



The Region Record

Vol. XVII No. 1 Winter 2003-2004

Chairman's Column

I would like to open this column with a thank you to Eleonora O. Florance for a generous donation to the VAR. She made a contribution through a work-related charity donation program. On behalf of the members of the VAR, we thank you. Your gift will help with the many tasks VAR members are involved in.

In the last year, many members have contributed money, time, and/or resources to Conservation efforts, land owner relations, and surveys. They have supported the conservancies around the area, through Cave Bucks and private donations. We have kept caves open and have opened some caves that have been closed for years. Members have also been involved, on an equal partnership with state and federal agencies and landowners, to protect, preserve, and keep caves open. None of this would have been possible without the volunteers who, at their own expense, contribute their time and energy to the projects in the region.

Every county has a coordinator for a survey in Virginia and West Virginia and they all need help. I know when you look at the cavers' calendars around the area there are no free weekends. This is a good thing. We all have work and family obligations, so if you cannot commit to a project full time, pick different ones that you can fit into your available time. Every project has openings for all skill levels, above and below ground.

So as we start a new year, let's make a resolution to support and volunteer with the many projects in the VAR area. With your help we can accomplish great things. We can build upon work that has been started, we can foster new projects, finish older ones and keep the long term ones working.

Thank you for all the work you have done and best wishes for another wonderful year in caving.

Craig

2004 Spring VAR Meeting April 23-25

by J. C. Fisher

Tri-State Grotto is hosting Spring 04 VAR. We have included a registration form with this newsletter. There is a considerable saving by pre-registration, which allows us to plan the number of meals and drinks. We will post a pre-registration form on the VAR listserv and Tri-State's Web page as well as a mailing to all grotto newsletters.

The location of the Spring 2004 VAR will be Grand Caverns located off I-81 at the Weyers Cave Exit (#235) in Grottoes, Virginia. The date is April 23, 24, & 25th. This has been a popular site in the past with level camping and we are adding some porta-pottys and hopefully hot showers. Registration will open Friday 12 noon.

John Fox will DJ Friday evening with the usual caver beverages.

Guided trips are planned for Saturday including a kid's trip. Andy Reeder will lead a conservation trip to Grand Caverns. Saturday evening dinner will be catered by Bob's Big Beef featuring Bar-B-Que beef and pork, fried chicken, potato salad slaw, beans, rolls, drinks, and brownies. Vegetarian meals will be available by request. A speaker will be on tap followed by more music and beverages.

Front Royal will have their award winning breakfast Sunday morning for an additional fee. The VAR business meeting will start at 9 a.m.

For further information or questions contact J.C. & Judy Fisher at 304-258-1822 day or 304-258-4974 evenings. You may e-mail us at jcf@access.mountain.net.

West Virginia Cave Conservancy at the Start of the New Year

by Jeff Bray

It's been a busy year with lots of accomplishments for many in our caving worlds, and we all hope for a great new year. The WVCC is getting ready for another great year as well. Most importantly, I want

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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 editor@varegion.org).** 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 complimentary copies of the *Region Record*.
- Current NSS members moving into the Region from elsewhere receive two complimentary 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

Mar. 10 deadline for submitting material for the Spring issue of *The Region Record*.

Apr. 10-11 **Grand Caverns Cleanup weekend.** Help clean this commercial cave. See flier in this issue.

Apr. 12 Deadline for getting the early registration discount for the Spring VAR meeting.

Apr. 15-17 **2004 National Cave Conservancies Forum** in Lewisburg, WV. See info in this issue or at www.wvcc.net.

Apr. 23-25 **Spring VAR meeting** hosted by Tri-State Grotto at Grand Caverns, near Grottoes, Virginia. See additional information & preregistration form in this issue.

May 8 **Bowden Cave Cleanup Day.** See article in this issue.

July 12-16 **2004 NSS convention** in Marquette, Michigan. See www.nss2004.com for more info.

Fall **Fall VAR meeting.** Date, location, and host grotto not determined.

Grand Caverns Resurvey Weekends

Jan. 3-4, Feb. 7-8, Mar. 6-7, Apr. 3-4, May 1-2, Jun. 5-6, Jul. 10-11, Aug. 7-8, Sep. 11-12, Oct. 2-3, Nov. 6-7
 (see article in this issue for more information)

WVCC Status Report

(continued from page 1)

to thank all our supporters, donors, and volunteers for all their help throughout the past year. I hope you will continue to help throughout 2004. I also encourage others to please volunteer to help out. There is always a project that needs more help, and if you have some time or some support you can send our way, it will be greatly appreciated.

Here's a quick rundown of some of the activities and projects we have coming up. I'll start with a quick plea for our Persinger property. Our matching grant runs out at the end of December, and at the time of press, we still had at least \$1,000 dollars needed to meet the \$8,000 limit for the matching grant (being matched by Cave Conservancy of the Virginias). If you can help us out, please do so. We'd obviously love to achieve the \$8,000 limit, and of course it will all help to eliminate our debt, and prepare us for the next purchase that I'm sure will exist soon.

In addition to the matching grant, we are also planning an open house of sorts in April at our Persinger property. As you may know, we own five acres around the cave entrance and we have been working with the USDA to form a conservation plan for this property, which involves the planting of many trees. We hope to turn the property into an attractive natural area. We have been running a fundraiser where you can sponsor a tree for \$10, to help pay for this plan. In addition to this, we're planning a huge tree-planting open house the first weekend of April. Watch our Web site for more details, and please sponsor a tree if you can!

Donaldson Cave in the Eastern Panhandle is now gated, but open and protected. A management committee is being formed, and

access is open, but you may want to check our Web site to see who the contacts are for the cave. Also, please watch our Web site (www.wvcc.net) for updates on this property. I'd also like to thank all the people who put in a great deal of time from the acquisition of the property to the gating of the cave. Thank you all!

The dig for Maxwellton Sink Cave is progressing nicely, and you can expect updates on this activity soon as well. Right now, work continues to stabilize the entrance and to make it as permanently safe as possible. This project is much larger than any of us dreamed, but a dedicated group has been putting in long hours to be sure that we have great access to a great cave. Thanks to all involved with this project as well.

The 2004 Cave Conservancy Forum is quickly approaching as well. This event, hosted by the WVCC and the Northeastern Cave Conservancy is a first of its kind, and will be held in Lewisburg, West Virginia, from April 15 to 17. A number of speakers have offered to talk about various topics that are important to cave conservation, and there will be informal discussions held each evening in the hospitality suite that will be geared toward cave conservation and the exchange of ideas. This forum is different than many other conferences because it is encouraged to have a more relaxed, free-flowing exchange of ideas as well as having some paper presentations. As more conservancies begin to work toward acquiring caves, we all will benefit if these groups communicate well with each other and exchange ideas as to what works and what hasn't worked. This forum is designed to encourage this idea. The NSS Cave Conservancy Committee will also be holding a meeting during the event. Our Web site (www.wvcc.net) has more information on the forum and is also included later in this

issue. It's only 45 bucks if you pre-register by March 15, and we're expecting representatives from all over the country, so this should be a very enlightening few days.

Along with all this, we've recently had elections for three new board members (see the Web site for results as they are being counted while this is written), we've got two new kiosks put up - one at Island Ford Cave with lots of brochures and information for visitors to take with them; we had a great banquet with a silent auction that raised much more money than we anticipated (thanks to the now-neatly-trimmed beard on John Pearson); and we're still working on finding those caves that you feel need attention. Keep us in mind, please feel free to help us out, and let's make 2004 the most successful year yet!

Request for Information from Cavers on Dye Tracing Studies in Virginia

by Joey Fagan

Information about dye tracing work and any other studies relating to the hydrology of Virginia's caves and karst is being actively sought. The Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation Division of Natural Heritage Karst Program is beginning work to compile a comprehensive atlas of the karst hydrology of Virginia. The Virginia Karst Hydrology Atlas will be a GIS-based product containing in-depth information about specific dye tracing projects. The karst hydrology atlas will be an important tool for planners and environmental managers at various levels of government. This

dynamic document will also serve as a valuable resource for karst scientists and for those performing research on Virginia caves.

The Virginia Karst Program has performed many dye traces since 1994 in conjunction with its karst protection work. A continuing project to define the drainage basins for Virginia's 366 recognized significant caves began in the spring of 2002. So far, conservation site boundaries are defined for about one-third of the state's significant caves. It is hoped that protection of many of Virginia's outstanding caves as well as the cave biota they contain will be accommodated through use of the conservation site boundary concept. Conservation sites provide a way to present planners with information about at-risk conservation areas while preserving sensitive information such as cave entrance locations. The completed "Consites" are already being used as a screening tool for project review as part of Virginia's State Environmental Review Program (SERP). The Virginia Karst Hydrology Atlas will add to the knowledge base required to protect karst aquifers and groundwater resources in the state.

The Virginia Karst Program seeks as many details as possible about any dye tracing investigations with which you have been involved or may know something about. If you request, access to any of the data you provide will be restricted according to your specifications; full authorship of each trace will accompany the data. Unless otherwise restricted, information from the atlas would be available to other contributing investigators and to state and local environmental planners and managers and their agents. The information obtained will enable hydrologic investigators to avoid duplication of work and will help focus resources on areas with data gaps and unanswered questions. Having all the data

from dye traces in Virginia available in one location will help everyone to better plan future studies and will assist researchers to do better science and produce a higher quality product.

For a hardcopy or an electronic copy of the data reporting form, please contact the Virginia Karst Program. Reports of dye tracing studies in other formats are also acceptable. Please respond at your earliest convenience so your data can be included in this important project.

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2003 Virginia Region Outstanding Service Award

by Meredith Hall Johnson

Hi VAR! You outdid yourselves this year and the Award Committee (me, Carol Tiderman, and J. C. Fisher) sure are glad that you're learning! Every year we beg for nominations for the VAR Outstanding Service Award. The first two years we did this, we practically had to write the justifications ourselves. Not this year!! Those good folks who know which of their fellow cavers have put forth extra efforts over the years for the good of the Region wrote some good justifications for their nominations. Thank you!

And the nominees were....Don Anderson and Andy Reeder! Congratulations to both of these

VAR cavers, who have done so many good things for the Region.

As you know, Don Anderson has been in charge of the VAR Landowner Recognition Awards for years. In fact he started this award. This year, ironically, he decided to step down, but hey, he's been in charge of this for 10 years. It was his thinking that the cavers in the Region should recognize the cave landowners in some way for allowing us on their property and in their caves. This certainly has helped landowner relations.

According to John Fox (thanks for the nomination!), "I have known Don for the past 20 years as a friend and caving "buddy". Throughout those years, Don's interest in caving, teaching, and sharing time with others have always been a characteristic. He has participated in many rescues over the years, trained with NCRC, and continues to support caving activities - vertical and horizontal." One of John's favorite Don Anderson quotes is: You can have gear, but you can't have too much."

My personal favorite Don Anderson quote is something like this: "Do you know that last month (September 2003) was my caving anniversary? I've been caving for 50 years!"

And that brings us to Andy Reeder. How many of you out there have been to one of the annual Restoration Camps at Grand Caverns over Easter weekend? Probably more than you know since a couple of the recent ones have been done concurrently with Spring VAR, like in 2002. Andy is the VAR Conservation Chair. As such, he runs these annual VAR-sponsored weekends. He has also been very involved in the Virginia Speleological Survey, serving as Pulaski County Director. According to Phil Lucas, Andy "provided reports on old caves, discovered new caves, mapped and surveyed throughout

the southwestern counties.” Phil said the VSS was sorry when Andy moved out of that area.

And John Fox wrote about Andy: “One of his earliest projects was the painting of Mrs. Paxton’s house that took several weekends with cavers from Maryland, Virginia, and West Virginia using scrapers and brushes.” I myself was not on that project, but it is famous throughout the Region. Mary Sue Socky said that Andy was responsible for “helping get Dixie Caverns Haunted Cave off the ground, and including other area grottos in the fun--haunting to raise money for cave conservation.” She said Andy has “done numerous “Outreaches” to the community on two of his favorite topics - CAVES and BATS.” Yep, that’s Andy, always helping to promote cave conservation within the Virginia Region.

So, it is no wonder that the Award Committee agreed with these folks and presented this year’s Virginia Region Outstanding Service Award to both Don Anderson and Andy Reeder. And they both acted surprised at the meeting when I called their names!

Now we come to the part of my annual article that begs you to think of other deserving Virginia Region cavers to nominate for next year’s award. Please include a few lines about why that person is deserving, or we won’t accept your nomination. Let’s repeat the good performance of this year’s nominators, John Fox, Phil Lucas, and Mary Sue Socky, and actually nominate with supporting reasons! Please send your nominations to my e-mail address: mercaver@wildmail.com.

Thank you in advance.

WVCC Kiosk at Island Ford Cave is Completed

by: Alex Sproul

November 22, 2003...

I'm pleased to report that the WVCC kiosk at Island Ford Cave is up and operational.

In addition to the VA Cave Law sign provided by Bill Balfour, the display includes a welcome letter, a complete copy of the law, a bright sign announcing do's and don'ts, a list of the grottos and contacts of the VAR, the description from Douglas' *Caves of Virginia*, the 1968 map by Dave Newsome (from Holsinger), and a list of informative Web sites. There is also a literature holder containing supplies of the two NEW NSS brochures -- *Fragile Underground* and *Bats*, and the VAR's *Caving Safely* brochure. Hanging beneath the bulletin board is a register book with waterproof cover. All display items are laminated and weather-proof.

I have just received from Phil Lucas of the VSS a much better map done in 1986 by Charlie Lucas, as well as more historical information about the cave, and will be posting these shortly.

Ironically (or perhaps not), the kiosk got its first visitors while I was still putting things up. Two teenage girls and their dad came to see the cave; they were doing a school paper on commercial caves vs. wild caves. They were delighted to have the NSS brochures, and were prepared with hardhats and headlamps for a tour of the cave.

The kiosk is located about 20 feet inside the mouth of the cave, at the right side of the large passage, and easily visible from the road yet protected from the weather.



The recently installed kiosk at Island Ford Cave, near Covington, Virginia. (photo by Alex Sproul)

I did a general trash cleanup, but noted some new orange spray-paint decorations on the left wall which will require some effort to remove.

It will be interesting to see how long the new materials survive.

Grand Caverns Resurvey Begins

by Bob Hoke

Grand Caverns is one of the oldest commercial caves in the country and it is in need of a new map. The Virginia Region has started a project to do a comprehensive resurvey of the entire cave and produce an accurate map to be displayed in the visitor center.

Mapping started in November and project weekends are scheduled monthly for the rest of 2004. The initial push will be to complete the commercial section before the cave reopens to visitors in the spring. The many side passages will then be pushed and mapped. There

have already been some interesting historical finds just off the commercial trail, including a variety of old light bulbs and a calcite-encrusted pick pickax. With 200 years of commercial operation, there are sure to be more discoveries.

Anyone who is interested in helping with the project is welcome, although the limited number of sketchers will probably mean that a multitude of volunteers can't be accommodated. If you are interested in participating please contact Carol Tiderman at 410-792-0742 or ctider@us.ibm.com and let her know what you would like to do and how much survey experience you have. Please do not contact the Park.

Camping will be available at no cost and winter accommodations are being arranged. Contact Carol for more information.

The scheduled 2004 project weekends are: Jan. 3-4, Feb. 7-8, Mar. 6-7, Apr. 3-4, May 1-2, Jun. 5-6, Jul. 10-11, Aug. 7-8, Sep. 11-12, Oct. 2-3, Nov. 6-7 (The July dates conflict with the NSS convention but give those who can't go something cool to do!)

Barricade Constructed in Bowden Cave

by Bob Hoke

Back in the spring of 2002 there was a significant collapse in Bowden cave that blocked the passage just upstream from the popular Water Course and effectively cut the cave into two pieces. The Monongahela National Forest, which owns all of the cave except the front entrance, decided that the unstable collapse was a danger to cave visitors and closed all of their part of the cave.

In most cases such a bureaucratic decision would mean the end of access to a popular cave. However, Forest personnel recognized that Bowden is a popular cave and that its continued closure would mean the loss of a significant recreational resource. The Forest's Cave Specialist, Linda Tracy, got a commitment that if a barricade was constructed between the end of the Water Course and the collapse, then the cave could be reopened to visitors. The "back" side of the collapse would not be barricaded, but attempts to dig through the collapse would be pointless because the barricade would preclude a through trip. Note that the term barricade is used since there is no "gate" in the barricade to allow access through it.

Professionally constructed cave gates are typically very expensive, but Linda and the Forest Service had almost no budget for this project. The good news was that the Forest had enough steel left over from other projects, and a professional gate builder, Chris Sanders, volunteered to construct the barricade at almost no cost. Linda was able to tap the caving community for the labor needed to haul the material to the construction site and for other support functions. Local cavers also provided on-site hot meals to the workers throughout the four days it took to complete the barricade.

The bottom line is that the barricade was completed on October 13 and the front part of Bowden Cave is again open to visitors. The Forest Service expects to reopen the back section soon.

There were three things which differentiated this project from most cave gating efforts:

- **The project was to open, not close, the cave.** Most cave gates are constructed to close or control access to caves. This was one of the few that was

constructed specifically to allow a cave to remain open to visitors. The Monongahela National Forest (and Linda Tracy) deserve a lot of thanks for not taking the easy option and just closing Bowden Cave due to safety concerns.

- **The barricade was 1,800 feet into the cave.** Most cave gates are at the cave entrance. However, this project required that 2,000 pounds of steel and lots of tools and equipment be hauled 1,800 feet through the cave to the work site. This required some strong backs, but it worked out better than many nay-sayers had expected. The hauling crews developed reasonably efficient ways to use slings to haul the steel pieces, which were up to 9 feet long and weighed up to about 250 pounds. Contrary to expectations, hauling material through the narrow Water Course proved to be much easier than in the rest of the cave where mud usually made the footing poor.
- **Welding equipment can safely be used inside a cave.** A LOT of in-cave welding was required to construct the barricade. The Forest Service and Chris Sanders each supplied a portable Honda generator for the project. The 45-pound beasts were hauled to the work site and connected through a paralleling unit to produce sufficient current to run a heavy duty stick welder (as well as a drill and work lights). There were fears that fumes and Carbon Monoxide (CO) would be a problem so a CO meter was in constant use to monitor the air when the generators were running. Fortunately, there was enough air flow through the collapse to keep the CO level down and bad air was never a problem. The only problem was that the welding fumes did

cut visibility in the main passage, but this was only a minor annoyance and the fumes cleared out after several hours.

In summary, the project was a big success. Cavers (and the local spelunkers and party animals) can again visit Bowden Cave. As one member of the work party noted when the official closure sign was removed from the front entrance, "Bowden Cave is again open to the vandals."

Bowden Cave Cleanup Set for May 8

by Pauline Apling

Although Bowden Cave was closed after the 2002 collapse, the vandals still managed to leave a lot of spray painted graffiti in the cave. A cleanup day will be held on May 8 to remove this paint and everyone is welcome to attend. The work day is being sponsored by the DC, Tri-State, Front Royal, and Mountain State Grottos.

Fortunately, most of the paint is on wet or muddy rock and should be easy to remove. Most work will concentrate in the front section of the cave and the trips should be pretty easy. Novices are welcome (but no kids under 14 and all kids must have a parent on their trip). There may be a trip into the back entrances if there are enough volunteers and the back section has been officially reopened.

This will also be a good opportunity to marvel at the new barricade that keeps visitors away from the collapse.

There will be a more detailed flier in the Spring *Region Record*, but feel free to contact Pauline Apling at papling@erols.com or 301-604-0764 if you have questions.

Information Needed About Inactive VAR Grottos

by Meredith Hall Johnson

Hi VAR,

I'm going over the list of former VAR grottos and I'd like SOMEONE out there to send me a paragraph or two about these grottos for inclusion in the History of the Virginia Region, Part II: 1971-2000.

Please pass this message to anyone you think might have some knowledge of these grottos, especially older members or former members. The grottos are:

American University
Annapolis
Carolina Borehole
East River
Elkins
Friendship Heights
George Washington University
Greenbrier
Holston Valley
Iron Mountain
Lexington
Marion
Morgantown
National Capital
Nova
Triangle University
Union 76
VMI
Wingate Outing Club

I inherited this list from Tom Spina. There may be others that have gone missing in the past 10 years. If so, let me know about those too.

As for current VAR grottos/organizations, there are 45 by my count, and Mary Sue and I certainly DON'T have that many grotto histories in hand. If you are not sure whether your grotto will be represented in the book we're co-editing, then e-mail us. We

would rather have every VAR grotto included with at least a paragraph or two than to not be included except in a boring list of slackers. (hint, hint)

We're getting towards the end of this project if you haven't guessed. We're fine tuning what we have and don't have. Thanks to those of you who have responded to my recent e-mails. I appreciate your taking the time.

Thanks,

Meredith (and Mary Sue)

P. S. Since I am proofreading this on New Year's Day, the final deadline has already passed. You missed out unless you have already e-mailed one of us. I *MIGHT* let you slide if you contact me NOW, but maybe not. By the time this is mailed out, I hope to be well into the layout/design part of this project. You should have heeded all those e-mails sent out begging for material!! -MHJ

Attention Photographers!

The NSS Members Manual Committee is already gearing up to produce next year's *Members Manual*. We need two great photographs, one for the front cover and one (smaller) for the back cover. It is generally viewed as an honor to have your photo selected for either of these.

In general, we're looking for a photo that depicts caving, but has no discernable person who can be identified. Sort of a generic photo that defines caving. It would be nice to have a person in it. The back cover photo would ideally be a photo from the Porterville Convention.

Whether you are a photographer by trade or just because you love to document your cave trips, please consider entering your best work. E-mail a .JPG to Gordon Birkhimer (Editor), BirkhimerGL@navair.navy.mil by February 15, 2004.

If your photo is selected, you will be contacted by e-mail and required to write a very short bio for inclusion in the *Members Manual*. All photographers are welcome, whether or not you have ever been published or entered the annual NSS Photo Salon.

Feel free to pass this announcement to any and all caver lists or grotto newsletters.

Thank-you,

The 2004 NSS Members Manual Committee

National Cave Conservancies Forum April 15-17 Lewisburg, West Virginia

by Jeff Bray

The National Cave Conservancies Forum is a national meeting scheduled to promote education and interaction among cave and karst based conservancies in the United States. Any board member, committee member or involved general member of these organizations should be able to benefit from and contribute to this forum.

This year's Forum is Sponsored by The National Cave and Karst Management Symposium. It is being organized and sponsored by The West Virginia Cave Conservancy and The Northeastern Cave Conservancy.

Pre-registration is only \$45.00 until March 15, 2004.

Planned sessions include special presentations on Management Plans, Access Regulations, Conservancy Organization and Land Trust Resources, Conservation Easements, Insurance, and Financial Issues. Conservancies will make an introductory presentation on the status of their organization.

A meeting of the National Speleological Society Cave Conservancies Committee is scheduled.

*A special publication, which will include outlines with related material from each of the sessions as well as articles on cave conservancies and cave conservation efforts in the U.S., will be published in advance of the forum and included with the price of registration.

Registration will open Thursday afternoon, April 15. Registration includes hosted hospitality each evening and break foods between the sessions.

Special field trips will be arranged including caving in some of the region's protected caves. Further information and contact details provided upon pre-registration.

For additional information about the Forum, or information on transportation, lodging, and schedule, please see the West Virginia Cave Conservancy Web site at www.wvcc.net.

Carbide Lamps from India

by Bob Hoke

[I recently received the e-mail message below. At first I thought it was a Nigerian spam message, but the subject was "Caving Carbide Lamp." I looked at the Web site and it looks like these are the guys who supply lamps to Inner Mountain Outfitters. If anyone wants to peddle carbide lamps I guess these are the guys to contact. Bob Hoke]

Dear Friend,

We would like to introduce ourselves as a Carbide Lamp manufacturer in India. Different types of lamp are made by us such as Helmet Mounted Caving Carbide Lamp, Carbide Hand Lamp, Carbide Generator and also any type of Carbide Lamp according to customers' specification. For information our Carbide generated all lamps are more suitable and cost effective for use in Cave than any other lights. We are exporting our products to U.S.A., U.K., Germany, Australia, France, Italy, Austria, Canada, Switzerland, South Korea, Slovakia with their entire satisfaction. We are looking for a dealer/agent to cater our product in any country. We are also making Mining Safety Lamp, Safety Torch which are used in underground mines and any hazardous areas.

For more details please visit us at www.jkdey.com

It is our fervent request to kindly insert our web site into your link page.

Expecting a good response.

With regards.

Sandip Kumar Dey.

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FALL VAR 2003 SUMMARY

by Janet Tinkham

Host: Front Royal Grotto

September 26-28 at Rural Retreat Lake & Campground, Virginia

Income:

Pre-registration 100 (\$25-adult, \$20-child)
 On-Site Registration 90 (\$28-adult, \$23-child)

TOTAL INCOME: \$5,049.00

(Income includes some adjustments-- ex: just caving no camping, camping but no meal, no camping but include dinner, etc.)

Expenses:

Camp Ground Rental	\$1,222.00
Registration	
(Name tags, Program Printing, Copying)	\$ 304.19
Dinner for 220 people	\$1,929.00
Sodas & water for Friday, Saturday	\$ 112.11
Beer for Friday, Saturday Night	\$ 284.36
Porta Potties (2)	\$ 125.40
Firewood	\$ 100.00
Payment to VAR (190 X \$3)	\$ 570.00

TOTAL EXPENSES \$4,647.06

INCOME – EXPENSE \$401.94

Comments:

Attendance - Fall VAR typically has a lower attendance than Spring VAR because there are numerous caving events scheduled in the fall that may conflict with the date. Fall MAR was held the same date as Fall VAR but at a different location. It was a special anniversary for MAR, which drew some of those who belong to both organizations. Historically the Fall MAR has been held in October and we thought by having VAR in September it would avoid this...but unfortunately, this time it didn't. An effort to coordinate dates with MAR would be recommended because it's nice to be able to gather with the MAR folks and having different dates would allow MAR members to take part in VAR and vice versa.

Beer - We had two kegs of beer for Friday night and two kegs of beer for Saturday night. One keg on Friday would have been adequate and probably three on Saturday, especially with a higher number in attendance. We had an issue involving underage drinking...for the last three or so VARs a college outing club of approximately 40 members has been attending. It is a very nice group of individuals with many having a true interest in caving conservation and safety. Some of the members are under 21 though, and on Friday were found to be making visits to the keg even after we had asked them not to. Saturday we had someone at the kegs carding people. We don't want to come across as old

sticks in the mud, but with holding this event in a state park where normally alcoholic beverages aren't allowed and with being put in the position of serving alcohol to underage people who are on a college outing being paid for by their school.... it did have us concerned.

Campground - this is the first and most important step in hosting a VAR. Once you have a campground secured then everything else falls into place. What we found in our search for a site is that the campgrounds on National Forest Service property involve a lot of red tape when having vendors and they are firm about no alcoholic beverages. Rural Retreat Campground is one that is owned by the state and managed by the county, so the local park manager was able to make the decision to allow us to have low-key availability of alcohol. Having a pavilion is a plus, but there are grottos in the region that have offered their tarps if a shelter is not available.

Food-if you find a campground that has kitchen facilities your grotto could attempt to prepare dinner yourselves. But why torture yourselves unless you have an experienced person who is used to cooking for a few hundred people? Caterers are the best bet, you can go online for the area you'll be in, or you can get caterer information from the past hosts of VAR. Some areas have local organizations who cook

for the fire department fundraisers...It's best to have the food served rather than self-service. This insures that everyone who paid for a dinner will get a decent meal and then people can go back for seconds with whatever food is leftover.

Programs - A Saturday evening caving related presentation is a must...most everyone attending enjoys and looks forward to this. Also, BATS Grotto started offering a New Caver Orientation during the VAR they hosted...and a vertical workshop on Saturday. These are well-received but optional additions to VAR...

Cave trips - With the much appreciated assistance of Mountain Empire Grotto, Powell Mountain Grotto, and VPI Cave Club, we were able to offer guided trips to some really special caves near Rural Retreat. We thank our guides and the landowners for allowing us access.

For those grottos that haven't hosted a VAR yet, we encourage you to do so. It really is fun and a great way to meet cavers in the region. You don't need a whole lot of people to do the preplanning, and during the actual event there are cavers from the different grottos always offering to help out if they are needed.

WANTED!



Cave Conservationist's with Attitude!

Join us for another GRAND CAVERNS EASTER RESTORATION CAMP (presented by the Virginia Region of the National Speleological Society) on April 9th -11th (Friday – Sunday), 2004. Enjoy an early PAROLE and join us for our annual gravel hauling express through beautiful Grand Caverns (and our equally exciting sinus plugging, epoxy FILLED escapades in NEARBY Fountain Cave!). Repair broken formations. Eradicate moss. Improve cave-owner relations. A great way to kick those Old Man Winter Blues and it beats making license plates! Primitive camping, socializing with convicted felons, food and beverage on Saturday night! Easter egg hunt for the kids on Sunday morning! And, it's all FREE (okay, donations are accepted)!

Directions:

Grand Caverns: From I-81, Exit 235, East to Grottoes. Turn Right at small store/gas station (passed ball fields). Follow signs and take right into Caverns. Phone (540) 249-5705.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT: Andy Reeder, VAR Conservation Chair

840 Twin Lakes Rd., Green Bay, VA. 23492

(w) 434-847-1640 / (h) 434-392-7452 or e-mail at

andrew.reeder@lynchburgva.gov



Spring VAR 2004

April 23-25, 2004
Grand Caverns, Grottoes, VA
Hosted by Tri-State Grotto

Spring VAR 2004 Pre-Registration Form

Please mail this form with your check (payable to Tri-State Grotto; 'Spring VAR' on memo line) to:

Tri-State Grotto Spring VAR 2004
Registration
c/o Judy Fisher
PO box 276
Berkeley Springs, WV 25411

Use pre-registration prices **only** if your form is **postmarked on or before April 12, 2004**. Thank you.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

21 years old or older? Yes/No (Please Circle) Age if under 21 _____

NSS Member? Yes/No (Please Circle) NSS Number _____

Grotto Affiliations: _____

Do you want a Vegetarian Meal? Yes/No (Please Circle)

VAR Fees:

Through April 12, 2004 (we'll use the postmark):

Adult (15 + years): \$28.00 X _____ = \$ _____

Children (5-15 years): \$25.00 X _____ = \$ _____

Babies (0-4): Free

Total amount enclosed: \$ _____

Cost after April 12: add \$5.00 to the fees per person.

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Laurel, MD 20707-2621

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Winter 2003-2004 Regional News

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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