



# The Region Record

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## Spring VAR Meeting Information

By J. C. Fisher

Seasons Greetings from the Members of Tri-State Grotto.

As visions of sugar plums and going underground dance through your head let us invite you to the Spring VAR 2013 instead.

Once again, Tri-State Grotto is hosting a Spring VAR meeting. The event will be held at Dilley's Mill located in Buckskin Scout Reservation, near Cass and Marlinton, West Virginia. The dates for this event will be the 17th, 18th, and 19th of May. This is later than normal, but we've had to adjust to the Scout's schedule. We have lots of cave trips planned; plus lots of non-caving activities such as biking on the Greenbrier River Trail; canoeing or kayaking on the Greenbrier River; and hiking.

To start off a great weekend, Tri-State's Chair – John DiCarlo – will host a bluegrass get-together Friday night, 7 pm.

Saturday morning, Vice Chair Bob Bennett has a very large lineup of "led trips." Those who pre-register will have an opportunity to sign up early. Some of the trips we're working on include Swago, Lightners, Billy Clay Pit, and Simmons Mingo. Saturday night's dinner will feature pit barbequed pork with all the fixings and drinks, and we haven't forgotten you vegetarians. We're working on a Saturday night speaker. John Fox will DJ with the traditional cavers' libations available on Saturday

night. The always popular VAR business meting will be held Sunday morning for you speleo-politicians. Front Royal Grotto will do its wonderful Sunday Breakfast.

A pre-registration Form is included with this newsletter. We strongly advise you to use this. By pre-registering you also insure we have a meal for you and it makes planning a whole lot easier.

We look forward to seeing you in the spring. More information will be in the *Spring Region Record*. For now, have a Wonderful Holiday from all of us at Tri-State.

If you have questions contact Judy Fisher at [cavelady50@yahoo.com](mailto:cavelady50@yahoo.com) or call 304-258-4974.

[Editor's note: The date of the Spring VAR Meeting was originally April 26-28].

While ridge walking, Grotto members identify sinks filled with trash so that arrangements can be made to get them cleaned out. The REAP Program receives a portion of the tipping fees that landfill operators collect from trash haulers and use that money to pay contractors to clean up abandoned trash piles.

Two sinks were cleaned on Spring Hollow Farm on Second Creek near the Greenbrier/Monroe County line. This farm is slated to become a participant in the Farmland Protection Program that uses deed restrictions to prevent future development of the property and to insure that it remains farmland in perpetuity. More than seven tons of material, mostly old fence wire, was removed and taken to the landfill. In the process of cleaning one of the sinks, an opening blowing steam was discovered. We hope to get permission from the landowner to dig on this opening to see if it leads to cave passage.

Two sinks were cleaned on property near Sinks Grove. Two vehicle frames, lots of wire and trash, totaling 6.72 tons were removed and taken to the landfill. Again, a small opening blowing lots of air was encountered. This sink lies directly above a remote section of Scott Hollow Cave. The landowner is caver friendly and has given us permission to dig as soon as deer season is over.

One sink was cleaned on property near Wolf Creek. Five and a quarter tons of old farm implements, wire and trash were

## Sinkhole Clean Up in Monroe County

By Rocky Parsons

December 10, 2012

This fall, G.R.O.S.S. Grotto, working with the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection's (WVDEP) Rehabilitation Environmental Action Plan (REAP), sponsored trash clean up on four sinkholes in Monroe County, West Virginia.

(continued on page 3)

## ***The Region Record***

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

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### **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   | <b>Deadline</b> for submitting material for the Spring issue of the Region Record   |
| May 1     | <b>Deadline for getting the preregistration discount</b> for the Spring VAR meeting. On-site registrants may not get dinner.        |
| May 17-19 | <b>Spring VAR meeting</b> in Pocahontas County, West Virginia. See article and registration form in this issue.                     |
| Aug. 5-9  | <b>NSS Convention</b> in Shippensburg, Pennsylvania. See <a href="http://www.nss2013.com">www.nss2013.com</a> for more information. |

### **List your Event Here**

If you have a caving event that is of regional interest please send information to the Editors listed above so it can be included in the calendar.

## Sinkhole Clean-Up

(continued from page 1)

removed and taken to the landfill. No openings were located during this cleanup, but a sinking stream was identified that needs to be dye traced.

Another sink near Sweet Springs and several in the Johnson's Crossroads area are also slated to be cleaned, but these will have to wait until spring.

Many thanks to the WVDEP's REAP Program and to Sam Stalnaker, the local Program Manager for working with us to clean up the sinks. This is a valuable program that benefits the environment, the landowner and cavers. There is no cost to the landowner or the people sponsoring the clean up. If you know of a sink filled with trash in West Virginia and the landowner wants to get it cleaned, contact the WVDEP REAP Program at 800-322-5530 or [www.dep.wv.gov/dlr/reap](http://www.dep.wv.gov/dlr/reap). This Web site contains a link to a map showing which Program Managers cover the different parts of the state and have direct contact information. This is a great way to establish good cave owner relations.

## Fall VAR Meeting Wrap-Up

By Rolland Moore

At the Spring Meeting of the VAR in 2012, I was the only one offering to host the Fall Meeting. It felt awkward not being a part of any group or larger organization, but I felt confident I could do it and was full of ideas to make it more fun! In the end success could be defined differently, but no one would argue it was a failure and, I believe most people had fun. Cavers came from as far away as Canada and Mexico. We also had guests from Indiana, Texas, and Florida. There were 111 guests registered in total with 5 pre-registrants not attending.

There were 14 Rockbridge County caves open for the weekend. There were several pits available including one 100-foot drop. A large trip was fielded to Cave Spring, the longest cave in the county. Mike Futrell of the Virginia Speleological Survey (VSS) provided several objectives for new discovery. A clean up of Bare Cave was taken on by several participants who removed a half-dozen bags of trash from the cave. Sunday at the business meeting John

Pearson volunteered to manage the gating of Hickman Cave and the Cave Conservancy of the Virginias volunteered to provide financial support for materials. The owner of Zimmermans Cave expressed an interest in finding an access liaison and requested support for managing his cave (contact Rolland Moore for more information).

The banquet was catered by Aida Ferreira Pina of the Paamul Grotto. This enabled her to join me for a week of



Fence wire and other debris being removed from a sinkhole in Monroe County, West Virginia. (Photo by Rocky Parsons)

surveying in the first and ninth longest known caves in the world. When the event got going, she became less like a caterer and more like indispensable event staff.

Thursday night we began making signs. At 10 a.m. Friday, she opened registration where she stayed until 2 a.m. the next day. After the cave trips were fielded Saturday morning we left the site to prepare the banquet. What she accomplished in the next five hours was nothing short of a miracle. Additionally, special thanks go out to Sarah Richards and Laura Sneed for providing name-tags at no cost and not asking for a discount! Special thanks to all the trip leaders and those who took it upon themselves to self-lead a trip. Special thanks to Joey Fagan for helping with trash during the banquet. Special thanks to everyone who attended and made the event what it was! At the end of the event the campground was spotless with no trash for me to pick up, even the land owner was impressed, THANKS!

Being my first event I learned a lot. I spent too much in the following ways: porta pots (\$230), beer (\$150), and the banquet (at least \$250). I should have spent more on soda and water. Other things could have been done differently too. The biggest lesson was that if I do this again, hire a local caterer!

Attendance was lower than expected for several reasons; however, now 111 VAR members know there are caves in Rockbridge County, and they also know I can throw a party. I look forward to doing this again and being more profitable in the future.

The registration page for the Web site, [www.fallvar2012.com](http://www.fallvar2012.com), is being repurposed for the month of December accepting donations to cover the \$810 shortcoming of the event. The first \$444 raised goes to paying the VAR fee. The remainder will be used for food and gas during the January expedition of the Proyecto Sierra Mazateca. Additionally I would like to encourage internal organizations of the VAR to make tax-exempt

donations to this organization in support of deep caving, as well as cultural and ecological preservation of Southern Mexico. See [www.proyectosierramazateca.org](http://www.proyectosierramazateca.org) for more information.

## Fall 2012 VAR Meeting Financial Report

### Income:

Pre registered adults: (59 x \$30)	1,770
On-site Registration: (36 x \$35)	1,260
Saturday Evening pass: (8 x \$15)	105
Event help discount: (2 x \$20)	40
Event Staff discount: (5 x \$15)	75
Under 12 years old: (1 x \$0)	0
Total Income:	\$3,250

### Expenses:

Campground Rental:	500
Porta-Potties:	531
Tents and Chairs:	391
Band:	500
Signs and Welcome flyer:	35
PayPal payment processing:	53
Banquet:	1,250
Beer:	320
Soda and Water:	36
VAR Fee:	444
Total Expenses:	\$4,060
Event Loss:	\$810

Loss paid by host: \$366

Unpaid VAR Fee: \$444

spent about one hour setting up camp in the field closest to the registration/party area. My little Honda only bottomed out twice, on the way in and out, fully loaded with all our gear going over the bump at the bridge crossing into the field. We headed over to the bon fire to visit with friends.

I signed up for a Saturday hydrology and cave tour to Cave Springs Cave. Josh Rubinstein was our primary guide with Scott Wahlquist. The trip was limited to 10 people and was to leave around 9 am. There were a few people jockeying for positions, as we had more interest than those who had signed up. The members on the venture also included: Bru Randall, Clint Neill, David Knox, Bill Pond, Darlene Nelson, Josie Clemenzi, Brenden Banks, and me.

We had about five stops that involved a little hiking for the first 2 hours going over the hydrology and watershed of the area. Lots of interesting information on the watershed and general hydrology of the area. (see Clint Neill's report).

We arrived at the cave to change into our cave gear and got underground around noon. We encountered a lot of mud and once through the keyhole and a little more traversing, we found the water. The sign-up sheet and write-up said we'd be knee-deep in water. No mention of two duck-unders where you had to crawl on hands/knees... I got to lead through some boooming stream passage... found a few pot holes too... a little more than knee deep (on me). Several of us needed a hand up, foot, or push/pull to get through and around some of the passages/ledges. A very pretty, muddy cave and particularly slippery on the way out.... Good thing someone had a hand-line (that was needed in a few areas both on the way in and out). On the way out, on one steep slope, I kept sliding back down and it was just like a cartoon.....even with a hand line, I just couldn't get a grip with my knees or boots and kept sliding back down.

We were running a little late and the thought of a taco dinner kept everyone moving..... we did not want to miss out (there were about 100 people attending for the weekend). There was a bit of a wait as people negotiated the vertical keyhole. It's amazing to me that some of the men were able to get through, as I had a tough time getting through on the way out – maybe just being under-tall. Those of us through first, while waiting for everyone to get through the keyhole, was the only spot a few us really seemed to get a little chilled... We hoofed it out after that and exited the cave close to 6 p.m. and took a few group photos.

Back to camp to clean up and get some dinner. During dinner, an announcement was made to sign a card for Craig Hindman, who had been in a terrible accident. We were shown a great slide presentation on caving in Mexico. Afterwards, the band fired up and several of us did a little dancing. We later learned from the drummer, that this was the band's second gig and they only knew about 25 songs (not all of which were very danceable as I kept making requests and didn't get any of those songs played or anything close to it). We spent time with friends around the bonfire until late and some stayed up to the wee hours of the morning.

Sunday morning was the VAR meeting. We learned that Jim McConkey had been thrown by a horse and hurt his back. A number of other people were not able to make the meeting, but we got through the agenda. Judy Fisher did a great job running the meeting with Mary Sue Socky taking notes. After the meeting, everyone was packing up, as we were supposed to be off site by noon.

The weather was perfect the entire weekend. A nice fall crispness in the air. It was great to visit with a number of people I hadn't seen in about 20 years. **A BIG Thank You to Rolland Moore**, all trip leaders and everyone else who helped out for this event!

## Fall VAR 2012 September 21–23 Lexington, Virginia

By Lynn Ott, NSS #15257FE

After work on Friday, 9/21, I picked up Bill Nelson in Pineville, West Virginia, and we headed to Lexington, Virginia (about 3 hours), for the Fall VAR. We were lost for about 45 minutes once we made the second turn off the freeway, but with the help of a local guy, we found our destination. We got registered and

## 2012 Fall VAR Meeting, Rockbridge County, Lexington Virginia

By Clint Neill

The 2012 fall VAR meeting was held Sept 21–23, 2012 in Rockbridge County Virginia just outside of the town of Lexington. It was hosted by Rolland Moore to benefit the Sierra Mazateca project. This project is dedicated to the exploration and conservation of the karst ecosystem in the Sierra Mazateca, Oaxaca, Mexico. In addition to discovering and exploring caves, the group is focused on preserving the highland cloud forests, precious water resources, and Mazatec cultural pride. They develop conservation programs to educate the students and also help generate markets for the organic foods produced in the Sierra Mazateca region, such as coffee, sugar, and honey.

Though it is a fairly long drive from Pittsburgh, I had a master plan to get my family's OK! I started by asking my wife if she would like to visit her sister and her family in Staunton, Virginia, which is about 35 miles from Lexington. After she and my son were all excited about the visit, I casually mentioned I might take a "little time" away for some caving. Eventually I slipped it in that I "might" be away Friday through Sunday. My wife was surprised that I would be willing to go alone. I explained that there are good people and interesting things to see and do everywhere if you travel with open eyes and an open mind.

Smartphones and GPS help a lot too! As an added bonus, I later I found out that Bru Randall was also going to attend.

The meeting was held at a horse farm about six miles outside of Lexington. My Garmin GPS had some curious ideas about how to get there, but they conveniently marked the way with some well-placed bright yellow VAR signs they made. The farm was

very well kept and had plenty of room for camping. Despite our proximity to Lexington, we were surrounded by mountainous terrain and no one I met had cell reception. There were no showers or potable water, but there were plenty of portable facilities complete with hand-washing stations. I exchanged email with Rolland a few weeks before the event and he mentioned he had gotten unexpectedly busy and had trouble finding the time to publicize the event. No vendors attended, but there were more than 100 participants.

Rockbridge County has approximately 200 known caves, and it is believed there are many more to be discovered. While there are lots of options, Rolland said he had a very difficult time organizing led cave trips. Bob Thren graciously offered his Rockbridge County cave database and there were a number of leads supplied by the Virginia Speleological Survey. Knowing there would be only a limited number of led trips, Bru and I visited the sign-up barn early Friday evening. A trip to Cave Spring Cave was listed as a hard trip. This is the largest known cave in the county with 1.5 miles of mapped passage. Rolland told us there were a number of hard climbs and some exposure. Bob Thren, as well as trip leaders Josh Rubinstein and Scott Wahlquist, assured us we would be fine so we were all set for the 9 a.m. meet up. We enjoyed a nice campfire and good conversations with old friends and some new ones before retiring reasonably early.

When we met up on Saturday, Josh asked the group of 10 if we would be interested in an above ground tour of the hydrology of the cave before we went underground. All agreed, so we set off on some county roads to see where the water in Cave Spring Cave originates. Josh had done dye tracing of the water sources a few years before with the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation. He explained about the dyes used and how they set charcoal traps to capture the passing of the dye. His

study showed that water in the cave was part of a different watershed than would be expected based on surface topography. His experiences have shown water does what water will, often against what our logic and science expects.

The water that ultimately ends up in the cave enters sinks and resurges at several locations as it travels down North Mountain. At one point a farmer set up a catch basin to be able to direct some of the water into a pipe several hundred yards long to water his livestock. The remainder flowed above ground for a while and then disappeared into a sink under an old junked Lincoln Town Car nearly buried in overgrowth that Josh dubbed "Town Car Sink." Further down the mountain the pipe emerged in a pasture and filled a watering trough. The overflow disappeared into an interesting limestone outcrop. The next stop was a large sinkhole next to a depression that held a small pond. A few years ago the water table dropped, and the entire pond disappeared into the sink! The last stop was the Lexington water treatment plant located not far from the cave entrance. The plant periodically rinses the filters into a holding pond where the water is treated with alum, a flocculent used remove suspended solids from the water. It is then pumped into a sink that ends up in the cave. I asked Josh if it creates problems in the cave, but he said it is considered harmless and actually causes the cave to have a rich variety of living creatures.

After the hydrology tour, we met with the cave owner. He is also a caver and has extensive knowledge of his cave. It is located near his home. It was later mentioned that he has received a Landowner Appreciation Award for his support of the caving community.

We suited up and set off for the cave early afternoon. The entrance is a fairly nondescript fissure with an internal gate. The beginning of the cave is a mazy section, but the trip leaders knew the way very well. Soon

we came to one of the challenges known as Scarlett's Fall, supposedly named over an accident from long ago. It is an intersection of two passages over a fairly deep fissure. It required a long stride to cross the gap made all the more difficult by a coating of slick mud over all of the hand- and foot-holds. With spotting from the leaders and Bru Randall, everyone managed to get across. At this point it became clear the group had a widely varied skill set and it might become an 'interesting' trip.

After chimneying across a number of fissures, we came to a tight sloping tube that led to a lower level and would eventually lead to the water passage. The cave has many great formations, but here was a particularly large and impressive white formation (see photo).

From there we made our way to a fissure with a 15-foot climb down into the water passage. Josh pointed out various locations where the water we studied above entered into the cave. Most of the water passage was less than knee deep, but one location requires crouching and crawling through the water to reach the "Wash Cycle," "Rinse Cycle," and of

course, the "Mud Cycle" that ultimately leads to the "Terminal Siphon." This final passage contained some truly beautiful gypsum crystals.

By now it was getting late, and we were in jeopardy of being late for the Saturday night Mayan Taco Bar planned by Aida Ferreira of Quintana Roo, Mexico!

There were a number of obstacles between us and a hopefully tasty dinner. In particular, the tight sloping tube that was greased with a coating of mud posed a major challenge. Without the aid of Scott Wahlquist, several of us, your author included, would still be in the cave! Teamwork and patience got us to the mazy entry of the cave. After a brief moment of route-finding we exited the cave around 6 p.m. While the cave was a bit challenging, it was very interesting and well-decorated and an all around excellent trip!

Since we were just a few miles from the meeting site, we would make that dinner after all! Alas, it didn't turn out as tasty as I hoped, but I'm not complaining. (Rumor has it complainers have to plan the next meeting ...)

After the Saturday night dinner, Tony Akers, the founder of the Sierra Mazateca project gave an interesting presentation about the caving and other activities of his team. Then it was time for three half kegs of beer and musical entertainment by the Graham Spice Band, a newly formed local group. They played a wide variety of music and covered many artists remarkably well. The wife of the singer/ lead guitarist popped on stage occasionally and belted out some terrific trumpet solos. When the music ended, we migrated off to a nearby farm field for a massive bonfire! The sky was crystal clear and "billions and billions" of stars lit up the night! It was so nice we stayed up until 3 a.m. There was a group of six



A large flowstone formation in Cave Spring Cave (Rockingham County, Virginia). (Photo by Clint Neill)

young male college students from Richmond at the fire who were convinced by some wily female to go fetch the keg. Despite the great efforts of many, that third keg was never tapped!

No big surprise, but there were no planned cave trips for Sunday. Since it was what I expected, I gathered some sketchy leads the night before. The VAR business meeting was held Sunday morning at 9 a.m. I missed most of it, but I did hear that Spring VAR 2013 will be hosted by Tri-State Grotto. It will be in Greenbrier County and there will be showers! It looks like they are doing a lot of advance planning and should be worth attending.

Bru had to leave on Sunday, so I decided I would just hike around and see if I could find any of the caves from my sketchy leads. Front Royal Grotto didn't do its traditional awesome Sunday morning breakfast, so after some oatmeal and coffee, I set out on the hunt. I decided to look for Bathers Cave just outside of Lexington. There are two colleges right in Lexington, Washington and Lee and the Virginia Military Institute. I figured there would have to be a worn path to such a nearby, locally known easy cave. My awesome directions were to follow Main Street in Lexington until a bridge crossed the Maury River. Turn left on Furrs Mill Road until you cross the Maury again. Park there, hike upriver over three hills, and voila! What could be easier?

Along Furrs Mill Road were the spectacular 80-foot white limestone Maury Cliffs. Later my brother-in-law who attended VMI told me the cadets practiced rappelling there. Apparently there is the Chessie Nature Rail Trail right there as well, but I ran out of time to explore it. I asked my brother-in-law about his experience at VMI. He told me "At VMI the wind doesn't blow ... it sucks!" So there you have it!

I got parked and looked for a trail. There was nothing but briars, jiggers, and evil "shiggy" of all sorts, but no

path. I decided to bail and try plan B. I was walking back to my truck when the young college kids from the night before pulled up. They agreed to let me tag along and we combined our sketchy information. They knew about "over the three hills," but also something about a fence that meets another fence. I had read somewhere you could spot it from a popular swimming hole across the river along Beans Bottom Road. Armed with all of this data, how could we go wrong?

The energetic young bucks scrambled up the hills and blazed trails. After a bit of aimless wandering, we came to a steep slope covered with loose soil and dead leaves and branches. Some of them started down, but questioned whether they would be able to get back up. The next guy down somehow dropped his helmet and it rolled on down toward the river. He hollered for his friends to catch it, but of course, they didn't. It stopped on a rock right at the river's edge. He was forced to climb all the way down to fetch it. Once there, he turned around and said, "Hey Guys! I think I found the cave!"

We all scrambled down the "bad news" hill-side, plucked off as many thorns and hitchhikers as we could and entered the cave. It was mostly a single long passage, but it was reported to be over 3,300 feet. We saw a few bats and they looked perfectly healthy! The cave had some simple climbs and chimneying, some long crawls and some interesting rimstone formations. The kids ended up being a lot of fun, and the cave was pretty interesting too. The climb back up "bad news" hill was the most difficult part of the whole trip!

A one point one of them mentioned that a lot of people at the VAR meeting told them they were the "future of caving." I totally agree, but I think we may have some work to do ...

Part-way into the cave, one guy's dollar store headlamp became unusably dim. I found out they had no spare batteries, no spare lights. One guy carried a book

bag/backpack with one bottle of water, half full, for the six of them. One guy was wearing loafers with no socks. Several had no gloves. One was in jeans and a cotton shirt. I didn't really notice all of this as I was going into the cave with them. Since I was just tagging along and not leading them, I never thought to "check" them. They all had on proper helmets and looked prepared at first glance.

With a cave as easy and small as this one, they managed just fine with what they had. Here's a little scarier thought; the day before they searched for Cave Spring Cave. From what they described, they came very close to finding it.

They were mostly oblivious to the landowner concerns and trespassing issues. They had no idea this cave was wet, muddy, mazy and had a fair number of dangers awaiting the ill-prepared.

After caving, we all went to the Country Cooking restaurant and had a great meal. During the meal, we talked and I hope I convinced them to get involved with a grotto or a college caving group. A pilot friend of mine says you start out with a full bag of luck and an empty one of experience. The trick is to fill one before the other is empty. This was a really great bunch of young adults. I really hope they "get" it before they are featured in some accident report.

In summary, the fall VAR was a great time. The weather was terrific! I got to see some beautiful country, do some great caving, and spend an enjoyable time in the company of Bru Randall. In all, I think I was a very lucky guy!

was originally scheduled for the first Saturday in May at Bill Balfour's home in Unus) has been moved to the Saturday morning of the Spring VAR. The meeting will start at 9 a.m. on May 18<sup>th</sup> and we're hoping for a short meeting so we can all go do caving things. Contact WVASS' Executive Director, Brian Masney, masneyb@gmail.com or 304-288-2705, for more information.

## **Appalachian Cave Conservancy to Celebrate 35 Years**

by John Wilson

All cavers are invited to the 35th anniversary of the founding of the Appalachian Cave Conservancy. This celebration will be held on May 18, 2013, at the Wilson Farm near Hayters Gap in Washington County, Virginia. It will include trips into Perkins Cave, the ACC annual meeting, a cookout, and other events. Registration and directions will be posted on the ACC Web site: [www.acave.us](http://www.acave.us).

## **George Washington Cave for Sale**

By Bob Hoke

Here's another great opportunity to be a cave owner. George Washington Cave in Jefferson County, West Virginia (very close to Harpers Ferry) is now for sale.

The link to the MLS information for the sale is  
<http://mrislistings.mris.com/DE.asp?ID=49690216188>.

A few points about the property:

1. It's 2.7 undeveloped acres and is in the flood plain.

## **Spring WVASS Meeting to be at VAR**

By George Dasher

The Spring Meeting of the West Virginia Speleological Survey (which

2. The cave MAY (or may not) have an authentic George Washington signature in it.
3. The asking price is \$100K. Apparently they were originally asking \$500K but recently reduced the price.
4. Dan Fong, a cave biologist at American University in D.C., says "The cave is one of very few locations in West Virginia with the Madison Cave Isopod in it (all other West Virginia sites are wells), along with a species of snail found only in a couple of caves in Greenbrier County, plus other animals. I think there is also a graffiti from George Washington himself, though I am unsure about that."
5. The map of the cave indicates it is 316 feet long and was formerly a commercial cave.

The MLS link has the listing agent's contact information if you are interested.

## **New Region Record Editor Needed NOW**

By Bob Hoke

I was unable to attend the Fall VAR meeting, but I submitted the following message that was read at the VAR Business Meeting on September 30:

The deadline for the Fall *Region Record* issue was August 15. To date I've received exactly nothing for the issue except the minutes from the Spring meeting. Rather than putting out an essentially empty issue, I've decided to delay the Fall issue and put it out when (hopefully) there is something to put in it.

This brings up a few questions that should be considered.

1. Is the *Region Record* still relevant? Has the Web, e-mail lists,

- Facebook, etc. made a quarterly print publication unnecessary?
2. Assuming the *Region Record* is still relevant, what should be in it and where will that material come from? Since I became involved as Co-Editor in 1997 I've had some great material submitted, but the input has been getting smaller in recent years. How can more material of regional interest be generated?
3. Perhaps we need a new Editor. I'm not tuned into the activities or interests of the proverbial "younger generation" of cavers. Maybe a younger Editor will be able to entice more material from his or her peers.
4. I've been the Editor for about 15 years and, frankly, I'm ready to turn the keyboard over to someone else. I'm quite willing to continue doing the printing and mailing, but I think it's time for someone else to prepare the issue. I'm not resigning at this point, but that time will be coming soon. If someone wants to take over now I'll be happy to let them do so.

**December, 2012 update:** The time has come. The Spring, 2013, *Region Record* will be my last issue. I am quite willing to continue printing and mailing the issues, but someone else needs to gather the material, do the layout, and produce the final PDF file to be printed and mailed.

accept the minutes as published in the *Region Record*. New River seconded. Motion passed.

### **Treasurer:** John Fox

The status of the treasury was presented and distributed.

### **Vice Chair:** Judy Fisher

Thanks for attending the meeting.

### **Chairman:** Craig Hindman

There is a grant request that will be covered later in the meeting.

### **Conservation Co-Chairs:** Meredith Hall Weberg

Grand Caverns Restoration was attended by appropriately 30 people. Gravel was spread and formations were repaired.

We need a representative to send conservation reports to the NSS. Janet Tinkham volunteered.

### **VAR Outstanding Service Award:**

Meredith Hall Weberg

No report, but the submission form is online.

### **Landowner Recognition Awards:**

Janet Tinkam

Dan and Marian McConnell were very surprised and appreciated the award. Currently there are no nominations. Please submit your suggestions. There is a form online.

### **Landowner Legal Support Committee:** Bob Hoke

No new is good news.

### **Region Record – Bob Hoke**

Send articles and pictures - The deadline for next issue is June 30.

### **VAR List Server:** Walt Pirie

There are approximately 200 members. The system is working well. No spam.

### **VAR Web Site:** Jim McConkey

There have been a lot of complaints lately about what info is not on the Web, particularly in regards to this VAR meeting. Just a reminder to everyone – the VAR Web site and the *Region Record* are only an outlet for publishing info on regional interest. I have published everything I have been given about the Spring VAR on the web site. Bob Hoke and I are only publishers and occasionally editors, we generally DO NOT

generate the material we publish. If you are not happy with what is not published, remind the people who generate the information that they need to submit it to be published. grottoes hosting cleanups, VAR meetings, and other events are welcome to set up their own pages if they have the facilities and I can link to it, or I will be happy to work with groups to do Web publishing for them, but they need to send the info to me to publish, likewise with the *Region Record*. I get far more complaints about the old grotto contact info being out of date or not working than I get updates from grottos. People out there are trying to contact grottoes using info off the VAR Web site and cannot because the grottoes do not keep their info updated. If you have an election or change of contact, please notify webmasterva@region.org.

**Cave Bucks – J.C. Fisher**

Cave Bucks still works. It's easy. For more information contact J.C. Send the funds in, don't hold onto them.

**VSS: Rick Lambert**

No report

**WVASS – No report****WVCC: No report****SCCI: Walt Pirie**

Consider sending funding to support their effort

**Grand Caverns/Cave Hill: Jim McConkey**

We have been shut out of Fountain Cave for the winter for WNS, despite almost no bats in the cave, but at the same time we have been severely restricted as to activities in Grand, so we have mostly been concentrating on historic signature research. The dig and historical research in Fountain will resume this month and cavers will conduct an in-service training for park employees in Fountain Cave this month as well.

Like last year Grand Caverns Park will sponsor its second annual Heritage Days festival on Saturday, June 16, 2012. A Grand Ball, illuminated by candle light and featuring two bands, will be held that evening. Virginia's Civil War 150-foot

mobile museum will be on site, along with Civil War encampments, cannon firing, and folk craft displays. If you missed it last year, you missed a great event, but now you have another chance. Heritage Days activities are free, but the ball, which includes a light dinner, is \$25.

**Virginia Cave Board: Meredith Hall Weberg**

No report. Virginia Cave Week is almost over. For information see [www.vacaveweek.com](http://www.vacaveweek.com).

**Cave Conservancy of the Virginias: Walt Pirie**

They own a waterpark and have funding for grants. They like to do projects, such as renting heavy equipment for sinkhole projects.

- BCC wants to purchase Robin's Rift.
- Providing education support for Project Underground.
- Megan Porter is creating a field guide to cave fauna and flora.
- Sponsoring the 2012 NSS Convention.
- Sponsoring the NSS HQ Fund.
- Would like info on the history of the CCV projects -some were lost or final reports were not submitted

**Spring Survey Project: Joey Fagan Continues – contact Charlie Maus or Joey Fagan.**

Getting base line info on the condition and quality of the springs.

**Crystal Cave at Hupps Hill –**

Bubble Cave moves to defer action to the Fall meeting. Pine Mountain Grotto seconded – passed.

**Youth Group Liaison: Joey Fagan**  
Still active and getting inquiries from scout groups. Need volunteers to help lead one or two trips a year.**Host Report: Tri-State**

235 registered, 18 no shows. New River Grotto moved to thank Tri-State. CCV seconded and the motion passed.

**OLD BUSINESS****VAR Hosts**

Fall 2012: Roland Moore in Rockbridge County, Virginia. First weekend in October. He needs help leading cave trips

Spring 2013 – Tri-State at the Boy Scout Camp between Huntersville and Dunmore in Pocahontas County, West Virginia, possibly the last weekend in April.

**WNS:** Decon your gear in hot water at 122 degrees for 20 minutes.

Monongahela National Forest closure expires June 30. The Chairman will ask Peter Youngbaer to draft a letter for the region to send to them asking for no renewal of the closure. Sligo moved. The chair will send letters to the Regional Administrators of the Monongahela, George Washington, and Jefferson National Forests requesting they do not renew the blanket closures that expire on June 30. Monongahela Grotto seconded – passed.

**NEW BUSINESS: None****Grant Requests:**

Mayacon 2012: In the spirit of communications is requesting \$250 for stenciling the stormwater drains in Union and Lewisburg, West Virginia.

**Announcements**

- Donations are needed by the Appalachian Karst Conservancy to pay for Gilley Cave.
- Put your trash in the green dumpster.
- West Virginia proclaimed Cave Week to be June 25-29.
- Requests come in for directions to and/or the phone numbers of cave owners. This will not happen.

**Adjournment**

Bubble moved to adjourn, CCV seconded. Meeting Adjourned at 10:22 a.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Carol Tiderman

# Spring 2013 VAR

## May 17th, 18th, and 19th

### Registration Form

The Spring 2013 VAR will be held at Dilley's Mill located at the Buckskin Scout Reservation. The Reservation is located off Route 28 in Pocahontas County, West Virginia, near Cass and Marlinton, West Virginia.

Early registration by May 1, 2013 - Full = \$28.00 \_\_\_\_\_

Early registration by May 1, 2013 - Under 15 years old = \$24.00 \_\_\_\_\_

On-site registration - Full = \$33.00 \_\_\_\_\_

On-site registration - Under 15 = \$29.00 \_\_\_\_\_

Please check if you want Vegetarian Option \_\_\_\_\_

Make check payable to: **Tri-State Grotto**

Please fill out a form for each person

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Grotto: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

MAIL FORM to Judy Fisher  
 PO Box 276  
 Berkeley Springs, WV 25411