

# DEAD DOG DISPATCH

## TRI-STATE CRYPTO OF THE NSS



BUTLER CAVE, BATH CO, VA

VOL. #23

ISS. #2

FEB

2008

#19



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(FAMILY ASSOCIATE-non NSS)(Voting over 16)

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All material for inclusion in the **DEAD DOG DISPATCH** must be sent to the EDITOR NO LATER THAN THE **25<sup>TH</sup>** OF EACH MONTH.

\*\*\* The Picture of the rim stone dam was taken by Bob Bennett in Butler Cave, Bath Co, VA.

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\*\*\*\* Don't forget, the **JONES QUARRY BOOKLET** is **STILL** available at a reasonable price **\$6.00**. If you don't have it in your library, then YOU MUST GET IT. It is PACKED with info about the QUARRY, the CAVE, the INDIAN BONES, and of course the **MAP!** If you are interested in purchasing the BOOKLET, contact **BOB BENNETT** [304-579-4304(H) or 304-725-3481 ext 491(W)](E-MAIL at [gimpycaver@comcast.net](mailto:gimpycaver@comcast.net) or **JUDY FISHER** [304-258-4974(H) or 304-258-1822(W)](E-MAIL at [jcf@access.mountain.net](mailto:jcf@access.mountain.net))

**WE NEED EVERYONE TO KEEP THINKING ABOUT  
VOLUNTEERING FOR A COUPLE OF OPEN  
POSITIONS. WE STILL NEED PEOPLE FOR THE  
FOLLOWING POSITIONS:  
PROGRAM CHAIR  
PLEASE GIVE IT SOME THOUGHT. WE NEED YOUR  
SUPPORT!**



**DEAD DOG DISPATCH**

**V.#23**

**I.#2**

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# TRIP REPORTS

## Popping Cherries in WV By Tina Blaik

My friend, Mark Manor, invited me to Greenbrier County, WV to visit his friend, John Pearson the weekend of January 25, 2008. We made arrangements to meet at Steeles Tavern and take one car on to John's place. Imagine my surprise when we got to John's and there were Bernie and Sean Wooten along with Ehren Gieske. They had a busy weekend of caving lined up and John had offered to let them stay at his place.

The next morning we pigged out on the yummiest pancakes ever. John had some things he wanted to get done and asked Mark if he wanted to do some cherry popping. I was laughing at this, but he was so serious that shivers ran down my spine. I asked what exactly they meant by cherry popping? He then told me that when you first go into a virgin cave, it's called cherry popping. Turns out that he and some guy named Bill Balfour had been ridge walking and road cruising and had found 12 new caves the previous weekend. Serious! 12 new, never seen before caves!!!



The cave that John had picked to deflower had a working name of "On the Way to Rocky's House Cave". I think it was in Monroe County as Pocahontas County seems slightly prettier for

some reason. John told me not to tell the precise location, but as everyone knows, I get lost easily, have no idea where we were and couldn't find it again if you paid me. Please don't ask me.

Anyway, John told me that he and Bill had been driving last weekend to visit someone named Rocky and spotted the cave along the side of a well traveled road. Bill went to the courthouse to determine who the landowner was so the cave could now have a proper name. They called it Johnson's Roadside Pit.

We loaded up our gear and then went and did a few errands, working our way down to Monroe County. We found a safe place to park the car and then hiked back up the road to where John said there was a cave. We couldn't see anything at first, but John said that the weekend before, there was snow on the hillside and there was a place that caught Balfour's eye because it didn't have any snow. We got to the place and there was a leaf filled climb-down that didn't look too tight.



John rigged a hand line and told me to go check it out. After a happy dance, I headed in. It was pretty cold outside, but as soon as I slide down the slot, I was in warm cave with a breeze. Of course, the first thing that caught my eye was a



gnawed on long bone of approximately 8 inches long. Thankfully, the critter that had done the chewing was not around. Since Mark and John weren't all that impressed with my bone find, I continued to explore. The cave had some pretties, a few bats and more crickets than I care to count. As soon as Mark caught up, the work of documenting the cave and its feature began.



We estimated that the slot was about 12 feet deep leading to a 6-8' room. The cave then veered to the left with a couple of high leads and some formations. Mark and I proceeded to take some pictures and go a little further into the cave. Ahead of us was a 20' chimney slot that looked too tight to me. Mark estimated that it went down at least 25' and when he dropped a rock, we thought we could hear it land in water. Mark stated that the slot was wider at the far end and possibly could be widened at the near end. They didn't have any vertical gear, so we decided to pack up data and save the rest for another day. John told us to don't expect him to wait until the next time we came down before he came back. In my opinion, this is exploration and adventurism at its best.

The next day we were up at a decent time and we had bacon, eggs and grilled cheese sandwiches for breakfast. While Mark took care of some repairs around the house, John ran me to see the Bubble Cave property. There are several well known caves here and I couldn't

resist when John asked me if I wanted to go in Lunch Box. I signed the required Waiver Release and began the descent. This is a tight cave with pretties-o-plenty. On this particular day, all the way in the very back, where Lunchbox and Bubble have a possibility of meeting, I got my Steve Irwin moment and discovered that Possums really do play dead. A fantastic experience to say the least!

John had promised that we would take ten-year old Hawken Nutter, his mom Loria and their friend Haylee to Higginbothams No. 1. So a little later on in the day, we headed for another caving adventure. We checked out all the downstream leads before we headed into the rest of the cave. This place is impressive on its own right however the sparkling clear ice formations were beyond fabulous on this day. It was here that we learned about the history of the cave and were able to spot the signature of Higgenbottom himself.

Mark led most of the trip, with Haylee providing most of the assistance to Loria and Hawken. This cave was a beautiful stream passage that contained smooth rocks and crevasse where the water had eroded it away. We found some white worms hanging out in a puddle as well as two different types of bats. The highlight of this trip was Fat Man's Misery and provided an excellent place for everyone to show off their stealth moves. We exited out the McClung's entrance via a telephone poll climb. Yup, one more thing crossed off my list of things that I have always wanted to do. When we exited, there was the landowner hiking through the woods. John yelled hello and told him he had Haylee with him. Apparently Haylee and Mr. Mooney are close friends, but Mr. Mooney couldn't believe that Haylee had finally visited his cave. Kudos to Haylee.

We hiked back around the mountain to our vehicles, parted with our previous crew and popped into Higginbothams No. 2. Mark noted that the water was down because we were able to crawl down some passage that is normally pooled with water. After climbing over some large rimstone dams, we climbed through some flowstone to the back rooms of the cave. John and Mark were mostly interested in looking for

old signatures. We checked out every room in the cave, finding evidence of barrel staves, and burnt wood and of chores bones! This time they were a small pelvis bone of a tiny animal as well as bat bones.

After we exited the cave, we worked our way back to the cars. John asked me if I'd like to pop into one more cave, Higginbothams No. 6! Although this ruined my entire plan on attempting the caves in number sequence, I feel the sacrifice was well worth the experience. Higginbothams No. 6 is a cave that only a few folks know about. In order to keep visitations to a minimum which protects the pretties in the cave. Once again, the happy dance emerged. I slid down the entrance and was in a low tight crawlway. The cave isn't very big, but it did have some pretties. Getting out though was tough. There are no footholds to push off of and the tight entrance is slippery and up hill. I highly recommend this cave for pure achievement factor of exiting without foot friction but I request that you respect this cave and avoid it.

All and all, I learned a lot, had some serious adventures and met a lot of great people. Thank you beyond words to everyone. This was the best trip everrrrr!!

## **Bender's Cave**

November 05, 2007

Participants: Jerry Bowen, Bob Bennett, Holly Morris and Channel 5 TV crew

by Jerry Bowen

Back in August, Bob Hoke advertised to the caving community, a request for a trip to an area cave. Youth groups are usually the one's asking for trips, but this request was different.

During the morning news from 6-9 AM on Fox Channel 5, they inject humor and other interesting human interest stories. To accomplish this, they send out Holly Morris, a program host, with a satellite truck and film crew. A young fellow by the name of Paul, Holly's scheduler, wanted to set up a caving trip for Holly. They wanted to do a nearby cave in suburban

Maryland, to which I smiled, and realized they would need to travel to our neighborhood. So back in August, I volunteered Tri-State Grotto, and we would work through the details later.

Paul and I must have bantered back and forth at least 25 e-mails with questions for which we both wanted answers. A couple of concerns for me were, they wanted to send a satellite truck, so they needed a good view of the sky. And they wanted to send a camera into the cave with only a three hundred foot cable running back to the truck. This meant we had to find a cave close enough to the entrance for a truck to park. Tall order. Most caves we explore involve walking some distance to get to the entrance.

I made a few phone calls, found a closed cave and set up a date with Paul for late September. More e-mails. They had to work out some logistical problems, withdrew our plan, asking to re-schedule. Eventually, November 5th was selected.

One of the details that amazed me was the early hour in which the crew had to rise. Holly told me they all had to meet at the studio in Washington, DC at 3:30 AM for a 4:00 AM departure. They were going to give themselves 2 hours to make the drive to meet at the entrance by 6:00. I asked each member of the crew how early they had to get up to make this trip, and the satellite operator took the cake. He rose at 1:30 AM to make this appointment. Bob and I marveled at the early hour exclaiming to each other, "This will go down in the record books!" Cavers going caving at 6:00 in the morning! UNHEARD OF! It was dark, and cold.....the moon was still out!

Watching them set up was really interesting, and seeing the technology at work. The cable that ran from the truck to the camera carried the video signal, power to run the camera and light, and at least three communications lines. Holly was wired with one receiver and one transmitter (two boxes). Her voice signal was transmitted wirelessly back to one of several antennas on the camera which was carried through the cable to the truck. Bob and I were wired for only

transmission to the camera. We could not hear the studio. Bob got several good pictures of the truck.



This particular week Fox was running a series called "Good Golly! Where's Holly?" Because there's a question in the name, they played a game with the studio folks, and on air they and the viewing audience were given clues. One scene, the camera filmed across a pile of kneepads, webbing and boots. The studio folks answered with their thoughts, where they thought Holly was. She had fun breaking the news, and then asking Bob and me about cave formations, how caves are found, safety and logistical things. It was as fun to be there as it was to watch, I'm sure.

During the broadcast, Holly remarked to her studio people that she had friends in the right places. Bob and I chuckled later.....what she really meant was, she had friends in 'low places'.



The broadcast happened on Monday. On Sunday, the day before the broadcast, I went by to see the

owner. She told me where she was going to leave the key, and I gave her a program schedule of when each clip would be shown, just in case she or friends and neighbors wanted to catch the broadcast. She really appreciated the advance notice. What I found out later was neat. Her father, 86 years young has had some health issues. He was awake for most of the broadcasts. They pointed out the window to the sat truck, and told him his cave was going to be on TV. He smiled real big when he saw people in his cave. We feel we brought him as much satisfaction, as they brought to Washington, DC that day.



If you haven't seen the broadcast yet, you can go to this link where Holly Morris has archives of her interviews.

<http://tinyurl.com/yqg3ah>

There is one main screen and two small (square) icons to the right in a box called 'side bar'. Three separate clips need to be started individually. Bob and I are interviewed in the two small square icons. Three clips are about four minutes each.

### ***Greenbrier County***

Sean and I left Hagerstown around 1 pm on Friday January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2008 to pick up Ehren Geiske in Winchester, VA. After picking Ehren up and transferring gear to our car we were on our way. Since we were driving right past it we decided to jump into Island Ford on the way down for a quick side trip. Apparently at that time everyone started worrying that we had not arrived in Lewisburg as I received several

voicemails on my phone. Thanks to all those who were concerned. We arrived in Lewisburg and met John Pearson and 2 Boy Scout leaders for an enlightening Mexican dinner at Carlitos. After much discussion of time periods before the three of us were born we headed back to John Pearson's house to bed down for the night. During the grand tour, much to our surprise, who showed up but another one of our Grotto members, Tina Blaik and one of her friends. We conversed for a while and looked at some maps and books before heading off to bed.

The next morning we got up early and headed out to the Higginbotham caves while Tina and Mark headed to Monroe County. We decided to jump into Higginbotham #2 first as it was the closest to the parking area. Many nice things to see and awesome rim stone pools filled the cave. Ehren took a few pics and after half an hour we decided to head out. On our way out the Boy Scout group from the night before headed in. Kids first followed by adults. The adults obviously did not know that there were other people in the cave because when I turned and headed deeper into the cave to make sure that Ehren was coming they yelled at me and told me we were not moving yet. I replied "I am an adult, not part of your group" which seemed to get a fair amount of laughs. I know that I am not much taller than a teenage boy but I have never been mistaken for one before.

Onward to Higginbotham #1 which was a breeze. Mostly easy walking stream passage with some nice things to see along the way. The water was a lot lower than the last time we were in there and we didn't even have to get wet. We blew through this cave and made it to the telephone pole entrance very quickly. Ehren took a few pictures and then we were on our way to Higginbotham #4. Along the way we stopped and took a look at Higginbotham #5. Although it would have been a supper fun belly crawl through the stream we decided to bypass it and get right to #4.

The entrance to Higginbotham #4 was as equally inviting as #5 and we were not looking forward to it after having read the description in the

Caves of Virginia book. It was not, however, as bad as they made it out to be. It started as a 100 foot dusty belly crawl over river stone, followed by 50 feet of crouching to avoid the stream, another 50 feet hands and knees crawling, 50 more feet through the stream, 50 feet frog crawling and finally 50 feet hands and knees crawling. Exhausted from all that crawling we all decided that there had better be something really nice inside this cave or we were going to be pretty upset. Thankfully there was. I am always amazed by how small the entrances are and how big the caves get inside.

Anyway, continuing on. Almost immediately we had to make a decision to stay dry or just plunge into the water. Sean, the smart one, who was wearing water boots just jumped right in while Ehren and I exhausted the extra effort attempting to stay dry only to come out with wet feet in the end anyway. The cave inside was awesome. Large booming passages, a beautiful stream bed and a fun yet terrifying loop. We had followed the passage around to the right for some ways when we thought we had come to the end. There appeared to be a crawl over some rim stone pools so I decided to take a look. About halfway through the crawl I heard a hissing sound, which I thought was a snake. I apparently yelled, which I don't remember doing, turned around and took off running the best I could through a hands and knees crawl. After trying so hard to stay dry through the stream passage I know found myself soaking wet from the rim stone pools. And of course, it was not a snake it was just a pissed off bat that I had brushed with my butt. We all got a laugh out of that one.

On the other side of the crawl we found ourselves on about 40 feet up on top of a large flowstone that we had passed earlier. After negotiating our way back down we continued to head deeper into the cave to the sections that we had not been. On the second time around, even though we knew it was there, a couple of us slipped on the supper slippery mud and fell on our bums sliding down toward the stream. After laughing for a bit we proceeded on our way. We took a second side passage to the right up a small waterfall and back for a ways before turning

around. The passage was very cool but didn't have many formations.

We contemplated turning back and heading out as we were all getting hungry by this point but decided to keep on going. We were all happy that we did as it wasn't long before we came upon the prettiest formations in the whole cave. Massive columns that had fallen over and several that were still standing. As well as elaborate draperies and bacon filled the stream passage. Continuing on we could hear a waterfall up ahead. It turns out it was just a baby 2 foot high waterfall but further ahead we could hear another much larger one. We were excited to see it until the stream got deeper, about 8 feet deep to be exact. None of us wanted to go swimming so we looked for a way around.

I climbed up through a small hole over a rim stone pool into another large room. As blind as I am I completely missed the path to the right and told them that there was no way to bypass the waterfall. Ehren came in and immediately said "What about that giant opening right there." Duh! So, we headed to the right. It didn't go anywhere near the waterfall but did go to a cliff with some more very deep water that would have required a hairy traverse and rope to cross. Later we found out that this path would have lead to the second, vertical, entrance to the cave. We turned around and checked out the large borehole passage that I had found to the left which came to a large pile of breakdown. I climbed to the top of the breakdown to check it out and say that is kept going in at least three different directions. Exhaustion and hunger had taken over so we all decided it was time to head out.

We practically raced out of the cave, changed the fastest I have ever seen the three of us get dressed and got to Shoney's in the nick of time. I don't know what was louder on the way there, our bellies or the radio. We were like the three little bears. Ehren came back to the table with one plate, I had two and Sean had three. In the blink of an eye the food was gone and the plates were stacking up. We even had room for dessert. After dinner we had to take the obligatory trip into Wal-Mart before heading back to John's

house. Even though we were all caved out we decided to take a look at the entrance to Buckeye Creek. I got out of the car and braved the 3 very verbal attack dogs to get to the owners house and after getting permission we jumped the fence into the horse pasture. We were immediately met by two very lonely horses that we desperate for affection. It wasn't long after that our short look at the entrance trip turned into lets see the inside trip and Sean and I went in several hundred feet.

After that we headed back to John's house. The others had not arrived yet so we headed upstairs and sat on the bed laughing for a while before heading off to bed. The next morning we packed up, thanked John again and took a look at the map for Higginbotham #4. We all felt better not swimming through the water when we found out that it was only a five foot water fall and the cave only continued for another 500 feet before ending. We said our good-bye's and headed off to Norman. We took a short trip into Norman to the Waterfall and then back to the Clay room. Norman was fantastic. It was littered with beautiful formations and even some raunchy mud sculptures.

Again, after exiting the cave we were starving. This time Ehren was prepared with an emergency supply of chocolate chip cookies to tide us over before lunch. After a quick bite to eat we were on our way. We took 220 home and stopped by Falling Springs which was also very neat to see. We made it back to Winchester at a decent time, dropped Ehren off and then headed to Silver Spring to pick up the kids before heading home. All in all a very long, exhausting and very rewarding trip.

Bernie Wootten





## OBITUARY:



**Born:** April 17, 1917

**Died:** December 24, 2007

**Services:** A memorial service will be held at a later date and interment will be private.

**Visitation:** The family will receive friends at the Stauffer Funeral Home, 1621 Opossumtown Pike, Frederick, MD on Saturday, December 29, from 2 -5 and 7 -9 p.m.

Mr. Hugh V. Stabler, 90, of Inwood, WV, died December 24, 2007 at the Sandy Spring Friends Nursing Home, after a brief illness. He was the husband of the late G. Melvina Stabler.

Born April 17, 1917 in Worchester, MA, he was the son of the late Harold Brooke and Sarah Farquhar Stabler.

Mr. Stabler graduated with a Degree in Commercial Art and worked for the Chesapeake and Potomac Telephone Company in Washington, D.C. for more than 30 years before retiring to Inwood, WV.

He was an avid amateur archaeologist, Mr. Stabler along with his friend Richard G. Slatterly and archeologists from the Smithsonian, located and excavated numerous archaeological sites in MD and VA from the 1930s to 1950s.

He enjoyed canoeing, camping, hiking and caving and fondly recounted the many trips with his close friends Tom Goetz, Ackie Lloyd, Bill Gilbert and Jan Hemphill.

His accomplishments include being a Peace Corp volunteer for several years, Librarian for the National Speleological Society (N.S.S.) in 1948, and Life member of the N.S.S. and Tri-State Grotto. He was a life long member of the Sandy Spring Friends Meeting and a member of Hopewell Friends Meeting.

He is survived by his two sons David Brooke Stabler, Gordon Farquhar Stabler and his wife Andrea and four grandchildren Andrew Stabler, Kenneth Stabler, Steven Stabler and Michael Stabler.

He was preceded in death by his brother Robert Brooke Stabler and sister Frances (Bartram) Stabler.

I for one will miss Hugh. He had many stories to tell of his many caving escapades. He couldn't see very well his last several years, but that didn't stop him from doing the things he loved to do.

Hugh, God Bless You!

You will be sorely missed.

Bob Bennett

**Memorials:** In lieu of flowers, donations may be sent in his name to Sandy Spring Friends School, 16923 Norwood Road, Sandy Spring, MD 20860

**Location:** Stauffer Funeral Home (Fred) ([Map](#))

**Church:** ([Map](#))

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## Hugh V. Stabler

## Warren County Properties

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# CAVIN CALENDAR

## FEBRUARY 10TH - MARCH 22ND



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Feb 10	Feb 11	Feb 12	Feb 13  Grotto Meeting 7pm	Feb 14  VALENTINE'S DAY	Feb 15	Feb 16
Feb 17	Feb 18 PRESIDENT'S DAY	Feb 19	Feb 20	Feb 21	Feb 22	Feb 23
Feb 24	Feb 25	Feb 26	Feb 27	Feb 28	Feb 29 LEAP DAY	Mar 1
Mar 2	Mar 3	Mar 4	Mar 5	Mar 6	Mar 7	Mar 8
Mar 9 DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME STARTS	Mar 10	Mar 11	Mar 12  Grotto Meeting 7pm	Mar 13	Mar 14	Mar 15
Mar 16 PALM SUNDAY	Mar 17  ST PATRICK'S DAY	Mar 18	Mar 19	Mar 20  EQUINOX	Mar 21 GOOD FRIDAY	Mar 22

# DEAD DOG DISPATCH



One Man Survey Team

- 1- BATS ARE DIEING
- 2- GREENBRIER TRIP
- 3- CHERRY POPPING

## DEAD DOG DISPATCH

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**TO:**

