifetime family dependent for \$10.** Parents are responsible for the behavior of their children at Old Timers. If you choose to party hardy yourself, give the kids a break and either leave them at home or bring along a responsible babysitter to watch over them at OTR. Misbehaving children are treated the same as anyone else at OTR and therefore are subject to immediate removal if circumstances warrant.

## Registration

### 18 & Over - BRING YOUR PHOTO ID to Registration.

Registration is open 24 hours from Noon, Thursday with reduced staffing after 6:00 p.m. Saturday night, reopening at 8:00 a.m. Sunday and then closing at 6:00 p.m. on Sunday night for OTR 2002.

OTR accepts checks written in U.S. funds and U.S. banks. OTR charges \$15.00 for any returned check. Of course, OTR welcomes good ol' U.S. Andrew Jackson's and Abe Lincoln's any ol' time.

We realize you will have traveled a distance to attend OTR and will be anxious to locate your friends as soon as you arrive. Check the campground map at Registration where, if your buddies remembered to post it, you can locate your grotto campsite. Please be kind to the hard-working, dedicated OTR staff who welcome you. They're cavers – *just like YOU* -- volunteering *their* OTR hours to make *your* registration process and gate entry a bit easier.

### If 18 or Over --BRING YOUR PHOTO ID to

**Registration.** You'll need it since the legal drinking age is 21 in West Virginia. A valid photo/age ID must be presented when you register, even if you're 76 years young. If you do choose to drink OTR alcoholic beverages, don't share with persons under 21 as you, and the underage drinker, risk being tossed out of OTR.

If you plan to drink OTR alcoholic beverages on Saturday or Sunday night, you **MUST** arrive before Registration closes. You will be charged registration fee from the time of your arrival.

## Overflow Camping

The overflow camp area in the SE quadrant is designed to welcome OTR's later arrivals. It opens in three stages that will be clearly marked on the signs at entrances to the camp area. The first area, the lower parameter, opens at 5:00 p.m. Thursday. The interior area opens next, at 12 Noon on Friday. The upper area adjacent to the public road will open at 5:00 p.m. Friday. If you plan to camp in that area, plan arrival times accordingly.

**To Volunteer or To Get Your Questions Answered, Go to the OTR/TRA Website at [www.otr.org](http://www.otr.org) or Contact: FANG (aka Chris Kramer-Harnage) – 2002 Madame Chairperson at [batfang@aol.com](mailto:batfang@aol.com) or (703) 786-8894-leave message.**

**NEW!! NO RESERVED Camping Space** – Space cannot be reserved or marked off at OTR. Markings &/or tape will be removed.

--**OTR 2002** begins at **12 Noon** on **Thursday** --

**OTR Events** - Each Old Timers' brings a host of new ideas, although the time-honored Doo-Dah Parade, Speleo-Olympics, Yard Sale, Speleo-Auction and other traditional OTR activities are planned as well. Schedule your arrival on Thursday for the ceremonial offering that evening around the bonfire area in celebration of OTR 2002. And don't forget to include the *OTR 2002 - A Look Back* theme in your campsite party decorations.

**Speleo-Olympics** - Contests begin on Friday @ 12 Noon and end Sunday @ 12 Noon. Depending on participation, contests will include: Vertical 30m Mechanical and 30m Knots, 10m Youth Mechanical Climb, Ladder Climb, Speleo-Obstacle Course, Beverage Drinking, Cave Quiz, Survey Course, Lamp Assembly, Sleeping Bag, Fun Run & Poster Contests. We'll also bring back the 2<sup>nd</sup> Ever Bob Lutz Tug-A-Rope-A-Rama grotto competition (watch out VPI!!!), the Orienteering Course, and a revised version of the Batty Boot Race.

**Kiddies Activities** - A host of activities for the younger set is planned on Friday and Saturday morning in the Party Pavilion. This is NOT a babysitting ruse – parents are actually encouraged to join in the fun!

#### **Entertainment**

Thursday night at 8:00 p.m., OTR 2002 will host an opening ceremony at the bonfire. Plan your arrival to participate in this event. Provide your own refreshments and visit with friends.

Toga attire will enliven the Party Pavilion on Friday (bring sheets for the entire grotto), and there'll be more fun and some oldie tunes on Saturday and Sunday into the wee hours. If your ears are tender, ear plugs are supplied at the DJ booth.

There's a stage setting at the Sauna/Hot Tub area for those who enjoy acoustic entertainment while in the buff. No set times, all musicians welcome! Bring your own instruments.

**Yard Sale** - Time to get rid of that undersized pair of caving boots you've been hankering to take to Salvation Army or the overalls that fit thirty pounds ago. The proceeds are yours to keep. The fun begins at 9:00 a.m. Sunday morning in the Party Pavilion and, unless you can con your spouse into doing it, YOU are your own cashier!

**Speleo-Auction** - Artifacts of all ages and descriptions will be accepted for Saturday's auction. OTR & the consignee share proceeds of all sales.

**Vendors & Vendors Row** - Space is available *by reservation only* for cave-related vendors along Vendors Row. Wednesday is set-up day for registered vendors. Food concessions are already pre-arranged and must have appropriate health permits.

Contact Kelley Deem @ 304-725-9812 for information.

Stock up on all your caving needs at Old Timers from the most knowledgeable and equipped speleo vendors in the business. And pray the weather gods are kind to us this OTR with a bit more shine.

**Posting the Porta Potties** - Whoops! Fair Warning to All! No Can Do! The porta potty vendor thanked us for keeping the potties clean of all flyers and posters. Please post your flyers elsewhere or at the Kiosk. Take your own reading material into the potty! So sorry, but ALL signs will be removed from potties by the Potty Poster (that's "PP") Patrol.

**Volunteers Needed!!!!!!** - You've heard it before, but we'll say it again – OTR just doesn't happen without the volunteer hours put in by a whole lot of your fellow cavers. Give a couple of hours at Registration or at the Gate or on Security. Pitch in wherever you're needed. Involve your grotto. We'll all have a safer, smoother party!

**Work Weekends** - Dig out your hammer. Grab your gloves and some of your caving buddies. And come join the ever evolving crew of volunteers at the upcoming TRA Work Weekends scheduled for May 11-12, June 8-9, July 20-21 & September 28-29. We'll find something for you to do! Check the website for scheduled work activities. But most important and to plan accordingly, let us know you're coming! Contact Kelley Deem at (304) 725-9812 or e-mail [kldeem@earthlink.net](mailto:kldeem@earthlink.net).

**Elections** - In 2001, TRA Membership re-elected leecce molina deem and Paul "P.D." Drennan at OTR 2001 to serve 2<sup>nd</sup> two-year terms as Trustees-at-Large. Elections will again be held on Sunday for posts held by outgoing Trustees-at-Large, A.J. Goslin and Don Conover. If you'd like to contribute to TRA's future, toss your hat (or helmet) into the ring and run for an elected TRA position.

#### **Staff Contacts**

Contact info is posted on the website at [www.otr.org](http://www.otr.org). If you have questions, feel free to call the responsible party(ies), or contact:

OTR 2002 Madame Chairperson – **FANG**  
aka Chris Kramer-Harnage  
[batfang@aol.com](mailto:batfang@aol.com)  
Mud Puddle Gulch  
1111 Shaker Woods Road  
Herndon, VA 20170-2481  
(703) 786-8894 – leave message

**JUNE 2002**

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**PLEASE FEEL FREE to COPY &  
DISSEMINATE  
OTR 2002 - A Look Back  
Informational Update  
Widely Within the  
Caving Community!!!**

**A Final Reminder – OTR begins at 12 Noon on Thursday –  
NO RESERVING or ROPING OFF SPACE --PLAN YOUR ARRIVAL ACCORDINGLY  
You Must Be Present to Occupy Space at OTR**

**Remember the R.O.O.T.s (Real Original Old Timers)  
Keep *OLD TIMERS REUNION* A Cavers' Event!**

# Fall VAR 2002 Pre-Registration

(ends September 7!!)

Hosted by Battlefield Area Troglodyte Society  
(BATS)



Please mail this form with your check (payable to BATS with 'Fall VAR' on memo line) to:

**BATS Fall VAR 2002 Pre-Registration**  
c/o Evelyn Bradshaw

**5713 Castlebridge RD, Apt. 226**  
**Fredericksburg, VA 22404**

Use Pre-registration prices **ONLY** if your form is postmarked **9/7/02 or earlier**.

Please answer all questions. *Thank you.*

## September 27-29, 2002

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Street: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

21 years old or over? Yes No (Please circle) Age if under 21: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you an NSS member? Yes No (Please circle) If yes, NSS number? \_\_\_\_\_

Grotto Affiliations: \_\_\_\_\_

Vegetarian Meal? Yes No (Please circle)

**Buying a T-shirt?** (Indicate quantity and sizes below)

T-shirts are **\$9 pre-reg. prices; \$11 at VAR!**

(Note: Shirt will not say STAFF as in photo.)

**Small:** How many? \_\_\_\_\_ x \$9 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Medium:** How many? \_\_\_\_\_ x \$9 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Large:** How many? \_\_\_\_\_ x \$9 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Xlarge:** How many? \_\_\_\_\_ x \$9 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### VAR Fees:

Through September 7, 2002 (we'll use the postmark):

(Ages are as of September 1, 2002.)

**Adults (13+ years):** \$27 x \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Children (5-12 years):** \$24 x \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Babies (0-4 years):** free

**VAR Meeting ONLY:** \$3 x \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Total Amount Enclosed:** \$ \_\_\_\_\_



NOTE: After September 7, 2002, add \$3 to the VAR fees. The price of t-shirts goes up to \$11.

National Speleological Society  
6304 Kaybro St.  
Laurel, MD 20707-2621

Address Service Requested

Non Profit Org U.S. Postage P A I D Annapolis Jct, MD Permit #2530
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## Summer 2002 Regional News

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### If you want to continue receiving the *Region Record*, please read this . . .

If this page is marked "TIME TO RENEW" it means that your *Region Record* subscription has run out and this is the last issue you will receive. Subscriptions are automatically extended when you attend a Spring or Fall VAR meeting, or you can subscribe to the *Region Record*. The last issue you will receive (Volume-Number) is indicated on the top line of your mailing label. More detailed information about subscriptions is listed in the box on page 2.

If you wish to renew your subscription, please copy or send this entire page. The address label contains information we need to expedite processing. Thanks.

\_\_\_ I want to continue receiving the *Region Record*. Enclosed, to maintain my subscription, are dues in the amount of: (please circle one) \$3.00 for one year      \$6.00 for two years      \$9.00 for three years

Name \_\_\_\_\_ NSS Number \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Grotto (or other caving organization that I claim as my primary caving affiliation) \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to VAR and send to: <b>Meredith Hall Johnson, 8061 Kittiwake Ct., Springfield VA 22153</b>
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