



The Region Record

Vol. XXI No. 1 Winter 2007-08

Chairman's Column

During the last meeting there were several obituaries related to those present. As the names of landowners and VAR members were mentioned, what came to mind was that neither land owners received VAR awards. These landowners had been friendly to cavers and had allowed access to their caves for well over 30 years. If only one of us had taken the time to write a short note and nominate them, it could have been a different story.

Of the VAR members' names that were related, the same thing was found. All had longstanding relations with the VAR and only one had been recognized with the Outstanding Service Award.

Let's take the time to recognize those people who deserve these honors before it is too late and we are wishing we had.

I was also asked by the Triangle Trogs to thank the Philly Grotto for co-hosting a wonderful Fall MAR/VAR and to wish them 50 more years.

The spring meeting will also be a combined region event. A SERA/VAR will be held a little later than VARs are usually scheduled. It will be in June in Bristol, Tennessee. Make your plans early, this is bound to be a big one.

The Virginia Cave Board is putting together a week in the spring as Cave Awareness Week. Let them know about the projects that are going on in your area. Try to do

something special that week. Contact Tom Lera for more information at frontier2@erols.com

Craig

Highland County Sinkhole Project

by Janet Tinkham

The weather on Saturday, October 27 was perfect for a series of sinkhole cleanups scheduled in Highland County, Virginia. It had been raining quite heavily at times during the week, but true to the weatherman's prediction, the clouds, along with the rain, moved out that morning. Traveling from the east on Route 250, the trees still held a smattering of fall colors and descending into

Monterey, we were met with a picturesque town nestled in the valley surrounded by majestic mountains.

This sinkhole cleanup came about after receiving an e-mail from Rick Lambert, Director of the Highland County Survey, wondering if Front Royal Grotto was interested in participating. With an enthusiastic yes, we knew that along with our grotto members there are always cavers in the Virginia Region who are ready and willing to volunteer for conservation projects. After meeting with Rick for a site visit, a date was set and the word was put out on the VAR listserv looking for volunteers.

The goal for the project was to clean debris from a series of sinkholes that were in close proximity to each other and located on the downslope of a drainage way. It

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A small part of the trash that cavers removed from a sinkhole in Highland County, Virginia. (Photo by Janet Tinkham)

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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- 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. 15 | Deadline for submitting material for the Spring issue of the <i>Region Record</i> . | June 5-8 | Joint VAR/SERA meeting in Bristol, Tennessee. See preliminary info in this issue. |
| Mar. 22-23 | Easter Cleanup at Grand Caverns (Virginia). See more info in this issue | July 17-21 | Weeklong NCRC Cave Rescue Class in Rockingham County, VA. More info later at www.er-ncrc.org . |
| Mar. 22 | Potomac Speleological Club's 50th Anniversary Banquet in Silver Spring, MD. See preliminary info in this issue. | Aug. 11-15 | 2008 NSS Convention in Lake City, Florida (west of Jacksonville). |
| May 3 | WVASS Spring Meeting at Bill and Juliet Balfour's home near Frankford, West Virginia. The meeting is open meeting and anyone can attend. Various West Virginia caving projects and WVASS bulletins will be discussed. For more information, contact Bill at bal4karst@hotmail.com | | |

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.

Sinkhole

(continued from page 1)

appeared that most of the trash was wood, wire fencing, pieces of old farm machinery, and some old glass bottles. There were a few additional surprises uncovered as we worked.

We all fanned out to work on separate sinkholes and found that whoever had dumped the trash had done so in a somewhat organized fashion: one sinkhole had mostly glass bottles and metal; another had wood, wire fencing, and animal bones; the third had wood and plastic jugs of who knows what, and the largest sinkhole had pretty much a mix of old machinery, fencing, and huge squash. And yes, there were some recovered items that we took home with us. For example, many of the bottles were still intact and old with very interesting shapes and sizes. One hot commodity was an iron waffle ring? Hmmm... who was it that kept saying that he had a friend with an antique store? Jim McConkey took some of the squash back with him to Thorn Springs Campground where the Baltimore Grotto was holding their annual pumpkin hunt. It was fun trying to figure out what some of the machinery pieces were and what they had been used for.

As we worked, we separated the recovered items into piles. Rick Lambert and Steve Johnsen brought a trailer and a truck with high railings, which were used to haul numerous huge loads of wood, wire fencing and miscellaneous items to the landfill. Bob Denton and Greg McCoy offered their four-wheel-drive vehicles to pull some larger items up out of the sinkholes with chains. Recyclables included metal that was put into a dump truck that had been parked on site, and 5-gallon buckets filled with glass.

Surprisingly, as we approached late afternoon, we realized that we had made a huge headway with these sinkholes. Most of the debris had been cleared and hauled away. What was left was some of the larger farm machinery that would have to wait for another day and there was some wood on the outside of the sinkholes that Rick said could be burned at a later date when the burn ban was lifted.

Another successful project was brought about by a group of energetic, conservation-minded individuals. Some of the highlights of the day: meeting new people, watching the Johnsen boys build a fort in the side of a sinkhole and decorate it with animal bones, having a porta potty on site, and having plenty of food and Lauren's carrot cake.

Thank you to Rick Lambert for his Highland County connections that really helped to successfully expedite this project. His neighbor rented us the dump truck that we almost completely filled, and also took care of hauling the metal to the landfill for us. Also, Rick made arrangements with the landfill for us to enter through a back gate after they had closed so we could dump our last loads.

Following is a list of those who participated, taken from a sign-up sheet:

Stevan Biggers, Pat Bingham, Bob Denton, Timothy Grimm, Jeff Jahn, Jake Johnsen, Jason Johnsen, Jeremy Johnsen, Jesse Johnsen, Steve Johnsen, Rick Lambert, Jim McConkey, Greg McCoy, Lauren Rexford, Todd Roberts, Rick Royer, Lisa Van Kylen, Jennifer Wagner, Rick Wagner, Scott Wahlquist, and Chris Woodley. If anyone was missed we apologize, just know that we thank you and you are truly appreciated.

MAKE MY EASTER, PUNK!

19th Annual Grand Caverns Easter Restoration Camp

March 21-23, 2008

Hop on down to the GRAND CAVERNS EASTER RESTORATION CAMP, sponsored by the Virginia Region of the National Speleological Society on March 21-23 (Friday-Sunday), 2008. If you enjoy the aroma of melting chocolate eggs and napalm, 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, wrestle with wild rabbits in the Wesson-oil pit, and a whole lot more!

A great way to kick those Old Man Winter Blues and it sure beats making license plates! Primitive camping, socializing with convicted felons, and food and beverage provided for Saturday lunch and dinner! Easter egg hunt for the kids on Sunday morning (depending upon number of kids)! And, best of all, it's all FREE (okay, donations are accepted)! If arriving at night, check the left-hand gate, it is usually left with the hasp in place so that it appears locked to the uninitiated.

Directions to Grand Caverns:

From I-81, take Exit 235 to SR 256 (turn left if traveling south on I-81, and right if traveling north on I-81, toward Grottoes) Travel east on SR 256 for 7 miles to Grottoes. At the intersection of Dogwood Avenue, turn south (Right) on Dogwood. Travel south on Dogwood Avenue for 1,000 feet. Turn right into the entrance of Grand Cav-

erns (Grand Caverns Drive).
Phone (888) 430-2283.

For more information contact
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White Nose Bat Syndrome: Help Needed!

by Alan Hicks

During the winter of 2006-2007, a large number of dead bats were discovered in four Albany, New York, area caves (Hailes and Knox Caves, Schoharie and Gages Caverns). Although it has not yet been confirmed, it seems likely that this event was related in some way to a fungus that was observed around the noses of roughly half the bats in Hailes Cave (see attached photograph). None of the many bat researchers that were sent the photograph had seen anything like it before.

We do not yet understand exactly what happened, or why, and are not even sure that the fungus and the mortalities are related. We do know that bats died by the thousands and that there is a chance that this problem can be carried to other sites by either bats or cavers.

We need your help. We ask that when caving, each of you keep an eye out for bats exhibiting this white nose condition or any unusual numbers of dead bats. If you en-

counter either situation, please call Alan Hicks at the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation as soon as possible (e-mail achicks@gw.dec.state.ny.us, cell 518-451-4632, office 518-402-8854).

SERA/VAR Joint Meeting June 6-8, 2008

From the Internet

The Mountain Empire Grotto and the Appalachian Cave Conservancy are proud to host the first ever joint SERA/VAR in the border area of northeast Tennessee and southwest Virginia. Many details remain to be resolved, but we have secured a large campsite across the street from Bristol International Raceway: the Bristol Campground on Highway 394, about 15 minutes drive from Interstate 81. We will offer directions to about 50 area caves plus guided trips to some of the largest and most beautiful caves in the area, including Perkins Cave, the jewel in the ACC crown.

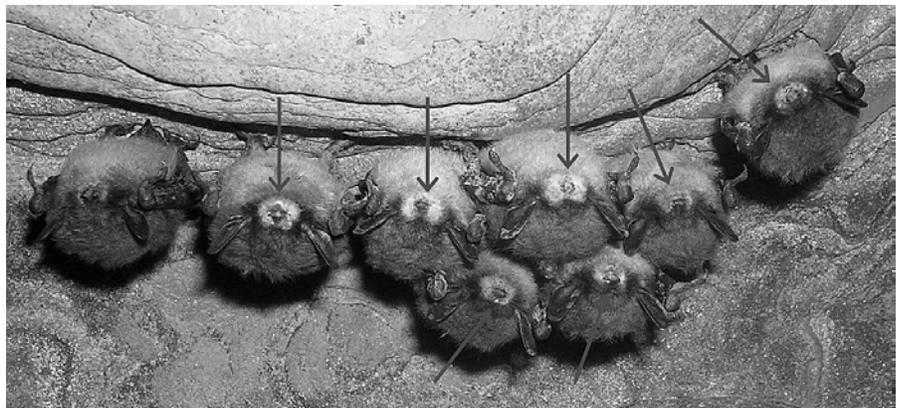
Besides some world-class caving, the site has quick access to thousands of miles of great hiking trails,

fishing, and boating opportunities at several TVA lakes, whitewater rapids on the Nolichucky, and calmer water on the North and South Fork Holston, the Clinch, and Powell Rivers.

While you're here, check out the giant Miocene fossil dig at Gray, Tennessee where East Tennessee State University and General Shale have just opened a must-see museum and laboratory. Visit Natural Tunnel State Park in the middle of Rye Cove, one of the most significant karst areas in the state of Virginia and take a tour through the 1,000-foot giant tunnel. We're going to have great music, great food, and activities that will make this a fun-filled weekend for all cavers.

We've extended our schedule to accommodate early arrivals on Thursday, June 5. Tim White volunteered to run the vertical contest and we took him up on the offer. A lot of vendors have said they're coming along for the ride. Thanks, guys, we'll be posting your logos. Wil Orndorff of the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation has agreed to lead a guided tour of Unthanks in Lee County (thanks, Will). ACC members will lead multiple guided tours of Perkins on Friday and Saturday.

Check the latest SERA/VAR information on the Web at www.caves.org/grotto/meg/.



The arrows point to unusual white noses in a cluster of bats in a New York cave last winter. The white is apparently caused by a fungus and may be related to an unusual number of bat deaths. (Photo by Nancy Heaslip)

2007 VAR Outstanding Service Awards

By Meredith Hall Johnson

This year's recipients were: J.C. and Judy Fisher, Alex Sproul, and Janet Tinkham. All have contributed mightily and long for the region. Thanks for all your hard work, folks!

Ken Hornung 1922-2007

Ken Hornung passed away in the wee hours of the first morning of Fall MAR-VAR. He had been an active member of the Battlefield Area Troglodyte Society and of the Potomac Speleological Club. He had been ill for about a year and we all knew the end was coming. But he still went to caver events and flirted like hell with the caver women! In fact, his son Mike said that during his last hospital stay, Ken would ask every nurse who came through the door whether she were married or had a boyfriend.

Ken went out kicking, just like he wanted. He did not actually die of the cancer that was killing him; he took a fall and broke a hip. For any of us, that would have hurt, but Ken was 85 and it just hastened his end. If you did not know Ken personally, you might recall seeing him at caver events with his crazy bat hat. Members of both of his beloved grottos miss him already.

I am writing an official and hopefully more-detailed obituary for the NSS News. I need your help and input. I know some of you out there have known Ken for decades. Please e-mail me your "Ken stories" so I can give a broader picture of the man and the caver. I

heard some cool stories at his 85th birthday bash last summer, but no one was taking notes. I did get a few responses to my VARlist request, but I really need more. Please help me honor our friend, Ken Hornung.

Thanks,
Meredith Hall Johnson

Donations Requested for Jim Hixson's Headstone

by George Dasher

Jim Hixson, a well known West Virginia Caver, died in July 2007 after a long illness. He is buried in Fort Spring, West Virginia.

Bruce Bannerman is collecting money for a headstone for Jim Hixson's grave. If you would like to donate, then please contact Bruce at banner@quixnet.net or 304-743-5455, or send the bucks to Bruce at PO Box 257, Culloden, WV 25510.

Virginia Region Landowner Recognition Award

by Janet Tinkham

As the New Year comes upon us please take a look at the list of past recipients of the VAR Landowner Award. What? You don't see your favorite landowner listed? The one who's been allowing visitation to his/her cave for many, many years? The one who is so welcoming to cavers, and looks forward to our visits?

Please add this item to your next grotto meeting agenda. It only takes a few minutes to go to the VAR Web site online nomination

form www.varegion.org/var/awards/landownerAwardForm.shtml. If your grotto has not submitted a nomination for this award, please make this a priority for the upcoming year. Do you know someone deserving of this award, someone who has been a longtime friend to cavers? Show your appreciation by presenting them with this plaque and certificate. A simple, but sincere way to say thank you.

Here are the Landowner Recognition Awards present to date:

- 1992 Buddy Penley
(Penleys, access to Newberry, VA)
- 1993 Rhoda Paxton
(Paxtons Cave, VA)
- 1993 Ruth Propst
(Sinnett/Thorn Mountain, WV)
- 1994 George and Lee Sively
(Organ Cave, WV)
- 1994 Robert E. Bright
(Simmons-Mingo Cave, WV)
- 1994 Gene Turner
(Buckeye Creek Cave, WV)
- 1995 Charles E. Simmons
(Porters Cave, VA)
- 1995 Mothes Family
(Friars Hole Cave System, WV)
- 1995 John Knutti
(Bowden Cave, WV)
- 1995 Pricilla Teter
(Mystic Cave, WV)
- 1996 Bill, Mildred and Judy Showalter
(Cave Hollow-Arbogast System, WV)
- 1996 Dr. and Mrs. J. T. Rogers
(Norman Cave, WV)
- 1997 Connie Houseman
(Dixie Caverns, VA)
- 1997 Mrs. Clark
(Clarks Cave, VA)
- 1997 Geraldine Freeman
(McClungs Cave, WV)
- 1997 Cecil Porterfield
(Pig Hole Cave, VA)
- 1997 Andy Graham
(Grahams Cave, VA)
- 1998 Kent Ford
(Witheros Cave, VA)
- 1998 Joe Lockridge

- (Breathing Cave, VA)
- 1998 Bob Brooks
(Crossroads Cave, VA)
- 1998 Ted Monger
(Jones Quarry Cave, WV)
- 1999 Barry Price
(Starnes Caverns, VA)
- 1999 Richard and Frances Latterell
(Molars Cave, WV)
- 2000 The Ferrell Family
(James Cave, et al, VA)
- 2001 The Combs family
(Dyers Cave, WV)
- 2001 Mike and Pat Dore
(Scott Hollow Cave, VA)
- 2001 Dave Mallow
(Mill Run Cave, WV)
- 2001 Robert Wyly
(Silers Cave, WV)
- 2002 Dr. Webb
(Giant Caverns, VA)
- 2002 Upper Valley Regional Park Authority
(Grand Caverns, VA)
- 2004 Charles Cassell
(Cassell Cave, WV)
- 2005 John Mooney and Helen Baker
(Higgenbotham Cave, WV)
- 2005 Mr. and Mrs. J. C. Links
(Tawneys Cave, VA)
- 2006 Steve Silverberg
(Lost World Caverns, WV)
- 2007 John and Christine Shiflet
(Glade Cave, VA)
- 2007 Mike Newsome
(Links Cave, VA)

Fall 2007 VAR Report

by Amos Mincin

The Fall 2007 MAR-VAR was held October 12-14 at the TRA (OTR) Site at Dailey, West Virginia. The weather was a bit cold but the spirit of those attending and of those hosting was warm and friendly.

Registration opened at noon on Friday. Some early arrivals went on caving trips. Later in the evening beer and soda were served, a bonfire was blazing, and music filled the air. Hans Nagl, Nate Hirneisen and Bill Schultz of Philly Grotto kicked off the evening with live music. Then Jess Wilson acted as DJ and played an assortment of music and presented a light and laser show on screen. At 10 PM the guided cave trip sign-up lists were put out. This worked out well and nearly everyone was able to sign up for the cave trip of their choice.

Saturday morning guided cave trips began to go out starting at 8:30 AM. There were trips to Friars Hole Cave, Cass Cave, Carpenter-Swago, Windy Run Cave, Sites Cave, Sinks of Gandy Cave, Alpena Cave, Sharps Cave, Elkhorn Mountain, and Bowden Cave.

The Saturday catered dinner was sliced pork loin and all the trimmings. A nice selection of deserts and a vegetarian dinner option were also available. Following dinner drawings were made for door prizes. Many items were donated by Howie's Harnesses, the West Virginia Cave Conservancy, and others.

That evening, a presentation was given by Doug Medville on his early day caving with Philadelphia Grotto, giving an interesting insight into the trips and activities in the late Sixties. This was followed by a presentation by the Japanese Exploration Team showing their facilities and caving activities in Japan, China and other places. Between 8 PM and 10 PM a live professional Blue Grass Band played some great sounding music, as beer, soda, and Philly Grotto 60th Anniversary cake were served. While many enjoyed the bonfire, others tested their limits in the Philly Grotto squeeze box. At least one male and one female caver made it through the squeeze box set at only 6-inches high. Many others set personal records at more typical heights.

Sunday morning Front Royal Grotto did an excellent job of serving the Pancake Breakfast. Following the VAR meeting, the event closed and the campground was cleaned up and many positive comments were received in regard to all the weekend activities.

Thank you to all those who attended and all those who helped with the planning, and running of this were successful field meet.

A total of 267 cavers registered. Twenty-five registered both MAR and VAR. VAR registrations totaled 198, and MAR registrations totaled 94.

Below is a summary of the income and expenses.

Income	
Preregistration	\$3,532
Rope + Bag Auction	\$120
6 Dinners Sold	\$60
50-50 Raffle	\$207
Registration at MAR-VAR	\$4,462
Total Income	\$8,381

Expenses	
Band	\$800
Porta Pots (\$85 x 8)	\$1,160
Dumpster	\$230
Beer + soda + ice	\$744
Name Tags	\$48
Cake	\$112
Trash bags	\$20
Food (300 x \$10)	\$3,000
Donation to TRA	\$401
Firewood (got for free)	\$0
Food For band	\$40
Guidebooks	\$446
Philly History Books/CD ROM	\$219
MAR Fee (94 x \$5)	\$470
VAR Fee (198 x \$3)	\$594
Cups, Plates, Forks	\$71
Propane	\$26
Total Expenses	\$8,381

Second Appalachian Karst Symposium May 7-10, 2008

by Bill Balfour

This is an update on the 2nd Appalachian Karst Symposium, to be held May 7–10, 2008, at the Gray Fossil Site at Gray, Tennessee which is near Johnson City, Tennessee. If you conduct research, exploration, or conservation activities in the Appalachian karst, or if you simply would like to learn more about it, then you should attend this conference.

Even if you are not doing karst research in the Appalachians now, odds are you will want to after attending this event. Numerous studies in virtually all branches of karst-related science have taken place since the initial 1991 Appalachian Karst Symposium, clarifying, challenging, and sometimes contradicting what we "knew" about the Appalachian karst at that time. So come get updated!

There will also be a field trip on May 10. Proceedings will be published in a peer-reviewed journal (a special issue of the *Journal of Cave and Karst Studies*). We are still settling on a (very reasonable) price and final agenda. Sponsors are still being accepted and there are very reasonable opportunities for commercial exhibitors. Sessions will include a wide range of science and conservation topics.

For more information, go to: www.etsu.edu/physics/appkarst/. So put this on your calendar, start working on your abstracts and papers, and stay tuned so you can register before the event fills up! Abstracts due 1/31/08 and manuscripts 3/31/08. Contact Wil Orndorff or Bill Balfour for additional information.

Potomac Speleological Club's 50th Anniversary Banquet

by Linda Devine

The Potomac Speleological Club (PSC) will be celebrating its 50th Anniversary at a banquet on Saturday, March 22, 2008. The location will be the Mi Rancho Restaurant in Silver Spring, Maryland. The restaurant is near the Silver Spring Metro station and inside the D.C. beltway, near the intersection of Georgia Avenue and Colesville Road.

Details will follow soon, but for now, we wanted you to save the date, as this will be the place to be next March 22nd! Information will be posted soon on the PSC Web site at <http://psc.cavingclub.org/>.

Photos for the 2008 NSS Members Manual Cover Wanted

by Meredith Hall Johnson
2008 *Members Manual* Editor

It's time to start putting together the 2008 issue of the *NSS Members Manual*. I am looking for a cover photograph and need your help. Please send me a small-sized photo via e-mail (to merecaver@yahoo.com) before the deadline, which is February 1, 2008. Photos can come from anyone who is an NSS member (please include your number with your e-mail). Photos that have been previously published in NSS publications are NOT eligible. Photos that have been entered in the Photo Salon at Convention are eligible.

Pretty much any caving photo is okay to enter. More than five entries must be sent to me on a CD

(these can and should be high resolution): Meredith Hall Johnson, 8061 Kittiwake CT, Springfield, VA 22153. Anything sent or post-marked after February 1 will not be considered. Please spread the word around to all your grotto members. The only stipulations are that cavers in the photo cannot be easily identified, nor any "bad" caving practices illustrated, such as someone touching a formation or not wearing a helmet.

Whoever gets their photo chosen gets to write a short biography for page 1 of the publication. How cool is that? Start looking through your cave photos now!

Last year's front cover photo was by a caver in Alaska who had not done much cave photography before, but took a very cool photo--remember the ice cave shot? So you never know whose photo will get picked, but it sure won't be yours if you don't submit it!

Thanks.

The Invertebrate Cave Fauna of West Virginia

by Bill Balfour

The long-awaited and much-improved West Virginia Speleological Survey Bulletin #16 is now available.

This bulletin, *The Invertebrate Cave Fauna of West Virginia, Second Edition*, is authored by Daniel W. Fong, David C. Culver, Horton H. Hobbs III, and Tanja Pipan. It is 167 pages long, and contains 11 color photos, 42 color maps, and six tables. It describes 88 species and three subspecies in 282 caves in 19 West Virginia counties.

To order this publication, send \$33 postpaid to WVASS, c/o Ray Garton, PO Box 200, Barrackville, WV 26559.

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Winter 2007-08 Regional News

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