



# The Region Record

Vol. XXII No. 4

Fall 2009

## Fall VAR Update

September 25–27, 2009

Battle of Cedar Creek Campground  
Route 11  
Middletown, Virginia

### Of Particular Note:

- No fires. No dogs. RVs okay, but will take up a lot of room (check with the campground to see if there are extra fees). Camping will be tight, depending on how many show up. We might be sharing tent stakes—it will seem like VARs in the old days.
- We will be recycling. Be sure to put your cans in the VAR Recycling bins. Please pay attention and don't throw trash in them.

### Friday Schedule

**Afternoon Delights:** If you arrive at a decent hour, plan to paddle or swim in Cedar Creek. Hike in the woods. See old friends and make new ones. Tour the Route 11 Potato Chip Factory in nearby Mount Jackson (open until 5).

**Dinner:** We highly recommend eating dinner at the local Italian restaurant in Middletown, Italian Touch. We love the food—maybe we'll see you there! While not part of the VAR, you will likely find cavers there.

**Party:** We're planning to have a "caver band" to play some rock-and-roll and bluegrass in the evening. We'll have beer and soft drinks to get the conversations going.

Might have a slide show in the background. (If you want to play in the caver band, please contact Jaime Reep of DINGO.)

Sarah Richards of BATS will be leading a wine-tasting; bring a bottle of your favorite not-too-expensive wine as we will be passing around bottles (must be 21+)!

Charles Kahn will have his Guillotine Trough for our amusement, watching our fellow cavers squeeze through the triangle and bruise themselves all up.

### Saturday Activities

**Conservation Project:** We will be working on the Skyline Caverns Karst Trail—it's always good to give back to caves! Janet Tinkham and Ellie Florance of BATS and Front Royal Grottos are heading up this project. Let them know that you want to help.

**Via Ferrata Trip:** Mike Frazier (limit of 12) (see Note 1)

**New Market Battlefield:** Susi Weston of BATS (see Note 2)

**Panther Cove Geology Hike:** Bob Denton (see Note 3)

**Geocaching:** Jerry Bowen (see Note 4)

**Show Cave Tours:** On your own or with a group. Nearby Crystal Caverns has already offered half-price tour tickets (\$5 rather than \$10)! Skyline Caverns is offering

tickets at \$12 for adults and \$6 for kids ages 7-13 (normally \$16 and \$8). Shenandoah Caverns is offering tickets at \$14 for the combo ticket (down from \$22!). Grand Caverns will offer tickets at \$11 for adults and \$9 for kids ages 6-12 (normally \$18 and \$11).

**Civil War Battlefield Tours:** Cedar Creek (on your own)

**Wineries/Vineyards Tours:** On your own or with a group

**Saturday Dinner:** Pulled Chicken Barbecue With Seeded Buns; Vegetable Lasagna; Scalloped Potatoes; Tossed Green Salad With Assorted Dressings; Rolls and Butter; Iced Tea and Lemonade; Dessert.

**NOTE:** If you have any aversions or allergies to the foods listed above, bring your own! We tried our best to come up with a varied menu and believe we have succeeded.

### After-Dinner Entertainment:

- A film or two from the International Congress of Speleology/NSS Convention, most likely *L'Abisso* (75 minutes, Italian with subtitles).
- *Battle for the Bats*, a film about White-nose Syndrome
- Door prizes
- More beer and soft drinks
- Music by DJ John Fox—dance the night away

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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

Sept. 3-7 **Old Timers Reunion** in Dailey, W. Va.  
 You must be a TRA member or accompanied guest to attend.

Sept. 4 **Pink Helectite Cave Entrance Sinkhole Clean Up** near Durbin, W. Va. See [www.otr.org/otrnews/news\\_item.asp?NewsID=563](http://www.otr.org/otrnews/news_item.asp?NewsID=563).

Sept. 8 **Deadline** for getting the preregistration discount for the Fall VAR.

Sept. 25-27 **Fall VAR Meeting** at Battle of Cedar Creek Campground in Middletown, Virginia. See article in this issue.

Nov. 14 **WVCC annual banquet** in Lewisburg, West Virginia. See [www.wvcc.net](http://www.wvcc.net) for more information.

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

May 21-23, 2010 **Spring VAR meeting** in Fairlea, West Virginia. (near Lewisburg). More information later.

Aug. 2-6, 2010 **NSS Convention** in Essex Junction, Vermont.

### 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.

## Fall VAR

(continued from page 1)

### Sunday

**Pancake Breakfast:** Thanks to Front Royal Grotto!

### VAR Business Meeting

Pack up, clean up camp, and go home

**Note 1: Via Ferrata Details:** “I have made all the arrangements with Nelson Rocks Preserve so we can offer the Via Ferrata climb at Fall VAR.

Here's the scoop. I have reserved the 11:00 AM spot on Saturday, September 26. The trip will be limited to 12. All participants must be 18 or older unless one of the other paid participants is their parent or legal guardian. The cost is \$50 per person, but if we have 10 or more and everyone has their own harness, the cost is \$40 per person.

Helmets are recommended but not required. I have at least a dozen harnesses of various sizes that I will be happy to loan.

It is roughly a 2 1/2 hour drive each way, so we would need to leave the VAR site no later than 8 AM (a little earlier would be better) in order to make our appointment time, get our safety briefing, do the climb up and hike back down the mountain, and be back in time for dinner. I know it's a long drive, but it was about the same at Spring VAR and nobody seemed to mind. The experience is worth the drive.

Direct all interested parties or questions to me. I'll handle the sign-up for this one. I can be reached by e-mail at [director37429@aol.com](mailto:director37429@aol.com), or by cell, (434) 609-3423.”

—Mike Frazier  
James River Grotto/Blue Ridge Grotto

**Note 2: New Market Battlefield Tour:** Guided “Captain’s” tour of nearby New Market Battlefield includes a visit to the Hall of Valor Civil War Museum, viewing of the Emmy Award-winning film, “Field of Lost Shoes,” and a guided walk of the Battlefield. Cost is \$7 per person. Let me know if you want to go on this tour. ([SusiWeston@gmail.com](mailto:SusiWeston@gmail.com))

—Susi Weston  
BATS Grotto

**Note 3: Panthers Cove Details:** “Panthers Cove is on the property of the Cedar Creek Battlefield Foundation, about 1.5 miles upstream from the Route 11 Bridge over Cedar Creek. It's a pleasant walk from the New York monument on Route 11 on the Battlefield.

There is some spectacular karst (big sinkholes, etc.) along the trail to the streamside cave.

I supervised a major clean-up at the Cove by BSA Troop 2 a couple of years ago. The cave and its entrance had been badly vandalized with spray paint. We managed to get the worst cleaned up, and we also mounted a Virginia Cave Law sign just inside the entrance, but at a location that folks getting out of canoes and such can see it readily.

The cove is flooded with natural light all day, so it is not frequented by bats. There are some crawly side passages, but I've never seen bats in there either.

The site has a unique natural history; there is evidence of use by humans from the Early Archaic Period (7,000 to 8,000 years BP) to the Late Woodland Period.

I'd be more than happy to conduct a hike/field trip, if you'd like, regarding the Cove's history, geological setting, and the recent conservation efforts.”

—Bob Denton, Jr. ([rkdenton@comcast.net](mailto:rkdenton@comcast.net))

**Note 4: Geocaching Details:** “A short lecture/informal class of perhaps 15-20 minutes. More if there are newcomers to the sport. Then there will probably be a few targets to find right on the campground. Something I set up for the event. Then with a little practice under their belts, we can cut them loose to drive off to find things on their own, or they can follow me around as we find them.

I don't remember anyone else geocaching at Spring VAR, except me. Jim had printed out geocache locations to hand out, but he told me no one took any. Perhaps, talked up a little, it will draw more interest. Most important for people to have is a hand-held GPS when they arrive. (Some driving GPS units may not do the job.)

When people hone their skills with a GPS finding geocaches, it makes it easier to find caves. That is a plus that comes with the sport....

If you are a veteran to geocaching, we may ask you to help lead some others in afternoon field trips. Once geocaches are found, logging your find on [geocaching.com](http://geocaching.com) helps you to keep track of the ones you have found, and others waiting to be found. There are also games within the game, so bring your questions and have some fun!”

—Jerry Bowen (bookmaker-[jb@myactv.net](mailto:jb@myactv.net))  
Tri-State Grotto

## Cave Hill Update

by Jim McConkey

As previously reported on the VARlist, the biggest news on Cave Hill is that it looks like Upper Valley Regional Park Authority, which has run the caves for many years, will cease to exist shortly and the

town of Grottoes will take over management of the caves. The deal has not received final approval yet, but approval is widely expected in the next month or two. .

The VAR's Grand Caverns Survey Project, running for nearly six years now, shows no signs of slowing down. Exploration continues in Grand. A new extension in an upper level of Dante's Inferno was mapped for several hundred feet and we have a number of leads and digs to follow up on. The closer we have looked at Grand, the more degradation due to tourists we have found. One of the biggest problems is mud that was intentionally stuck on formations by visitors, and Carol Tideman has been leading efforts to slowly and carefully remove the mud. The wishing pools have been emptied (several times) of the coins tourists have thrown in over the years. Once cleaned, the coins were redeemed and have netted several hundred dollars put towards conservation projects around the Park.

Up the hill in Fountain Cave, Bill Biggers and his stalwart crew of diggers continue trying to extend the cave through a long passage that was artificially filled. Jim McConkey has been doing historical research on the cave and he and his crew of detectives has been attempting to recreate the original tour from when the cave was opened in 1835 (see accompanying article). As part of continuing exploration of the hill, a group of cave biologists is expected this fall to help update the biological inventory of the hill.

The project generally meets the first full weekend of the month, with free camping Friday and Saturday nights. Contact Carol Tideman ([ctider@us.ibm.com](mailto:ctider@us.ibm.com)) if you can attend.

## Historical Mysteries on Cave Hill

by Jim McConkey

We have done so much research on the caves and the surrounding area as part of the VAR's Grand Caverns/Cave Hill Survey Project that we plan to eventually publish a book about the history of Cave Hill. As part of that effort I have been extending my project weekends to include trips to the Special Collection Library at the University of Virginia to do more extensive historical research. That research has led to a number of surprises, solved some mysteries, and added others.

### Fountain Cave

Dozens of visitors to Weyer's Cave (as Grand Caverns was originally called) wrote extensively about their experiences, and we have a rich record of the cave that allows us to accurately trace the history and development of the cave. In stark contrast, almost nothing was ever written about Fountain Cave, which was discovered 31 years after Weyer's Cave. Imagine my excitement when I discovered a musty copy, apparently one of only two in existence, of a 16-page booklet written in 1835, the year the cave was discovered. Samuel Noah's *A Description of Weast's Cave* had provided an invaluable complete tour of the cave from the year of its discovery. The cave at that time was named after the landowner, but was quickly renamed Fountains Cave, after formations that looked like fountains. After transcribing Noah's description, I quickly set out to follow the tour with the aid of several fellow detectives. We tried and tried for several months to make any sense of the tour. Even after allowing for artistic license and crude estimation, we remained just as clueless.

Noah's tour begins by descending a slope to the Lamp Room, where lights are doled out, and then down another slope to the Ante-Chamber, where the cave branches out. To the left of the Ante-Chamber is a long hallway that leads to a series of small, connected pools. There is a small passage to the left of the current entrance, but it has no sign of water and bears no resemblance to Noah's description. Only after a chance visit to one of the side passages in the very back of the cave did I realize that I was standing in this pool passage that was supposed to be at the *front* of the cave! Abandoning all previous assumptions, I tried following the tour from the very back of the cave, and lo and behold, I was able to find landmark after landmark described by Noah. How could this be possible? Having been in charge of the surface survey of Cave Hill, I had a good idea.

Back in the 1980s, Phil Lucas was surveying near the back of Fountain Cave and felt air movement. From the smell and the proximity of the air to the edge of the hill, Phil felt the air had to be coming in from outside and set out to find its source. Armed with his survey from the entrance to the place he felt air, and a newfangled Texas Instruments TI-59 calculator, he and a few recruits surveyed from the entrance along the *outside* of the hill, with the calculator making real-time estimations of the direction and distance to the place with air movement. After an arduous afternoon on the steep hillside, his crew was about to mutiny, but decided to give him one more shot when the calculator said the source of the air was within the length of their tape. The calculator brought them right to the entrance of a small cave, now known as TI-59, after Phil's trusty calculator. The cave itself is one room, roughly 40 feet long, 30 feet wide, and 15 feet high, with an interesting pit at the back. The pit, roughly 10 feet across, is currently about 6 feet

deep and seems to be artificially filled with rocks. Using Compass to compare the surface survey data with Phil's Fountain Cave data, I was not surprised to find that TI-59 Cave lies only 20 feet directly over the top of the large dirt pile at the back of Fountain Cave.

So from this one musty little booklet, I can now make the brash conclusion that what we now know as TI-59 Cave was the original entrance to Fountain Cave, and was, in fact, what Noah called the Lamp Room. The pit at the back of this Lamp Room led down to what is now the top of the large dirt pile at the very back of Fountain Cave, and the large, flat platform at the bottom of the dirt pile is the Ante-Chamber. The water pools passage is still there, right where Noah described it, and many of his other landmarks are still identifiable even today. Once the foliage dies off the trees and the weather turns nicer, we plan to revisit TI-59 Cave and investigate the pit again. This new theory still leaves the question of when the current entrance was dug. With the scarcity of records, that question will be hard to answer. We do know the current entrance was probably in place by around 1870, but the exact date still eludes us.

### The Tunnel

Craig Hindman first turned up an intriguing report that The Grottoes Company attempted to connect Weyer's Cave and Fountain Cave around 1890, a distance of about 700 feet. Could this "connection," widely assumed to be a tunnel, still exist? Where is it? Was it buried on purpose, and if so, why? As in so much historic research, I returned to the source, found at the University of Virginia. The April 14, 1890, issue of the *Rockingham Register* turned up a crucial clue:

"The Grottoes Cave Co, are at work making a connection between Weyer's Cave and The

Cave of the Fountains – a distance of 700 feet. We understand they have already gone a hundred or more feet, and have found another chamber which has not yet been explored."

This one extra sentence about encountering natural passage got me thinking. From our cave and surface survey data, I knew there is only one place the two caves are close to 700 feet apart (ignoring the VAR's new extension of Grand Caverns, which was not known at the time), that is, from the current entrance of Fountain Cave to the Oyster Shell/Rainbow Thermometer rooms in Grand. There is roughly a hundred feet of passage behind the rainbow thermometer in Grand, heading directly along the fault towards the entrance of Fountain Cave, and I thought I remembered it was blasted. Returning to this site, we verified that two short blast zones lead into natural passage. Also unusual for Grand was the complete lack of signatures in this section. I went back and read dozens of historical trip reports of Weyer's Cave, and up until The Grottoes Company days, every report that mentioned the end of the cave described it as what is now the room with the rainbow thermometer. Not one mentioned this extension. The blast zones show drill holes and other characteristic signs of activity by The Grottoes Company, so this section dates to about the right time. We may never know if the mystery of "the tunnel" has been solved, but if I am right, we are lucky they gave up their efforts so easily. If they had dug a mere 23 feet beyond the end of their extension, they would have broken into the new section discovered by the VAR and the entire history of the cave would have been irrevocably altered.

### A New Discovery

The *Rockingham Register* also contained some other gems about

Cave Hill. An article entitled "New Cave" in the March 25, 1892, issue grabbed my attention:

"The authorities have been prospecting for some time for new caves in the famous cave hill. They succeeded in finding one some days since that promises to add new splendors to those already so well known. Success to you, gentlemen!"

Some time back I reported on my "discovery" of Corkscrew Cave in the *Region Record*. A sinkhole filled with rocks piqued my attention and, with the permission of the landowner, we dug and blasted into a cave that was eventually pushed to about 150 feet. The cave spirals down to what should be ceiling level of the cave, but beyond the presumed fault that stops the southerly development of Grand Caverns. If this cave could be pushed, we could break into miles of new cave. Cave Hill doesn't give up her secrets that easily, though, and the cave "ended" in a 4-inch crack, much to our disappointment. Intoxicated by the thrill of exploring a new cave, no one noticed anything unusual on the first few trips into the cave. On my third trip in, I started noticing one inch drill holes characteristic of the blasting done by The Grottoes Company, and noticed that the "breakdown" on the lower level of the cave was apparently man-made. Without a more extensive description, there is no way to know for sure if this is the new cave reported by the *Rockingham Register*, but it is clearly the most likely suspect.

### Chalybeate Well

I have lately turned my attention to the short-lived *Shendun News*, Shendun being the former name of the town of Grottoes. Published by The Grottoes Company for only about three years, this weekly newspaper was somewhat less than objective and always reported on the growth of Shendun in the most

glowing terms. There is apparently nothing new about marketing “spin!” The front page of the June 25, 1891 issue featured a woodcut titled “On the Road to The Grottoes” depicting two mules pulling a street car on their way to the caves. The accompanying article provided an interesting tidbit.

“Just beyond this point the car halts at the Chalybeate Well, one of natures’ strong tonics that the Company has walled and curbed for the refreshing of the thirsty rider.”

The July 9<sup>th</sup> issue from the same year continued,

“The platform that has been built at Chalybeate Well, at the foot of Grottoes Ridge, is a pleasant space to pass an hour. Everything combines to render it a pleasant spot – comfortable seats, perfect shade, the soothing murmurs of the swift-running waters of the South river of the Shenandoah, and the mountains in the distance with their crests frequently topped with clouds, all play an important part in making this charming spot one which might well be termed “The Idler’s Paradise.”

So just what was this interesting “Chalybeate Well?” Chalybeate refers to high iron content of the water, so this “well” would be a natural source of mineral water. From the drawing on cover of the *Shendun News*, it was right next to the South River on the flat part of road, just north of Madison’s Cave. This would locate the “well” very close to the entrance of Steger’s Fissure, the only known underwater cave on the hill. A karst window in the vertical bedding of the limestone that faces the road provides access to a small room. The water comes within 8–10 feet of this window. [See *Region Record* volume XX number 1 (Winter 2006–07) for a description of the VAR’s cave diving expedition and

*Region Record* volume XIX number 1 (Winter 2005–06) for an earlier map of the cave.] John Holsinger, while investigating the Madison Cave Isopod back in the 1980s, wondered why this cave, which is obvious from the road, had escaped public notice for all these years. Well, it appears it had been noticed, but people of the time had no idea what they were looking at!

## Cassell Cave WVASS Monograph

by George Dasher

The Cassell Cave Survey Project, West Virginia Speleological Survey Monograph #3, was published this spring by Bob Zimmerman. The monograph is 60 pages long, and contains two color photographs (on the cover), 15 black-and-white photographs, and assorted other line plots and sketches. The monograph also contains an article on the capture of surface streams on Back Allegheny Mountain and a description of the map design. And, of course, it contains 23 quad maps of Cassell Cave, Grimes Cave, and Willis Cassell Cave.

These maps are incredible, and are testimonies to the Gangsta Mappers’ consistent, high-quality sketching styles, Bob’s ability to process the data for an extensive and complex three-dimension maze cave (which, at 8.62 miles, is the second-longest cave in Pocahontas County), and Bob’s excellent cartographic skills. Each quad map contains a bar scale and true north arrow, an index map, cartographic notes, and a plan view of a very complicated cave. There are also numerous cross-sections, ceiling heights, and cave elevation symbols, as well as many, many offset views to show the very confusing nature of the cave.

In short, this monograph is very much worth owning, both for its description of the cave and as a fine example of cave cartography. It was awarded a green ribbon, Honorable Mention in the Cartographic Salon at the 2009 International Congress in Texas.

The monograph can be purchased from WVASS, c/o Ray Garton, PO Box 200, Barrackville, WV 26559, garton@mammoth-geo.com. The cost is \$10, plus \$2 postage.

The monograph will also be on sale in the West Virginia Cave Conservancy booth at OTR. The price is the same, but there is no shipping charge.

## WVCC Member Appreciation Party at OTR

by Meredith Hall Weberg

Friday evening of OTR, the West Virginia Cave Conservancy invites current and future members to a wine and cheese party. Starting at 6 p.m. and lasting until the wine and cheese are gone, the party will be held at the WVCC Booth on Vendor Row.

Come see what the WVCC has been doing this past year. Come meet the Directors. Come renew your membership or join this great group in saving caves.

## Firewood 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. Help BATS make a bit of 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!!

## OTR Meetings

by George Dasher

There will be two meetings during OTR, on Saturday, September 5th. Both meetings are open meetings, which means that anyone can attend. The first is the annual meeting of *The West Virginia Caver*, which is a report of the workings of the WVC within the past year. It is a chance for people to make suggestions (or to complain). This meeting starts at noon in the OTR Pavilion. For more information, contact George Dasher at 304-965-1361 or wvcaver@juno.com.

The second meeting is the Fall meeting of the West Virginia Speleological Survey, which starts at 6:30 p.m. behind "Cooters." Contact Bill Balfour for more information at bal4karst@hotmail.com or 304-497-0859. This meeting will consist mostly of the area coordinators' reports, and anyone with an interest in mapping and documenting West Virginia's caves should attend.

## Minutes of the Spring VAR Region Meet April 26, 2009

Meeting was called to order at 9:10 AM.

**Secretary** - Carol Tideman

A motion was made by Bubble Cave to accept the minutes as published in the *Region Record*. FUN 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

A request for a grant was submitted. Participated in a conference call regarding WNS protocols for Virginia. VAR supported the WNS moratorium.

**Conservation Co-Chair** -

Meredith Hall Weberg

The Easter Cleanup was held at Grand. The sinkhole on Cave Hill was prepared for the cleanup, algae abatement was done in Grand, a pavilion and the putt-putt rails were painted, four bat houses were erected.

4-18-9: Thirteen people showed up at Crystal Caverns to participate in finishing the karst trail extension for the northern end of the Virginia Karst Trail.

4-26-9: Thirty-nine people participated in the Cave Hill Sinkhole Cleanup - four dump truck loads of junk were sent to the dump - the metal was separated out for recycling, about another three or four loads. A sediment layer was reached, the bottom of the pit was

not. To be revisited for completion.

WVCC worked at the Persinger property, trees were planted - six attended.

**VAR Outstanding Service**

**Award** - Meredith Hall Weberg  
Nominate folks who help the region - e-mail a reason for the award or use the form online.

**Landowner Recognition Awards**

- Janet Tinkham

The Lyall O. Steger family of Cave Hill in Grottoes, Virginia. Mr. Harper for Flower Pot Cave.

**Landowner Legal Support Committee** - Bob Hoke

No new is good news.

**Region Record** - Bob Hoke

Send articles and pictures - Deadline for next issue June 15.

**VAR List Server** - Walt Pirie

No report.

**VAR Web site** - Jim McConkey

Contacts need to be updated for grottos.

**Cave Bucks** - JC Fisher

Send in the money you collect.

**VSS** - Rick Lambert

Five more caves than West Virginia - Requested old survey notes from the 1960s through the 1990s to be sent in for archiving. They can be scanned if you do not want to donate them.

**WVASS** - George Dasher

WVASS will be holding two meetings - at Bill Balfour's May 9 at 3:30 & at OTR behind Cooters at 6:30. Submit maps for the ICS. West Virginia cave protection signs are available. Three bulletins are almost ready for release. WNS found in West Virginia. PATH - power line project - on hold for another

year. Wind Project threatening. Big Spring Sewage Treatment Plant location; route still not finalized. A housing development is being planned over Organ Cave.

#### **WVCC - Bob Handley**

There have been no new purchases. Brochures for members & landowners are planned. Cleanups are planned. All WVCC caves are closed. Need donations to pay for Scott entrance to Maxwelton. In the process of updating the Web site. The City of Ronceverte is incorporating Organ property via roadways. Locals are opposed.

#### **Virginia Karst Program - Joey Fagan**

VDOT getting stimulus money and are reviewing projects as a result. Dye tracing materials are available. Sinkhole cleaning WQ11 75% is covered by the state up to \$2,500 - the remaining 25% of the owners cost can be repaid through in-kind service. The state share may be raised to \$4,000. WNS - nearly every cave species are affected - so far it has not been detected in Gray or Big Ears. The Commonwealth supports the Smithsonian's effort to create a captive breeding colony. It takes 2 to 3 weeks to test animals. Soil samples were collected in approximately 30 states, 200 sites. Madison U (in Wisconsin) will be testing the animals collected and the soil samples. Soil testing has not begun. No timeline is available. Studies are being done on methods of transmission. The European fungus is not the same as the US fungus species.

**SCCI - Walt Pirie**  
No report.

**Grand Caverns/Cave Hill - Jim McConkey**  
Fountain Cave is closed - work continues in Grand.

**Virginia Cave Board - Meredith Weberg**

Published a Cave Owners News Letter - send articles. Agreed with moratorium. A special issue is being sent out in June re WNS. Visit the Virginia Cave Week Web site. Karst Trail work continues. Need updates to landowner contacts - send to Dave Socky.

#### **Wilderness Proposal - Bob Handley**

Sixteen Wilderness areas have been designated in the Monongahela National Forest - Dolly Sods, Cranberry Glades, Otter Creek - added Greenbrier, Spice Run, Big Draft. Over 37,000 acres have been added.

**Virginia Karst Trail - Joey Fagan**  
Report areas that could be added.

**CCV - Joey Fagan**  
Powell Mountain Research - subsurface activity curtailed, surface activity continues.

#### **Spring Survey Project - John Pearson**

Training was held six weeks ago. Judy has solutions & data loggers.

**Landowner Law - John Pearson**  
A bill was introduced to update the landowner protection law - it died in committee - will be resubmitted.

**Host Report - VAR cavers**  
213 in attendance - most participated in the alternate activities provided.

#### **Old Business**

Spring 2010 - Bubble Cave - will be held at the Fairlea Fairgrounds.

#### **New Business**

Fall 2009 - BATS might be willing to host for the Fall 2010 - no volunteers.

Host for the Spring 2011 - no volunteers.

#### **Closed Cave List - Bob Hoke**

The main page shows all caves closed. There is a posted list of historical information. Background for all closed caves in red.

#### **How is WNS going to affect your grotto?**

Independent moves - The Virginia Region supports and endorses the protocols issued by the Commonwealth of Virginia and requests that its members comply with its directives - Tri-State seconded. Motion passed.

#### **Grant Requests**

The chair received a request for a grant \$5,000 to create a Virginia Big-ear bat colony in the Smithsonian conservation and research center in Front Royal, Virginia. Grottoes can make direct contributions Bubble moved \$500 be provided as seed money. Monongahela seconded - motion passed.

#### **Announcements**

- Karen Kastning has ICS handouts.
- Please turn in name tag holders.

#### **Adjournment**

Bubble Cave moved to adjourn, WVCC seconded.

Meeting Adjourned at 11:09 AM

Respectfully submitted:  
Carol Tideman

# Fall 2009 VAR MEETING AGENDA

Sunday, September 27, 2009 9:00 a.m

- 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. VAR OUTSTANDING SERVICE AWARD: Meredith Hall Weberg
  - C. LANDOWNER RECOGNITION AWARD: Janet Tinkham
  - D. LANDOWNER LEGAL SUPPORT COMMITTEE: Bob Hoke
  - E. *REGION RECORD*: Bob Hoke, Pauline Apling
  - F. VAR LIST SERVER: Walt Pirie
  - G. VAR WEB SITE: Jim Mcconkey
  - H. CAVE BUCKS: J.C. Fisher
  - I. VSS: Rick Lambert
  - J. WVASS: George Dasher
  - K. WVCC: Bob Handley
  - L. VIRGINIA KARST PROGRAM: Joey Fagan
  - M. SCCI: Walt Pirie
  - N. GRAND CAVERNS/CAVE HILL: Jim McConkey
  - O. VIRGINIA CAVE BOARD: Tom Lera
  - P. VIRGINIA KARST TRAIL: Andy Reeder
  - Q. CCV
  - R. SPRING SURVEY PROJECT: Charlie Maus
  - S. OTHER \_\_\_\_\_
- VII. HOST GROTTO REPORT: BATS & DINGO
- VIII. OLD BUSINESS
  - A. HOST GROTTO FOR THE SPRING 2010 MEETING: Bubble Cave
  - B. OTHER \_\_\_\_\_
- IX. NEW BUSINESS
  - A. HOST GROTTO FOR THE FALL 2010 MEETING
  - B. HOST GROTTO FOR SPRING 2011 MEETING
  - C. HOST GROTTO FOR THE FALL 2011 MEETING
  - D. WNS
  - E. OTHER \_\_\_\_\_
- X. GRANT REQUESTS: SUBMITTED TO CHAIR
- XI. ELECTION
- XII. ANNOUNCEMENTS
- XIII. ADJOURNMENT

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## Fall 2009 Regional News

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Grotto (or other caving organization that I claim as my primary caving affiliation) \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to VAR and send to:  
**Meredith Hall Weberg, 8061 Kittiwake Ct., Springfield VA 22153**