

# DEAD DOG DISPATCH

## TRI-STATE GROTTO OF THE NSS



# DEVIL'S TOWER WYOMING

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**#79**



(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 **25<sup>TH</sup>** OF EACH MONTH.

\*\*\* The Picture of Nikki & Chris was taken at Devil's Tower National Monument, Wyoming.

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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))

### TRI-STATE GROTTO MEMBERSHIP DUES ARE AS FOLLOWS:

FULL MEMBERSHIP -----**\$10.00** (Must be NSS)  
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SUBSCRIBING MEMBERSHIP-**\$12.00** (Non-Voting)  
FAMILY MEMBERSHIP -----**\$2.00/FAMILY**

WE NEED EVERYONE TO KEEP THINKING ABOUT VOLUNTEERING FOR AN OPEN POSITION. WE STILL NEED SOMEONE FOR THE FOLLOWING POSITION:  
**PROGRAM CHAIR**  
PLEASE GIVE IT SOME THOUGHT. WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT!



# CAVING EVENTS

## 2008

JUN 1-6 ----- Carter Caves St Park – Gate Laurel Cave  
**JUN 5-8 ----- SERA / VAR – Bristol, TN**  
 JUN 11 ----- Grotto Meeting – 7PM  
 JUN 14 ----- FLAG DAY  
 JUN 14 ----- Harpers Ferry Outdoor Festival – 11am  
 JUN 14 ----- Crystal Grottoes Cavern workday – 10am  
**JUN 15 ----- FATHER'S DAY**  
 JUN 16 ----- VAR meeting – 7pm @ Triple Brick Museum  
 JUN 18 ----- Donaldson Cave – 6pm – see Jerry  
 JUN 20 ----- WV DAY  
**JUN 20 ----- SUMMER SOLSTICE**  
 JUN 20-22 --- 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Caving Jamboree, Lutz Field Station, Pocahontas Co, WV  
**JUL 4 ----- INDEPENDENCE DAY**  
 JUL 4-6 ----- Bubble work weekend @ Nancy Hanks  
 JUL 9 ----- Grotto Meeting – 7PM  
**JUL 12 ----- GROTTTO 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 ----- 5<sup>th</sup> 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 8 ----- WVCC Banquet  
**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 ----- GROTTTO 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

## 2011

AUG 1-5 ---- NSS Convention, Glenwood Springs, CO

\*\*\*\*\* 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 May ----- **\$27.00**

**TOTAL TO DATE: --- \$4228.00**

# GROTTTO LINKS

Tri-State Grotto website ----- [www.wobey.net/TSG](http://www.wobey.net/TSG)  
 VAR website ----- [www.varegion.org](http://www.varegion.org)  
 NSS website ----- [www.caves.org](http://www.caves.org)  
 NSS Convention 2008 ----- [www.nss2008.com/](http://www.nss2008.com/)  
 OTR Website ----- [www.otr.org](http://www.otr.org)  
 MAR Website ----- [www.caves.org/region/mar/](http://www.caves.org/region/mar/)  
 WVCC ----- [www.wvcc.net](http://www.wvcc.net)  
 Andy Celmer's Web Site --- [www.wobey.net/TSG/Andy/](http://www.wobey.net/TSG/Andy/)  
 Art Jr's Web Site ----- <http://photos.arthanson.net/>  
 Bob's Web Site ----- [www.wobey.net/TSG/Bob/](http://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](http://www.wobey.net/TSG/Ehren/)  
 Jerry's Cave Web Site ----- [www.wobey.net/TSG/Jerry/](http://www.wobey.net/TSG/Jerry/)  
 Vitas's Web Site ----- [www.wobey.net/TSG/Vitas/](http://www.wobey.net/TSG/Vitas/)  
 Tina Blaik's Web Site ----- [www.kayakdream.com/](http://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/](http://s63.photobucket.com/albums/h143/Todd_05/)  
 Bob Gulden's Web Page - [www.caverbob.com/home.htm](http://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](http://www.chockstone.org/TechTips/prusik.htm#Bachman)  
 Tri-State Grotto MySpace -----  
 ----- [www.myspace.com/tristategrotto](http://www.myspace.com/tristategrotto)  
 Animated Knots by Grog ----- [www.animatedknots.com/](http://www.animatedknots.com/)  
 White Nose Syndrome -----  
<http://www.caves.org/grotto/dcg/wns-notice-to-cavers.pdf>  
 NSS Online Cavers ----- [www.onlinecavers.com](http://www.onlinecavers.com)



## MONTH OF JUNE

Bob Bennett, Gordon Birkhimer, Andrew  
 Celmer, Anya Crane, Mike Eppley, Vik  
 Garg, Stephen Jefferson, Joey Reeves,  
 Chuck Stanley, Bill Vis, Bernie Wootten,  
 Jonathan Wootten

*HAPPY BIRTHDAY*

## Tri-State Grotto Meeting May 14, 2008

Bernie Wootten started the meeting at 7:00 pm.

We talked about Spring 08 VAR

Chuck Stanley gave the treasures' report. It was  
 moved, seconded and passed.

Keith Hammersla presented a certificate To Tri-  
 State Grotto for help at Heritage Days.

John DiCarlo talked about the last work session  
 at Crystal Grottoes Caverns.

We had some new people introduce themselves.

We talked about the Harpers Ferry Outdoor  
 Festival at the KOA Campgrounds.

Ted talked about and congratulated us, on the  
 amount of dirt that has been moved in the Adam  
 Stephen Dig.

Todd talked about Culverson Creek, Wildcat  
 Entrance in Greenbrier Co. WV.

Terry went to Shovel Eater Cave. Terry told us  
 that Corkscrew Cave is the deepest in the East.

This weekend is MAR.

Jerry Bowen talked about a trip to Church  
 Mountain in Rockingham County.

Bob Bennett talked about Silver Cave.

May 23 Scott Hollow Jerry Bowen  
 May 23 Bubble Cave Work  
 May 31 Donaldson Cave clean up  
 May 31 Climbing Practice  
 June 5-8 SERA/VAR

Next meeting Jerry will have a video on the  
 newly discovered section of Grand Caverns.

Cave Bucks - \$27 was collected and will be sent  
 to SCCI. So far, Tri-State Grotto has collected  
 \$4,228.00 in Cave Bucks.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30.

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

**Guess who's the new NSS President? None  
 other than our own Gordon Birkhimer!!!!  
 Congrats Gordon! Way ta go! Now I can say  
 I've been cavin with the President!!!!**





## Surveying in the Gap

by  
Terry McClanathan

Gap Cave is a large historically significant cave located in the Cumberland Gap where the states of Virginia, Kentucky, and Tennessee join. It is presently being mapped by CRF. Eastern Kentucky caver Mike Crockett is coordinator for the project. It's a long drive to The Gap. Go down 81 to Bristol, then 2 hours west to the far corner of Virginia, about eight hours total.

To sweeten the arrangement Mike has been taking me to some of the pits on nearby Pine Mountain, which runs for about 100 miles along the VA/KY border. That's another story in itself, which I'll save for a later date. Gap Cave is the culmination of exploration efforts spanning several decades which have resulted in the connecting of several large caves in the area. The cave has the distinction of passing under three states. Douglas mentions Cudjos Cave and Soldiers Cave. Cumberland Gap Saltpeter is described in Holtzinger. The present Gap Cave System exceeds twelve miles, and most survey efforts yield an additional thousand feet or so each trip. Regular surveys are scheduled for the last weekend of each month.

The trips are arduous. It generally takes about four hours of caving just to reach the work areas. An awful lot of breakdown climbing is involved. Trip lengths are generally in the 12-16 hour range. My first two trips were from the horizontal entrances. Our objectives were survey in and around a large stream passage located beyond two huge breakdown chambers about two miles into the cave. There are bat restrictions, and both of my earlier trips (in Sept. 07 and Dec. 07) were at times when only the horizontal entrances can be used. There is also a vertical entrance which supposedly cuts travel time to the survey areas in half. This is only accessible

beginning Memorial Day weekend, so I had made arrangements for this May 24-25<sup>th</sup> to be my third trip. Bob Alderson (Roanoke) had informed me that on a recent trip his group had surveyed a small infeeder stream to the top of a deep pit. Thinking I'd be interested in this, they ended their trip at the top of this pit. Now why would anyone think I'd care about a deep pit found in a great cave? Just more "icing on the cake."

For this trip our team consisted of Cheryl Pratt, Bob Alderson, Marion O. Smith, and myself. Cheryl had lead on my second trip and Bob had lead on the first one. They're both major players in the Gap survey project, having been on many trips and being very knowledgeable of the caves complexities. By that I mean they always seem to know where they are, where they're going, and how to get us all back, as opposed to my being perpetually lost most of the time.

Anticipating a good showing for the Memorial Day weekend (but in fact the four of us were the only ones who would actually be caving), Bob had packed scaling poles for a climbing lead near the small in-feeder stream leading to the "new" pit. We were also toting ropes of 150 and 65' lengths for the drops, plus full packs of vertical and survey gear. Translation... our packs were stuffed. Add in Bob's scaling poles, and I thought this a rather ambitious undertaking for just the four of us. Did I mention that our collective ages totaled 231 years, with Marion taking "oldest geezer" honors at 65, and Cheryl being the "baby" at only 53.

The vertical entrance was formerly the Cumberland Gap Saltpeter Cave. As described in Holsinger, it entails two canyon drops a short way inside the entrance. Marion pointed out some authentic civil war era signatures in the upper part of the cave. Following the drops there is a low sand crawl of around 200' (we stashed the scaling poles here), lots of scrambling, some nice easy walking sections (but not nearly enough), and of course lots of breakdown. I found myself wondering why anyone would consider this the "easy" entrance. We certainly didn't set any speed records. Once in the Little

Big Breakdown Room, which I recognized from my previous trips, the real fun commenced. Bob lead us up a series of steep slippery climbs to a thirty foot drop into the small in-feeder they had followed to the pit a few months before. It was here that Cheryl had some sort of revelation, suddenly remembering the ugliness of the 500 feet of survey that had taken them to the edge of the pit. If she remembered doing this, she must have forgotten about it up to that point, because her remarks were something like "You mean we have to go through that (horror) again!!?" Somehow, in my own mind, I had envisioned that once in the area, it would be pretty routine to get to the pit. What was I thinking? There doesn't seem to be a whole lot of "easy" associated with this cave.

The route started as a scramble in a mucky stream passage cut into a shaley limestone. The shale was kind of slimy and of the consistency that just sticks to everything. Soon the passage deteriorated to a crawl followed by more, low scramble. The muck never improved. I had the 65 foot rope and Cheryl was trying to keep the 150 from getting totally slimed. I think she was doing a better job than I. When we reached the last survey station from Bob and Cheryl's last effort we found ourselves looking down a long slope which ended in a gaping black void. Bob said he had thought the drop was about 80 feet so we figured the 150 would probably rig the main pit. From survey notes, Bob also theorized we'd probably encounter another shorter drop before connecting into the lower level main stream borehole, hence the need for the second 65' rope we had with us. Our hope was to complete the survey loop by tying into the main stream once we dropped the big pit. But what is it they say about the best laid plans????

Our first obstacle was finding a way to rig the pit safely. The breakdown slope looked heinous. There were no obvious rig points. The apparent lip was about 50 feet down slope over considerable unstable looking breakdown blocks. We rigged the 65' rope to a large block and I went down for a closer inspection. The end of the rope put me at a wall where the limestone didn't look too bad. Some testing with a hammer

revealed that a good portion of the wall was the same rotten shaley limestone we'd encountered enroute in the stream in-feeder, and thus no good for setting bolts. A little higher on the wall I found some rock which was close to the desired tone. Placing bolts here would put us about ten feet above the break over, but out of line from any of the larger death rocks. A lot of "gardening" would be needed to clear the way, but it seemed our safest bet. The slope was too steep to stand on safely, so I clipped into the very end of the 65' rope, and by turning at an awkward angle, laboriously set two anchors for our rig point.

Thinking there still might be a second drop to the main stream level, we wanted to conserve our shorter rope, so we re-rigged the 150 from the breakdown blocks at the top of the slope to the bolts I set. I then used the main rope to clear all the loose rubble from the slope as I made my way to the edge of the main pit. Rocks falling into the pit were taking a good three seconds to hit, indicating the drop was probably over 100' deep. We set our first new survey station at the edge of the pit at 49' from the tie-in. That meant only a hundred feet of rope was going to be in the pit. I didn't think it would reach, but I rappelled down to see if it might be just a foot or two short. It wasn't. The knot appeared to be dangling perhaps 15-20 feet from the floor. I changed over and climbed back up. We would have to use the 65' rope after all. Still, it did not reach all the way to the bolts, so we used a long piece of webbing to wrap the breakdown and then rigged into that. That freed up the 150 to reach from the bolts all the way to the pit floor. After a while longer, Bob and I completed the re-rigging and placed some pads at the break over. Cheryl came next and we continued the survey down the drop. The pit was totally free for 116'. Our rig was at the lowest possible point on the slope, so higher figures could be obtained by rigging where the lip was higher on the slope, but these did not look appealing to us. The pit was much larger than I'd anticipated, measuring about fifty feet long by 20 wide and being somewhat kidney bean shaped. The top twenty feet was shaley limestone, but the rest was nice looking rock with about a 20 degree dip. All in all a very nice

domepit. A small waterfall from the in-feeder stream landed in a small pool at the far end of the dome.

Once all four of us were on bottom, we continued the survey. It was soon determined that we faced two problems. As expected we were still higher than the main stream passage, but had no ropes for another drop. The in-feeder stream from the pool trickled into a small canyon. This lead to the top of an eight foot drop into a pool at a lower level, then drained off into another drop which we presumed connected to the main stream passage somewhere beneath us. The second problem was that none of us could fit into the tight slot at the top of the eight foot drop. Also the small stream canyon was extremely muddy. The CRF has a standard that the same person doing foresights must also do the backsights, and with the same instruments. This may sound awkward but it's really not much trouble when the passage being surveyed is normal. However, when the passage is mucky, it can be a real pain. Reading the fore and back sights of the five stations we set in the 40 or so feet from the bottom of the dome to the eight foot drop got me completely slimed.

We finished up the little bit of survey and held a pow-wow. We had gained only about 200' of survey, certainly not a very impressive figure for all of our effort. We had sure consumed a lot of time in getting to the drop and rigging it. We, and all of our gear, had picked up quite a few extra pounds of mud. Bob thought it unlikely that this route would be used again, so it was decided (though not unanimously) that we should de-rig and take the ropes out with us. It was nearly midnight. This was looking like it was going to be a long tired exit. And so the decision was made to rout, although I don't think the pace we set could really be termed a "rout". Moving mud covered packs and ropes through the 500 foot long in-feeder above the 116' pit was like rolling a couple of heavy mud snowballs. Everything just kept getting bulkier and heavier.

Suffice to say that it was indeed a slow, tiring exit. Bob and Cheryl didn't seem as wasted as Marion and I, or else they carried their weariness

more stoically. At least once we got to the breezier parts of the cave, some of the mud dried and started to fall off our persons and gear, lightening the load a bit. We finally emerged to a starry chilly night (morning) a little past 4AM, but with a long hike back to the vehicles. We'd only been underground 16 hours, but it seemed much longer. I'm still waiting for that "easy" trip in the GAP. By the time we finally arrived back to the field house, dawn was breaking.

And so, my third trip ended much like the other two, feeling pretty tired, but with a pleasing sense of accomplishment. The Gap is a great cave. For me personally, the 116' pit was especially nice. It's a beautiful drop. If it were closer to the 200' range it would be a classic. Bob was probably correct, though; I doubt if there will be many (any?) other trips back to it. The Gap project is always on the lookout for "new blood". If a small group were to carpool, the drive wouldn't be so bad. Many people drive down on Friday and spend the night. Accommodations are excellent and free. The personnel are first rate. Just contact Mike Crockett and express an interest if you'd like to be a part of the survey of one of the finest overall caves to be found anywhere. I guarantee you'll be gratifyingly exhausted afterwards, but you will also leave the next day thinking "what a great trip" you had. And after all, isn't that the way we all want to feel when the caving trip is over.

### **We Are Finally "REAL" Cavers**

Two years ago when Sean and I joined the grotto we were told that anyone that was a real caver had been to 2 caves. One of them was the Trout caves and the other was Scott Hollow. Well, finally, after two long years on Memorial Day Weekend we became "REAL" cavers.

We started early Friday morning and picked Jerry up with plans to meet with Corey and his friend Joe en route. About half way to the cave the boys caught up and Corey scared the pants off of some of the people in the car

with a dastardly face. Now that our group was together, we proceeded to the cave.

The entrance was totally awesome. I have never seen a hole in the bottom of someone's house that leads to a huge cave. We geared up and Jerry and I practically had to chase Sean, Corey, and Joe through the entrance and down Drag Ass Hill. The hill wasn't too bad going down. Going up was a completely different story. When we reached the Junction Room father Jerry made us all turn around so to make sure we knew where we were going.

Moving onward through the cave we made it down to a very large room that started the stream passage. Joe was so excited that he started running around in circles, arms spread wide, flying like an airplane. Until this very moment he had only ever been in Maryland sized caves. Needless to say he was very impressed. Continuing down the passageway we came across a rickety ladder rested on a 3-foot tall pile of rocks that went about 40 feet straight up. At the top you had to use a hand line that was placed who knows when to make it the rest of the way on top of the ledge.

Being fearless and invincible Corey was the only one that attempted this feat while the rest of us waited at the bottom. Corey disappeared around the corner after replying okay to Jerry telling him not to go too far. Anyone that has caved with Corey knows all to well that that request is very hard for him. After 15-20 minutes of not going to far Corey finally appeared at the top of the ladder and made his way down wiggling twice as much as when he went up. All of the wiggling solidified my decision that unless there were mass pretties up there I would not be climbing that ladder.

We walked on for a ways and Joe admired many fossil formations before heading back upstream. Since we still had time we headed to the double waterfall. The waterfall was very neat in how it was formed. Corey went

to take a closer look, Sean made it partway before filling his boots up with water, Joe admired fossils, Jerry ate an energy boosting chocolate bar and I took a nap as I had worked a 12 hour shift the night we left for the cave.

On the way out Jerry became the caboose and challenged us to find our own way out. To his dismay, I think, we found our way with only one minor hiccup which we easily corrected. Again, on the way out, Jerry and I chased the boys up Drag Ass Hill and out of the culvert. After we were out and gear all packed we drove up to the nearby entrance in the field.

We checked out a couple of other things in the area, none of which really panned out before heading to the Bubble property. The next morning after our various jobs of hole-digging, grass mowing, weed-wacking and tree cutting we headed out to check out Richardson's. Being a very wet cave we opted to do something else and come back to that one later.

So, Sean lead the way to the Higginbotham Caves. We all geared up and started with #2 and took a short look around. Corey, you know how he likes his little holes, may have even found the connector passage that leads to #1. #1 was next and we breezed through there and out the telephone pole entrance. From there we went to #5 and checked that out some. Corey went inside one side and Sean explored the other. Everyone decided again that we would rather not get soaking wet. Back at base camp had we pushed it I found out that we could have made a through trip there also.

Then we headed to #4. Sean and I learned that the long crawl is much softer and larger when the ground is not frozen. There are many beautiful things inside this cave and for the most part it consists of a large stream passage. The last time Sean and I were in this cave we didn't make it back to the waterfall. This time the water was lower and



most of us didn't mind getting a little wet. The waterfall was twice the size as it was listed on the map and was very nice to see. Corey continued past to take a picture and then we headed out.

After working and caving all day Sean and I were both starving and exhausted and that pot luck dinner was about the best food I had ever had. Meanwhile, Corey was busy digging a giant hole attempting to break into virgin cave passage. He nearly made it too, but not quite.

The next morning, after church, we headed out. On the way we decided to stop at Crossroads. I had to leave my house at 6:07pm that night to go to work so we only had a little over an hour in the cave. Sean had brought some flagging tape because we couldn't afford any time getting lost. We marked the drop down well and Sean marked several other key areas. After about 20 minutes in the cave the sole of Jerry's shoe came off and he had to turn back. After assuring the rest of us that he could make it out without any problems he turned back.

The rest of us continued on a short way, explored a gorge and went a short distance down a stream passage. After about 20 more minutes we turned to head out also. I was in the front, followed by Joe, Corey and last Sean. As I headed out I began picking up the marking tape. Sean was getting pissed in the back of the line. Finally he said out loud. I can't believe Jerry is messing with us like this by picking up our markers. We all had a laugh when I announced that I had been collecting them the whole time.

As a bigger surprise when we got near the climb up there was Jerry, still in the cave and down a passage opposite the climb up. Again, Sean thought that Jerry was just messing with us, making sure we could find our way out of the cave. Jerry was just disoriented however, as cavers are never lost. We all made it out and Jerry retired the

"best pair of caving shoes he has ever owned." We quickly changed and piled in the car as my deadline was rapidly approaching.

Jerry was gritting his teeth the whole way saying we were cutting it way too close. We made it back to the house at 5:55pm and I was out of the shower, dressed and ready to go by 6:02. 5 minutes ahead of the deadline.

Bernie Wootten

## **Caving during SERA/VAR**

### **6/6/08 – Berry Hill Cave**

Carl Amundson, Tony Amundson, Marion Smith, Sharon Jones, Carl Cornett, John xxxx, Gary xxxxx and three other cavers I can't remember their names.

Well, it was a REALLY hot day at SERA/VAR and I was looking forward to getting underground. We met at the registration area at 10:30 and headed out to the cave. Berry Hill Cave was about 40 min from the campground. When we got there we parked in front of the owner's house and headed to the entrance. There are two pits in this cave; 90' and 105'. The 90' drop was pre-rigged and we brought rope for the other. We all dropped the 90'er and then walked around to the bottom 105' drop. Not everyone wanted to drop the 105'er because of the 2 straddle pits that had to be negotiated to access the top of that drop. About half the group headed out while John and I rigged the drop. The straddle pits weren't too deep, 20 to 30'. But for guys with short legs (me & my brother) it was kind of hairy... Tony, John, Marion, Sharon and myself bounced the 105, de-rigged and headed out of the cave. It was still hot when we got out, (but as those of us who were there know, it stayed hot at SERA/VAR).

Berry Hill is a great little vertical cave. We spent a total of 5 hours underground.

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## 6/7/08 – Blowing Entrance of the Omega System

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This was a drop I wanted to do as soon as I knew it would be open during SERA/VAR. A 140' drop blowing LARGE amounts of VERY cold air and it did not disappoint.

We left the campground at 9am and had breakfast with the wives before heading to the cave. The pit is about an hour and 40 min from Bristol. A lead-trip was going to that area, (there are three caves within walking distance of each other), but we just wanted to drop the pit and head back. We were under strict orders to be back for dinner... ;-)

We followed the directions given to us at registration but had some trouble making it up the road to the cave. We parked at a convenient spot, suited up and prepared to hike up the road. When to our surprise, about 20 cavers came out of the woods about 200' down the road. Cool. We found out we missed the bridge that the directions showed. As it turned out it was just a culvert.

We were taken to the Blowing Entrance and they were not kidding when they named it. The air was blowing really hard and it was cold. It was like standing in front of a large window air conditioner. Man, it felt great on a hot day. I rigged the drop and then the rebelay about 50' down. After that it was a free rappel all the way to the bottom. During SERA/VAR we could not access the Omega system, but we did take the passage to the gate. It took about a half an hour of caving to reach the gate. The wind was howling thru that tight passage. I think it was the coldest I have ever been in a cave without being wet. It felt good to get back to the bottom of the drop and warm up on the way up the rope.

When we got out, there were a group of cavers ready the head down. I left my rope rigged so it could be used by everyone that wanted to drop the pit. I told the trip leader to get the rope back to me when they were done. We got back in the van and made it back to the campground in time for dinner. Another great day of caving at SERA/VAR. We were not underground very long, but it was a great pit to bounce. I would do it again in a heartbeat...



Blowing entrance to Omega



Paxtons







# CAVIN CALENDAR

## JUNE 8TH - JULY 19TH



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>Jun 8</b> SERA / VAR	<b>Jun 9</b>	<b>Jun 10</b>	<b>Jun 11</b>  GROTTO MEETING 7PM	<b>Jun 12</b>	<b>Jun 13</b>	<b>Jun 14</b>  FLAG DAY Crystal Grottoes Work Day 10am Harpers Ferry Outdoor Festival
<b>Jun 15</b> FATHER'S DAY	<b>Jun 16</b> VAR meeting 7pm	<b>Jun 17</b>	<b>Jun 18</b> Donaldson Cave - see Jerry - 6pm	<b>Jun 19</b>	<b>Jun 20</b> WV DAY  SOLSTICE Caving Jamboree	<b>Jun 21</b> 5th Annual Caving Jamboree - Lutz Field Station, Pocahontas Co, WV
<b>Jun 22</b> Caving Jamboree	<b>Jun 23</b>	<b>Jun 24</b>	<b>Jun 25</b>	<b>Jun 26</b>	<b>Jun 27</b>	<b>Jun 28</b>
<b>Jun 29</b>	<b>Jun 30</b>	<b>Jul 1</b>	<b>Jul 2</b>	<b>Jul 3</b>	<b>Jul 4</b> INDEPENDENCE DAY Nancy Hanks Work Weekend	<b>Jul 5</b> Nancy Hanks Work Weekend (Bubble Cave)
<b>Jul 6</b> Nancy Hanks Work Weekend	<b>Jul 7</b>	<b>Jul 8</b>	<b>Jul 9</b>  Grotto meeting 7pm	<b>Jul 10</b>	<b>Jul 11</b>	<b>Jul 12</b> Grotto Picnic at Crystal Grottoes 12 noon
<b>Jul 13</b>	<b>Jul 14</b>	<b>Jul 15</b>	<b>Jul 16</b>	<b>Jul 17</b>	<b>Jul 18</b>	<b>Jul 19</b>
					Karst-O-Rama	

# DEAD DOG DISPATCH



Spar in Paxtons

- 1- SURVEYING IN THE GAP
- 2- FINALLY 'REAL CAVERS'
- 3- SOME SERA / VAR GAVING

## DEAD DOG DISPATCH

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