



The Region Record

Vol. XXI No. 4 Fall 2008

Fall VAR 2008 September 19-21

by Susan Burr

Hopefully by now most of you have heard about the 2008 Fall VAR co-hosted by Blue Ridge Grotto and James River Grotto. It is being held in Covington, Virginia, on September 19–21, 2008. The campground and on-site registration opens at noon on Friday at the Covington Moose Lodge. Thursday night camping is not available at the Moose Lodge property, but there are several campgrounds and hotels nearby. The Moose Lodge property needs to be vacated by noon on Sunday. We have an awesome Web site with everything you need to know at www.varfall2008.com

We are offering a great selection of led and self-led cave trips, both horizontal and vertical. Most caves are located an hour or less away. On-site cave trip sign up begins at 10:00 PM Friday night. We have led cave trips on Friday, Saturday and Sunday. See our Web site for complete details. For those of you who do not wish to cave there are lots of other nearby activities.

We plan on having a free form cavers slide/video show, so if you have some caving slides or videos you want to show bring them. We may have this offered both Friday and Saturday night as well as having a DJ both nights. Charles Kahn will also have his “Guillotine Trough” squeeze box there. Satur-

day night after dinner, we will have our door prize drawings, and then guest speaker, Phil Lucas, will present his talk on “The Results and Benefits of Digging (For Caves).” Both wine and beer will be served following the speaker.

Realizing the high cost of travel these days, every effort was made to keep the registration fee as low as possible. We also offer with and without meal options. This way if you do not like the meal we have planned, you do not have to pay for it. There are many restaurants within 5 miles of the campsite.

Both Blue Ridge Grotto and James River Grotto hope to see you all there!

[The deadline for getting the preregistration discount is September 2. A registration form is in this issue. Ed].

Front Royal Cave Gating

By Janet Tinkham and Nuch Songsasen

Several years ago, Front Royal Grotto received a grant from the Cave Conservancy of the Virginias (CCV) to gate Front Royal Caverns located in Warren County, Virginia. The primary reason for gating the cave is for

the protection of the Madison Cave Isopod, which was discovered in the cave in the 1990s. The Madison Cave isopod, *Antrolana lira*, is a subterranean freshwater crustacean endemic in the Shenandoah Valley in Virginia. It was listed as a threatened species in November 1982. With the encroaching development in the area and already high visitation by locals, the decision was made to gate the cave to try to reduce the threat to the groundwater habitat.

Front Royal Caverns was initially gated in the summer of 2004, but the gating was not completed at that time. A number of events delayed completion: The property changed hands from private to county ownership, and while the new Skyline High School was being built, no one was allowed on site for safety reasons. Finally, the site was released and we were given permission to go back and complete the gating, which was done on June 28, 2008.

In addition to gating the cave, steps and a hand railing were added to allow safer access by high school students and teachers. The county is very proud of owning a cave and has ideas of developing an “outdoor classroom” to be used in conjunction with the environmental/conservation Standards of Learning (SOLs) during the school year. There are many above ground karst features on the property, including a spring and sinkholes. Taking the students into

(continued on page 3)

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

Sep. 2 **Deadline for getting the preregistration discount** for the Fall VAR meeting in Covington, Virginia.

Sep. 18-21 **Help construct a bat-friendly gate for Trout Cave.** Contact Dave West at d270@bellatlantic.net for more info. See more info in this issue.

Sep. 19-21 **Fall VAR meeting** near Covington, VA, hosted by the Blue Ridge and James River Grottos. More info in this issue.

Nov. 15 **WVCC Banquet** at the Brier Inn in Lewisburg, WV. More info at www.wvcc.net.

Dec. 15 **Deadline for submitting material for the**

Winter issue of the *Region Record*.

Mar. 12-14, 2009 **Third National Cave & Karst Conservancies Forum** in Lewisburg, WV. Contact John Perason at jpearson@rcc.com for more info.

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.

Front Royal Cave

(continued from page 1)

the cave will add to an extremely beneficial learning experience.

Although the heat was brutal, 26 people showed up to help with this project. Thank you to Craig Hindman for the gate design and technical guidance and to Kevin Mulligan for the supply of steel and the awesome work light that attracted not only every bug in a two-mile radius but the local sheriff's department. With hard work, the gate was completed by midnight Saturday. Special thanks to the rest of the crew: Carol Tiderman, Craig Hindman, Anya Crane, Jim McConkey, Jay Balakirsky, Scott Davis (Rhonda, Chandler and Autumn too!), Greg McCoy, Lauren Rexford, Gloria Updyke, Eric Berge, Earle Berge, Justin Bishop, Brian Bishop, John Walter, Janet and Rex Tinkham, Ellie Florance, Tom Tucker, Benny Korzendorfer, Jeff Jahn, Judy and JC Fisher, Nuch Songsasen, Bob Gray and Gary Allison.

Snowshoe Sewage Treatment Plant

The June 11th *Pocahontas Times* reported that the proposed regional sewage treatment plant site located upstream of Sharps Cave and across from Split Rock Spring has been found unsuitable for a such a plant, as air-filled voids were discovered when the site was tested. The site located at the confluence of Old Fields and Big Springs Forks "showed a potential for upwelling of subsurface water after heavy rains." Drilling at this site also found underground voids, and the area is subject to surface flooding. This leaves only the site located on lower Cupp Run near Snowshoe. Because of large boulders in the area, resistivity imaging was not as effective at this site, but boreholes found voids under the surface. Still, this site is the best choice, as it poses the lowest risk of the three possible sites.

[Reprinted from the August, 2008 issue of the West Virginia Caver]

Third National Cave and Karst Conservancies Forum

by John Pearson

The West Virginia Cave Conservancy is pleased to announce the third National Cave and Karst Conservancies Forum that will be held March 12th through 14th, 2009 in Lewisburg, West Virginia at the Brier Inn. This event will bring together cave and karst conservancies from across the country to discuss topics affecting our organizations.

We are pleased to announce that Bubble Cave, LLC, will be hosting the event. Bubble Cave has approached various caving organizations for Platinum and Gold sponsorship levels to help keep the cost of the event to a minimum. The current Platinum sponsors are the West Virginia Cave Conservancy and the Cave Conservancy of the Virginias. It is also anticipated that the National Cave and Karst Management Symposium Steering Committee will be a Platinum sponsor.

Our Gold sponsors include the Battlefield Area Troglodyte Society (BATS) of Fredericksburg, Virginia; Tri-State Grotto of Martinsburg, West Virginia; Blue Ridge Grotto of Roanoke, Virginia; the West Virginia Association for Cave Studies of Maxwilton, West Virginia; and Bubble Cave, LLC, of Berkeley Springs, West Virginia.

A call for papers to be presented is hereby announced. If you are interested in presenting, please contact John Pearson at jpearson@rcc.com or call him at 304-497-3939 to discuss. It is desired to have all abstracts submitted no later than March 1, 2009, for scheduling.



The welding crew working on the Front Royal Cave gate. The original gate was horizontal and difficult for bats to get through. The new steel structure provides an easier route for bats to get through. Photo by Nuch Songsasen.

Thursday, March 12th will be the kickoff for the event with our Howdy Party to be held in the early evening (time to be set closer to the event). Food and beverages will be provided.

Friday will be for status reports from attending conservancies and submitted papers. Tentative topics include emergency management along the lines of the White Nose Syndrome that affected the North-eastern Cave Conservancy this past winter; discussions on how do cavers, cave conservancies, and scientists work together cohesively; property tax issues; and possible deterrents to petty vandalism.

Saturday will be for a workshop on the response to White Nose Syndrome, coordination with state and federal agencies when these types of situations arise, and the process of reviewing management plans in such crises. If White Nose Syndrome looks to be an expanding issue by the time of the meeting, these issues will be critical for cave management and managers.

Now for the cost and registration information, the cost will be \$25 per attendee. This reduced rate is being offered because of our generous sponsors.

Mark Burke Received VAR Landowner Recognition Award

by Janet Tinkham

On August 3, 2008, members of the Shaver's Mountain Karst Survey presented Mark Burke with the VAR Landowner Recognition Award. Mark is owner of the



Mark Burke (on the right) receiving the VAR Landowner Recognition Award. Mark is owner of the Alpine Lodge Alpine Shores Campground and is owner of Alpena Cave. Pictured (left to right) are Rocky Parsons, Susan Posey, Jason Cain, Ralph Hubbard, Jeff Stutler, Doug McCarty and Mark Burke. Photo by Rocky Parsons.

Alpine Lodge, Alpine Shores Campground, and Alpena Cave in Randolph County, West Virginia and has always allowed unrestricted caver access.

He hosted the Gangsta Mappers for the Bowden Cave resurvey at the Alpine Lodge and Restaurant which he manages. He is very caver friendly, often allowing discount rates for cavers staying at the Alpine Lodge. He shares information on local caves and provides a link to local cave/landowners.

Trout Cave Gate Project— An Update

by Dave West

Most VAR cavers are aware that a gate will be installed on Trout Cave (Pendleton County, West Virginia) to reduce human impact on the cave's small, but growing, colony of endangered Indiana bats. The gate will be installed on September 18–21 and caver help is needed.

I've received a number of questions about the project. that I'll try to answer below.

Where will the gate(s) be located and why?

The primary gate will be at the main entrance and what amounts

to a fence will be put in place at the second entrance. Both will be placed as close to the drip line as reasonably possible to prevent the establishment of campsites.

What will folks be doing each day?

Thursday and Friday will consist of digging the necessary small trench for the sill plate, installing said sill plate, and getting a start on the various columns. Friday and Saturday will be the days for pulling the steel up the hill and welding it all in place. On Sunday, we will also try to mitigate and damage to the steep hillside.

How will the steel and gear get up the hill?

The initial gear will need to be carried up, until a winch is in place to haul the balance of the heavy stuff. As much of a high line as can be put in place will guide the steel up the hill. A power operated winch will do the hauling. It will probably take multiple "pulls" with the winch. People will be stationed at a few places up the hill to help guide the material being hauled up.

What skills are needed?

A few additional people with welding and/or cutting skills may be useful. The ability to assist in carrying a 10-foot long piece of steel that weighs about a hundred pounds across the road will be useful.

What hours will folks be working?

Would you believe 9-5? Not determined precisely as yet.

Where will volunteers stay?

We have rented two cabins at Thorn Springs Park, about 1.5 miles from the cave. The cabins have bunk beds with bare mattresses on marginal springs and no bedding. Workers should bring sheets and/or a sleeping bag.

Will food be provided and for what meals?

Three meals a day will be provided. If an individual has special needs, they need to let us know ahead of time.

When are the workers really needed (which days)?

Saturday and Sunday is when the most steel will be moved.

When will the work be finished?

If all goes according to plan, by Sunday afternoon.

If we must all sign a waiver, can we see it ahead of time?

The text of the waiver has not been finalized yet. As soon as it is it will be posted on the Web and sent to various caving e-mail lists.

It would be great if the information was on a Web site so folks can look at it for updates.

An excellent idea. We have established a page on the D.C. Grotto's Web site at www.caves.org/grotto/dcg/gate.

If you are planning to help with this project, or have any questions, please e-mail me, Dave West, at d270@bellatlantic.net. We really need firm commitments from folks to help with our planning. Thanks.

Stay Warm at OTR!

by Meredith Hall Weberg

The Battlefield Area Troglodyte Society (BATS Grotto) is selling bundles of wood again at this year's OTR.

Bundles will consist of 5 or 6 logs and sell for \$5 each. Any profits will be divided between the OTR Sauna Committee and the West Virginia Cave Conservancy. Last

year we made a whopping \$18 profit, so each group got the huge sum of \$9! Help BATS make a bit more money for the Sauna Committee (you know you benefit!) and WVCC (you benefit here too).

Come by the BATS Camp and buy a bundle or three! Keep your grotto campsite warm this year!!

Minutes of the Spring VAR Region Meet June 8, 2008 Bristol, Tennessee

The meeting was called to order at 9:03 a.m.

Reports

Secretary: Carol Tideman

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

Treasurer: John Fox

A financial report was presented. A motion was made by Tri-State to accept the financial report. BATS seconded, Motion passed.

Vice Chair: Judy Fisher

Nothing to report.

Chairman: Craig Hindman

(The agenda was suspended to allow discussion of item VIII B (the Fall VAR meeting).

Due to the short time frame between the Spring and Fall meeting an executive decision was made to accept Blue Ridge Grotto's bid to host the Fall VAR meeting. The Fall VAR will be held from September 19-21 at the Covington

Moose Lodge. Registration forms are available online.

Conservation Co-Chair: Meredith Hall Johnson

- The Easter Cleanup was held at Grand Caverns. News crews were on site and interviewed Andy and Meredith.
- Janet Tinkham reported on the planned gate modification/repair at Front Royal Caverns. Also a cave cleanup is planned.
- Dave West reported on the planned gating of Trout Cave on September 17–21. The Indiana bat population has increased. The cave will be open during the summer. DNR, BCI and Fish and Wildlife are funding the project at a cost of approx. \$35,000. It is approximately 1½ hours from the VAR meeting. Contact Dave West for more information. The welder is being paid. The Preserve Committee will control access.

Goodwin’s Cave Management: Al Stewart

The cave was gated around 20 years ago. The bats have not come back. The plan is to keep the cave open year round.

VAR Outstanding Service Award: Meredith Hall Johnson
Send in nominations before OTR. Provide a paragraph with the reason behind the nomination.

Landowner Recognition Awards: Janet Tinkham
Two nominations made by Charlottesville Grotto and the Shavers Mountain Project. These were approved.

Landowner Legal Support Committee: Bob Hoke
No report.

Region Record - Bob Hoke
No report.

All Caves In Virginia Are Protected by State Law

(Code of Virginia Sections 10.1-1000 to 1008)
Caves are unique natural environments.
Help preserve all caves for future generations to enjoy.

In Virginia Caves It is Illegal to:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write or mark upon cave walls or surfaces • Break, deface, or remove any natural material or mineral formation • Litter or dump spent carbide or other waste materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excavate, damage, destroy or remove any historic or prehistoric cultural relics, bones, or artifacts • Disturb, harm, or remove any bats or other naturally occurring organisms
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For Further Information Contact:
Virginia Cave Board, Department of Conservation & Recreation
203 Governor St., Richmond, VA 23219 (804) 786-7951

Any violation of the provisions of the Cave Protection Act is punishable as a Class 1 or Class 3 misdemeanor.
Tampering, defacing or removal of this sign is a Class 1 misdemeanor.

The Virginia Cave Board has ordered 500 of the above signs to be placed in the state's significant caves. The 24" x 18" plastic signs will be available by the Fall VAR meeting.

VAR List Server - Walt Pirie
No report.

VAR Web Site: Jim McConkey
No report.

Cave Bucks: JC Fisher
Send in the money you collect.

VSS:
The next *Virginia Cellars* issue is coming soon.

WVASS: George Dasher
No report.

WVCC: Meredith Hall Johnson
The next meeting will be held on July 12 at Dave Cowan's. *The Open Cave* is coming soon; send material.

Virginia Karst Program: Joey Fagan
Staying busy. A list of links was handed out. Dye tracing materials are available. Will be attending the Appalachian Karst Symposium.

SCCI: Walt Pirie

No report.

Grand Caverns/Cave Hill: Carol Tideman
The Fountain Cave dig continues. A breakthrough was made in Dante's. The state still has plans to make into a state park.

Virginia Cave Board: Dave Socky
The next meeting will be held next weekend at Crystal Caverns. A grant request has been made to make more cave protection signs and labels.

Wilderness Proposal: Bob Handley
No report.

Virginia Karst Trail: Joey Fagan
Andy Reeder is working on a report to the Virginia Cave Board. Janet Tinkham said that Warren County has property near the river and may add it to the Trail.

CCV: Joey Fagan
Ongoing project in the stewardship of the Powell Mountain Karst Pre-

serve. Many projects are in the early stages.

White Nose Syndrome: The Northeast Cave Conservancy has opened its caves and the Guilday committee has opened the caves. Fish and Wildlife is working on a memo regarding other caves; some caves may remain closed (on Federal lands). Dave Cowan said that The Portal is reopened.

Host Report: Mountain Empire
No report.

Old Business

Spring 2009: Ti State still working on a location.

Spring 2010: Bubble Cave, will be held at the Fairlea Fairground.

New Business

Fall 2009: BATS might be willing to host

Spring Survey: Charlie Maus Proposes a program to monitor significant springs and create a database. Would require monthly or quarterly monitoring at the sites, including measuring flow, temperature, turbidity, pH. etc. A joint VAR-VSS project is proposed. Training would be set up. Would start with 10 to 12 springs. A data compiler will be needed. The ultimate goal would be to develop a base line for abating future pollution. Virginia Highlands moved to approve this project; Bubble Cave seconded. Motion passed. The Chair moved this project to the Conservation Committee.

Dingo Grotto requested membership in the VAR. Bubble Cave moved to accept; BATS seconded. Motion passed.

The Virginia Cave Board requested membership in the VAR. Blue

Ridge moved to accept; BATS seconded. Motion passed.

Grant Requests

The Virginia Cave Board requested funds for cave signs and labels to update the existing signs; they also will need volunteers to install them. A request was made for \$500. Virginia Highlands moved to grant \$500; Bubble seconded. Motion passed.

Announcements

Karst fact sheets were distributed.

2009 Registration Committee said registration forms were ready to go, the final price has not been set yet but it should be online by the end of July.

Mary Sue Socky - she and Bob Hoke have updated the VAR Limited Access Cave List.

Multiple grottoes will be working on the Haunted Cave at Dixie Caverns to raise funds for conservation.

Craig Hindman: Thanks to SERA for inviting us to a joint event.

Adjournment

Virginia Highlands moved to adjourn; BATS seconded.

Meeting Adjourned 10:12.

Respectfully submitted:
Carol Tideman

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.

VAR Limited Access Cave List

Check the access status of VAR caves on-line at

www.VAR-caves.us

Fall 2008 VAR MEETING AGENDA

Sunday, September 21, 2008 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: Andy Reeder / Meredith Hall Weberg
 - 1. Report on activities
 - 2. Other
 - B. GOODWINS CAVE MANAGEMENT: Blue Ridge Grotto
 - C. VAR OUTSTANDING SERVICE AWARD: Meredith Hall Weberg
 - 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. VIRGINIA KARST PROGRAM: Joey Fagan
 - N. SCCI: Walt Pirie
 - O. GRAND CAVERNS/CAVE HILL: Jim McConkey
 - P. VIRGINIA CAVE BOARD
 - Q. WILDERNESS PROPOSAL
 - R. VIRGINIA KARST TRAIL: Andy Reeder
 - S. CCV
 - T. SPRING SURVEY PROJECT: Charlie Maus
 - U. OTHER _____
- VII. HOST GROTTO REPORT: Blue Ridge & James River Grottos
- VIII. OLD BUSINESS
 - A. HOST GROTTO FOR THE SPRING 2009 MEETING: Tri-State
 - B. HOST GROTTO FOR THE FALL 2009 MEETING: BATS(?)
 - C. HOST GROTTO FOR THE SPRING 2010 MEETING: Bubble Cave
 - D. OTHER _____
- IX. NEW BUSINESS
 - A. HOST GROTTO FOR THE FALL 2010 MEETING
 - B. HOST GROTTO FOR SPRING 2011 MEETING
 - C. OTHER _____
- X. GRANT REQUESTS: SUBMITTED TO CHAIR
- XI. ELECTIONS
- XII. ANNOUNCEMENTS
- XIII. ADJOURNMENT

FALL VAR 2008 REGISTRATION FORM

SEPTEMBER 19-21, 2008
COVINGTON MOOSE LODGE FIELD
COVINGTON, VA

HOSTED BY BLUE RIDGE GROTTO and JAMES RIVER GROTTO

ATTENTION: THE VAR HAS REQUESTED THAT ALL CAVE GEAR BE WASHED PRIOR TO
ATTENDING THIS VAR DUE TO THE WHITE-NOSED SYNDROME IN BATS

Use pre-registration prices **only** if your form is **postmarked on or before September 2, 2008**. Please print legibly.

Name _____

Others you are paying for _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone Number _____ Email Address _____

Grotto/Organization _____

VAR FEES:

Pre-registration fees through September 2, 2008 (we will use the postmark). Pre-registration will allow for cave trip sign up.

Adult w/meal (16+ years): **\$27.00** X _____ = \$ _____

Adult without meal: **\$17.00** X _____ = \$ _____

Children w/meal (5 – 15 years): **\$23.00** X _____ = \$ _____

Children without meal: **\$13.00** X _____ = \$ _____

Babies (0 – 4 years): **Free**

Total amount enclosed: \$ _____

Cost after September 2, 2008, add \$3.00 per person.

Please send completed & signed form along with a check made payable to Blue Ridge Grotto to:

Fall VAR 2008
c/o Susan Burr
4544 Cordell Dr. SW
Roanoke, VA 24018

Led cave trip sign up (List 3 in order of preference): We will attempt to accommodate your first choice.

This is for cavers who pre-register only.

1. _____

2. _____ 3. _____

I understand that caving and event participation involves hazards and risks that carry the potential for serious or fatal injury. I release all claims against the Blue Ridge Grotto, James River Grotto, the event organizers, staff and the Covington Moose Lodge, 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 2008 Regional News

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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.

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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 Weberg, 8061 Kittiwake Ct., Springfield VA 22153