



The Region Record

Vol. XX No. 4 Fall 2007

Chairman's Column

The Region was well represented at the NSS Convention. However there were several people whose absence was noted.

The Region had many members receive recognition. The list of those who received their well deserved Fellowships include Pauline Apling, John Fox, Rich Geisler, Kelsea Johnson, John Pearson, and Janet Tinkham. John Pearson received the Victor A Schmidt Conservation Award. Bob Hoke was awarded the Peter M. Hauer Spelean History Award. When you see these folks, thank them for all that they have done and encourage them to keep up the good work.

The Fall MAR-VAR will be held at the OTR site and it should be well attended. Come help the members of the Philadelphia Grotto celebrate their 60th Anniversary.

Craig

Fall 2007 MAR-VAR Field Meet October 12th -14th 2007

by Amos Mincin

Triangle Troglodytes Grotto is co-hosting the event along with the Philadelphia Grotto that is celebrating its 60th anniversary.

It will be held at the Robertson Association Grounds (OTR Site) in Dailey, West Virginia. Registration will open at noon on Friday October 12, 2007.

Additional information and directions can be found at the event Web site www.philly60th.org

There will be numerous guided and non-guided cave trips. Participants are encouraged to sign up for guided trips at the event on Friday beginning at 10 pm. A guidebook will be provided.

Friday evening a DJ will provide music entertainment.

Live music for the Saturday Night Philadelphia Grotto 60th celebration will be provided by the music group "Rush Hour."

"Rush Hour" is a West Virginia-based, five-piece bluegrass band, formed by experienced musicians who have been on the bluegrass circuit. "Rush Hour" has a vast selection of original material, strong instrumentation and spectacular vocals.

A catered meal will be provided by the Lions Club on Saturday Evening. There will also be a vegetarian meal option.

Sunday morning pancake breakfast will be available for purchase provided by the Front Royal Grotto. They are known to provide excellent quality at a reasonable price.

Special presentations will feature the history of Philadelphia Grotto

and exploration, surveying and mapping of caves in West Virginia. International guests will be present.

A squeeze box will be available Friday and Saturday for a fun challenge.

Caving vendors will be there.

Pre-registration is encouraged. All cavers are cordially invited to attend. **The deadline for preregistering has been extended to September 29.**

Plenty of camping sites and hot showers will be available. However, the sauna and hot tub equipment that is traditionally part of OTR will not be available.

Cave Hollow Farm Cleanup

by John Pearson

In 2004, Bill and Juliet Balfour bought their first home in the metropolis of Unus, West Virginia. Their property contains the Hinkle Unus entrance to the Culverson Creek system, which is now called the Balfour entrance. On May 12 2004, Mark Manor and I dropped by the Balfour's new home to check out the impressive entrance to the system. However, no one was home.

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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

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| <p>Sept. 29 Deadline for getting the preregistration discount for the Fall MAR-VAR meeting on Oct. 12-14</p> | <p>July 17-21, 2008 Weeklong NCRC Cave Rescue Class in Rockingham County, VA. More info later at www.er-ncrc.org.</p> |
| <p>Oct. 6 Trout Rock Conservation. Annual clean-up day. Contact Pauline Apling at papling@verizon.net for more info.</p> | <p>Aug. 11-15, 2008 2008 NSS Convention in Lake City, Florida (west of Jacksonville).</p> |
| <p>Oct. 12-14 Fall VAR-MAR meeting at the OTR site (near Elkins, WV) co-hosted by the Philadelphia Grotto and the Triangle Troglodytes. More information in this issue.</p> | |
| <p>Dec. 15 Deadline for submitting material for the Winter issue of the <i>Region Record</i>.</p> | |
| <p>June 5-8, 2008 Joint VAR/SERA meeting in Bristol, Tennessee. More info later.</p> | |

List Your Event Here

If you have a caving event that is of regional interest please send information to the Editors listed above so it can be included in the calendar.

Cave Hollow

(continued from page 1)

Having never been to the cave before, Mark and I began systematically walking the fields trying to locate the entrance. What we ended up finding was a sinkhole full of trash, at least 50 years worth. I documented the trash for a future conservation project when time permitted.

Fast forward to New Year's Eve, December 31, 2006. Dave and Sandy Cowan were having a get-together and all the cavers who were visiting the area over the holidays were invited. Attending that party were members of the Central Connecticut Grotto (CCG). They were looking for a new cave to do and I mentioned that I wanted to place flagging tape around the mattock marks up at Lobelia Saltpeter Cave to keep people from walking through them.

Plans were made to get together on New Year's Day and get underground. Jon Le May, Garth Varian, Diane and Mark Lucas, and I went and checked out the historic part of the cave. I brought them a map of the cave and they ended up pushing a couple of leads that I

had never bothered to do. While we were re-grouping, Garth told me that Bill Balfour had been quite generous with his time over the years with their group, giving them leads for caves etc. Garth then told me he was the conservation chair for his grotto and he was looking for a project. Well that magic light bulb came on in my head.

Garth and I discussed the sinkhole project and due to the distance his volunteers would have to travel, we picked Memorial Day weekend for the extra day for travel. In order to do this cleanup, we would need a backhoe with operator. Balfour made those arrangements with his neighbor Pete Fogas. I then made arrangements for a construction dumpster and a port-a-potty while Juliet planned for lunch food. Mark Manor told me that he'd help me roast another pig for the after-cleanup celebration.

Nine a.m. seemed real early to me after staying up late around the campfire at Bubble Cave but I was able to get up and out of the house on time. For a few weeks beforehand, I was worried that there weren't going to be enough volunteers. Wrong!! CCG descended on Cave Hollow Farm ready to work. Initially Garth told me maybe four

or five members would be there. There were at least 12 members of their grotto, coming all the way from NRO (Northeast Regional Organization) country down to the heart of VAR. There might have been more, but not everyone who signed in gave me their affiliation.

Balfour and I put all the volunteers up at WVACS. There, everyone had accommodations as they desired. Some camped, some stayed in the field house and some stayed in their trailers. At WVACS, there are the comforts of home, including bathrooms, showers and kitchens.

We had 33 volunteers, including the members of CCG, WVACS, Blue Ridge Grotto, Front Royal Grotto, Philly Grotto, Bubble Cave and the entire Springer family. Having these kinds of numbers, I took Cass Springer, Diane Lucas, Jeff MacDonald and Mark Manor over to my Wildcat dig to clean up all the shoring that had been left there from last summer's work. Figured I might as well get that cleaned up as well.

The sinkhole that Mark and I had documented in 2004 is overlooked by Carroll Hill Road, making it an easy place for anyone to dump their garbage. Pete Fogas worked the larger pieces of trash out of the sink with chain, while volunteers loaded up Rick Bantel's truck, my truck and Dave Cowan's Tweety with trash and began filling the construction dumpster. I saw truck frames, refrigerators, washers, driers, and tires all being removed as well as lots of household items.

All in all, we got the sink cleaned out of all the big stuff by a reasonable time on Saturday. I figure that at least 200 hours of volunteer time working was put into the project removing more than 11 tons of trash. That is excluding all the travel time. If you figure that the people from Connecticut drove 10 hours to get to Greenbrier County,



A little mechanical advantage helped 33 cavers clear debris from a sinkhole on Cave Hollow Farm in Greenbrier County, West Virginia. (photo by John Pearson).

then there was literally more than 360 hours of travel time to and from the project, excluding all the preparation time.

Janet Tinkham and Mark Manor were put in charge of setting up for the pig roast. After lots of indecision on my part, we decided to do it up at WVACS in case there were people drinking. I have to say, Mark did a great job on this pig. It was slowly cooked over a period of almost 20 hours and came out great. In fact, Gordon Birkhimer came up just to help me carve the meat. For those of you who don't know, Gordon is an excellent chef and knows how to handle a knife.

Bill, Juliet and I want to thank everyone who made this happen. In no particular order the following people participated in the sinkhole cleanup and we want to recognize them. If you were there and you didn't sign in, I apologize that you were omitted.

Dave and Sandy Cowan; Bill and Juliet Balfour; Garth Varian; Jon Le May; Diane and Mark Lucas; Steve Adams; the entire Springer family consisting of Greg; Tisha; Cass; Sara and Silas; Jeff MacDonald; Alisa Werst; Jerry DuBeck; Darren Dolezel; Steven Janesky; David and Mary Sue Socky; Ed Saugstad; Jeff Bogart; Mark A. Williams; Janet Tinkham; Mark Manor; Steve Millett; Mack Field-Sloan; Andy Ouimette; Randy Rumer; Pete Fogas; Gordon Birkhimer and Rick Bantel. Oh, and of course, me, JEP.

VAR Limited Access Cave List

Check the access status of VAR caves on-line at

www.VAR-caves.us

Dixie Caverns Cleanup

by Meredith Hall Johnson
VAR Conservation Committee Co-chair

This is a report on the VAR Conservation Committee-sponsored clean-up in Dixie Caverns on June 30, 2007. Thanks to BATS and Blue Ridge Grotto for providing most of the workers! And to Mary Sue Socky for helping to organize this event.

Our main reason for doing a conservation trip in Dixie was that in the spring, some jerk etched the word "MEXICO" into the edge of the rimstone table at the "Magic Mirror" (formerly known as the "Reflecting Pool"). The sort of funny thing about this horrible vandalism is that the idiot can't even spell—he left out the "I" and that would have been the easiest letter to gouge into the rock. The letters were almost 2 inches high, but not as deeply etched as I had envisioned. We managed to erase most of the visible marks, so in that respect the trip was a success. Tanya McLaughlin and I worked on the gouges with a variety of possible solutions, but the thing that worked was a small wire brush. I hated scraping the rock but that was the only way to smooth out the gouges. We all know that vandalism begets vandalism, so it had to be done.

We knew we had succeeded when Susan Burr and Pat Sims came in the cave later to let us know that lunch was there. Susan asked about the vandalism and I said to go look. She said she didn't see it. I said "Good!" She even knew where to look. If you look really hard, yes, you can still see where the gouges were, but the average tourist will never notice.

But the conservation effort would have been considered a success anyhow for all the other work that was done. There is now a "Great Wall of Travis" at the back of the cave—a row of rocks forming a one-rock-high wall to protect a large rimstone/flowstone and a pool that is one of Dixie's showcase areas, "The Wedding Party." Travis Coad led the effort here, with Ellie Florance's help and someone else (sorry, I'm not sure who). Previously, the tour guides would actually stand on the flowstone to give their talk on the room (this is also where the large oddly shaped "Turkey Wing" formation is). Hopefully the wall of rocks will preclude this from happening anymore. After Mary Sue Socky hosed down the formation, you could still see it was mostly white.

Lots of algae was scraped off of walls. Even moss was removed in places. Winnie Miller and Ellie Florance had to practically be dragged out of the cave when we were finished—they kept finding more algae to clean. Tanya and I spent some time cleaning moss from be-



Ellie Florance cleaning formations along the commercial trail in Dixie Caverns. (Photo by Meredith Hall Johnson).

hind a low lamppost—very awkward but it sure looked a lot better without the green. Mary Sue ran back and forth between groups of workers, making sure they had the proper materials and tools for their jobs. She helped out on most of the individual projects.

In one area is a large "formation" called the "Big Cheese" or something silly like that. It looks like a huge wedge of cheese and is actually the mud dump-site when some passages were made (I think! I was not really paying that much attention when the tours went by unless they said it was okay to touch...). In the past, it was part of the tour for tourists to scratch their names or initials into the mud wall of the Big Cheese. Not anymore!! The wall is now pretty well cleaned of any names and initials, thanks to the hard work of Holly Poole!

The following cavers came out to help and I thank them.

Travis Coad (VPI Cave Club)
 Ellie Florance (BATS)
 Me (BATS/VAR Conservation Committee)
 Tanya McLaughlin (Mountain Empire Grotto)
 Winnie Miller (BATS)
 Holly Poole (Blue Ridge Grotto)
 Matt Poole (Blue Ridge Grotto)
 Mary Sue Socky (Blue Ridge Grotto)

Thanks also to Susan Burr and Pat Sims (both of Blue Ridge Grotto) for bringing lunch and leading the "reward" trip into Goodwins Cave. Thanks too to both Mary Sue and Dave Socky for much prep work before this weekend could happen.

The owner of Dixie Caverns was very thankful for us coming out to help her cave. There is still a lot of work that could be done but we got a good deal done. I hope more trips like this can be undertaken in the future on the part of the VAR Conservation Committee.

Another pretty cool thing that happened that day was when we were

working on the vandalism at the Magic Mirror, I noticed some small white "millimeters" on top of the water. I like looking for amphipods in cave pools and I thought that is what these were. Turns out they probably are "springtails," also known as "columbolans," according to the research Mary Sue did. She e-mailed Dr. John Holsinger who said that this was the first recorded citing/sighting (LOL, I'm an editor, can you tell?) of springtails in Dixie Caverns. Mary Sue wrote up something for the owner to give to the tour guides to include in the tours. Pretty neat!

VAR Outstanding Service Award Nominations

by Meredith Hall Johnson

Start thinking about who you know around the Region who deserves a bit of extra recognition for all he or she has done for us, caves, and caving. Nominations for the annual VAR Outstanding Service Award are being taken now. Be sure to include a paragraph or two with examples of why this person deserves this award. Think about past winners; among them, Don Anderson, Evelyn Bradshaw, John Fox, Jim Hixson, John Holsinger, Karen Kastning, Phil Lucas, and Andy Reeder. This is fewer than half of the recipients since 1999. You can find the rest listed on the VAR Web site at varegion.org/var/awards/serviceawards.shtml. We are talking the cream of the VAR caver crop here, folks. But there are more like them out there. You just have to drop me an e-mail and their names will be considered for this year's award. I already have one nomination, but need more. We can give up to three awards each year and the presenta-

tion is made at the Fall VAR. Thanks!

An Early Report on Gap Cave

submitted by Phil Lucas

Dear fellow caver who is reading this, I have a request. Please stop for a moment, set aside the nylon coveralls, cave pack full of gear, and your helmet with its LED array of lights, the settle down into a comfortable chair before you read further. Allow your imagination to transport you in an earlier time, 1831 to be exact, and join Charles Hoffman on his exploration of a cave at Cumberland Gap, Virginia.

The cave is now called Gap Cave and is being surveyed by the Cave Research Foundation and Pine Mountain Grotto with 11.6 miles recorded thus far. But in 1831, there were no carbide lamps, so pine torches and candles were used to light their way. There were no maps to show the extent of the cave and in fact, very little was known about caves, cave processes, or what might be found in them. The exploration of a cave in that time was a much different from today, but perhaps in some ways much the same as well. So settle down in that chair and flee back to another time and place.

Phil Lucas

Many thanks to Russ Carter who, despite being located on the coast of Washington State, accomplishes clever searches to find these fascinating bit of history and sends them along to the Virginia Speleological Survey.

From: Hoffman, C[harles] F[enno], *A Winter in the Far West, Volume II* (London: Richard Bentley Company, 1835), pages 207-

215. (The full text of this book has been made available on the Web by Google).

LETTER XL.

Cumberland Gap, April 8th, 1834

There are three or four houses within as many hundred yards of the little inn at which I am staying; but this appears to be the only tenanted one in the neighborhood. It lies upon the edge of a grove of pines, facing the road, with a green meadow on one side, and the crags of the Cumberland range impending immediately over it on the other. The dividing lines of Kentucky, Tennessee, and Virginia here intersect each other; and the triangular section thus made on the confines of these three "sovereign and independent states," is reputed to be a sort of neutral ground, so far as the operation of the laws of either is concerned. A gang of counterfeiters and comets of false money are said to have their workshops among the deep glens adjacent. I am told that they mingle with the people in the most impudent manner. Their fast horses carry them when suspected soon beyond the reach of immediate pursuit; and the seclusion of their rocky dens prevents their being subsequently ferreted out, supposing even that the sheriffs officers should be anxious to encounter these "Cumberland riders." You may form some idea of the facilities for retirement afforded here to these gentry, by accompanying me now through the cavern mentioned in my last. There is a mountain-torrent within pistol-shot of the house, and by following it up about a quarter of a mile, you come to where it rushes from a small opening in the hill-side.

Passing about a hundred yards ahead, the gorge, which farther down affords a channel to the brook, is abruptly terminated by a precipitous rock; and here, in the face of this rock, overhung by drooping weeds and wild flowers,

is the entrance to the cave. It is a ragged aperture, about six feet in diameter, sloping downward from the brink internally about fifteen feet; and when the sun is in certain positions, you may from the outside catch a glimpse of the brook before spoken of, as it gleams over the floor of the cavern, while keeping its way to the outlet lower down the mountain. I had four guides with me, each of whom carried torches; and after lighting them at the entrance, and supplying myself with a long pole to steady my descent down the first steep, we entered the mouth of the cave. A few steps in the shallow water at the bottom led to a sudden turn, where the daylight was at once excluded; and uniting our torches together, to throw their collected light in advance, we discovered that we could only continue our route by entering a deep pool about breast-high, which lay clear as crystal before us. In the middle of this pool a detached crag hung from above, so near to the water's edge as to screen the path beyond; and before entering the water I sent one of the party ahead to ascertain whether there was any dry footing beyond. He shrunk at first from the icy water; but after pausing a moment, when it threatened to reach his shoulders, soon disappeared behind the curtain; and listening to his splashes a moment or two longer, we were glad at last to hear his call to "come on."

Our path in advance did not seem to improve much, however, as we gained the point proposed; for, after advancing a few paces over a floor of rock and sand, another pool, still broader, and almost of equal depth, lay yet before us, so we went ahead, while our route through this damp and narrow gallery soon terminated in a lofty and dry chamber some fifteen feet in diameter. This was called "The Fire-room," and here we proceeded to kindle some fuel brought with us, and prepare for our farther advance into these dark domains. On

the upper side of this chamber, whose floor was a rough inclined plane of about forty-five degrees, there was a narrow hole called "The Blast," barely large enough for the admission of a man's body. Through this aperture the wind rushed with such force as actually to bewilder one, and of course extinguish a torch instantly when placed in contact with it. The passage it afforded ran in an upward direction, and was about five yards in length. Having supplied himself with a brand from the fire, our principal guide led the way through the crevice, and we successively followed, crawling after him on our hands and knees.

This, I confess, was rather disagreeable; but when the torches were again lit, and I could hook around me, I felt myself amply repaid. The apartment, which from its smooth, dome-like roof is called "The Oven," would cover an area, I should think, judging by the imperfect light, of at least forty feet diameter; though the immense rocks which lie in massive piles upon its floor render it difficult to judge of its dimensions. These rocks formed a rough knoll in the centre; and clambering with some difficulty to the top, we pursued our way along a rocky ridge, whose profile might have been borrowed from the external features of any of the mountains around. We seemed, indeed, from the numerous rises and descents along our route, to be traversing the broken summit of a mountain, with merely the roof of a cave instead of the canopy of heaven above us.

At length, however, we descended into a long narrow apartment, called "The Saloon." It had a high square ceiling and a firm floor of clay, firm enough, indeed, for the foot of a dancer. This, I learned from my guides, was the favourite room of the place; but, though certainly a most comfortable-looking chamber for a picnic, I did not think it compared with the apartment into which I was soon after

ushered. "The Gallery of Pillars" realized all that I had ever read of those sparry halls that lift their glistening columns and sport their fairy tracery within the bowels of the earth. The form of the grotto was so irregular that it was nearly impossible to make an estimate of its dimensions. The innumerable stalactites, sometimes pendent from the roof, and sometimes raising themselves in single columns from the floor, were so clustered together and intermingled, that the actual walls of the subterranean chamber were excluded from view; while the light of our torches, as we waved them aloft, would at one moment be reflected back from a thousand fretted points, and be lost the next in some upward crevice that led away the bats alone knew where.

But the most striking object in this fairy cell is yet to be mentioned. It was a formation of spar resembling a frozen waterfall that reared itself to the height of fifteen or twenty feet, and ran completely across one end of the chamber. The ceiling of the grotto was about ten feet higher, but the petrifying water, which was now dripping from the hanging stalactites above, had united them here and there with the top of this marble cascade, so as to form a Gothic skreen of sparry points and pillars along its otherwise smooth round summit. One of the guides succeeded with the aid of his companions in scaling the slippery elevation, and drawing his body with difficulty between the dropping pillars that knit the top of the congealed cascade to the roof of the grotto, he disappeared in perfect darkness behind the skreen. A moment after it seemed as if a hundred lamps were dancing in that part of the cavern. He had merely lighted a couple of candles with which he was supplied, and placed them so as to be reflected from the minute and interlacing fretwork above.

There was yet another chamber to be explored; and being now about

half a mile from the mouth of the cave, it behoved us, if we wished to derive any benefit from our lights in returning, to expedite our movements: Passing, then, from the grotto, the uneven floor of which was partly paved with truncated columns of spar, acid partly strewn with broken pillars that some barbarous hands had wrenched from their places, we crawled over huge rocks, where the roof of the cavern descended to within three or four feet of the broken floor, and came to a rugged declivity, seamed by deep and dark chasms, which rendered the descent difficult and perilous. When we had gained the bottom of this precipice and looked up, the top of the cavern was scarcely discernible by the light of our torches. A limpid brook, about a foot in depth, had here channelled its way in the smooth limestone: following it up for a few yards, a sudden turn brought us to a long semicircular gallery, about five feet in height, and hardly more in breadth. This, from the singular echoes it produced, was called "The Music-room;" and no whispering gallery could supply a more remarkable phenomenon of sound. The lowest tone of voice produced a murmur that trembled through the apartment, like the humming sound created by striking upon the wood-work of a guitar, - or rather, I may assimilate the effect produced by some tones, the base ones particularly, to the low notes which a harp will send forth when the keys of a piano are touched near it. I was very sorry that we had not a musical instrument of some kind with us, to experiment more particularly upon these delicate and not unmelodious echoes. This room was nearly in the form of a crescent, and its smooth ceiling sloped gradually at the farther end till it touched the surface of the winding rivulet. At that point the stream became both broader and deeper; and the cavern not having been yet explored beyond this chamber, I proposed diving into the brook where it disappeared be-

neath the descending roof, and ascertaining whether it were not possible to rise in an open space beyond.

The principal guide, however, declared that he had already tried the experiment, and had nearly been suffocated by getting his head above water in a crevice of the dropping vault, from which it was difficult to extricate himself. We prepared, therefore, to retrace our steps; and our lights being nearly exhausted, we reduced their number to two while winding again through the devious labyrinth. After once or twice slightly missing the way, I emerged at last from this nether world, highly gratified with my subterranean wanderings.

Whimsically enough, the individual who gave the writer this information subsequently palmed a copper dollar upon him.

Minutes of the Fall VAR Region Meet April 29, 2007 Durbin, WV

The meeting was called to order at 9:11 a.m.

Reports

Secretary – Carol Tideman

A motion was made by Bubble Cave to accept the minutes as published in the *Region Record*. DC seconded. Motion passed.

Treasurer – John Fox

A financial report was presented. A motion was made by Bubble Cave to accept the financial report, BATS seconded - Motion passed. The domain name has been renewed - we are good for 6 years.

Vice Chair – Judy Fisher
Nothing to report.

Chairman – Craig Hindman
No report.

Conservation Co-Chair – Meredith Hall Johnson

- Blue Ridge, WVCC, and BATS cleaned Island Ford cave. Graffiti was power washed.
- Easter – the large pavilion was re-roofed. The remains of the Octagon were put into a dumpster, brush was chipped, paradise trees were pulled.
- During VAR – Judy JC Fisher pulled garlic mustard and removed trash from the Gaudineer Scenic Area Virgin Red Spruce Forest.
- Poor Farm Cave needs graffiti removed.
- Can recycling was present VAR and will be at all future meetings.

Goodwins Cave Management – Mary Sue Socky
The cave was broken into in August 2006. The owner's repair is holding well. Craig Hindman designed a bat-friendly gate. The design was sent to the owners and we are waiting for a reply. Water pH sampling for a science fair project was done. The week-long NCRC will be held June 16-23 and is hoping to use the cave for a confined space mock rescue.

VAR Outstanding Service Award – Meredith Hall Johnson
Need nominations—write a paragraph why they deserve recognition—we can award up to 3 a year. Nominations forms are on the Web.

Landowner Recognition Awards – Janet Tinkham
No nominations. Think of landowners who deserve this

award. There is a form online to use for submitting nominations.

Landowner Legal Support Committee – Bob Hoke
No news is good news.

Region Record – Bob Hoke
Send articles – Deadline June 15th.

VAR List Server – Walt Pirie
No report.

VAR Web Site – Jim McConkey
No report.

Cave Bucks – J.C. Fisher
The conservancies need your dollars.

VSS
Phil Lucas has stepped down and Rick Lambert is now in charge.

WVASS – George Dasher
West Virginia cave protection signs are available. The WVASS meeting is next week at Shavers Mountain.

WVCC – Bob Handley
Bob Handley has taken over as president. They are looking for caves to acquire in West Virginia and possibly Virginia. The project to gate Rapps Cave has been completed. WVCC no longer accepts credit cards but cash and checks are welcome.

New Dixie – Mary Sue Socky
Dixie Caverns – New River Valley and Blue Ridge did a cleanup on April 1 and inspired tour guides to do some cleaning. The cave was vandalized. Someone keyed “Mexico” on the rim of the reflecting pool. The Conservation Committee is trying to find a way to repair the damage. There will be a Haunted Cave this fall.

Cave Management Forum – Joey Fagan
At the field event in Scott County 15 people surveyed several caves.

Dye tracing was done. Approximately a mile of cave was re-opened. There is a bunk house and all are welcome. Data used in environmental review – Madison Cave isopod inventory.

SCCi - Walt Pirie
No report.

Grand Caverns/Cave Hill – Craig Hindman
A pseudo-scorpion was seen in Fountain Cave. Grand Caverns Park requires a line item on the general assembly budget to become a state park. There are new environmental displays as a result of punitive actions against DuPont.

Cave Board – Dave Socky
The Cave Board meeting will be at Natural Tunnel this fall. Cave week will be held in conjunction with Earth week. Sinkhole regulations are being revised. Storm water regulations are being revised. Roby Hollow Cave's gate was breached and the cave was spray painted. The vandals put their names in the cave. This information was turned over to the sheriff.

Wilderness Proposal – Bob Handley
Things are slowly happening in DC. Nick Rayhall is chair of the National Resources Commission. They are in the process of developing a wilderness bill for West Virginia's Dolly Sods, expanding plans for Chestnut Hill, Seneca Creek, the East Fork of the Greenbrier, Spice Run, and three areas in Greenbrier. A concerted effort by some in the DNR to remove wilderness designation has been suppressed so far. Support is needed. The Wilderness Coalition is working hard to make things happen.

Virginia Karst Trail – Joey Fagan
Virginia Outdoors plan is about to be published. Andy came up with statutes that will be in the upcoming

ing plan. There may be some funding.

CCV – Joey Fagan

- *Living on Karst* is a valuable resource the supply is running out. They are about to republish with information on conservation easements added.
- Ogdens Cave – they have an option but it is over one million dollars. They have transferred the option to the Nature Conservancy. CCV was reimbursed for expenses. The Nature Conservancy will transfer option to DCR.
- CCV is updating its Web site.

Quorum Committee – John Pearson

Proposes all references to quorum rules be deleted. Blue Ridge seconded. Passed unanimously. The committee was dissolved.

Host Report

There were about 280 attendees. Thanks for coming. The raffle brought in approximately \$300. Bubble Cave moved to thank Front Royal Grotto, BATS seconded – passed.

Old Business

Oct. 12-14 The MAR/VAR will be held at the OTR site. Preregistration forms are available. Caving will be available the week before. Price will be \$24 plus MAR or VAR fees.

New Business

- **Spring 2008** – there will be a joint SERA/VAR, hosted by the Mountain Empire Grotto. The event will be held on June 5-8 at the campground next to the Bristol Speedway. There will be new caves to visit. Closed caves will be open.
- **Future meetings** – There were no other groups volunteering to host future meetings.

- **Insurance** – Insurance will be needed if we are to hold another event at the fairgrounds at Fairlea West Virginia. John Pearson appointed as a committee to investigate with Ted Kayes the possibility of having a rider on the NSS policy.

Grant Requests

None received.

Announcements

- Rocky has 3 cans of Fluorescein dye powder for sale at \$5 per can.
- Mary Sue announced the week-long NCRC will be June 16-23. Marian and Dan McConnell are the contacts.
- Joey announced the Appalachian Karst Symposium will be in Johnson City Tennessee – the date TBA.
- Janet – There was an individual who was acting inappropriately on a cave trip and he was too drunk to drive home. They were spoken to and have been asked not to come back. It was suggested that they be refunded their \$3 VAR dues and notified by mail that they are not welcome.

Adjournment

Bubble Cave moved to adjourn, RASS seconded.

Meeting adjourned 10:17 a.m.

Respectfully submitted:
Carol Tiderman

How to Continue Receiving the *Region Record*

Anyone who attends a VAR meeting automatically gets the next four issues of the *Region Record*. If an NSS member moves into the Region he/she is normally sent two free issues. Anyone may subscribe for the paltry price of \$3.00 per year (see the form on the back page).

The easiest way to continue receiving issues is to attend a VAR meeting at least once a year.

Fall 2007 VAR MEETING AGENDA

Sunday, October 14, 2007 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. OTHER
 - B. GOODWINS CAVE MANAGEMENT - BLUE RIDGE GROTTO
 - C. VAR OUTSTANDING SERVICE AWARD - MEREDITH HALL JOHNSON
 - D. LANDOWNER RECOGNITION AWARD - JANET TINKHAM
 - E. LANDOWNER LEGAL SUPPORT COMMITTEE - BOB HOKE
 - F. *REGION RECORD* - BOB HOKE, PAULINE APLING
 - G. VAR LIST SERVER - WALT PIRIE
 - H. VAR WEB SITE - JIM MCCONKEY
 - I. CAVE BUCKS - J.C. FISHER
 - J. VSS - RICK LAMBERT
 - K. WVASS - GEORGE DASHER
 - L. WVCC - BOB HANDLEY
 - M. NEW DIXIE - BLUE RIDGE GROTTO
 - N. VIRGINIA KARST PROGRAM - JOEY FAGAN
 - O. SCCI - WALT PIRIE
 - P. GRAND CAVERNS/CAVE HILL - JIM MCCONKEY
 - Q. VIRGINIA CAVE BOARD
 - R. WILDERNESS PROPOSAL
 - S. VIRGINIA KARST TRAIL - ANDY REEDER
 - T. CCV
 - U. OTHER
- VII. HOST GROTTO REPORT - TRIANGLE TROGS
- VIII. OLD BUSINESS
 - A. HOST GROTTO FOR THE SPRING 2008 MEETING - MOUNTAIN EMPIRE
 - B. OTHER

- IX. NEW BUSINESS
 - A. HOST GROTTO FOR THE FALL 2008 MEETING
 - B. HOST GROTTO FOR SPRING 2009 MEETING
 - C. OTHER _____
- X. GRANT REQUESTS - SUBMITTED TO CHAIR
- XI. ELECTION
- XII. ANNOUNCEMENTS
- XIII. ADJOURNMENT

Fall MAR-VAR Pre-Registration Form

**Fall MAR-VAR Field Meet and Philadelphia Grottos 60th Anniversary Event
 October 12-13-14, 2007
 The Robertson Association Grounds, Dailey, WV**

Current Info and Detailed Directions: www.philly60th.org
 Last Day to Pre-register September 29, 2007
 Pre-registration also available at OTR, See Philly Grotto.

- Combined MAR and VAR hosted by **Philadelphia Grotto** and the **Triangle Troglodytes**
- Led Trips to many of the local caves
- Live Band and DJ
- The TRA facilities with plenty of camping and hot showers
- Philly Grotto's 60th anniversary party
- Weeklong pre-event caving
- Guidebook
- Speleo-Vendors
- Many other things to do in Wild and Wonderful West Virginia

Adult Names: _____

Child Names: _____

Street: _____

City: _____ State/Country: _____ Zip: _____

Email: _____ Phone #: _____

Primary Grotto: _____ Vegetarian Meal (circle Yes/No) **YES** | **NO**

Emergency Contact Name: _____ Phone #: _____

Pre Registration Costs	Cost	\$	*Note: Participants must choose MAR or VAR or Both.
Children Under Age 4	Free		
Age 4 to 18	\$20		
Adult	\$24		
MAR Fee*	\$5		
VAR Fee*	\$3		
	Total		

(after September 29, Add \$3 to the registration fee per person)

Please send the completed and signed form along with a check made out to **Philadelphia Grotto**, drawn on a US bank to:

Fall MAR-VAR 2007
c/o Amos Mincin
13 Levis Avenue
Media, PA 19063 USA

International Note:
Cavers from outside of the United States can pre-register with this form and pay in cash at the event

I understand that caving and event participation involves many seen and unseen hazards and risks, carrying the potential for serious or fatal injury. I release all claims against Philadelphia Grotto, the Triangle Troglodyte Grotto, the event organizers, staff, and The Robertson Association, for any injury, damage, or death which may occur to myself or my family participants.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

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

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Fall 2007 Regional News

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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. Also, *please print legibly*. 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 _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

E-mail _____

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