

DEAD DOG DISPATCH

TRI-STATE GROTTO OF THE NSS



SANDY CAVE CARTER CAVES ST PARK

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#53



(FULL FAMILY-must be NSS)(Voting rights if over 16)
(FAMILY ASSOCIATE-non NSS)(Voting over 16)

Payment of DUES can be made at MONTHLY MEETINGS
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All material for inclusion in the **DEAD DOG DISPATCH** must be sent to the EDITOR NO LATER THAN THE **25TH** OF EACH MONTH.

*** The Picture of the waterfall on this month's cover was taken by Tina Blaik in outside of Sandy Cave on Box Canyon Trail in Carter Caves St Park.

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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 or **JUDY FISHER** [304-258-4974(H) or 304-258-1822(W)](E-MAIL at 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!



TRI-STATE GROTTTO MEMBERSHIP DUES ARE AS FOLLOWS:
 FULL MEMBERSHIP -----\$10.00 (Must be NSS)
 ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP---\$12.00 (Non-NSS)
 SUBSCRIBING MEMBERSHIP-\$12.00 (Non-Voting)
 FAMILY MEMBERSHIP -----\$2.00/FAMILY

CAMMIN EVENTS

2008

APR 1 ----- ALL FOOL'S DAY
APR 9 ----- Grotto Meeting 7PM
APR 12 ----- Crystal Grottoes Cleanup – see Bernie
APR 12 ----- Jones Quarry Cave – see Linda Kling
APR 15 ----- TAX DAY
APR 19 ----- Harlansburg Cave, PA – see Bernie & Sean
APR 22 ----- EARTH DAY
APR 25 ----- ARBOR DAY
APR 26 ----- Helectite Cave Cleanup, Pocahontas Co,
WV – Contact Linda Tracy - 304-636-8328
MAY 5 ----- CINCO de MAYO
MAY 10 ----- Heritage Day (Adam Stephen Day)
MAY 11 ----- MOTHER'S DAY
MAY 14 ----- Grotto Meeting 7PM
MAY 16-18 -- Spring MAR – Pine Hill Campground,
Hazelton, WV
MAY 17 ----- ARMED FORCES DAY
MAY 22 ----- DAY of PRAYER
MAY 23-26 – KY SPELEOFEST – Lone Star Preserve
MAY 23-26 – Bubble Weekend
MAY 26 ----- MEMORIAL DAY
MAY 31 ----- Donaldson Cave Cleanup – 11AM
JUN 5-8 ----- SERA / VAR – Bristol, TN
JUN 11 ----- Grotto Meeting – 7PM
JUN 14 ----- FLAG DAY
JUN 15 ----- FATHER'S DAY
JUN 20 ----- WV DAY
JUN 20 ----- SUMMER SOLSTICE
JUL 4 ----- INDEPENDENCE DAY
JUL 9 ----- Grotto Meeting – 7PM
JUL 12 ----- GROTTO PICNIC @ Crystal Grottoes
JUL 17-20 --- Karst-O-Rama – Great Saltpetre Cave
Preserve
JUL 27 ----- PARENT'S DAY
AUG 11-15 – NSS Convention, Lake City, FL
AUG 13 ----- Grotto Meeting – 7PM
AUG 28-31 – OTR
AUG 30 ----- DOO DAH
AUG 30 ----- 5th Annual POLYESTER POWER HOUR
SEP 1 ----- OTR
SEP 1 ----- LABOR DAY
SEP 7 ----- GRANDPARENT'S DAY
SEP 10 ----- Grotto Meeting – 7PM
SEP 19-21 --- FALL VAR – COVINGTON, VA
SEP 11 ----- PATRIOT'S DAY (9/11)
SEP 22 ----- AUTUMN EQUINOX
OCT 8 ----- Grotto Meeting – 7PM
OCT 10-12 – Fall MAR – Woodward, PA
OCT 13 ----- COLUMBUS DAY

OCT 31 ---- ALL HALLOWS EVE
NOV 4 ----- ELECTION DAY
NOV 11 ----- VETERAN'S DAY
NOV 12 ----- Grotto Meeting – 7PM – Elections
NOV 21 ----- THANKSGIVING DAY
NOV 22 ----- BLACK FRIDAY
DEC 10 ----- Wrap gifts for Red Cross – 6PM at
Martinsburg Mall
DEC 13 ----- GROTTO CHRISTMAS PARTY
DEC 14 ----- CAVING
DEC 21 ----- WINTER SOLSTICE
DEC 24 ----- CHRISTMAS EVE
DEC 25 ----- CHRISTMAS DAY
DEC 31 ----- NEW YEAR'S EVE

2009

JUL 19-26 ---- NSS Convention, Kerryville, TX

2010

JUL 12-17 ----- NSS Convention, Essex Jcnctn, VT

***** CAVE BUCKS *****

CAVE BUCKS is a voluntary donation for cave purchases. The money is collected at each monthly meeting and sent to the organization of choice. The money SHOULD NEVER be kept past the week it is collected.

Month of Mar ----- \$34.00

TOTAL TO DATE: ---- \$4190.00

GROTTO LINKS

Tri-State Grotto website ----- www.wobey.net/TSG
VAR website ----- www.varegion.org
NSS website ----- www.caves.org
NSS Convention 2008 ----- www.nss2008.com/
OTR Website ----- www.otr.org
MAR Website ----- www.caves.org/region/mar/
WVCC ----- www.wvcc.net
Andy Celmer's Web Site ---- www.wobey.net/TSG/Andy/
Art Jr's Web Site ----- <http://photos.arthanson.net/>
Bob's Web Site ----- www.wobey.net/TSG/Bob/
Earl Suitor's Web Site -----
<http://mysite.verizon.net/wvcaver/>
Ehren Gieske's Web Site --- www.wobey.net/TSG/Ehren/
Jerry's Cave Web Site ----- www.wobey.net/TSG/Jerry/

Vitas's Web Site ----- www.wobey.net/TSG/Vitas/
 Tina Blaik's Web Site ----- www.kayakdream.com/
 David Hackley's Web Site -----
 ---- <http://s180.photobucket.com/albums/x307/clearsig/>
 Todd Robert's Web Site -----
 -- http://s63.photobucket.com/albums/h143/Todd_05/
 Bob Gulden's Web Page - www.caverbob.com/home.htm
 Nikki Fox's Web Site -----
 ----- <http://s231.photobucket.com/albums/ee8/cavefox1/>
 Rock Climbing Knots Friction -----
 -- www.chockstone.org/TechTips/prusik.htm#Bachman
 Tri-State Grotto MySpace -----
 ----- www.myspace.com/tristategrotto
 Animated Knots by Grog ----- www.animatedknots.com/
 White Nose Syndrome -----
<http://www.caves.org/grotto/dcg/wns-notice-to-cavers.pdf>
 NSS Online Cavers ----- www.onlinecavers.com



MONTH OF APRIL

Jeff Hajenga, Lauren Rexford,
Ann Shepard

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Tri-State Grotto

4/12/08

Meeting

Bernie Wootten started the meeting at 7 PM.

Chuck Stanley gave the treasurer's report.
Moved, seconded and passed.

We talked about paying dues for WVCC.

NCRC training will be held May 3-10, 2008.

Old Business

We talked about the Spring 2009 VAR that we are sponsoring.

We talked about the Crystal Grottoes Caverns clean up.

We discussed the White Nose Syndrome that has affected bats up north. For some unknown reason, the bats deplete their fat reserves and die months before they would normally emerge from hibernation.

New Business

Sean Wootten made a motion to have the Grotto Picnic at Crystal Grottoes Caverns. It was seconded and passed.

Eli and Tina talked about a trip they went on to Windy Run Park.

Todd Roberts talked about Kenny Simmons Cave.

Bernie talked about going to Glade Cave and the tunnel.

Eli talked about two trips to Fountain Cave.

We collected \$34 in Cave Bucks.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 PM.

Submitted by
John P. Di Carlo, Jr.
Secretary
Tri-State Grotto



Nikki in Crossroads Cave

Waterproofing enhancements put to the test

(Or, how I tried to love the Apex by abusing it)

by Jeff Bartlett



OK, I admit it; it's no secret I have my complaints about the Apex. Just read the feature on I Hate This Cave in this issue of *Arkansas Underground* and you'll probably have a good idea why. Honestly, when the folks at Princeton Tec – surely nice people who want to put a quality product to market – dreamed the Apex up, I doubt they were thinking about the photo on page 15.

So I'll admit that it's an excellent light. Versatile with the broad flood and the tight spot, great battery life, great light output, very well suited for caving. Fantastic value for the price paid.

But the "Waterproof 1M" silkscreened on the housing itself is kind of a joke. Waterproof, eh? As such, there has been plenty of discussion on the NSS discussion forums and elsewhere about exactly what can be done to improve the waterproofing of the Apex to make it a bit more cave-worthy.

It has been suggested that there are two fundamental problems with the design of the head unit, which can be "upgraded" with a bit of diligence:

1) While the odd shape of the gasket and its small size don't suggest a tight seal, you can create a better seal by simply coating the gasket with a silicone-based lubricant.

2) One of the production issues is that the screws holding the head unit's front and back halves together are a bit too long; they can't be tightened appropriately without cracking the plastic in the head unit itself, so they're not tight enough. The suggested fix is to clip 2-3 millimeters off the end of each screw, so the unit can be tightened better without damage.

After we got back from I Hate This Cave and I dried my poor, drowned Apex out, I decided to test these methods.

I took my Apex apart, per instructions, and removed the gasket. I then took a pair of wire cutters and clipped the end of each screw – about two threads was just right. Before reassembling the unit, I coated the gasket with a liquid silicone lubricant and carefully resealed it to confirm a good seal with each half.

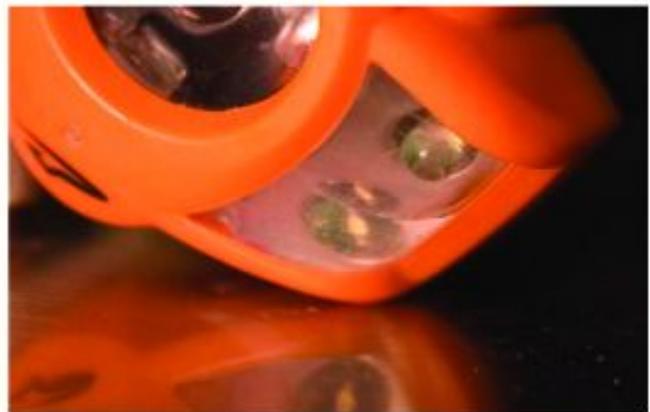
Since the IPX-7 rating that Princeton Tec claims for the Apex requires the unit to remain underwater for 30 minutes at a depth of 1 meter without a breach in the seal, I thought a 15 minute trial in about 6 inches of water should be a walk in the park. I filled up a glass of water, took note of the clock, turned the headlamp on, and dropped it in. In lieu of a handy

thermometer, I threw a couple of ice cubes into the glass of water for the first minute or two of the test, in an attempt to simulate the 58 degree temperature of cave water in our state.

After 15 minutes, I removed the unit from the glass...

...and it was absolutely filled with water. While I didn't perform the same test with the same unit its stock form, making my tests decidedly unscientific, at this point I would consider this headlamp maybe "dunkable" but certainly not anything more than "water-resistant".

The conclusion? A confirmation of what we already knew, if you need something for extremely wet caving, you may need to look at other lamps. Unfortunately, the suggested "improvements" do not appear to solve the waterproofing issues at hand. So, while we all still continue to use these headlamps and are generally pleased with the result, it's a good idea to pay special attention to keeping your helmet and lamp as dry as possible in some of our wet caves!



Printed with permission from the author, Jeff Bartlett (Supplied by Danny Cumbo)

TRIP REPORTS

CAVIN KENTUCKY

March 27, 2008 – March 30, 2008

Tina Blaik & Eleonora "Eli" Florance

Directly after work on Thursday, I headed down to Renick, WV to meet up with Eleonora "Eli" Florance at John Pearson's house. As house guests for the night, equipped with a delicious Buffalo Stew and serenading spring peepers, we spoiled the cats and completely kept John from working. Eli put the finishing touches on some bat shaped cookies she could share with everyone. The next morning, we indulged in a gourmet caver's breakfast of cinnamon apple cake with ice cream topping along with Myan Mocha Coffee. Thanking John, and waving good-bye, we headed for Kentucky in the morning.

Continuing west on Rt. 64, toward Carter Caves State Resort Park in Olive Hill, Kentucky, we saw a many of the mountains in West Virginia. The towering peaks layered between steep cliffs and twisty turns boast a background of continuous trees, rock, and occasional historical structure. We met an entire flock of about 25 wild turkeys which flew across the mountain like they wanted to come caving with us. About the time we noticed the "Welcome to Kentucky" sign, the landscape grayed out and shopping centers replaced mountain peaks. Approximately 3 hours after we had left John's house, we arrived at our Holiday Inn Express. Although we decided to spoil ourselves with a warm clean room, beautiful camping spots with trees were available as well as spots in a chilly bunk house. After checking into the hotel then checking out its amenities (Remembering that I don't drink coffee, I got hooked up with the lady that controls the hot

chocolate.), we headed to the park which was about 15 minutes away.

"Oooo", "Wow", and "Look at that!" were the catch phrases of the rest of this weekend. It seemed that everywhere we looked there was something spectacular to catch your eye. The Friday night caving trip was postponed to Saturday evening. This allowed Ellie and I time to explore some more of this scenic sanctuary of cave entrances and flowing streams that intertwine them.

We stumbled upon a closed for the bat season cave called "Laurel Cave". The cave is well marked that it was closed and a rope barrier was setup to inhibit folks from entering. I was told that this cave house approximately 10,000 Indiana bats. We were thankful not to see any bats on the ground or in the air around this cave. I felt good about the cleanliness of my caving gear, so with a wave goodbye, we went to explore other parts of the park.

Hiking the Natural Bridge Trail near the Welcome Center, we were amazed at this landmark, which is unique to this state as it is the only natural bridge that can support a paved highway. It is huge! The trail leads down a woody path and picnic tables until suddenly you are confronted with a massive cave entrance or the downstream side of the bridge. The stream itself called to the kayaker in me. If only it were a couple inches deeper I would have had to paddle it right then. A continuous class 2 creek provided eye candy for the imagination as well as protection for the river left side of the bridge. Plants grow in pot holes high up on the walls. With every step of this journey under the stone, we appreciate and are awed by the beauty of the earth at that moment. This is the stuff that all the home shows try to mimic. Once our helmets were our main source of light, we headed back to the warm hotel and the hot chocolate lady.

Saturday morning started off by raiding the continental breakfast before an early morning hike on the Box Canyon trail. This .75 hike packs all the scenery of a 10 mile hike and then some. Beginning at the Cascade Cave Parking lot this orange blazed trail soon approaches a fork where you must decide if you want to go right or left. If you take the trail to the right you will have a landscape show that builds slowly until you reach the grand finally. If you take the trail to the left, as we did, you get the best of show first and a slightly more strenuous hike. Either road you take is winner and at only .75 miles, you could spend the entire day just exploring the rocks and its many cave entrances. There is a literal three sided box with a crevasse at its two connecting joints. One crevasse doesn't go anywhere but the crevasse to the left continues the orange blaze around and down the rock formation so that you see the other side. Pitted and pot holed, the rock formations remind you of prehistoric times with abundant and exotically green plant life. Waterfalls and caves tease and tempt the most docile of cavers. Sandy Cave is also located here however; it was flooded upon our arrival and has landed on my "Caves to do" list.



Popping back over to the Welcome Center we suited up for the X-Cave clean up project. They supplied full white coverall (with hood) made of Tyvek. We also sported some fashion eye safety wear and were given the choice between two different styles. Masks that rival any you could get at home depot were also supplied. White doctor-like gloves

where doubled and used to protect your hands from the bleach we were to clean the cave with. Mark Walker, our captain of cleanliness, seriously vertical caver, and all around great guy directed us toward deposits of graffiti and algae covered formations. Climbing ladders, protecting water pools, and dodging the tour groups became the task. Now as fun and populated as this may sound, there were several moments where I found myself very alone in the cave. This is the perfect cave to film a scary movie. It has stairs leading to cave entrances on a cliff side, long lonely passageways, and the highly unlikely and elusive cave monster. At the end of the day, much was accomplished and everyone was a bit tired but no one had perished due to cave monsters or bleach. I was proud of us all. I should also mention that the Carter Cave Restoration was attended by a lot of people doing projects around the entire park.

Elli and I really got lucky when we hopped over to Cascade cave to see if we could get a look around before they closed it. Jonathon Lewis was still locking up so we had the opportunity to explore. The most magnificent sight in this cave was the daylight that came through a cave entrance on the other side of the creek that ran in and out of the cave. A waterfall could be seen beyond that. Further on in the wilder part of this cave Elli found a group of 5 Indiana bats on the ground with one slightly farther away. Three of them were dead but the rest were dying. This was absolutely heartbreaking! The authorities took pictures as well as a specimen to the lab for further investigation. It was defiantly not believed to be white nose anything as they had no other symptoms. So, this is where I met my first Indiana bat. They are bigger then pips, black in color, have cute toes and seem to like to cuddle in groups. Adorable!!!

It was about this time that the cook out began. There was grilled chicken breast, baked beans, salads, and the best chocolate

cake ever! It was just the thing to finish off a long day... but then there was more....

With stamina and enthusiasm that would rival the famous Bobby "The Dogg" Miller's outings, Eleonora "Eli" Florance, decided to catch the 9:00 pm difficult caving trip to Cow-Counterfitter Cave System aka: Oligo Nunk Cave System. If you did not catch that, these caves are not just caves, they are whole cave systems. This trip was lead by Jonathon Lewis if you went on the "mild" trip or led by Brian Saul if you took the more "difficult" trip. Please note that the description of both these trips seemed difficult and involved harsh conditions. I heard that just to get to this cave, you had to 4 wheel drive through a creek as well go straight up the mountain. Had I known that, I would have just gone for the car ride.

I, on the other hand, took the opportunity to catch a ride back to our warm hotel room and support from the hot chocolate lady. Did I mention that this hotel has the best shower on the east coast? Yes, hot water combined with great water pressure works wonders for the aches and pains of a long day caving and running around the woods. I am so proud of Eli for getting this trip in.

Bright and early Sunday morning, Eli and I went to Tar-Kiln Cave with a group led by ESSO member and cave owner, Mark Walker. (Remember, the guy heading up the x-cave project.) Hiking in through a peaceful cow pasture and a nice stretch of woods, I got to meet some more cavers that live in the area. I got some advice on how to fix/add my knee pads into my caving suit. Earl taught us how to identify a hickory and ash tree. We picked up a little trash and attempted to get off some of the graffiti on the cave entrance. Shortly after we entered the Main entrance, I remember making the decision to be on the wet team, following Jonathan Lewis. This involved going through the stream passage. At first, the water was up to around waist level as we climbed amazing twisty tunnels. We stopped to play

at a great little squeeze, about 20 feet long, that had another passage leading from that which just kept going and going. Kevin was first through to get through the squeeze. I followed then went again following Earl. Pressing onward once again, we exited the cave out the Middle Entrance. Here we met up with the other cavers. We asked them to setup some webbing at the waterfall fall entrance and onward we went. Now there was some crawling! Multit-colored, wet rocks in inches of water followed by sand then more-deeper water, we crawled over everything. Then the water got deeper and wider. Finally, we were up to our necks in water and ducking under tight spaces trying to keep our caving hats dry and any possible parts out of the water. At one point, I would have given my left toe for my kayak. I think I could have gotten it there too! Anyway, this water was a bit chilly. Shrinkage echoed down the cavern chambers as space between the water and cave top grew closer and your body grows tighter. Just as I was beginning to wonder if I would fit through the rabbit hole we found the final squeeze to the exit. The climb up the waterfall was my biggest challenge of the weekend. With one hand tightly on the webbing, the other grasping wet rock, higher and higher I climbed out into the cold. Then ran back to the car as fast I could. Kudos goes out to the makers of my under layer!



Tina

A huge Thank You goes out to Eleonora "Eli" Florance, John Pearson, Jonathon F. Lewis, ESSO Grotto and the Kentucky Carter Cave Park Service for a wonderful weekend in West Virginia and Kentucky.

Carter Cave Restoration Video by Dave Ruth
<http://nsscavers.ning.com/video/video/show?id=19>

Pitting in Monroe County

It is no secret that I have an attraction for hundred foot pits. So when I saw a tiny blurb in the Feb 08 issue of the West Virginia Caver (Vol.26, No. 1) stating that a cave had been opened in Monroe County which contained a hundred foot pit it certainly caught my eye. In a short paragraph at the end of Ed Saugstad's column, West Virginia Connection, Bob Kirk and Craig Hall reported that they had gained entry to a cave by digging through a trash filled sinkhole on a property owned by Craig. Bob reported that the cave had pits of 85 and 100 feet.

I immediately contacted both Craig and Bob for details. Craig told me the approximate location and gave me his permission to check it out. Bob verified that he had used a disto laser to measure the two pits. Unfortunately I had just recently (the day before New Years) broken my ankle in a wood cutting accident, so my caving itinerary was on hold for a while. I made plans to visit the cave as soon as I was able.

By the end of January I seemed pretty mobile again so I figured it was time to test the ankle with a little rope work. What better way to start than checking out the new pit. I contacted Craig once more and he gave me specific directions. I also spoke with Bob who gave me some additional details about the pits. Both also informed me that they had opened a second multi-drop pit cave on the property just the previous weekend. This was looking better by the minute. Some folks from Tri-State were planning a trip to Lost World (still Grapevine to me) for the next weekend (Feb 9th) so I thought

why not join in on the fun and then head on down to Monroe.

I recruited an old time caving friend from Pennsylvania, Todd Dishong, for the adventure. We went to Grapevine early, rigged the historic 118' entrance pit, and bounced it a couple of times prior to the arrival of the rest of the Tri-State group. My ankle felt good. Shortly after Tri-State showed up, Todd and I departed for Union. The new caves were just outside of town so we soon found ourselves walking through some gorgeous karst fields that were just completely pocked by tantalizing sinkholes. Craig's directions proved faultless, and we easily located both entrances which were conveniently located just a short distance from each other.

We opted to check the one containing the hundred-footer first. The dug entrance was quite steep and slippery. We rigged a handline to make the exit easier. Just inside was a standing height room sloping downwards. Craig said they named the cave Cricket Den. There certainly were a lot of the hopping insects on the ceiling, so I thought the name seemed appropriate. Bob had left rigging bolts sans hangers in place. All I had to do was screw on new hangers and we were ready to go. The first pit is accessed by climbing into the top of a canyon at the bottom of the entrance room. Darkness beckons below but the top of the canyon is too narrow. An open ended crawl leads out over the canyon to a climbdown. This puts you on traversable ledges which cut back to the actual pit. Bob had also placed bolts along the traverse for protection and re-belays. The pit was black and looked deep. Todd and I rappelled in and taped it at 71 feet. It was a free drop into a spacious dome of about 10-15 foot diameter. It went up higher than our 71' rig point, explaining Bob's disto figure of 85' top to bottom. There was one short side passage about twenty feet above the floor, and a too tight drain at the bottom with some slight air movement. These were the only leads.

The two pits in Cricket Den are somewhat parallel so we derigged the 71 footer and set about rigging the deeper pit. I figured if Bob disto-ed the pit at 100', it was doubtful that it

was going to be an actual 100 foot drop, but maybe in the 90's.....? A short crawl at ceiling level along the lower right of the entrance room lead to the top of the drop. I used a natural rig point at the near end of the crawlway. The top thirty feet or so was kind of shaley, but below the contact the rest of the pit was a nice freefall down a circular well about fifteen feet in diameter. We taped it at 96', not a hundred, but still very respectable as far as new pits go in West Virginia. The crumbly shale at the top suggested that one down, one up, was probably the most prudent method for exploring the pit, so first I and then Todd bounced it. Bob had mentioned that he and Craig were going to compile a map of the cave later, so except for taping the two pits, Todd and I made no attempt at surveying.

We exited Cricket Den (I was glad we had a handline at the entrance) and walked the short distance to the cave opened only the weekend before. An article in the April 08 West Virginia Caver (Kilroy Was Here by Ed Saugstad) details how this cave was first entered by a party consisting of Ed, Bob, Craig, Leanne Barley, and Ricky Short. The entrance was somewhat snug and dropped into another small sloping room, similar to the entrance room in Cricket Den, except wetter. The steepness of the slope increased until it dropped off into a shallow pit. Imagine our surprise when we saw spray-painted above the drop the word "pit" with an arrow pointing downwards. When I later asked Bob about this, he conjectured that perhaps some teenager of minimal girth had squeezed through the tiny entrance he and Craig had enlarged and painted the sign. It appeared to have been there for quite some time. There was no evidence of any earlier exploration beyond the sign.

Once again Bob had left two bolts along the wall of the first drop. I put hangers on them and rigged my 180' rope. The first drop was awkward and we taped it at 20' to a landing between a small pool and a steep slope leading to a second and deeper pit. This proved to be a part shear, part free drop into a canyon. I used a natural re-belay around a sturdy stalagmite and Todd went down with the end of the tape. We got 70' for

the depth. As I started down the pit I noted a set of footprints leading into a mud floored canyon about twenty feet from the top of the drop. Bob later confirmed that this had been traversed for a short distance but it had ended. About 25' from the bottom was another canyon lead but it also ended quickly. There were no additional leads.

The most interesting thing about the cave was the completely intact black bear skeleton laying at the bottom of the 70 footer. I had seen portions of skeletons at the bottom of pits before; jaw bones and even a full skull in Dying Skunk Pit (Pocahontas), but never a complete skeleton. I surmise that the bear must have been using the small entrance and room as a den, slipped down the steep slope above the 20 foot drop, and in trying to extract itself, wandered to the lip of the 70 foot drop and fell in. Craig told me the cave had no official name yet, so I suggested Black Bear Plunge, not being aware of any "plunges" in West Virginia (TAG has several such as Cascade Plunge, Piggy Plunge, etc.), and that bear had certainly taken a fatal one.. Taking into account the slope of the entrance room and above the second drop, the total depth of Black Bear Plunge is well over a hundred feet.

Todd and I de-rigged, exited to a dusky fading twilight, and hiked in the dark back to my vehicle. We had a very enjoyable day to reflect upon for the four and a half hour drive home. Many thanks to Craig Hall for permission and Bob Kirk for the bolts. And thanks to both Bob, Craig, and others for their efforts in opening these two fine pit caves.

Terry McClanathan (NSS 12103)



Bats in Crossroads



This sinkhole is one of two to emerge along Maugans Avenue in front of Maugans Avenue Car Wash during the past year. The holes are delaying a project to widen the road from two to five lanes.

The hole solution?

Engineers counting on grout to prevent future Maugans Ave. sinkholes

By JOSHUA BOWMAN
joshua.bowman@herald-mail.com

A section of Maugans Avenue plagued by sinkholes got some long-term relief on Tuesday.

The Washington County Commission approved a contract to pump grout into an area along Maugans Avenue in front of Maugans Avenue Car Wash, where two sinkholes have appeared in the past year.

The grout will stabilize the area and help prevent new sinkholes, said Terry McGee, chief engineer for Washington County.

"We think the two sinkholes are related to larger instability issues here," McGee said. "The grout will help fix that."

The work will include boring

about 20 holes at least 5 feet into the rock below the soil that will be filled with grout to stabilize the ground, McGee said.

The project is estimated to cost \$172,000, but that could change if engineers determine more work is needed, McGee said.

"We're spending \$7.4 million on this roadway. The last thing we want to do is have more sinkholes out there," said McGee, referring to the Maugans Avenue improvement project, which will widen the road from two to five lanes.

A small sinkhole developed in front of the car wash last year and was quickly filled, McGee said.

The latest sinkhole developed May 13 as a small puncture on the shoulder of Maugans Avenue. By the next morning, the hole had grown to between 20 and 30 feet deep and between 22 and 30 feet deep, McGee said.

See HOLER, A11



By Kevin G. Silbert/Staff Photographer

Holes

Continued from A1

C. William Hetzer Inc. of Hagerstown, the contractor who was hired to widen Maugans Avenue, plugged the sinkhole by filling it with large stones, smaller rocks and fill dirt.

McGee said engineers have not been able to determine why sinkholes are occurring in the area.

Joseph Kroboth, the county's public works director, said a well drilled for the car wash might have drawn down the water table and played a part in creating the sinkholes.

The grouting work was recommended by the State Highway Administration. The SHA offered the services of its contractor, Concrete Protection Services Inc., which does sinkhole repair for the SHA.

Because the SHA offered their contractor for the work, the contract was not put out for bid, McGee said.

McGee said work could begin in two weeks and should take about five days. Drivers should expect lane closures during the work, as one row of holes will be drilled into the road, McGee said.

SATURDAY

November 25, 2006

Valley

The Herald-Mail • Hagerstown, Md.

WEEKEND
CALENDAR

Christmas
Shepherdstown

A variety of activities are scheduled for Shepherdstown's 100th Victorian Christmas celebration. Today and Sunday, Dec. 1-3. For information and a schedule of events, go to www.christmasinshepherdstown.com.

Wings of Christmas

The model train display is on a 2-foot-by-30-foot layout, in a levels deep and contains 1,000 feet of track with 50 figures, 1,000 feet of wire and 25 O-gauge trains. Today and Sunday, 1 to 5 p.m., Hagerstown Roundhouse Museum, 8 S. Barbara Blvd., Hagerstown, 54, adults; 50 cents, ages 12 and younger. Call 301-9-4665.

Winefest Winter 2006

Wine show and exhibits re-

Study: County's geology is split

MARTINSBURG, W.VA.

By MATTHEW LIMSTEAD
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Berkeley County leaders have gained another tool in their ongoing effort to implement zoning or land-use regulations, even as developers continue to seek approvals for projects that will override any new planning rules.

A report by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) based on the agency's study of groundwater flow in Berkeley County reaffirmed the split character of the county's "plumbing," said Hugh Hovius, the federal agency's Water Science Center director for West Virginia.

"Traced across the C&D-square mile area is about the same," Hovius said. "It's the geology that makes the difference."

The geological character of the county largely is split between the eastern part's hard limestone and the western part's more stable and predictable shale formations, Hovius said.

The characteristics of each part are more readily apparent on a map

"Our challenge is to create a land-use tool that mirrors what our residents want."

—Zoning Advisory Committee member
Caryn Thomas

generated by the USGS study, which shows color-shaded craggy shaped areas side by side in the karst region with extremely different levels of groundwater flow.

In southeastern Berkeley County, for example, an area that includes Pleasant Spring yielded the highest rate of water output — between 80 and 2,000 gallons per day per acre — than any other, Hovius said.

The areas around it, however, produced significantly less.

"You might put a well down and have very little yield," Hovius said. But by moving as little as 100 yards, the output could be much higher because of a fault in the limestone, he said.

In the USGS report, authors Ronald D. Hovius and Katherine E. Pughin said that the rate at which groundwater is recharged or is recharged is difficult to measure because the calculation set only involves geology, but

precipitation, vegetative cover, temperature, runoff, infiltration rates and topography.

"Should long-term use of ground water exceed its rate of replenishment, water shortages could result," the authors said.

Zoning regulations could be implemented to avoid that possibility, particularly in areas served by wells and not within the county or City of Martinsburg's public water districts, officials have said.

Zoning Advisory Committee member Caryn Thomas believes the USGS study complements the county's updated comprehensive plan, a guide now being used by the panel to draft a first-of-its-kind ordinance for county voters to consider next year.

"Our challenge is to create a land-use tool that mirrors what our residents want," Thomas said.

As the commission's work moves forward, developers are rushing to get their projects approved under existing county regulations, which have little power to guide development.

"By the time we get ready to vote, what's going to be left," Thomas said.

For more information, the USGS report is available at pubs.usgs.gov/dw2006/20/.

Both articles were supplied by John DiCarlo



SAVIN CALENDAR

MARCH 9TH - APRIL 19TH



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Apr 6	Apr 7	Apr 8	Apr 9 Grotto Meeting 7pm	Apr 10	Apr 11	Apr 12 Crystal Grottoes Cleanup 10am
Apr 13	Apr 14	Apr 15 TAX DAY	Apr 16	Apr 17	Apr 18	Apr 19 Harlansburg Cave-see Bernie & Sean
Apr 20	Apr 21	Apr 22 EARTH DAY	Apr 23	Apr 24	Apr 25 ARBOR DAY	Apr 26 Helectite Cave Cleanup 9am
Apr 27	Apr 28	Apr 29	Apr 30	May 1	May 2	May 3
May 4	May 5 CINCO de MAYO	May 6	May 7	May 8	May 9	May 10 Heritage Day (Adam Stephen Day) 9am
May 11 	May 12	May 13	May 14 Grotto Meeting 7pm	May 15	May 16 Spring MAR - Hazelton, WV	May 17 MAR

DEAD DOG DISPATCH



MONEY BAT

- 1- PITTING IN MONROE CO.
- 2- KENTUCKY CAVIN!
- 3- APEX REPORT

DEAD DOG DISPATCH

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