



The Region Record

Vol. XXIV No. 1 Winter 2010-11

To All Who Care About Virginia Karstlands

by Judy Molnar, Virginia Cave Board

Governor McDonnell's Commission on Government Reform & Restructuring Reform subcommittee on Government Simplification & Operations has submitted recommendations for consideration to the Commission to eliminate/consolidate various boards and commissions. The recommendations can be found at this link: www.reform.virginia.gov/docs/BoardsCommissions11222010.pdf.

Note the recommendation that the Virginia Cave Board (VCB) should be merged with the Board of Conservation and Recreation. Since Boards are limited in size, this greatly dilutes the knowledge and expertise about karst issues that can be represented on a State board.

Then it gets worse: another separate recommendation by the same committee is to merge the Board of Conservation and Recreation, the Chippokes Plantation Farm Foundation, and the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation into a new Land Conservation and Management Board! This will dilute any karst representation even further, essentially eliminating the VCB.

Background: The VCB is composed of **appointed volunteers** with expertise in a wide variety of areas. Presently, Board members

include university professors, a former commercial cave manager, private citizens, a federal agency employee, industry consultants, and educators. Board members attend and present papers at regional, national, and international conferences and discuss Virginia's cave and karst resources. Board members help developers and city and county governments in providing best management solutions for development in karst areas. Board members keep all cave owners aware of karst issues through the *Virginia Cave Owners' Newsletter* and serve as a resource for all teachers who teach about karst, which is part of the state's Standards of Learning.

When writing in support of all that the VCB does, please focus on any or all of the following talking points:

1. The VCB raises its own funds, so this Board presents no cost to the Commonwealth.
2. Water resources are a key component of Virginia's economic development. Fully one-fourth of all Virginia counties and cit-

ies are underlain by karst terrain and contain caves. An understanding of karst water resources for wise use by multiple stakeholders in Virginia karst requires Virginia karst expertise. The VCB brings this specialized expertise not found in any other Board or Commission to the Commonwealth.

3. Water quality is an important issue for Virginia, especially in environmentally sensitive karst areas. All the rivers that flow into the Chesapeake Bay have their headwaters in karst, so anything that impacts the water quality in karst will be felt all the way downstream statewide to the Bay.
4. For many people, the only caves they will ever step into are tourist caves; hence it is vital that cave visitors understand the importance of protecting karst. A significant part of Virginia's tourism includes caverns, several of which are renowned worldwide. VCB members work with commercial cave managers and help

(continued on page 3)

Spring VAR Meeting

Durbin, West Virginia

April 29-May 1, 2011

Hosted by Front Royal Grotto

Additional details will be posted on VAR website as they become available.

The *Region Record*

The *Region Record* is the quarterly publication of the Virginia Region of the National Speleological Society. Any articles, announcements, or other materials of general interest to cavers in the Region are welcome. **Send all material to Bob Hoke (6304 Kaybro St., Laurel, MD 20707 (301)725-5877, e-mail editor@varegion.org).** Electronic submissions (e-mail or disk) are encouraged, but any form of input is welcome. Non-copyrighted material contained in the *Region Record* may be reprinted by organizations that are affiliated with the VAR or the NSS, provided that proper credit is given to the *Record* and the author. The opinions expressed herein are those of the individual author, and do not necessarily reflect those of the editors, the VAR, the NSS, or their internal organizations.

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Region Record Subscriptions

- New NSS members in the Region receive two complimentary copies of the *Region Record*.
- Current NSS members moving into the Region from elsewhere receive two complimentary copies. Current NSS members who move within the Region get no freebies.
- When a subscription is going to expire the last issue will be stamped "Time to Renew." No renewal notice is sent.
- When a person attends a VAR meeting he/she is automatically added to the list to receive the next four issues. If he/she is already on the list, four additional issues are added to the subscription.
- When multiple people live at the same address only one copy of each issue will be sent to the address unless a box requesting individual issues is checked on the VAR registration form or a request is sent to the Circulation Manager.

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Regional Calendar

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

Apr. 21-23 **Annual clean-up weekend at Grand Caverns.** More information later.

Apr. 29 - May 1 **Spring VAR Meeting** in Durbin, West Virginia. Hosted by Front Royal Grotto. Details coming later.

June 4 **Grand Caverns Illumination.** See article in this issue.

July 18-22 **NSS convention** in Glenwood Springs, Colorado.

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 Board

(continued from page 1)

them provide their visitors with information that accurately reflects the wonders and importance of the karst landscape. A new concept that extends this education, the Virginia Cave and Karst Trail is just getting started and will not get far if the VCB is eliminated.

5. State budget cuts have already reduced the Department of Conservation and Recreation Karst Program. The VCB's expertise is needed more than ever to help support the State employees who are left for all the karst issues they have to deal with.
6. This is the third winter that White-Nose Syndrome is affecting Virginia's bats, and if what's happened up north is any indication, this winter and the ones to follow will be critical for the survival of several bat species. The impact on agriculture and local ecology may be huge. It seems a bit short-sighted to eliminate the VCB's expertise now.

To sum up: The consolidation of the VCB with other boards neither simplifies nor reduces costs to the Commonwealth but leaves a huge dent in the expertise available in dealing with issues in Virginia karst. It's in the best interest of the State to keep the VCB a separate standing Board as currently legislated.

Please support the Virginia Cave Board by **writing** [this packs the most punch] **to your local state representatives about this issue** and to the following members of the subcommittee:

Delegate Glen G. Oder
DelGOder@house.state.va.us

Delegate R. Lee Ware, Jr.
DellWare@house.virginia.gov

Speaker William J. Howell
DelAHowell@house.virginia.gov

Senator Mary Margaret Whipple
district31@senate.virginia.gov

Senator L. Louise Lucas
district18@senate.virginia.gov

Senator Ryan T. McDougle
district04@senate.virginia.gov

Senator Mark D. Obenshain
district26@senate.virginia.gov

The following link will help you locate addresses for the representatives:
<http://conview.state.va.us/whosmy.nsf/main?openform>.

If you wish to make additional online comments, make sure you mention the Virginia Cave Board specifically [there is no place online it is actually mentioned!] at this link:
<http://www.reform.virginia.gov/Comments/CommentOnAction.cfm?id=146&sec=Natural%20Resources>, or call the Virginia General Assembly's Constituent Viewpoint Comment line toll-free at 1-800-

889-0229 (804-698-1990 in Richmond).

Many thanks!

[This article also appeared in the December 2010 issue of the *Virginia Cave Owners' Newsletter*].

Monroe County Sinkhole Clean Ups October 30–November 2, 2010

by Rocky Parsons

A year or so ago, while ridgewalking an area near the Stringtown Road north of Union, John Pearson and I found five sinks that were filled with old barbed wire, woven wire, fence posts, and trash. So the West Virginia Cave Conservancy (WVCC) scheduled a clean up of the sinks for this year's Spring VAR that was held in Lewisburg. However, due to wet weather and the concern of track-



View of one Monroe County (West Virginia) sinkhole that was cleaned up by cavers. In this photo some of the debris had already been removed from the sink and was awaiting transport and disposal. Photo by Carroll Bassett or Rocky Parsons.



Heavy equipment assisted WVCC volunteers in removing wire and other debris from one of two sinkholes they cleaned in Monroe County, West Virginia. Photo by Carroll Bassett or Rocky Parsons.

ing up the farmer's field, the clean up had to be postponed.

WVCC rescheduled the clean up for October 30 in order to take advantage of dry weather. The clean up was coordinated with the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection's (WVDEP) Rehabilitation Environmental Action Plan (REAP) Program. REAP uses a portion of the funds collected as tipping fees by the solid waste landfills to hire contractors to clean up abandoned trash dumps.

In this case, the contractor utilized a large track excavator equipped with a "thumb" to reach into the sinks and pull out the wire and trash. The material was loaded into a small dump truck and hauled to a collection area near the county road and then loaded into a large tri-axel truck so that it could be hauled to a landfill.

We would have preferred to have the wire taken to a recycling center, but the recycling center will not accept wire because it gets tangled in their shears when metal is being processed. Even after being com-

pacted in the back of the tri-axel by the excavator, the wire completely filled the truck above the sideboards. That's a LOT of wire!

During the course of the day, several cavers showed up to lend a hand. Of course we couldn't resist the temptation of having an excavator that close to sinkholes without putting it to good use. At least one promising entrance was opened. Some digging will be required before seeing if it leads to a new cave.

Later that day, the REAP contractor moved his equipment and a crew of men to Broad Run of Monroe County where GROSS Grotto sponsored the clean up of two sinks containing old tires, appliances, wire, and trash dating from the 1950s and 60s. This material was pulled from the sinks by hand and machine and loaded into the contractor's smaller dump truck and a large trailer.

The next day, October 31, the contractor moved his equipment to another farm on Broad Run and removed a very large pile of barbed and woven wire located on a ridge between two sinks.

The following Tuesday, November 2, the contractor went to Dark Hollow near Alderson where GROSS Grotto sponsored the clean out of a small sink near the top of the Greenbrier Limestone. Rusty cans, glass, and trash were removed and loaded into a truck.

There was a total of 7.9 tons of material removed from the sinks and taken to a landfill. The dozens of tires that were collected were taken to another landfill that specializes in their disposal. All of this work was completed without cost to the caving community or the landowners. I highly recommend that anyone wanting to clean up an abandoned dump or a sinkhole get the landowner's permission and contact the WVDEP's REAP program for assistance.

Thanks to all the folks who participated in the clean up including John Pearson, Bill and Juliet Balfour, Ed Saugstad, Carroll Bassett, and Bob Leibman.

Baker Quarry Gate Completed

by Bob Bennett and Brent Jefferson

The gating of Baker Quarry on November 20 and 21 was a huge success. The weather couldn't have been better. It probably got up to near 60 degrees on Saturday afternoon. I want to thank all of those who helped with the work that was done at the quarry. Thank you Paulette, Janet, and Lauren for fixing the food! The chili was a smash hit! If anyone went hungry, it's their own fault! Lauren and Paulette even fixed breakfast on Sunday morning for those who spent the night.

The work on the quarry gates was hard and tedious at times. Some of the drilling took three or four

people to push the drill in some of the hard sections of rock and where there was hardly room to push the drill. As near as we can figure, we had 27 people show up to help in some way or another. Some cut steps in the hill leading up to the main opening, some manned the drills, some backfilled dirt and rocks, while others hauled steel up the hills to the entrances.

Things really got rolling between 10 and 11 o'clock a.m. (thanks to John Puckett for going after more steel so we could get the job done in one weekend!) By mid-afternoon the food was ready and we had quite a smorgasbord of food available (for vegetarian and meat eaters alike). We had coffee, water, sodas, juice, tea, and hot chocolate to drink.

Thanks to Anya Crane, John Puckett, and Kevin Mulligan for cutting the steel and cutting holes in the steel when needed.

A special thanks goes out to our welders: Craig Hindman, Greg McCoy, and Kevin Mulligan. They worked until about 1:30 a.m. trying to get the job done. The only thing left on Sunday morning was to weld the lock mechanism (which only took about an hour to do).

Also, thanks to those who stayed with us and spent the night to help finish up the next morning! Everyone was pretty ragged out by then!

If I have missed anything please forgive me (I'm getting old and my memory isn't what it used to be] senior moments, LOL!])

Again, thanks to everyone who helped!

Update on the Virginia Cave and Karst Trail

by Babs Bodin, Virginia Cave Board

The Virginia Cave and Karst Trail (VCKT), which was mandated by the Virginia Outdoors Plan, is becoming a reality! The Virginia Cave Board (VCB) is spearheading the development of the statewide trail system to educate the public about, and for preservation of, Virginia's fragile karstic resources. **The VCB wants people to actually visit Virginia's cave and karst sites rather than just download tons of geological information from a Web site.**

Having decided to develop the VCKT system, practicality then dictated that the most feasible course of action would be to build the VCKT in manageable segments that are linked together by driving directions contained on the VCB Web site. Important first steps have been made by establishing the first trail segment at Crystal Caverns, and the project at Skyline Caverns is well underway.

Crystal Caverns at Hupp's Hill erected 12 permanent markers during the spring of 2010. These markers, which form the 1/3-mile-long *How Strata Shaped Strategy Walking Trail*, clearly show that *the hillock's rich Civil War history happened because of its geology*. Each marker interprets how soldiers utilized karstic features for tactical application of their armies' strategic goals during the 1862 and 1864 Valley Campaigns. Besides Civil War infantry trenches and gun emplacements, visitors can view a sinkhole used as a gun emplacement and two wild caves, as well as the surface "footprint" of Crystal Caverns. Many visitors to Hupp's Hill found that traversing this walking trail, which is also part of the Civil War Trails network, has been

an extremely worthwhile educational and recreational pursuit.

A second trail segment at Skyline Caverns is an Eagle Scout project under the auspices of the Front Royal Grotto. The existing trail has several karst features posted and one cave is partially fenced. Much more is planned, however. A kiosk will contain a topographical map with a trail overlay that will direct visitors to the actual trail signs, which will interpret selected karst features. A rough draft of signage text, which will be further refined for sign production, defines karst and sinkholes, explains cave ecosystems, connects sinkholes to groundwater supplies, and discusses the effect development has on karst.

By establishing these trail segments, we have now made the very important first steps towards building the statewide trail system—after all, the hardest part of beginning a big project is actually getting started! With one trail segment finished and another in progress we now have models that can serve as templates for building additional trail segments in other localities. VCB envisions a network of such segments that can be built by individual cave owners, grottos, and heritage sites.

A rather important consideration in these times of budget deficits is the cost factor involved in erecting permanent markers. What may be very surprising is the fact that the Crystal Caverns trail segment was constructed on a shoestring. For example, while the camera-ready sign text for each marker at Crystal Caverns took several hours to research, write, and import visual images, the signs themselves were very inexpensive to produce, costing approximately \$60 per marker. While not state-of-the-art, these markers have a rustic appeal and will last for at least 10 years, at which time more funding may finally be available for upgrades. But until these upgrades can be made,

it is expected that many, many people will learn about the Commonwealth's cave and karst resources by reading them. In other words, finding major funding in an unhealthy economy does not have to deter teaching valuable educational lessons NOW.

The Virginia Cave Board, in conjunction with local grottos, needs your help to inventory cave and karst resources that can be included on the Virginia Cave and Karst Trail. Please e-mail me at babsbodin@gmail.com if you would like to help educate visitors about the Commonwealth's rich karst resources!

[This article also appeared in the December 2010 issue of the *Virginia Cave Owners' Newsletter*].

Ogdens Cave Gated

by Jeff Jahn

A cave gate was placed in Ogdens Cave on Saturday November 6, 2010. The cave is located in Frederick County, Virginia and is part



The almost-complete gate at Ogdens Cave in Frederick County, Virginia. Only about half of the gate is shown. It extends about 15 feet past the left side of the photo. Photo by Anya Crane.

of the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation's Ogdens Cave Natural Area Preserve that was acquired under the Natural Heritage program. The cave contains an extremely diverse ecosystem, including a branch of Buffalo Marsh Run, and hosts five rare species of invertebrates.

The project was organized through the efforts of the Volunteer Stewardship Committee, whose membership includes cavers, neighbors and adjoining property owners, and staff of DCR and Lord Fairfax Community College. A total of 23 people assisted with the effort.

The gate was placed in a narrow crack beyond the entrance room and before the sump area that leads to the back part of the cave. Special thanks to Craig Hindman, Greg McCoy, and Kevin Mulligan, who provided the welders and transported the materials and support equipment to the job.

It was a perfect fall day and above-ground activity such as brush clearing, removal of barbed wire fence, and clean up of rubbish, was occurring in earnest while the cave gate was being put in place. The teamwork and effort put forth by all of

the participants made for a fun day and allowed the project to be completed in one day.

Grand Illumination and Ball Coming to Grand Caverns

by Jim McConkey

Grand Caverns, once known as Weyer's Cave, was the site of the first documented dance held in a cave. Within two years of the cave's opening to the public in 1806, one large hall quickly became known as the "Ballroom", and by the 1820s the owners were staging regular dances there. During these "Grand Illuminations and Balls," the cave would be illuminated by literally thousands of tapers and guests would amuse themselves in dance as musicians played, sometimes in multiple parts of the cave.

The VAR's Grand Caverns Survey Project tried to convince the park to stage a Grand Illumination and Ball for the cave's bicentennial in 2006, but for various reasons it never happened. The cave's new management, however, is much keener on recreating the event.

Mark your calendars for Saturday, June 4, 2011, for the next Grand Caverns Grand Illumination and Ball! The day will also feature a Civil War encampment and other festivities. The details are still being worked out, but Virginia Region cavers will be involved heavily. Stay tuned for more information.

Short Notes

by George Dasher

Gene Turner: Gene Turner, the owner of Buckeye Creek Cave (in Greenbrier County, West Virginia), died on November 24, 2010. Gene, 82 years old, was the son of the late Greely and Nellie Turner—who were great friends to the caving community in their own right. Gene was a member of the Spring Creek Presbyterian Church, a Navy veteran, and an honorary member of the West Virginia Association for Cave Studies. Survivors include two brothers and several nieces and nephews. Gene was an extremely respected cave owner who had received the Virginia Region Landowner Award. He had allowed many cavers into his cave, permitted several long-term (and on-going) mapping and scientific studies in his cave, and allowed several VARs to take place on his property. He enjoyed being involved with surface activities with cavers, and he was a wonderful person of great integrity who will be much missed. [Gene Turner was given the VAR Landowner Recognition Award in 1994. *Ed.*]

Grant County WVASS Bulletin: WVASS Bulletin #17, *The Caves and Karst of Grant County*, authored by George Dasher, is now for sale to the caving community. The bulletin contains maps, descriptions, and pictures of Grant County's 90 known caves and 18 karst springs, as well as a detailed summary on the county's geology. It is 120 pages long and contains six maps in an envelope. The cost is \$15, and it can be purchased from any speleo vendor, the NSS Bookstore, or directly from WVASS. To purchase the publication from WVASS, contact Ray Garton, West Virginia Speleological Survey, PO Box 200, Barrackville, WV 26559, 304-366-6035, or garton@prehistoricplanet.com.

Corridor H: A new section of Corridor H has been opened

between Moorefield and Maysville in Hardy and Grant County, West Virginia. This highway ends in the middle of nowhere (for west-bound travelers), but it is an extremely scenic and very interesting highway to drive, particularly from a geological point of view, as there are many impressive “new” folded and faulted exposures (with much buried and filled-in karstification) of the Tonoloway and Helderberg limestones. The highway will continue west from Maysville, through the New Creek Mountain series of ridges, and will end near Scherr. This too promises to be a very interesting geological highway.

Virginia Cave Board: Gary Moss has reported that the Governor of Virginia has formed a commission to reduce the size of Virginia's state government. Part of their plan will be to merge the current Virginia Land Conservation Foundation, the Chippokes Plantation Farm Foundation, and the Virginia Cave Board into the Board of Conservation and Recreation. Gary speculates that the end result could be that the Virginia Cave Board may very well go away, and its duties could be handed over to new Board members who are not necessarily familiar with specific cave and karst issues. In addition, with all the added duties, the Board of Conservation and Recreation may have little time for cave and karst issues. See the lead article in this issue for more information.

Smoke Hole Caverns: A Grant County, West Virginia, man has pleaded guilty to setting the fires that destroyed the Smoke Hole Caverns' gift shop last November. Brent Michael Combs, 25, of Cabins, entered a plea bargain agreement with prosecutors and admitted to one count of first degree arson and one count of arson causing injury. Four other charges were dropped as part of the plea deal. Combs was linked to the crimes through a bottle of malt alcohol, two wooden matchsticks, and dog hair found at the scene. Similar

items were found at his home. (Source: an undated Grant County news article.)

National Geographic and WNS: The December issue of *National Geographic* (V. 218, n. 6, p. 126) contains an excellent article on White-Nose Syndrome (WNS). It is 12 pages long, and contains six photos, including a large one of roosting little brown bats in Hell-hole and an incredible picture of a roosting colony in Hubbards Cave in Tennessee. It also contains a map showing where WNS has been found at present, and which includes inserts showing the range of the six infected bat species. This is one of the more concise and informative articles I have read on WNS, and it contains information that is new (at least to me)—including the fact that six bat species are infected, while another three are at high risk, and the fact that only the DNA of the WNS fungus has been detected west of eastern Tennessee, not the fungus itself. The article makes a comparison to the Chestnut Blight, which killed all North American chestnut trees early in the 20th Century, and it also contains a graph showing how the bat populations in Howes Cave, where the fungus was first discovered in North America, has been decimated. In short, the article is well worth tracking down and looking at, if only for the map and the picture of Hubbards Cave. My only complaint is that it says that the only way the fungus could have traveled to North America from Europe is by hitching a ride on a visitor or caver. It does not mention that Howe's Cave is very close to the eastern terminus of the Erie Canal and that the fungus could have arrived on a ship-transported bat, instead of on a human, but that's only a trivial editorial concern of my own.

The 2013 NSS Convention in Pennsylvania???

by Carol Tideman

The folks who were bidding to host the 2013 NSS Convention had to drop out. The only dates they could get at the selected facility were in direct conflict with the International Congress of Speleology.

I have been holding the Shippensburg University site as a bailout location for years. The date for the 2013 Convention will be August 5-9. Unfortunately, many of the folks I was counting on to fill out the staff are working on the 2012 Convention. To ask them to do a job two years in a row is asking too much.

Four grottoes in the Mid-Appalachian Region (MAR) have already volunteered to host pre and post-Convention field camps and/or to lead trips during Convention.

A few folks have indicated their willingness to fill the staff positions, but we are far from having a full roster. I am collecting names and the positions they have volunteered to fill.

Some folks have offered to fill the top positions, but those who will be reporting to the Chairs need to decide if these are the leaders they feel comfortable working with. Leaders and staff must be compatible for this to work.

There is a Convention Manual in the Business Pages of the NSS Web site at www.caves.org/committee/convention/Convention%20Manual.pdf. Please read the position descriptions to see if there is a position you can fill or be a part of.

We need to get the bid together by March 1 to send to the NSS Board of Governors to review before their April 1 meeting. This gives

them time to review the bid. They will not vote on the bid until the BOG meeting at the 2011 Convention. That only leaves two years to get it all together and ready to run. That may seem like a long time, but it goes by fast.

The site will allow everything to happen in one location. We can camp, rent dorm rooms, use the dining facilities, have all the sessions, salons, workshops, etc. within a 10-minute walk end-to-end. That does not mean that we might not want to go off site for the Howdy Party, if there is a great option, but we don't have to.

The facility has almost everything we will need. It has a health center ("Med Tent"), the rooms are equipped with computer projectors, and they have all the tables and chairs we will need. There are a few things we will need to work on. The gym (where the vertical sessions will be held) is not air-conditioned, so we will have to find a way to cool that location. The same applies for the banquet.

We will need to supplement the flushers at the campground with port-a-johns. We also might want to get a big tent to set up as a social area in or near the campground. We cannot park next to our tents, but the parking area borders the camping area. "Tin tenters" will have to park in the lot, but we can reserve space for them. Sorry, no hookups are available. There is water at one end of the campground. We may have to run some water down to the middle and far end.

Officially this is a dry campus, but worst case is we will have to have cans instead of kegs. If anyone knows of a good winery in Pennsylvania, it looks like we will be able to have wine at the banquet.

I think you can see that a lot of the issues we will have to deal with can be cut down into small units that a few people can handle. Because there is so much available on site,

we do not have to create a lot of big wheels that will burn out people.

We even have a local caver who has a T-shirt business and has offered his services.

Give it some thought. If you see a job with your name on it, please send me a note and I will add you to the roster. You can reach me at ctider@ymail.com.

Skinny Surveyors Needed!

by Jim McConkey

The VAR's Grand Caverns Survey Project just passed seven years and is still going strong. Besides ongoing conservation efforts in Grand and a major dig project in Fountain Cave, we have recently regained access to part of Cave Hill that had been off-limits for the past couple years. A couple new caves of unknown extent have been recently discovered, but require skinny surveyors.

If you can sketch or survey, and fit in narrow places, please present yourself at the next project weekend, January 8-9 or February 5-6, 2011.

Fall VAR/MAR Wrap-Up

by Jim McConkey

After a dreadful week of nonstop rain, the skies cleared just in time for the Fall VAR/MAR, co-hosted this year by the D.C. and Baltimore Grottos at Friars Hole Cave Pre-

serve. Robbie Mothes, the owner, had freshly mowed a huge field and there was plenty of room for the over 260 attendees, with plenty of port-a-pots to serve all. The staff went down a day early to set up registration, tarps, and food preparation and serving areas. Clear skies served to lower the ambient temperature, so the roaring bonfire was a popular stopping point as cavers rolled in all night long. Thanks to the local hot tub company for their scraps!

For the first time in years, there was caving galore. Guided trips went out to Bone-Norman (only one caver didn't fit), Norman, Poor Farm, Scott Hollow, Culverson Creek, and a vertical trip in the Crookshank entrance of Friars Hole. A big round of applause, please, for the many trip leaders! With 46+ miles of cave right beneath camp, there were nonstop cave trips within feet of camp all weekend, at all hours of the day and night. Most attendees seemed to be making up for lost time underground. Family members and a few cavers also visited some of the more interesting local aboveground attractions, such as Bear Town, the Falls of Hills Creek, and the Droop Mountain Battlefield. Brian and Sandy Preaux demonstrated their cave radio system on Saturday for interested cavers.

Saturday evening a queue formed almost the length of the campground waiting for dinner. Cooking for nearly 300 in the wild is not an easy task, but D.C. and Baltimore managed to serve up a delicious meal of bratwurst sausages, sauerkraut, potatoes, corn, veggie chili, and salad efficiently and only a few minutes behind schedule. There was just enough left over for the staff to have breakfast while dismantling camp. After dinner Mike and Andrea Futrell talked about the use of GIS systems for the Virginia Speleological Survey archives and Brian and Sandy Preaux talked about their exploration of the southern end of the Friars

FALL 2010 JOINT VAR-MAR FINANCIAL REPORT	
Hosted by Baltimore Grotto and DC Grotto at the Friars Hole Cave Preserve, Pocahontas County, W. Va.	
INCOME	
Pre-registered adults – VAR (\$30 x 111)	\$3,330
Pre-registered adults – MAR (\$30 x 28)	840
Pre-registered adults – VAR & MAR (\$35 x 43)	1,505
Pre-registered children age 5-15 (\$23 x 3)	69
Pre-registered children under age 5 (\$0 x 3)	0
Onsite adults – VAR (\$35 x 39)	1,365
Onsite adults – MAR (\$35 x 27)	945
Onsite adults - VAR & MAR (\$40 x 8)	320
Onsite children age 5-15 (\$28 x 4)	112
Onsite children under age 5 (\$0 x 3)	0
Onsite adult – VAR meeting fee (\$10 x 1)	10
Speakers Comp (\$0 x 3)	0
Sale of extra guidebooks (\$1 x 52)	52
Total Income	\$8,548
EXPENSES	
Campground rental (\$7 x 264)	\$1,848
12 portable potties, 2 sinks, 1 pumping	896
Printing (250 guidebooks, name tags, surface activities info sheet, maps)	182
VAR Fee (\$5 x 205 adults)	1,025
MAR Fee (\$5 x 106 adults)	530
Refunds (for Pre-registered no-shows (\$20 x 9) & overpayment [\$5 x 1])	185
Beverages (28 cases beer, 14 cases soda, 3 cases water, 20 bags ice)	577
Food & Supplies for Saturday Night Dinner	1,224
Mailing expenses (guidebooks & refund checks)	19
Total Expenses	\$6,487
EVENT PROFIT	\$2,061

Hole. After the presentations, most cavers retreated to the relative warmth of Snedegars Cave, where they enjoyed a huge candlelit passage, a laser light show, and balmy temperatures. The rest jockeyed for space around the bonfire while listening to tunes spun by DJ John Fox. Some had little use for partying and just went caving instead. Why not, when your tent is 50 feet from an entrance? A few got a little worried when a group on a Crookshank-Snedegars through-trip did not return on time. The party got turned around and could not find the connection, but the ropes had

already been pulled out of Crookshank. They had planned wisely, though, and their friends returned to Crookshank after dinner with a rope and everyone got out safely, if somewhat hungry. There was fortunately plenty of food left for them when they returned to camp.

As most people broke camp Sunday morning, a raucous VAR meeting was held while a constant stream of cavers passed behind the meeting on their way for just one more caving trip before they left. The event was a huge success socially and financially, which only goes to prove you do not need a

fancy site, expensive caterers, or fancy accouterments to stage a successful VAR. If your grotto hasn't hosted one in a while (or ever!), why don't you consider it? There is plenty of help available in the region for financial planning, and there are even VAR planning documents on the VAR Web site: www.varegion.org/var/events/hos-tavar.shtml.

VAR Mailing List Help Wanted

by Meredith Hall Weberg

Does anyone want to help out the Virginia Region with just a few hours per month and a lot of glory? Just kidding about the glory, but I really do want someone to take over this job. I've been keeping the VAR Mailing List updated for nine years now. I do not want to do it for 20 years or so like my predecessor, Evelyn Bradshaw, did.

It's a pretty easy job that anyone with a computer could do. This would be an excellent opportunity for a young person to pitch in and "give back to caving." I am trying to divest myself of some of my volunteer duties and this is one of them. PLEASE HELP!

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