



The Region Record

Vol. XXIV No. 2 Spring 2011

Chairman's Column

VAR owes many thanks to Front Royal Grotto for stepping up to host the Spring VAR at Durbin West Virginia. We have no volunteers to host any meetings after the spring. Talk it over with your groups and let us know if you're willing to host a meeting. If we don't have a volunteer group we will just have a business meeting.

In the last few months we have lost two pillars of VAR: Evelyn Bradshaw and Bob Handley. Both will be missed, but not forgotten. Evelyn was for most of us our first contact with the NSS, with a simple card asking us to join, or to tell us that there were other people around who loved caves. Bob with his conservation message about caves and his leadership. They both laid the foundation that we can build upon. Our thoughts are with their families.

At the last VAR the Chairman was to appoint a committee to look at the possibility of managing Crystal Cave at Hupps Hill in a partnership with the NSS, the Cedar Creek Battlefield Foundation, and the town of Strasburg, Virginia. While this could be an opportunity to further the stated goals of the NSS, there are many things to look at. At the time of this writing, there is a draft plan to go to VAR, but it is felt by the committee that it may not be workable for a number of reasons.

The draft version of the Crystal Cave Plan is available on the VAR Web site and anyone interested is

welcome to read it. It's at www.varegion.org/var/theVar/varMeetMinutes/varMeetMinutes.shtml. Please send me your comments.

—Craig

Spring VAR Meeting April 29 – May 1 Durbin, West Virginia

Shake off the winter blues and join us at the Spring meeting of the Virginia Region (VAR) April 29–May 1, 2011. Front Royal Grotto will host the event at the East Fork Campground in the welcoming town of Durbin, West Virginia. The registration form is included in this edition of *The Region Record* and it can be downloaded off of our Web site. Postmark by April 1, 2011, for pre-registration prices. After the April 1st deadline, please save time by filling out form and bringing it with you. Updates can be found on the FRG Web site <www-frontroyal.varegion.org> or by contacting Janet Tinkham at 540-933-6850 or janete@shentel.net.

General Info:

- Dogs are welcome if on leash and picked up after.

- Drinking water is available with many spigots located throughout the campground.
- There is a small bathhouse at the campground, one side for men and the other for women. Each side has one toilet and one shower. There will be additional porta-potties throughout the campground and possibly extra showers hooked up by spring.
- Vendors include Inner Mountain Outfitters, Honeysuckle Pottery, Speleobooks and B&C Wunderwear
- WNS Decon: There will be a station to decontaminate your gear after caving. Loaner gear will also be available.

Friday:

- Registration opens at noon
- Vertical workshop will be offered and is intended to help cavers fine-tune their existing climbing system; work on ascending techniques and practice change-overs. If you do not know how to do a change-over, you can learn here. The vertical workshop will begin on Friday and go until Sunday. Stop by anytime and play on rope.
- Evening socializing with friends, bring instruments to show off your musical talent

Saturday:

- Registration continues.

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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

Apr. 1 **Deadline for getting the preregistration discount** (and guaranteeing a dinner) at the Spring VAR Meeting.

Apr. 22-24 **Grand Caverns Restoration Camp.** Help maintain Grand Caverns in Grottoes, Virginia. See article in this issue.

Apr. 29 - May 1 **Spring VAR meeting** East Fork Campground in Durbin, W. Va. (Pocahontas County) See more info and registration form in this issue.

Apr. 30 **WVASS Spring Meeting** in Durbin, W. Va. (during the Spring VAR Meeting). More info in this issue.

June 4 **Grand Caverns Heritage Day.** More information in this issue.

June 15 **Deadline** for submitting material for the Summer issue of the *Region Record*.

July 18-22 **NSS convention** in Glenwood Springs, Colorado. See www.NSS2011.com for 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.

Spring VAR

(continued from page 1)

- In addition to some led and self-lead cave trips being offered during VAR, there will be many non-caving attractions such as the Green Bank Telescope and Observatory, Seneca State Forest, Area Hikes in Monongahela National Forest and a conservation project.
- Saturday evening will include a mouth-watering barbecue chicken dinner or a vegetarian chili, which is perfect after a long day's caving. Pre-registration guarantees a meal. Without pre-registration, you risk not having a meal ticket available.
- Evening presentation by Greg Springer and Bob Zimmerman on the "Resurvey of Cass Cave."
- Warm up with the bonfire and dancing.
- **Sunday:**
- Pancake breakfast will start at 8 a.m. and last until we run out of food. Prices are \$4 for adults and \$2 per child.
- VAR business meeting at 9 am.

Hamilton and New Trout Caves Reopened

by David West, Manager
John Guilday Caves Nature Preserve

The John Guilday Caves Nature Preserve reopened for limited visitation on March 12, 2011. We strongly encourage any visitors to ensure their cave gear is thoroughly decontaminated to U.S. Fish and Wildlife standards before visiting another site outside the 10-mile ra-

dius they recommend. See www.fws.gov/whitenosesyndrome/pdf/WNSDecon_Cavers_v012511.pdf. West Virginia is essentially surrounded by White-Nose Syndrome (WNS)-positive states.

Our bat counts at the Preserve indicate two things. First, in Trout and Hamilton Caves, both positive for WNS, the overall population is dwindling rapidly. There are essentially no bats left in Hamilton Cave. Trout Cave continues to be an important site for the endangered Indiana bat with a slight increase in population from last year. However the large population of Little Brown bats is almost gone, as only eight remain. The Pips have also been hit hard, but remain a bit more populous. Indianas are actually the largest current wintering bat group in the cave. Second, New Trout Cave seems to be unaffected by WNS; and offers a ray of hope, albeit a small one.

Hamilton and New Trout caves will be open for visitation and will remain open all year. Please ensure your gear is clean before arriving. Decontaminated is better, especially if visiting New Trout Cave. If you plan to visit both caves, please visit New Trout first. Because Trout Cave is now utilized by two endangered species, the Indiana bat (90) in the winter and the Virginia Big-Eared bat (159) in the summer, it will remain closed all year. There is not a reasonable period when it can be opened without disturbing one or the other groups.

This policy will be reviewed at least annually, and is subject to change on short notice as conditions change. The Preserve will do all it can to protect the bat populations in our caves while permitting recreational, scientific, and educational use to the extent possible. Again, visitors should ensure they follow U.S. Fish and Wildlife guidelines regarding WNS after leaving the property.

Grand Caverns Easter Restoration Camp April 22-24, 2011

From the VAR Web site

Hop on down to the 21st annual GRAND CAVERNS EASTER RESTORATION CAMP, sponsored by the Virginia Region of the National Speleological Society on April 22-24 (Friday-Sunday), 2011. If you enjoy the camaraderie of fellow cavers, join us for our annual gravel-hauling express through beautiful Grand Caverns. Improve cave-owner relations and a whole lot more! A great way to kick those Old Man Winter Blues!

Primitive camping, socializing with fellow cavers, and food and beverages provided for Saturday lunch and dinner! And, best of all, it's all free (okay, the Easter Pig is accepting donations)!

Directions:

From I-81, take Exit 235 to SR 256, [turn left if traveling South on I-81, and right if traveling North on I-81, toward Grottoes]. Travel East on SR 256 for 7 miles to Grottoes. At the intersection of Dogwood Avenue (Rt. 825), turn South [Right] on Dogwood. Travel South on Dogwood Ave. for 1,000 ft. Turn Right into the Entrance of Grand Caverns [Grand Caverns Drive] and then turn right immediately after passing the entrance gate to the big pavilion. Phone (888) 430-2283.

For more information, contact Andy Reeder at cavecon@earthlink.net or Meredith Hall Weberg at merecaver@yahoo.com.

Spring WVASS Meeting April 30, 2011

The spring meeting of the West Virginia Speleological Survey (WVASS) will be held during the Spring VAR meeting at 3 pm on Saturday, April 30, 2011. It will be in the East Fork Campground in Durbin, West Virginia (the VAR site). This is an open meeting that anyone interested in inventorying or surveying West Virginia's caves can and should attend.

For more information contact Bill Balfour at 304-497-0859 or bal4karst@hotmail.com.

Fountain Cave Update

by Jim McConkey

Bigger's Diggers are still hard at work on the dig and report "only one more rock" before they break through. A local newspaper reported that the cave's owner in 1873

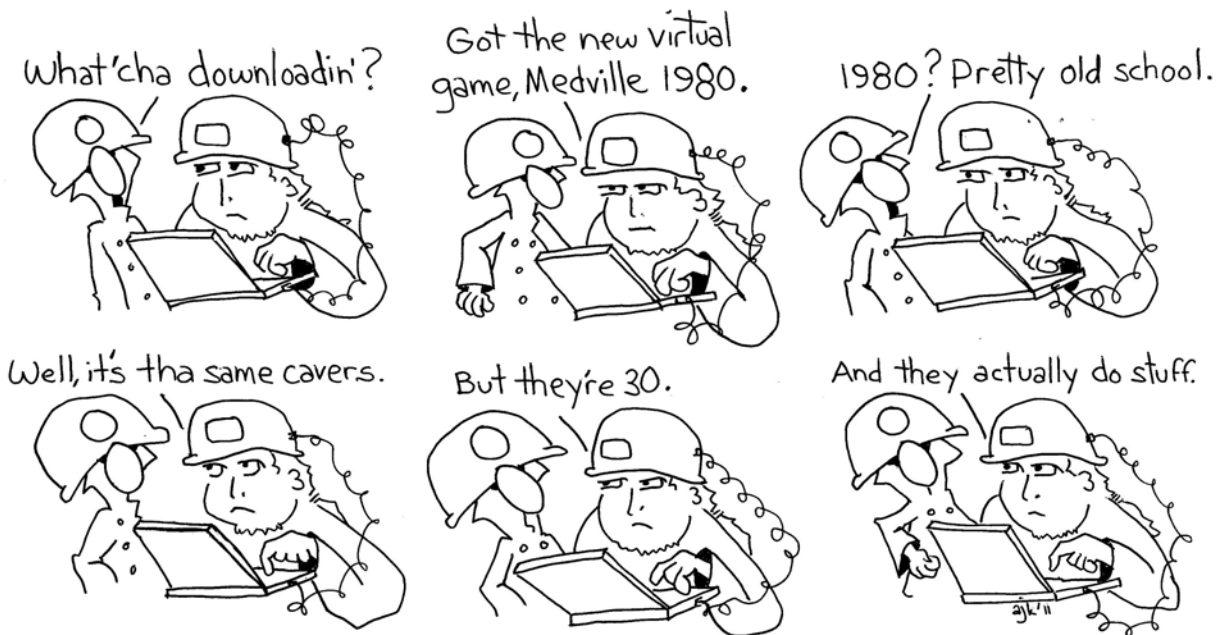
was tunneling to "extend the cave to another he believed adjoined it," and the passage is lined with historic dynamite holes.

I reported some time back of discovering an 1835 booklet called "A Description of Weast's Cave," by Samuel Noah, written the year Fountain Cave was discovered. Edward Weast was the landowner at the time and the cave was briefly known as Weast's Cave. Noah's booklet gives a complete description of the original tour, if you can follow it hidden between the excessive flourishes, flowery language, and lengthy quotes from the classics. Right after I found the book, I recruited a number of volunteers to try to follow the tour. For months we scratched our heads in utter confusion because nothing made sense. Either Noah had taken extreme artistic license, or we were clearly in the wrong place. But the cave only has one entrance! How could that be?

Several months later, while checking on Bigger's Diggers at the extreme back of the cave, I happened to wander into an adjacent passage and it hit me that the rimstone pools in front of me were The Fountains, from which the cave derives its name. According to Noah,

these were supposed to be just to the left of the ENTRANCE. Throwing out any notion of which end is which and starting from the "back" of the cave, we quickly located a series of landmarks from Noah's description, in the correct order and of the correct size and location. We have now identified most of the features Noah identified, though we are still clarifying the actual path through the middle section of the cave.

Suddenly, it all fell into place. I remembered that TI-59 Cave, which had been discovered by Phil Lucas and his trusty Texas Instruments TI-59 calculator 30 years ago, was very close to what we now know as the "back" of the cave. TI-59 is a single room 40 feet across halfway up the very steep eastern flank of Cave Hill, with a wide fissure for a main entrance and a second skylight opening above. I remembered having seen a very unnatural looking pit at the back of the cave from my previous visits. Checking the 3D plot of the caves of Cave Hill in Compass, it was clear that TI-59 only lies 20 odd feet over top of the dirt pile at the "back" of Fountain. Noah describes a "Lamp Room," where tourists would light their torches before descending a longer staircase into the cave. It is



Cartoon by Jim Kramer

the only part of Noah's tour that we could not locate inside Fountain Cave. TI-59 has a skylight, so you don't really need lights, and it would make an excellent Lamp Room.

The ice and snow of winter prevented us from testing my theory for many months, but taking advantage of a spell of nice weather and the availability of a few foolish volunteers, I led a hardy group to TI-59 Cave on March 5th, 2011, having previously arranged with a couple of Bigger's Diggers to take a break at 11:00 AM to listen for us at the top of the dirt pile. The outside crew arrived at TI-59 at precisely 11:00 AM and immediately commenced to banging rocks together. The inside crew was a few minutes late, which caused initial disappointment. What was that? After a few minutes of banging, we thought we heard a returned bang, but couldn't be sure. We stopped and listened. Nothing. We banged again, keeping quiet this time, and sure enough, we got a response. A loud call by a unison of four voices brought a muffled vocal response! When we later rendezvoused, the inside crew reported that my voice was identifiable, and could be heard throughout most of area, even by listeners 50 feet away. So we have now officially made a voice connection through the original entrance to West's (Fountain) Cave! The connection was sealed many years ago and there are no plans to reopen it. This entrance was only used for four or five years before the cave was abandoned for the next 30, until a new owner dug the current entrance and built the stone tunnel in 1868 and reopened the cave to the public.

Two New WVASS Publications

by Brian Masney

Two new publications of the West Virginia Speleological Survey (WVASS) will be on sale at the Spring VAR meeting. They will also be available through the WVASS Web site (www.wvass.org).

The Caves and Karst of Tucker County – WVASS Bulletin #18, by Doug McCarty and Brian Masney. There are 304 cave and karst features, 155 photos, and 96 maps, including new maps of Mill Run Cave, Bennett Cave, Close Mountain Cave, Blackwater Pit, Fieldhouse Cave, Ellick Cave, Ellick Dome Cave, and more. Rather than the map packet past WVASS bulletins have had, this bulletin will have a CD containing full-sized color versions of all maps and photos, plus some extra photos that didn't make it into the book. Also included is Greg Springer's article on Tucker County geology, which George Dasher has called "ground breaking." The book will cost \$30.

A color version of the bulletin will be available by special-order for \$85. The color version will have color pictures, color maps (where color was included on the maps), and color figures in the geology article. It will also have a heavier, better quality paper.

The Survey of Cass Cave, edited by Robert Zimmerman, cartography by Robert Zimmerman and Gregory S. Springer. Monograph #4 of the West Virginia Speleological Survey. 2011. Describes the history and geology of Cass Cave, including a map of the entire system. 23 map sheets, 1 profile sheet, 23 figures, 64 pages. \$16

There will also be older WVASS publications for sale at VAR, including, but not limited to:

The Cassell Cave Survey Project by Robert Zimmerman, Monograph #3 of the West Virginia Speleological Survey. 2009. Describes the history and geology of Cassell Cave and the nearby small caves that are part of the Cassell Cave drainage system, including a map of the entire system. 25 map sheets, 28 figures, 60 pages. \$10

The Caves and Karst of Grant County, West Virginia, WVASS Bulletin #17, George Dasher, editor, Dedicated to Roy Sites, geologist, native, and long-time resident of the county, Copyrighted Sept 2010, Includes: 120 pages in length, 90 caves, 18 karst springs, 87 pictures, 34 maps, 4 geological schematics, 4 envelope maps, cave descriptions, geological description of the county, two geological columns, acknowledgments, a description of WVASS, a list of WVASS publications, a warning to people entering caves, Cave and landowner laws, cave map legend, and an index. \$18

WVASS Bulletin #15 – Caves and Karst of Pendleton County by George Dasher, 2001. 404 pages describing 326 caves with 172 cave maps, 23 as fold outs, with 202 photos. \$45

Virginia Cave Week 2011

by Meredith Hall Weberg

Mark this on your calendars: Virginia Cave Week is April 17–23, 2011. Cave Week's goal is to educate people about caves and karst areas, particularly teachers and schoolchildren. See the Web page at www.vacaveweek.com, which contains numerous links to cave-related Web pages as well as activities teachers can do with students. This year's theme is "Bats and the Webs of Life."

Grand Caverns Heritage Day June 4, 2011

by Jim McConkey

Grand Caverns will be hosting its first (annual?) Heritage Day on June 4, 2011. Plans include daytime outdoors exhibits by Civil War and other reenactors, living history exhibits, and folk artisans of all types. The highlight of the day will be a Grand Illumination and Ball starting just after the park's normal closing time. For \$25, visitors will be treated to a candlelight tour of the cave, a light dinner consisting of period foods, and dancing in the cave to two live bands in two different rooms, with the cave spectacularly lit by hundreds of candles. Period dress is encouraged for the ball, and ticket sales are being limited to 100 to keep the cave from getting too crowded with dancers. It will be the most interesting underground event in many years! Get your tickets while they last.

Heritage Day will fall on a normal VAR project weekend, and the \$5 per carload general admission will be waived for volunteers. If you are a folk artisan of any type (blacksmith, potter, broom makers, etc.), please contact me if you would like to participate. There is no charge for exhibiting, and you may sell your wares. We are still desperately looking for a square/contra dance caller who would be willing to travel to Grottoes for the dance and preferably donate their services. If you know any callers who might be interested, please contact me ASAP. Whatever you do, do not miss this unique event and please come out and support Grand Caverns!

[See the Heritage Day flyer in this issue]

Cave Hunting Experiments With a Thermal Imager

by Jim McConkey

Huddling as close as we could around the roaring fire on a 15 degree night at Grand Caverns this winter, we got to discussing how the extreme cold might be of some use in finding caves. Most cavers know that many caves have been discovered by someone observing steam rise from an entrance on a cold day. A fireman in the group started recanting tales of using a thermal imager to find hot spots and colleagues in a smoky, burning building, and it got us wondering if such a thermal imager might be of some use in finding caves. We did not ask too many questions when a professional thermal imager showed up the following month!

The park's maintenance crew reported that very weekend that they had just seen steam rising off the hill a few days before, coating the tress above it with shimmering crystals of ice. We decided to check out their observation after dark, with the ambient temperature around 20 degrees. We had previously determined that the steam they had seen must have been issuing from Watertank Cave, which is connected by impassably small cracks to the Kentucky area of the New Section in Grand Caverns and that breaths with the cave. We went to the spot where the maintenance crew had been, but saw nothing unusual from the ground by eye or with the imager. The cave is good 100 feet up along the hiking path, so we decided to take a closer look. From 10 to 15 feet away from the entrance, the thermal imager showed that the entrance and the rocks above it looked hot. We found another hot spot at the base of a rock outcrop near the actual water tank, which is 150 feet back down the hill, but couldn't see anything in the light.

We went back down the hill and up towards the entrance to Grand Caverns. The imager showed some lightness near the entrance to Forgotten Saltpeter Cave, but that one is small and we don't believe it breathes much. Up at the entrance building to Grand, we could find no heat leakage from around the building (and we know there is leakage), but the main power transformer was lit up brightly behind its fence. On the other end of the building, the bat gate over the main entrance itself was lit up brightly.

We continued down the hill towards Madisons Cave, looking periodically at the hillside. We could not discern Mad As Hell Cave from the path (it is one room with a large entrance and probably doesn't breathe at all). Further down the path, I spied a hot spot on the side of the hill, not near any known caves. Upon closer investigation, we found a large rock covered with green moss and condensed dew. The rest of the hill is devoid of live vegetation. It appears that cave air is leaking out at this point, and there has been some recent collapsing of dirt. This is not on park property, but the owner was with us and we may go back and try digging at that point with his permission. We could not discern the entrance to Madisons Cave from the road, but it is about 100 feet up the hill. We headed back towards camp across a field and I took one last long distance look at the hill. I saw a hot spot a ways up the hill and Tommy volunteered to climb up. Of course, he stuck out like a sore thumb on the imager, and we were able to guide him directly to the hot spot. It was at the base of a limestone outcrop, but he could not find any openings or air blowing.

Back at camp, we tried to image our tents, one of which contained two cavers who had turned in early. We could not see them at all, but the bottom of the tent under their rain fly shone brightly. The other (empty) tents were dark. We could

see the hot motors and tires of the vehicles, and where Craig had turned the heater in his truck. On the back of the fireplace, we could clearly see where the fire was, with the mortar particularly warm. A dog's pawprints glowed visibly for several second wherever he had been, but human footprints, insulated by shoes, did not show as well.

Bottom line: The thermal imager seems to work well for caves at close range, like the 20 to 40 feet it would typically be used for in a burning building, but is much less effective at hill-scanning distances of 100+ feet. But it did find us a dig, and we have a bunch more locations to try. It will be interesting to see how it works underground with everything (?) at relatively the same temperature. We still have a lot more playing to do in the name of cave finding science, but this was a good start!

VAR Mailing List Has a New Keeper

By Meredith Hall Weberg

I would like to thank Susan Crowley for volunteering to take over the upkeep of the VAR Mailing List. I figured nine years was enough for me doing it. Find her e-mail address on page 2. Send your VAR dues and renewals to the VAR Treasurer, John Fox, who will send your mailing information to Susan. Checks must go to John! Mail to John Fox, PO Box 1056, Radford, VA 24143. Thanks.

NSS Headquarters Location Options

by Carol Tiderman

The “discussion” regarding the future location of the NSS Headquarters is getting serious. I believe that the new Headquarters will not only enhance the services to the membership but will facilitate public outreach and, hopefully, public funding of our activities to preserve and conserve caves, karst, and their contents.

Locations currently under consideration:

Huntsville, Alabama:

- Cahaba Shrine Temple
- University Office Park

Mammoth Cave, Kentucky, Area:

- Indian Cave
- Cedar Hill
- I-65 Interchange at Cave City Exit

Bowling Green, Kentucky:

- Lost River Cave

More information about each location is on the NSS Web site at www.caves.org/commission/hq/files/Download/ReportToBOGApril2011.pdf

It's important that you let the Directors and NSS officers know what you want.

Please do not hesitate to contact them (and me) and let us know how you feel. We're coming up on the next Board of Governors meeting the first weekend in April in Albuquerque. Any specific comments you send will help with this contentious issue. You can reach me at ctider@ymail.com and you can reach the entire BOG at BOG@caves.org.

Obituary

Robert Hall Handley NSS 1002

by Todd and Scott Handley, and George Dasher

Robert Hall Handley, age 82, of Renick, died on Saturday, January 15, 2011. He was born on April 21, 1928 in Thomasville, Georgia, and was the son of the late Charles Overton Sr. and Nelle Hall Handley.

Bob was driven by his interest in preserving a clean environment for future generations, and he felt that everyone should be able to enjoy the natural world around them. He had worked with many conservation projects to fight strip mining for coal, to lobby for more wilderness areas, and to ensure that people have clean water. He was a founding member of the West Virginia Association for Cave Studies and the West Virginia Cave Conservancy, a member of the National Speleological Society, the first president of the Digging Section (of the NSS), a member of the American Society of Dowsers, and was involved with many other caving organizations. He was the President of the Greenbrier River Watershed Association, a director of the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy, and a life member of the Greenbrier Historical Society (where he had a family interest in maintaining the local history).

Bob was famous for his cave exploration, and he spent most of his life helping others share his passion. He first went underground at age nine in 1937 in Higginbotham Cave #1 (in Greenbrier County), using pine torches for light, and he joined the National Speleological Society in college while caving with the VPI Grotto. Bob moved to Charleston after college, where he joined the Charleston Grotto. His “never say can't” attitude toward ridgewalking and cave exploration

was significant to the discovery of many cave systems. One of his greatest contributions (and his favorite cave) was in what we now know as the Organ Cave System, which is currently over 36 miles long, and where the Handley Room is named for him.

Other favorite caves included Patton, Foxhole #1, Ludington, McClungs, Buckeye Creek, Rapps, and Culverson Creek, all of which are in the lower Greenbrier River Valley. Bob also caved all over West Virginia and the East Coast, as well as in TAG, Mexico, Belize, China, Costa Rica, and Hawaii (a place he particularly enjoyed).

In 1949, Bob, Bob Flack, and Bob Barnes were three Charleston Grotto members who connected the Hedricks-Masters Cave to Organ Cave, making it the first long, multi-entrance cave in West Virginia. They exited the cave by walking past the tourists on the Organ commercial tour. In 1959, Bob, Bob Flack, and Conrad Revak connected Organ to Lipps Cave (this was the caving trip that Bob counted as the best of his life).

Bob also explored (in Organ) down the Jones Canyon to the Rutherford Room area, the Humphreys-Lunar Way-Dressing Room area, the Revak Room area, the Cyclops Hall area, and in both levels of the cave north of the Flack-Handley area. In addition, it was Bob who lost his sandwich while exploring north of the Dressing Room in a large, mazy passage that was later named Handleys Lost Sandwich Passage. This sandwich was found decades later by Ray Cole, who was on a D.C. Grotto survey trip.

Bob was one of the first cavers to cross the Flack-Handley Turnpike (back before it actually was a turnpike), which is a narrow, bedrock ledge that connects the Flack and Handley Rooms, and which has about

50 feet of exposure, and he was famous for crossing Cyclops Hall in the very exposed ceiling crack (about 25 feet above the floor) and then climbing down the other side of that large trunk passage (he said he would never do that again!). Prior to that, Bob was on the original Cyclops discovery trip, where he, Bob Flack, and Seigel Workman knew nothing of proper vertical techniques. They were able to climb up their rope, going hand-over-hand, but they could not turn their bodies to enter the awkward, tiny Cyclops Eye at the top of the 20-foot-high drop. Fortunately, Bob Flack had read in the *NSS News* about Prusik knots, and the group fashioned these out of a clothesline handline to ascend the drop and exit the cave.

Bob was on the first-ever caving trips into both Culverson Creek and Ludington Caves (both with Earl Thierry), he was on the original Bone-Norman connection trip, and he (together with Liz McGowan, Bob Stepp, and Walt Pirie) established a voice connection between Rapps and Buckeye Creek Caves. Bob was the second person to descend the 139-foot-high Suicide Falls in Pocahontas County's Cass Cave, and he was the first per-



Bob Handley in Simmons Mingo Cave during Project SIMMER in 1973. (Photo from the Potomac Speleological Club Archives, courtesy of Ed Devine).

son to explore the immense room beyond. Bob was the first person (on a Charleston Grotto trip) to descend the 120-foot-deep entrance drop of Grapevine Cave, and he later worked with the landowner to dig a new entrance to that cave and turn it into the commercial Lost World Caverns.

Bob was one of the early explorers in Floyd Collins Crystal Cave, the cave where the modern exploration began of what would become Kentucky's Mammoth Cave System (and it was Bob who was on the cover of the first edition of *The Caves Beyond*). He participated in both the 1954 C3 NSS Expedition (to that cave) and Project SIMMER, the 1973 NSS Expedition to explore Simmons-Mingo Cave in Randolph County.

Bob was known for his climbing abilities and rope techniques, and he was famous for writing his initials in high, hard-to-reach places, such as on the ceiling of many of the caves he explored. Bob would not allow other cavers to follow him up his climbs. He would instead insist (much to the relief of those following him) that they use a belay (provided by him).

Bob is the oldest person, at age 81, to rappel the 860-foot-high, free-fall drop below the New River Bridge on Bridge Day. He had also rappelled Borbollon, in Mexico, which is a drop of about 700 feet, and he bounced El Sotano, the deepest free-fall pit in the Western Hemisphere, which has a drop of about 1,275 feet. In 1951, at the NSS Convention (hosted by the Charleston Grotto in Charleston), Bob gave the Society's members their first demonstration on rappelling, when he descended 65 feet down the side of one of the downtown buildings in less than seven seconds, much to the amazement of the spectators. This was a body rappel, and although Bob did not admit it at

the time, he was burned by the rope during the rappel.

In an ironic twist of fate, Bob fell 15 feet while inside his home in 1978 and broke his neck, paralyzing him and leaving him a quadriplegic. It was only with great effort that Bob was able to learn to walk again, and one of his greatest personal achievements was being able to walk down to Blackwater Falls within five months of the accident.

In 1996, Bob retired to caving, from Union Carbide, where he had worked as a Senior Engineer. He then moved from his long-time home in Saint Albans to Renick, in the Greenbrier Valley, to be closer to the caves and caving areas he loved. Bob was made a Fellow of the Society in 1968, and he was presented with the Lew Bicking Award in 1994 at the Barrackville, Texas, NSS Convention. This is one of the Society's highest awards, and is given annually to an explorer of great note. Bob was also presented with the Carnegie Award (an honor that was given at each OTR to an individual who had made a long-term contribution to caving and speleology), as well as the VAR Outstanding Member Award (in 2001).

In the final quote from Pam and Tom Malabad's interview of Bob in the *2000 NSS Convention Guidebook*, Bob said: "I believe that, if we are seriously interested in the future of caving, we should all belong to the national association, which is of course the NSS. One of the things I would like to pass on is that cavers should keep track of their experiences in a log of some sort, and get your thoughts and feelings in print. Caving has got a lot of facets to it and a lot of it is to study and learn, whether we're in new caves or old ones. Be kind to your fellow cavers... help out when help is needed."

Survivors include: one brother, John Handley and his wife, Julie, of Jacksonville Florida; two sons and

their spouses, Scott and Meri, of Vancouver, Washington, and Todd and Julie, of Parkersburg; four grand-children, Meghan, Quinn, McKellam, and Austin. In addition to his parents, Bob was preceded in death by one brother, Charles Handley, Jr.

A "Celebration of Life" will be held in memory of Bob on May 28 at Lost World Caverns in Greenbrier County. The family requests that memorial contributions be made to any of the following organizations in Bob's name: the West Virginia Cave Conservancy, Greenbrier River Watershed Association, Greenbrier Historical Society, or the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy

[Originally printed in the April, 2011, West Virginia Caver (V29n2p7).]

Evelyn Bradshaw 1915–2011

by Bob Hoke

Evelyn W. Bradshaw, NSS 11874, died on January 29, 2011, at the age of 95. She had been diagnosed with Alzheimer's in 2005, but the immediate cause of death was pneumonia.

Evelyn was a major figure in the National Speleological Society from the mid-1970s until around 2000. She served in many positions during her years of service to the Society, but her most important role was as the Chair of the Internal Organizations (IO) Committee from 1975 to 2000. During her long tenure she actively encouraged cavers to form new grottos and helped them with the initial organization and administration.

She tried to play peacemaker and arbitrator in numerous inter- and intra-grotto "turf battles" with generally good success. She also served two terms on the Board of Governors (from 1978 to 1984), she was on the NSS Executive Search Committee, and she worked closely with the Congress of Grottos. She was made a Fellow of the Society in 1977 and awarded the William J. Stephenson Outstanding Service Award in 1985.

Evelyn was very active in the VAR and attended most VAR meetings. For many years she maintained the VAR database used to mail the *Region Record* and frequently handled registration at VAR meetings.

Evelyn was born in 1915 and grew up in various New England locations. She graduated cum laude from Radcliff in 1937 with a degree in mathematics. During World War II she worked as a secretary with the American Friends Service Committee (Quakers) in Philadelphia. She continued to work for various Quaker organizations until her retirement and then with the Law of the Sea Project for several more years.

After World War II she went to mainland China with a United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Mis-



Evelyn Bradshaw at the 1983 NSS Convention in Elkins, West Virginia. (Photo by Chip Clark).

sion and while there met her future husband. Once, when asked her about her time in China, she said she saw awful things and declined to discuss the subject further. After China, she and her husband moved to North Carolina. Evelyn was briefly involved in the civil rights protests there and later in the Virginia Beach, Virginia, area.

Sometime in the 1960s Evelyn went to her first wild cave (Porters Cave in Virginia) with her daughter's Girl Scout troop. After several more cave trips she joined the NSS in 1969. In 1971 she helped found the Tidewater Grotto in the Virginia Beach area. She served on the first Virginia Cave Commission (later renamed the Virginia Cave Board), which soon became embroiled in a successful effort to stop development on top of three historic Virginia caves. Evelyn was a fixture at regional caving events and NSS conventions for many years. She set up her own tent and camped at these events until she was at least in her late 80s.

Evelyn claimed that her occupation was "secretary," but that is like saying Michelangelo was a housepainter. Sure, Evelyn could take shorthand and accurately type faster than most people think, but her skills and personality weren't those of a mere secretary. She was skilled at getting things done and she was a tireless worker. Despite some controversial actions, the Society and the Grotto greatly benefited from her years of service and active involvement. She will be missed.

Minutes of the Fall VAR Region Meet October 3, 2010

Meeting was called to order at 9:13 a.m.

Secretary: Carol Tideman – A motion was made by Blue Ridge 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 Bubble Cave to accept the financial report. The Virginia Cave Board seconded. Motion passed.

Vice Chair: Judy Fisher – Nothing to report.

Chairman: Craig Hindman – Will be covered in the agenda items.

Conservation Co-Chair: Meredith Hall Weberg – No report.

VAR Outstanding Service

Award: Meredith Hall Weberg – Awards were announced for Ellie Florance and Charlie Maus.

Landowner Recognition

Awards: Janet Tinkham – Nominate folks who help the Region. Email a reason for the award or use the form online.

Landowner Legal Support Committee: No news is good news.

Region Record: Send articles and pictures. Deadline for next issue is December 15.

VAR List Server: Walt Pirie – No report.

VAR Web Site: Jim McConkey – Contacts need to be updated for grottos.

Cave Bucks: J.C. Fisher – Alive and well. Tri-State is closing in on \$5K. Send the funds out, don't sit on them.

Virginia Speleological Survey: Rick Lambert – Two more caves

than West Virginia. The regional library for Virginia and West Virginia is being established as a different 501(c)(3) organization. The building size is adequate and by spring there will be more information available on what funding will be needed.

West Virginia Speleological Survey: George Dasher – The Tucker County Bulletin is almost done. Grant County is done. It will cost \$15 and contains 90 caves and 18 springs. There are more bulletins in the works. Please send Bill Balfour and the county coordinators any information on new finds.

West Virginia Cave Con-

servancy: John Pearson – Lobelia Saltpeter Cave has been closed by the owners, the Southeastern Cave Conservancy. WVCC caves are open. Please decon. Any closures will be discussed at the November WVCC meeting – pending input, in writing, from the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources.

Virginia Karst Program: Joey Fagan – No updates.

Southeastern Cave Conservancy, Inc.: John Pearson – No report.

Grand Caverns/Cave Hill Survey: Jim McConkey – The project is going strong. The dig in Fountain Cave continues. Grand conservation and history work continues.

Virginia Cave Board: Dave Socky – The summer meeting was delayed until the fall due to lack of a quorum. The next meeting will be on November 20 in Richmond. They will be meeting the new head of the DCR.

Skyline Caverns: An Eagle Scout has adopted the nature trail and will install benches, etc.

Virginia Karst Trail: Meredith Hall Weberg – No report. Still in the idea stage.

Cave Conservancy of the Virginias: Joey Fagan – Alive and well.

Spring Survey Project: Joey Fagan – Still alive.

Youth Group Liaison: Joey Fagan – Joey is looking for a list of folks who lead caving trips.

Host Report: D.C. and Baltimore Grottos – 189 pre-registered, 10 no-shows, 84 on-site registrations, 263 in attendance, over 100 from MAR..

Old Business

VAR Hosts:

Spring 2011: No volunteers.

Fall 2011: No volunteers.

Spring 2012: No volunteers. New River is investigating a site, but price is an issue to be resolved.

White-Nose Syndrome: Cindy Sandeno of the U.S. Forest Service introduced herself. She is the new Cave Coordinator for the entire Forest Service. A new brochure was presented regarding caving in TAG. Do not take gear from the Virginias to that area. Some gear will be available. Leftover supplies from the Vermont convention’s decon operation are available to anyone present. Clean your gear between cave trips in Virginia and

stay out of areas that do not have WNS.

New Business

Crystal Caverns at Hupps Hill: JC Fisher - A detailed plan is needed. The cost will be approximately \$1,500 per year. We are not responsible for major repairs. The NSS can provide insurance. A point of contact would be established to coordinate use. There would be quarterly events. Donations would go back to the VAR. The VAR would solicit grants. A committee would be created. The third weekend would be set aside as a conservation weekend. Project Underground would be interested in using the site for training.

The Cave Board moved: “The VAR supports “in general” the concept of the NSS’s involvement at Crystal Caverns.” New River seconded. Passed, CCV abstained.

The Chair created a committee to develop a proposal - John Pearson, Judy and J.C. Fisher, Jim McConkey, and Bob Denton.

Grant Requests: No requests.

Election: D.C. moved to reelect the same slate of officers. Cave Board seconded. Motion passed.

Announcements

George Dasher said he has cave protection signs for anyone who wants to install them.

There was a thank-you for Aida Mothes for letting us have the meeting on her property.

There was a request for help in tearing down the site and cleaning up.

Adjournment

Tri-State moved to adjourn, Bubble seconded.

Meeting Adjourned at 11:21 a.m.

Respectfully submitted:
Carol Tiderman

If you want to continue receiving the *Region Record*, please read this . . .

If this page is marked “TIME TO RENEW” it means that your *Region Record* subscription has run out and this is the last issue you will receive. Subscriptions are automatically extended when you attend a Spring or Fall VAR meeting, or you can subscribe to the *Region Record*. The last issue you will receive (Volume-Number) is indicated on the top line of your mailing label. More detailed information about subscriptions is listed in the box on page 2.

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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: **John Fox, PO Box 1056, Radford, VA 24143.**

GRAND CAVERNS HERITAGE DAY

JUNE 4, 2011



LIVING HISTORY EXHIBITS

CANDLE LIGHT TOUR AND BALL

To celebrate our rich heritage and in observance of the upcoming sesquicentennial of the Civil War, Grand Caverns will be celebrating Heritage Day on June 4, 2011. General admission to the park for Heritage Day will be \$5 per carload which will be applied to caverns tours if taken. Heritage Day will include a civil war encampment, living history exhibits throughout the day, and a candlelight tour and authentic ballroom dance in the evening. Ticket sales for the candle light tour and ball will be limited to the first 100 people and advance reservations will be required. The candlelight tour and ball will take place between 6-8 pm inside the caverns. Admission for the candle light tour and ball is \$25 per person. There will not be an admission charge to the park if you have a Candlelight Tour and Ball ticket. Period dress for the ball is encouraged but not required. Light refreshments during the Ball will be provided.

GRAND CAVERNS

5 GRAND CAVERNS DR.

P O BOX 478

GROTTOES, VA 24441

WWW.GRANDCAVERNS.COM

EMAIL:

CAVERNSINFO@CL.GROTTOES.VA.US

PHONE: 540-249-5705



Advance Ticket Request Through May 20, 2011

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: _____

_____ Tickets @ \$25 Each =\$ _____

Please mail to Grand Caverns address on right.

WHERE HISTORY RUNS DEEP

SPRING 2011 VAR MEETING AGENDA

Sunday, May 1, 2011 9:00 am

- I. **Call to Order**
- II. **Delegate Registration**
- III. **Distribution of Agenda**
- IV. **Call for Independents**
- V. **Officer Reports:**
 - a. **Secretary:** Carol Tiderman
 - 1. Motion to accept Fall 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-serv:** Walt Pirie
 - g. **VAR Web Site:** Jim McConkey
 - h. **Cave Bucks:** J.C. Fisher
 - i. **Virginia Speleological Survey (VSS):** Rick Lambert
 - j. **West Virginia Speleological Survey (WVASS):** George Dasher
 - k. **West Virginia Cave Conservancy (WVCC):** John Pearson
 - l. **Virginia Karst Program:** Joey Fagan
 - m. **Southeastern Cave Conservancy, Inc. (SCCi):** Walt Pirie
 - n. **Grand Caverns / Cave Hill:** Jim McConkey
 - o. **Virginia Cave Board:** Tom Lera
 - p. **Virginia Karst Trail:** Andy Reeder
 - q. **Cave Conservancy of the Virginias (CCV):**
 - r. **Spring Survey Project:** Charlie Maus
 - s. **Crystal Cave at Hupps Hill**
 - t. **Other** _____
- VII. **Host Grotto Report:** Front Royal Grotto
- VIII. **Old Business:**
 - a. **Host Grotto for the Fall 2011 Meeting:** _____
 - b. **Host Grotto for the Spring 2012 Meeting:** _____
 - c. **Host Grotto for the Fall 2012 Meeting:** _____
 - d. **WNS**
 - e. **Other**
 - f. _____
 - g. _____
- IX. **New Business:**
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
- X. **Grant Requests Submitted to the Chair**
- XI. **Announcements**
- XII. **Adjournment**

Spring VAR 2011 Pre-Registration Form

Please print this form and mail it with your check, payable to **Front Royal Grotto** with "Spring VAR" on the memo line, to:

Front Royal Grotto
c/o Eric W. Berge
12612 Marsteller Drive
Nokesville, VA 20181

Name _____ AGE* _____

Name _____ AGE* _____

Name _____ AGE* _____

Name _____ AGE* _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone Number (____) _____ E-mail _____

VAR Fees:

Use pre-registration prices only if your form is postmarked on or before April 1, 2011

Cost after April 2, 2011: Adults: \$30.00, Children: \$20.00

Adult (13 + years) with meal: \$26.00 x _____ = \$ _____

Children (4-12 years) with meal: \$20.00 x _____ = \$ _____

Vegetarian Meal YES / NO (circle one) How Many Vegetarian Meals = _____

Children 3 and under: Free

Total amount enclosed: \$ _____

Interested in Pancake breakfast on Sunday Morning? YES / NO (circle one) How many? _____

*** If you do not provide your age above you will receive a non alcoholic beverage VAR name tag and will not be served alcohol. We will be verifying age at time of registration.**

Spring VAR 2011

Hosted by Front Royal Grotto

April 29 - May 1, 2011

East Fork Campground in Durbin, W.Va.