



The Region Record

Vol. XV No. 4 Fall 2002

Chairman's Column

Recently Carol & I were asked to speak to a regional council of scout leaders about caving. No they were not asking us to take them caving but rather to educate them about sport caving, cave etiquette, safe caving, conservation and appropriate cave gear. They also wanted to know how to better interact with grottos. They are well aware that some troops have left cavers with negative feelings about scouts.

Were you aware that no scout under the age of 14 is supposed to venture underground, except in a commercial cave? It was news to us, considering the number of 8 to 10 year olds we have we have seen on scout caving trips.

I know some grottos flatly refuse to take out scout troops, while others have members who seem to really enjoy educating and exposing youths to the world underground. We suggested that they approach grottos to come to a meeting and speak to the scouts only. If the grotto is willing to take them underground, the cavers can make the offer. If no offer is made, they should consider taking wild cave tours in commercial caves. We made them aware that our free time means a lot to us and we prefer to use it to work on our cave projects or just to enjoy a sport trip and spend time with our friends.

I hope that somewhere we might be able to find a mid point where we can impart knowledge to scouts and possible future cavers, without being tied to spending endless hours taking them to the same novice caves.

While talking to them it also became obvious that they are willing to help us and provide labor to assist with conservation projects, regardless of whether they are under or above ground. Maybe the time has come when we can call on scout troops and ask them to do something for us.

Craig

Island Ford Has a New Sink

by Bill Balfour & Mary Sue Socky

July 8, 2002:

Island Ford Cave has a new sink....

located right in the middle of the main walk in entrance! Some ignorant yahoo decided that it was a good place to dump not only the kitchen sink but a whole (big) truckload of assorted household garbage. Looks like a yard sale gone wrong. At any rate, plans are being made to clean up the mess in the near future and keep

morons from driving back in the cave to unload crap. If you're in the area and happen to see anything that looks like yahoos at the cave check it out. We'll be glad to bring the cave protection act to full force against them.

The Saga Continues...

A few days later, (July 16) Thomas Moore, April Kuebler, and Duane Owen decided to visit Island Ford Cave. Thomas arrived at the cave first, so he and April took some photos of the garbage. Then Thomas used his finely honed dumpster diving skills to root through the garbage and find a piece of personal mail with someone's name and address on it. Thomas was excited with his find, and took the evidence (envelope and photos) to Dave & Mary Sue Socky, who passed the stuff on to Bill Balfour. From this point, Bill Balfour, Ed Swepton, and other cavers from the WVa Cave Conservancy took the evidence to the Covington Police. Hopefully something will come of all this; the guilty party will be tracked down and made to clean up his mess.

By the way, New River Valley Grotto is planning a cleanup in Island Ford Cave in Fall 2002.

[Reprinted from the July/August issue of *The Carbide Dump*, published by the Blue Ridge Grotto].

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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- 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

- 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**.
- Dec. 15 Deadline for submitting material for the Winter issue of the *Region Record*
- 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.

Fall VAR 2002 Update

Or, Why You Should Come to Fall VAR...

By Meredith Hall Johnson

Fall VAR 2002 promises to be one of the best! Hosted by Battlefield Area Troglodyte Society (BATS) of Fredericksburg, VA, Fall VAR will be held at Endless Caverns the last weekend in September, 27-29. Arrival begins at noon on Friday and there will be led cave trips to local caves all day on Saturday.

One of the main and most important reasons for you to pre-register for Fall VAR is that you get to choose the led cave trip you want to go on. It is first come, first served, though, and only available to cavers who pre-register. There is a wide variety of led cave trips. These range from beginner trips to technical vertical trips. Descriptions of the caves are on the Web site. It's also three dollars cheaper if you pre-register. Yep, doesn't sound like much, but think of it in terms of gallons of gas or a six-pack of your favorite beverage...

Pre-registration closes out on September 7, so go ahead and wait until the last day, but get your envelope postmarked by the 7th or you won't get the discount or the cave trip.

The Saturday night dinner will be a buffet-style all-you-can-eat feast, catered by Shaffer's Barbecue of Woodstock, which comes highly recommended. The guest speaker will be Devin Kouts of PSC. He will talk about the Caves of Taylor Run. Yes, he gave this same talk, sort of, in Maine, but a lot of us missed it. I for one am looking forward to it!

As for camping, it will be semi-primitive. In other words, although there is a shower house, don't expect too much hot water! There

will be some, but who knows how long it will last. Bring chairs for the dinner and the VAR Meeting on Sunday. Dogs will be allowed but discouraged. Dog owners are expected to keep their dogs on leash the entire weekend and clean up after them. There may be an extra charge for dogs. Endless Caverns policy is there is no cutting of firewood on the property but we can pick up obviously dead wood. The weather/drought and local fire officials will determine if fires will be allowed. If we can have fires, we plan to have a big bonfire.

Please check out the Web site at www.varegion.org/var/theVar/fallVar.html. Cave descriptions and everything you could possibly want to know about Fall VAR can be found here. Pre-registration forms can be found here. Print one off, fill it in, and send with your check. It's that easy.

I look forward to seeing you this September at Fall VAR 2002!

(Please see the preregistration flyer later in this issue).

Rules for Trout Rock Caves Access

by Bob Hoke

The NSS-owned John Guilday Cave Preserve in Pendleton County West Virginia contains three caves that are among the most popular recreational caves in the state. Trout, New Trout, and Hamilton are popular with experienced cavers as well as scouts and other youth groups. The caves are in amazingly good shape considering their many visitors.

The visitor booth on the property used to contain a page of rules for using the property. However, this information is now gone. Three

recent incidents pointed out the need for posting explicit rules for the property.

1. The cave register in Trout contains names of apparent "cave for pay" groups that are using the cave (and dutifully signing in).
2. Several dozen "out" arrows were scratched in the rock in Trout Cave while I was leading a tourist trip recently. We think we know who did the damage, but they denied it and we could not prove it. (It was a group with flashlights and baseball caps).
3. The next weekend while Fred Grady and I were preparing to go in Trout to remove the "out" arrows a group came down the hill with lots of camping gear. They said they had camped in one of the cave entrances.

Here are the new rules for using the caves. They simply restate the policies that have been in effect for many years, and there should be no surprises for the caving community.

- **The caves are closed to commercial users.** This includes any person or organization that takes money to guide others, or to anyone who pays for a guide. Not-for-Profit groups, to include youth groups, who pay or accept any type of fees associated with cave trips, are not allowed in the caves. Scout, church, and school groups are not considered commercial users provided they have not hired a guide.
- **Camping and fires are prohibited.** The property is too hilly for camping. Camping or fires in or near the caves will disturb the bats that reside in the caves throughout the year. Camping is available at Thorn Spring Park, about 1.5 miles from the Preserve.
- **Make no marks in the cave,** including directional arrows and

any type of writing. If you wish to mark your route you can make small piles of rock, but please remove them as you leave. Each cave contains a cave register where we encourage you to sign in and write any comments about your trip.

- **Leave nothing in the cave**, including trash, food, spent carbide, and human waste. If you bring it in the cave you must take it out with you.
- **Do not disturb any animals you encounter.** The caves are the home for several varieties of bats and you may see them hanging on the walls or flying. This is their home so do not disturb them.
- **Stay on the trail.** Avoid the temptation to take a shortcut directly down the hill to your car. Doing so is dangerous, causes erosion, and will disturb the poison ivy growing on the hillside.
- **West Virginia caves are protected by law.** Any acts of vandalism, mineral collecting, or disturbance of cave animals is prohibited. Violations will be aggressively prosecuted.

The visitor booth now has signs stating the rules and there are small "rack cards" with the same information in the brochure rack in the booth. If you visit the cave and don't see the signs or rack cards, please let me know so we can replace them.

By the way, the 9th annual "Trout Rock Conser-Vacation" will be held at the Preserve on Saturday, September 7. There will be litter pickup along the road, a little trail work, and a cleanup trip in Hamilton Cave. The cave trip is suitable for beginners, but everyone on the trip must be at least 18 years old or one of their parents must be on the trip. Contact Pauline Apling at (301)604-0764 or papling@erols.com for more information.

Tinkham House Burned to Ground

by Meredith Hall Johnson

Two long-time VAR cavers, Janet and Rex Tinkham, had their house burn to the ground in a storm on August 3. They pretty much lost everything, including one of their dogs. Including all cave and camping gear.

If you don't know, Janet is the President of the Front Royal Grotto. She and Rex both are really wonderful people who would do anything to help anyone.

If you feel like it, a couple of FRG members have started a collection--to go to whatever they might need. Twila Lang is the collector and will keep a list of folks who donate. Her mailing address is: 93 Wellspring Road, Bentonville, VA 22610. Her e-mail address is tk928@rmaonline.net. Contact Twila if you have ideas or suggestions on ways to help, or questions.

BTW, Janet and Rex are okay, thank God. Just exhausted and trying to make it through a very difficult time. Also, if you have any old caving photos involving the Tinkhams, please make copies and send to Twila, or scan them and send.

Next *Region Record* Deadline is Dec. 15

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

Minutes of the Spring VAR Region Meet

April 29, 2002
Grand Caverns, VA

Meeting was called to order at 9:10.

Reports

Secretary - Carol Tideman
A motion was made by Germany Valley to accept the minutes as published in the *Region Record*. VPI seconded. Motion passed.

Treasurer - John Fox
A financial report was presented.

Vice Chair - Judy Fisher
No report.

Chairman - Craig Hindman
Everything is OK

Conservation Chair - Andy Reeder

Bowden Cave -
Fall BATS -
Spring DC & Tri-State - cleaned graffiti, corrected vandals who were spray painting in the cave.

Island Ford Cave -
Fall - Front Royal
Spring - Blue Ridge

Bowden Cave:
Spring - DC & Tri-State
Fall - BATS

Island Ford:
Spring - BATS
Fall - Blue Ridge

Grand Caverns Cleanup has 40 people - 800 feet of passage were graveled - 13 formations were repaired in Fountain Cave.

The draft of the Island Ford Management Plan is waiting approval by the West Virginia Cave Conservancy.

New River Trail - no update

Goodwins Cave Management - Blue Ridge

The cave opens shortly. There has been little visitation. The cave is holding up OK.

Staunton Cave - Ted Andrus
No report**VAR Outstanding Service Award**

- Meredith Hall Johnson
Seeking nominations - need suggestions and a short bio to justify. Deadline August 1.

Landowner Recognition Awards-
Don Anderson

New River - The Ferrells are upset (James Cave owners). They are concerned about the amount of visitation and the size of the groups using the cave. A letter is being drafted to be signed by the owner to be sent out to the scout council and others

Landowner Legal Support Committee - Bob Hoke
No news**Region Record - Bob Hoke**
Needs material - Deadline June 1**Patch Committee - Ernst Kastning**
No report

VAR List Server - Walt Pirie
It is operating - Users need to sign on and respond to a request for a short bio. NO SPAM!

VAR Web site - Vitus Eiduevicius
The site up and running. Jim McConkey has added and is maintaining an event page.

Cave Bucks - J. C. Fisher
Is alive and well - \$2,700 collected by Tri-State to date.

VSS - Phil Lucas
4,027 caves in Virginia.

WVSS - George Dasher
Cave Law signs are available - an extensive written report was submitted indicating who was maintaining the database and who was coordinating the county surveys.

History of the Region - Mary Sue Socky & Meredith Hall Johnson
Send materials for part 2 - 1971-2000. Part 1 pictures have been returned

West Virginia Cave Conservancy - Ed Swepton
Working on Kersinger Entrance to Benedicts Cave. Please submit any leads for caves that need protection.

New Dixie - Blue Ridge Grotto
Still surveying - 1 mop up trip and land survey to be done.

VA Karst Program - Joey Fagan
The project will use stream tracing & developing construction site boundaries to protect karst areas from development

Planned sinkhole cleanups
May 21 - Shenandoah County.

Lee County
Their mission includes environmental education, surveying caves etc.

SCCI - Walt Pirie
Valhalla purchased for 100K - VPI raised 3K for Valhalla. Snail Shell Cave has been purchased.

Host Grotto Report
WVCC thanked all for coming 262 registered attendees. VPI moved to thank the WVCC - Blue Ridge seconded. Motion passed

Old Business

Host for Fall 02 - BATS

Will be held the weekend on September 27'th at Endless Caverns
Preregistration will be available online. Front Royal will offer breakfast on Sunday

Host for Spring 03 - DC & PSC
May 10-12 at the OTR site.

Host for Fall 03 - Front Royal - location to be announced

Host for Spring 04 - Tri-State - location to be announced

International Congress 2009 -
An inquiry was made to see if there was any interest in the region hosting. DC moves to decline to get involved as a region. Germany Valley seconded. Motion passed.

New Business

Digital Line Graph - Ira Sasowsky
Germany Valley moves to write a letter of support contingent on no cave locations be indicated on the map. VCC seconded. A generic letter is to be produced and reprinted in the Region Record - referred to the VCC

Rumbling Falls: No action

Grant Requests: none

Announcements

Cheryl Jones - Fragile Underground brochures are available

Sligo moved to adjourn, Tri-State seconded. Passed.

Respectfully submitted:
Carol Tideman

FALL 2002 VAR MEETING AGENDA

Sunday, September 29, 2002 9:00 AM

- I. CALL TO ORDER
- II. DELEGATE REGISTRATION
- III. DISTRIBUTION OF AGENDA
- IV. CALL FOR INDEPENDENTS
- V. OFFICERS REPORTS:
 - A. SECRETARY - CAROL TIDERMAN
 - 1. Motion to accept Spring minutes
 - 2. Other
 - B. TREASURER - JOHN FOX
 - 1. Current Financial Report
 - 2. Other
 - C. VICE-CHAIR - JUDY FISHER
 - D. CHAIRMAN - CRAIG HINDMAN
- VI. COMMITTEE REPORTS
 - A. CONSERVATION CHAIR - ANDY REEDER
 - 1. Report on activities
 - 2. Call for volunteers:
 - Bowden Cave -
 - Summer _____
 - Winter _____
 - Island Ford Cave -
 - Summer _____
 - Winter _____
 - 3 Island Ford Management Plan
 - 4. New River Trail
 - 5. Other
 - B. GOODWIN'S CAVE MANAGEMENT - BLUE RIDGE GROTTO
 - C. STAUNTON CAVE - TED ANDRUS
 - D. VAR OUTSTANDING SERVICE AWARD - MEREDITH HALL JOHNSON
 - E. LANDOWNER RECOGNITION AWARD - DON ANDERSON
 - F. LANDOWNER LEGAL SUPPORT COMMITTEE - BOB HOKE
 - G. *THE REGION RECORD* - BOB HOKE, PAULINE APLING, BARRY CHUTE
 - H. PATCH COMMITTEE - KAREN KASTNING
- I. VAR LIST SERVER - WALT PIRIE
- J. WEB PAGE - VITUS EIDUKEVICIUS
- K. CAVE BUCKS - J. C. FISHER
- L. VSS - PHIL LUCAS
- M. WVASS - GEORGE DASHER
- N. HISTORY OF THE REGION - MEREDITH HALL JOHNSON, MARY SUE SOCKY
- O. WVCC - ED SWEPSON
- P. NEW DIXIE - BLUE RIDGE GROTTO
- Q. VA KARST PROGRAM - JOEY FAGEN
- R. SCCI - WALT PIRIE
- S. OTHER
- VII. HOST GROTTO REPORT - BATS
- VIII. OLD BUSINESS
 - A. HOST GROTTO FOR THE SPRING 03 MEETING - DCG & PSC
 - B. HOST GROTTO FOR THE FALL 03 MEETING - FRONT ROYAL
 - C. HOST GROTTO FOR THE SPRING 04 MEETING - TRI-STATE
 - D. Other

- IX. NEW BUSINESS
 - A. HOST GROTTO FOR THE FALL 04 MEETING
 - B. OTHER _____
- X. GRANT REQUESTS - SUBMITTED TO CHAIR
- XI. ELECTIONS
- XII. ANNOUNCEMENTS
- XIII. ADJOURNMENT

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

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Fall 2002 Regional News

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: Meredith Hall Johnson, 8061 Kittiwake Ct., Springfield VA 22153
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