

DEAD DOG DISPATCH TRI-STATE CRATTA

CHRIS GOATES IN
MCMAHONS MILL CAVE

VOL. #24

ISS. #2

FEB

2009

#11



(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
or can be SENT TO:

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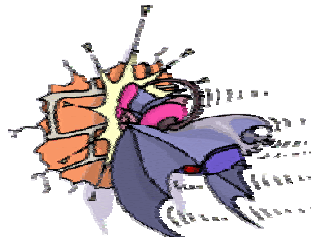
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*** The photo on the cover shows Chris Coates in
McMahons Mill Cave. It was taken by Nikki Fox.

**** 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
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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 AN OPEN POSITION. WE
STILL NEED SOMEONE FOR THE FOLLOWING
POSITION:
PROGRAM CHAIR
PLEASE GIVE IT SOME THOUGHT. WE NEED YOUR
SUPPORT!



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GROTTTO.

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

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CAVE IN EVENTS

2009

FEB 2 ----- GROUND HOG DAY
FEB 11 ----- Grotto Meeting - 7pm
FEB 14 ----- VALENTINE'S DAY
FEB 14 ----- Breathing Cave - see Bob Bennett
FEB 16 ----- PRESIDENT'S DAY
FEB 21 ----- Jones Quarry Cave - see Brent Jefferson
FEB 24 ----- FAT TUESDAY
MAR 8 ----- DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME STARTS
MAR 11 ----- Grotto Meeting 7PM
MAR 14 ----- Adam Stephen Dig - 9am - see John DiCarlo
MAR 17 ----- ST PATRICK'S DAY
MAR 20 ----- VERNAL (SPRING) EQUINOX
MAR 22 ----- WORLD WATER DAY
MAR 25 ----- MD DAY
APR 1 ----- ALL FOOL'S DAY
APR 8 ----- Grotto Meeting 7PM
APR 10 ----- GOOD FRIDAY
APR 12 ----- EASTER
APR 15 ----- TAX DAY
APR 22 ----- EARTH DAY
APR 24 ----- ARBOR DAY
APR 24-26 --- SPRING VAR - Sponsored by Tri-State Grotto - Held at Grand Caverns
MAY 10 ----- MOTHER'S DAY
MAY 13 ----- Grotto meeting 7pm
MAY 16 ----- ARMED FORCES DAY
MAY 25 ----- MEMORIAL DAY
JUN 5-7 ----- Bubble Weekend
JUN 10 ----- Grotto Meeting - 7pm
JUN 14 ----- FLAG DAY
JUN 20 ----- WV Day
JUN 21 ----- FATHER'S DAY
JUN 21 ----- SUMMER SOLSTICE
JUL 4 ----- INDEPENDENCE DAY
JUL 8 ----- Grotto Meeting - 7pm
JUL 11 ----- Grotto Picnic - Crystal Grottoes - 12pm
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

2012

JUN 25-30 ----- NSS Convention, Lewisburg, WV

***** 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 January ----- \$27.00

TOTAL TO DATE: --- \$4385.00

Keep It Coming!

GROTTO LINKS

Tri-State Grotto website ----- www.wobey.net/TSG
VAR website ----- www.varegion.org
NSS website ----- www.caves.org
NSS Convention 2009 ----- <http://www.ics2009.us/>
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/>
Art Jr's 2nd Web Site ----- <http://www.tristategrotto.org/>
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

GROTTO BIRTHDAYS

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MONTH OF FEBRUARY

Malakai Hanson, JD Hicks, Carrie
Marcum, Isiah Reeder, Ted Wachter,
Barbara Walthers, Will Walthers, Tyler
Wootten

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

CAVING NEWS

WNS!!!

From: varlist Discussion List
[VARLIST@listserv.vt.edu] on behalf of
Dave West [d270@BELLATLANTIC.NET]
Sent: Saturday, January 24, 2009 3:00 PM
To: VARLIST@LISTSERV.VT.EDU
Subject: A report of bats with fungus in
Hamilton Cave, WV.

Two bats have been observed in Hamilton Cave in Pendleton County, WV that display a fungal presence on their nose area and wings. The bats are not located near the entrance, and in fact are relatively deep into the cave. This has not been confirmed as White Nose Syndrome, but photographs provided show a strong resemblance. Until proven otherwise we will proceed as though it is. We sincerely hope it is not.

In a compilation of trip reports from cavers that had visited affected caves in New York assembled by the Northeast Cave Conservancy, Hamilton Cave was among the caves subsequently visited by one of the groups reporting.

If you have visited Hamilton or New Trout Caves, both of which are located on the NSS owned John Guilday Caves Nature Preserve, please ensure you thoroughly disinfect your

caving gear before caving elsewhere. Please refrain from visiting either cave until more information can be obtained in the coming weeks.

The Preserve will need to be closed until further notice. We apologize for any inconvenience, and beg your understanding of the situation.

If you can forward this to a list serve not included above, please do so.

Thank you,

Dave West, Manager
John Guilday Caves Nature Preserve
National Speleological Society

We had the annual bat count at the John Guilday Caves Nature Preserve yesterday. We sent a party of four into each of the three main caves; Hamilton, Trout, and New Trout. Due to the report of possible presence of White Nose Syndrome in Hamilton Cave, each party included West Virginia Division of Natural Resources personnel to facilitate any collecting that needed to be accomplished. Also assisting with the count were members of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the U.S. Forest Service.

So first the good news. The count in New Trout Cave was generally up with no evidence of WNS. The count in Trout Cave was on a par with last years count, although there were slightly fewer Little Browns, which may not be statistically significant. Two Little Brown bats with fungus were collected in Trout Cave, no more evidence of WNS than last year, and the bats collected last year tested negative.

So now the bad news. Five dead bats were collected on the trail en route to Hamilton Cave. Tabitha Viner, a pathologist at the National Zoo in DC, examined one with a field necropsy kit and determined that it had essentially no body fat. In Hamilton Cave, although the overall number of bats was about the same as in recent years, there were over 200 bats near the entrance in an area that has had an average count of 16 in

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past years, and these were more active than one would expect. Counts in the further reaches were down from 179 to 39. Over a quarter of those counted that were close enough for examination showed evidence of fungal growth. As the count ended around twilight, bats were seen leaving the cave, presumably in search of food. Species affected include Little Browns, Eastern Pipistrelles, and Northern Long Ears. All of these observations are consistent with the presence of White Nose Syndrome. Samples were collected, and we await the results as final confirmation.

The preserve will remain closed until further notice. The caves will be examined again prior to Spring.

David West, Manager
John Guilday Caves Nature Preserve

Tri-State Grotto **Meeting**

Jan 14, 2009

Bernie Wootten started the meeting at 7 pm.

We had one new visitor who introduced herself.

Chuck Stanley gave the treasurer's report. It was moved, seconded and accepted.

Mail Call

Bernie read some of the mail to us.

VAR

Bernie updated us on the Spring 09 VAR. Several people brought Sodas and beer to the meeting tonight for the VAR. We will do that for the next several meetings. There will be ads for the guidebook. Inside ads will be \$10 for a half page.

Old Business

John DiCarlo gave a Grotto T Shirt report. We ordered 33 T Shirts. We have sold most of them, and have broken even. He turned over \$257 to Chuck which more than paid the bill to buy them. He still has T Shirts to get to people.

New Business

Conservation. There was talk about placing "Cave Law" plaques in caves.

A discussion took place about the VAR Landowner Award. There are people that were missed from the list. We talked about someone who we would nominate. Joe Harper for Flower Pot Cave. It was moved, seconded and passed.

Trips

Bernie and 10 others went to Porters Cave. Joe talked about his two sons, who went, and thanked everyone who made it possible.

Bernie talked about a trip to a cave in a RR Tunnel.

At the WVCC banquet weekend, Ben proposed to JoBeth while they were in Scott Hollow. A June wedding is planned.

49 people were at the Grotto Christmas Party.

Bob talked about the search for Duffys Cavern.

Tri-State Grotto celebrated its 24th birthday, and Paulette Bennett brought a cake for the occasion.

Cave Bucks

\$27 will be sent to WVCC.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:15.

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



Booty in TAG

During the mid to late 90's legendary TAG cavers Alan Cressler and Marion O. Smith enjoyed an incredible run of modern caving discoveries. First Alan transformed Alabama's Walking Fern Cave from an in-cave 80' pit to a 447 foot deep cave, discovering the spectacular 242' Whopper Well and a beautiful 229' dome in the process. He soon followed this up by digging a low blowing crawl in another Alabama cave called Frenchman's Pit, which after 500' of belly wallowing in a gravelly stream passage popped out into the top of an impressive 100' diameter pit featuring a 224' freefall rappel, later dubbed Dental Floss Well. Thousands of feet of virgin passage at the bottom of this eventually connected into a large valley cave making the total system one of the longest and deepest in the state. These efforts were eclipsed when Alan lead a small group of cavers through a near sump just inside the entrance of Guess Cave, also in Alabama, to discover a large borehole passage nearly two miles long. Soon nearly five miles of booty was surveyed in this cave.

Not to be outdone by his younger protégé Alan, TAG pitting "guru" Marion O. Smith pushed up two previously undone waterfall climbs of fourteen feet each in Tennessee's Rumbling Falls, and was rewarded with the discovery of gaping blackness. Marion christened this the Rumble Room. Accessed by an impressive 201 foot rappel, this massive breakdown room proved to be just the terminus of an immense river passage averaging nearly 100 feet wide and extending for miles. The Rumble Room is the largest chamber east of the Mississippi, and Marion and crew have mapped over 15 miles in the cave.

The secret to all this success is hardly a secret at all. As many cavers have demonstrated, the easiest way to find new cave is to thoroughly push old cave. This is not an exclusive TAG

phenomenon. Consider the Omega System in Va., presently the states largest; the eight to twenty eight mile jump in West Virginia's Hellhole resulting from a six year push by GVKS cavers; or the grandmother of them all, Lecheguilla. Indeed, practically any caver who has been caving long enough has experienced the thrill of being the first to set foot on untrodden ground. All we need do is enlarge that blowing crack, push that nasty low stream crawl, or maybe just move a few rocks out of the way, and we are there.

I confess to feeling a bit down this past fall as a result of losing our daughter, so just before Christmas I contacted Marion to see if he was going to be in Tennessee over the holidays. He invited me to join him on a trip to drop some undone pits in two little known caves near his home. He said the caves would most likely remain pretty insignificant, with little chance of finding a deep pit (meaning over 100'), or any going boreholes. He was working on mapping the one, which was proving more complex than he'd first thought, while the other he had just started. He told me that if I wanted to do all the small pits in the 20-60' range that the two caves had to offer, I could maybe get somewhere between 300-500 vertical feet out of them. Sounded like a nice diversion to me.

Todd Roberts expressed an interest also, so the two of us found ourselves enroute to Marion's house in the early morning hours of Dec. 20th. Figuring we would probably be nerdholing all weekend, I made a 4AM stop at Bo Allen Pit near Sparta, Tenn., which was only about half an hours drive from Marion's. Bo Allen was an old favorite of mine, featuring a short walk, a nice 153' freefall, pretty formations, and no mud. It only took us about an hour to bounce the pit, which I assured Todd would doubtless be the high point of our weekend. Then on to Marion's for about an hours sleep before daylight.

After breakfast, four of us, Marion, Todd, myself, and Sharon Jones, all piled into Marion's battered 4-wheel drive Toyota, "Old Blue". The target cave was called Death Boulder Pit, and was located in Long Bottom beside the Caney

Fork River in White County, Tennessee. Marion had been working a number of caves in that area over the past year. He said it had rained over six inches the week before and was forecasting heavy rain for later that day. He expressed some concern that if the river should rise, it could easily flood our 4 wheel access road back into the cove, “trapping” us. But then every outing with Marion tends to be an adventure, so we all decided what the heck and went for it.

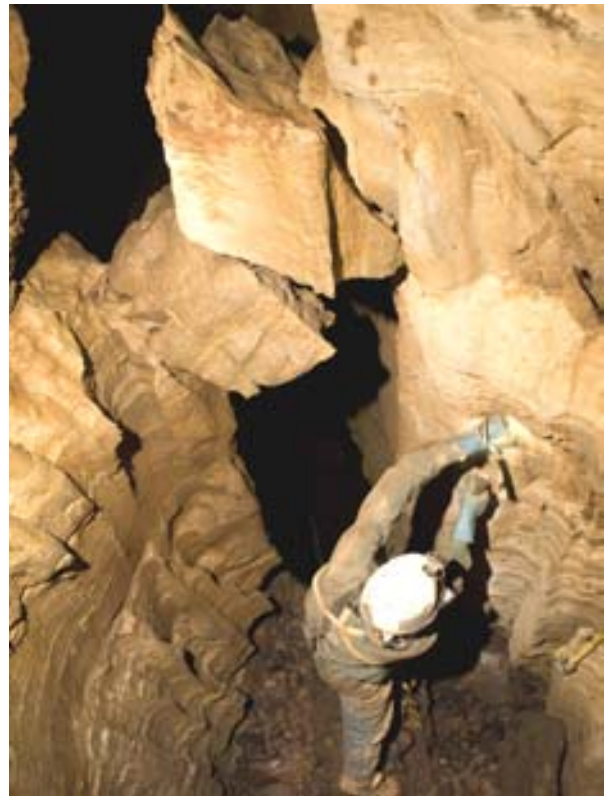


Marion rigs rope at the entrance to Death Boulder Pit Cave in preparation for dropping the first pit, as Terry and Sharon gear up. Photo by Todd Roberts

The cave was known, but Marion had traversed around the sixty-foot pit (the cave’s namesake) just inside the horizontal entrance on an earlier trip and gotten into uncharted territory. He was in the process of methodically checking out several additional shallow pits he had found. He surmised that one or more of these blowing pits would soon connect into a nearby cave he had taken me to on a previous trip. Some of the pits he had not yet descended because they needed bolting for safe rigging. First we all bounced and I taped the sixty foot pit (65’ actually). Then Marion used our rigging rope for the 60’ pit to check an obvious lead around to the left side of the drop. While he was doing this, I crossed over the pit to the opposite side, where he instructed me to pick up a previously stashed rope and rig the next drop, beyond which I was to proceed with one of our push ropes up the next drop and set bolts for a descent of an undone pit Marion

had found on his last trip. While I was doing this, Marion, Sharon, and Todd checked out two shallow pits which could only be entered by acrobatics while of rope down the pit I had just rigged. My last vision was one of a cursing Marion hanging upside down as he tried to maneuver into the tight slot leading to the two pits. I remember thinking that didn’t look like a whole lot of fun, and gladly proceeded onto my bolting assignment..

There were death rocks guarding the virgin pit, so I set a bolt high in a small alcove above the drop in an effort to keep the rope well away from them. By the time I was finished bolting, Marion, Sharon, and Todd had caught up to me. We backed up the bolt to some large breakdown and I began the descent.



Terry setting bolts for rigging second virgin drop in Death Boulder Pit Cave.
Note death rocks right above.
Photo by Todd.

It was awkward at the top, but then opened up into a roomy canyon, though the drop was only 35 feet. The canyon immediately dropped off into another pit. I had a second short push rope

with me, and tying my rack to the end of it, my Stenlight revealed that if I set bolts right above the lip, the rope would just reach bottom. However, Death Boulder was living up to its name. Perched directly above the second pit were two precariously wedged multi-hundred pounders. You know, the kind that make you ask yourself, "what is keeping that up there"? Marion had joined me by this time and we were discussing our options as Todd rappelled. We coerced Todd to pendulum over and give them a few good kicks while he was still safely above to see if they could be dislodged. He managed to move a chockstone which shifted them a bit, but then they seemed to resist his efforts, so we decided they would probably stay put for a while longer. I started setting bolts for the second pit. There was nothing to rig to, and the entirety of the short rope would have to go into the pit in order to reach, so we decided to tie into the first rope, thus providing a safety line for rigging into the second rope. I set one bolt high to keep the rope from touching the two death rocks, and set another right above the lip in order to put the maximum amount of rope in the pit. We dropped into a nice sized dome and taped the pit at 32 feet. At floor level there was a tight crawl blowing some air. I looked in and declared the crawl too tight, gnarly, and muddy. Todd thought otherwise. As Sharon and then Marion climbed the 32' pit, he managed to squeeze through and found a deeper pit on the other side. His two second rock drop indicated a depth of about 50 feet. The two virgin pits we had just descended were not closing down any leads; they just seemed to lead to more mysteries. Todd reported that there was no natural rigging for the new pit, and I was out of bolts. Except for Todd, none of us were too keen on going through the crawl just then anyway, so we opted to check out one of Marion's other pit leads in a different part of the cave.

Marion's next objective took us back to the initial pit traverse near the entrance. Here a second pre-rigged traverse line took us out over a canyon and then around to the right into a breakdown filled passage. This skirted around another pit and ended at the edge of a drop occupying the entire floor. Marion had left this

rigged from an previous trip, so we quickly rappelled in with our remaining two push ropes and taped the drop at 46'. Marion then pointed out a small hole about ten feet up the wall which he said opened into another drop of 47' which lead to our virgin target. Getting up the ten feet into the top of the 47 footer proved awkward. There was very little space to get into rappelling position while straddling the narrow partition separating the drops. I think each of us employed our own individual technique in negotiating this nasty spot. Todd's looked to be the most graceful, or at least he managed it with the least amount of groaning or cursing. Mine could best be described as a flailathon. Once at the bottom on the other side we rigged our shallow virgin drop with a natural and once more found ourselves on untrodden turf in a short canyon. The only lead was about fifteen feet off the floor through a narrow vertical slit. I removed all my vertical gear, and with a boost from Marion, was able to chimney up and squeeze through. Beyond was another climbdown into a partitioned room with a beckoning high lead on the other side. Air was coming across the top of the room from this lead. What looked like continuing passage could be seen beyond, or was this just the top of another drop. One more lead that refused to die.

After we all climbed out of the shallow pit, Marion suggested that Sharon and I climb first and take our derigged rope to check out the pit we had passed on the way in. He thought it was about 30 feet deep, but said it hadn't been dropped yet. As we extricated ourselves from this little pit series, there was a reverberating boom. We were not really far below the surface. We were miles from any highway. The boom had to be thunder, and it must have been right on top of us. The rope Sharon and I had was about 90 feet long. I rigged the pit to a stone column splitting the passage and started down. Once in the pit, I noticed a deeper hole in the floor just offset from where the rope landed. I tossed the rope down this and continued. The rope seemed to be swinging freely, so I kept a close eye on it as I slowly rappelled down the narrow shaft. The end was about four feet from the floor. Getting off was no problem, but I figured getting back on might be interesting with my ascending rig. A

narrow crack lead into a small upward trending dome with no air flow. Just as I was assessing the feasibility of chimneying up this, garbled cries from above brought me back to the rope. "Could I hurry up and climb out of the pit?" I couldn't understand the rest. Everyone sure seemed anxious though.

As I climbed I noticed cool air issuing from a body sized window about half way up the pit. I must have been too focused on the swinging end of the rope and missed seeing it on the way down. I tossed a rock through the window and it dropped down a pit which seemed to go deeper than the one I was climbing out of. There was also visible passage through the window continuing on the other side of the pit. Still more mysteries.

When I got to the top of the drop I soon saw what all the fuss was about. Water was pouring into the cave from multiple ceiling fractures. That explained the big BOOM! We had all heard earlier. We were high on side of the cliff so there was no danger of the cave actually flooding, but we all thought of the already full river outside. If it should rise and flood our "access" road that could be very bad. I told Marion what had transpired below. He said the rope I had rigged with was a 97-footer, indicating that the pit was probably in the 70-80 foot range, making it the deepest drop in the cave found so far. We had already been in the cave about nine hours. The incoming streamlets negated the idea of taking time to tape this new drop. Marion lamented on the fact that it looked like it might take at least three more trips just to finish off the leads we had found on what was supposed to be the mop-up trip to complete exploration of the cave.

Debate over this would have to wait though, for our immediate problem was getting out as quickly as possible. A safe extrication from the cave, off the cliffs, and out of the cove was uppermost in our collective minds. Dry traverses we had crossed on our way in were now quite slippery where additional ceiling "leaks" had sprung. Extreme care had to be taken. Once outside the cave our retreat was sloppy and ungraceful. We climbed/skidded down the steep

cliff face. The bouncy drive along the rough river road through sporadic downpours was nerve-wracking. The four-wheel road had two feet of water in all the low spots. Even so, Marion and "Old Blue" got us back in time for a late Pizza Hut supper in Sparta.

Now you might think the preceding account enough adventure for one weekend, but it's a long drive to TAG, so I like to make the most of things once I'm there. Sunday morning found us once more winding our way over curvy Tennessee backroads to another of Marion's recent projects. Brody Cave, in De Kalb County, was previously thought to be just a pleasant walking cave culminating with a small pit near the end. Marion had traversed around this pit to another, which he dropped, only to be stopped by yet another shallow pit, which is where we come in. Sharon had picked up a snuffle from the night before and elected not to cave today, but in her place we were joined by Andy Zellner. Brody Cave also had the advantage of being only three miles from I-40, so Todd and I would have only a short hop to the interstate for the drive home once the days caving was finished.

Preparing for anything, we each carried a rope. The hike was less than half a mile, losing about 200 feet of elevation. Marion said the cave was originally reported as being only about 300' long to a pinch. A few years back some cavers pushed through the pinch into more walking passage, ending near a 37' pit some 800' from the entrance. We all bounced the 37' pit which dropped into a canyon that became too narrow to follow. Up above, an easy traverse lead to a 19' drop over breakdown into what seemed to be a continuation of the same canyon. Marion had been as far as a narrow pit apparently dropping still deeper into the canyon. While we were checking out the rigging for this, Andy did a hairy traverse further out in the higher level of the canyon. He was able to gain solid footing on a large breakdown bridge, where the passage continued for about a hundred feet before the floor completely dropped into a deeper part of the same canyon. Andy's traverse did not appeal to either Marion or me. The rope tied at the 19 drop was long enough that Andy was able to use

it to rig a high tyrolean along his traverse for the more faint-hearted (and older) of the group. Isn't it amazing how fearless you become when clipped into a safety line while traversing slippery, sloping ledges?



Sharon on traverse line around first pit in Death Boulder.

Photo by Todd Roberts.

We all soon joined Andy on the breakdown bridge and were excitedly peering into gaping darkness.

Andy's drop did seem pretty deep, though the near end was narrow and jagged. This would make for an ugly rappel. Further out on the right wall of the canyon, and about 20 feet down, was a prominent flowstone bulge. From our vantage point the canyon appeared to enlarge considerably below this. It looked like a rebelay bolt set above the flowstone protrusion would make for a nice drop. Marion had warned that it might be necessary to do some bolting in the cave, and while I had used mine up the day before, Andy had some extra with him. I rappelled down to the flowstone, found some good rock just above it, and set a rebelay bolt.

From here I could see that the canyon went vertical, and of good dimension to a narrowing about 30 feet down. Rocks tossed through the narrowing fell free for another second before impacting with a resounding echo. Oooh!!! I sent the rest of the rope down the drop and into the waiting void. Thinking that the rope might not reach, Marion sent our last short push rope down to me just incase I needed extra. We were determined to get to the bottom.

The narrow spot wasn't really very tight and below that was about 40 feet of freefall to the floor. The near end of the canyon was a beautifully sculptured circular dome with a clear pool at its base. The drop taped at 94 feet. Below the landing point a too tight crevice dropped down into deep water. Outside, the valley floor was occupied by a large lake created by one of the TVA dams. The deep water most likely represented the perched water table resulting from this lake. In the opposite direction from the dome, the canyon continued as a high walking passage for about a hundred feet to a short climbdown. Just past this was a deep lake to the caves apparent terminus. Todd did some photography around the dome area. He even found an albino crayfish in the pool. Marion volunteered that Todd's photographic efforts in Brody's and Death Boulder from the day before might well be the only pictures ever taken in these two caves.

Granted, neither of the two caves we worked in this weekend will probably ever become popular tourist destinations, but each certainly had their merits. If nothing else, we had the adrenalin rush which virgin cave always elicits. Brody's was actually a fairly pleasant cave overall, and below the 94 foot drop might even be called impressive. We derigged all our ropes and exited after about five hours underground. Once again, many thanks to Marion and Sharon for their hospitality. Todd and I had a great time.

Terry McClanathan



Dome at bottom of 94' pit in Brody Cave. Photo by Todd.

SHORT TRIP REPORTS

Dec. 31st

Grapevine (Lost World) in Greenbrier Co. Bob Jones, Terry, Todd, The Stembel family consisting of John (Rocco), Susan, Natalie, and Starr. All the guys bounced the historic 118' entrance pit, Terry and Todd yo-yoed several times. Everyone toured commercial and pretty parts of wild section. All the Stembels and Bob Jones are TAG friends of Terry's from Atlanta who have cabins in the area. This was a nice Christmas diversion. Starr (8 yrs.) and her younger sister Natalie (6 yrs) especially had a great time. It's really fun for us old-timers to relive our early days of caving through the experiences of children. They have such unbridled enthusiasm.

Jan 10th

Shoveleater
Germany Valley in Pendleton Co.

Four different work teams were in the cave. Terry and Carl on one and Chris and Nikki on another, plus perhaps half a dozen others with varying assignments.

12 hour survey trip. Carl and I taped and surveyed the Skyline Traverse Drop. We got 162' making it the sixth pit in the cave exceeding 100' in depth, and the second deepest found in the cave so far.

Jan 24th

Death Boulder, White County, Tenn
Marion O. Smith, Terry

This was the follow-up trip to the Dec. 20th weekend. One of Marion's objectives was to connect Death Boulder to another nearby cave called Great Reason. The week before Marion had already excavated a short crawl near the entrance which lead to a couple of pits. The first we taped at 64'. It dropped into the dome where Todd had previously (Dec 20) pushed a muddy crawl to another pit. This needed bolting, which I did, and Marion and I descended. The drop was 46' into a 70' long high canyon that dead-ended. At the top of the 64' pit we went in another direction and did back-to-back pits of 15 and 29 feet. These also dead ended. Next we went over to the pit only I had descended (Dec 20) due to the heavy rain coming into the cave. As soon as Marion went down he recognized the passage and declared that I had unknowingly already connected the two caves. I had failed to see this, even though I had been in Great Reason last June. We taped the drop at 78', making it so far the longest in the cave. The entire cave system now boasts a total of 21 pits ranging from 15 to 78 feet deep. The new pits we did on this trip were all well guarded by death rocks so we spent a lot of time making things as safe as possible. The trip lasted 8 hours.

Jan 25th

Four small caves in Warren County, Tenn
Marion, Sharon Jones, Terry

The three of us spent Sunday on a ridge walk in search of an only done once pit called Biner Eater Pit. Enroute we found three other caves, one of which was virgin.

Biner Eater turned out to be two pits of 24' and a pretty nice 80 footer. I pushed a tight stream passage at the bottom for about 140 feet of hard earned booty. Marion made it in part way but couldn't contort his longer legs around some of the corners. Todd and Cory would have loved it: I didn't, but it was one of those "I might be able to fit through that" kind of passage and there was air. It finally pinched to a jagged five inch fissure and I gave up.

We also found two small contact caves. One had been reported as Dyer Cove Hartselle Cave and had

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about 160' of passage. The other was a small virgin cave. Marion and I explored about 130' of hands/knees and some walking passage to an awkward tight spot. I managed to pass this and got about 40' further into a stand-up formation room which ended the cave. Marion said he would turn it into the TCS as Marylander Cave.

Our last stop was a known cave located in a major ravine. We didn't know the nature of the cave or even the name at the time. Imagine our delight when after a few hundred feet of nice spacious canyon we came to a pit. We had to go back outside for rope and vertical gear. The drop was only 24 feet but it landed us in a nice stream passage. After a hundred feet this became a crawl which only Sharon and I went through. It soon opened into more canyon passage which we followed to a room with a nice active rimstone floor. I traversed across the room into a tight (but not too tight) passage which continued as a three level narrow stream canyon. For a couple of hundred feet I stayed in the roomier high part. There were a lot of formations. This eventually became a formation choke and I dropped down to the middle level. I chimneyed along this for perhaps another 150'. I could have traversed the lower stream level even further. It looked a little bigger but I would have gotten soaked. Thinking about the 30 degree outside temperature and mile hike back to Marion's truck soaking wet was a strong deterrent to that. We spent a little more than two hours in this fun little nicer than expected cave. Marion checked the TCS printout back at his house and identified it as Chestnut Hollow Cave.

The Detamore Caves

Bill Balfour

I got a call from Wil Orndorff on my birthday inviting me to go with him up to Frederick County, Virginia to investigate a cave that Dan Doctor from the USGS had stumbled on. Dan thought that perhaps the cave had a chance to reach the phreatic zone and that there might be a pool where we could look for the Madison Cave isopod. So a couple of days later, on April 10th, I loaded my truck and headed north up I-81.

I met Dan and Wil at the truck stop just south of the West Virginia line where we consolidated into my truck. On the way out to the cave Dan gave us a geology tour of the area he has been mapping which allowed me to collect a very large Elbrook boulder that was almost entirely calcite. I could just barely lift it into the truck and it now resides at the entrance to my driveway. As we were driving Dan also informed us

that with a good GPS reading he now thought that the cave was just across the state line in West Virginia. When we reached the landowners driveway we could see the state line sign just down the road a few tens of feet. We drove up by Mr. Detamore's house and then veered off to the right and parked down in the field close to the woods. Dan had already made prior arrangements for our arrival with the owner so we didn't have to check in.

Consulting the topo map and the woods ahead where the cave was supposed to be made it look like the location would be in West Virginia. We suited up and brought the survey gear along in case we decided to map the cave. We hiked down through the woods along an old path past several small sinks until we came to a big sink that had a nice sized entrance along one side of it. The entrance was 20 feet wide and about 5 feet high and a large passage sloped down dip and out of sight.

Wil and I started the survey while Dan poked around looking for critters. The cave obviously was not virgin with scattered household artifacts lying around and was dry and dusty. As we surveyed down the dip tube it became higher and we were soon in nice walking passage floored with breakdown. This led into a flat dirt floored room where a small red wagon, 1950's vintage, was rusting away. We surveyed the room and then proceeded to investigate the dip tube continuing down, albeit as a much smaller dip tube. We carried the survey down this crawlway and after 50 feet or so it became choked with breakdown. In other words, it mercifully ended without us having to exert much effort and it was bone dry, so much for finding the phreatic water table.

We climbed back out the entrance and while gear was being stowed I wandered over to the next sink less than a hundred feet away. Oops, another entrance, now what were the odds of that. I walked back over and told the guys we were not done just yet. We started at our entrance point and ran a surface survey over to the new cave, moved a couple of logs and slid in.

Cave number 2 was another dip tube sloping down at about 20 degrees also. However, it was not nearly as spacious as the last cave. We were almost able to stand up at one point just before the cave ended though. It turned out to be 100 feet long. We investigated a couple of more sinks but did not find any more openings so we walked back up the hill into Virginia and called it a day. We had surveyed a little over 400 feet in a couple of hours. That made the 3.5 hour drive up and the 3.5 hour drive back more than worth it, well maybe.... At least it added two more caves for West Virginia at the expense of Virginia.

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DETAMORE CAVES

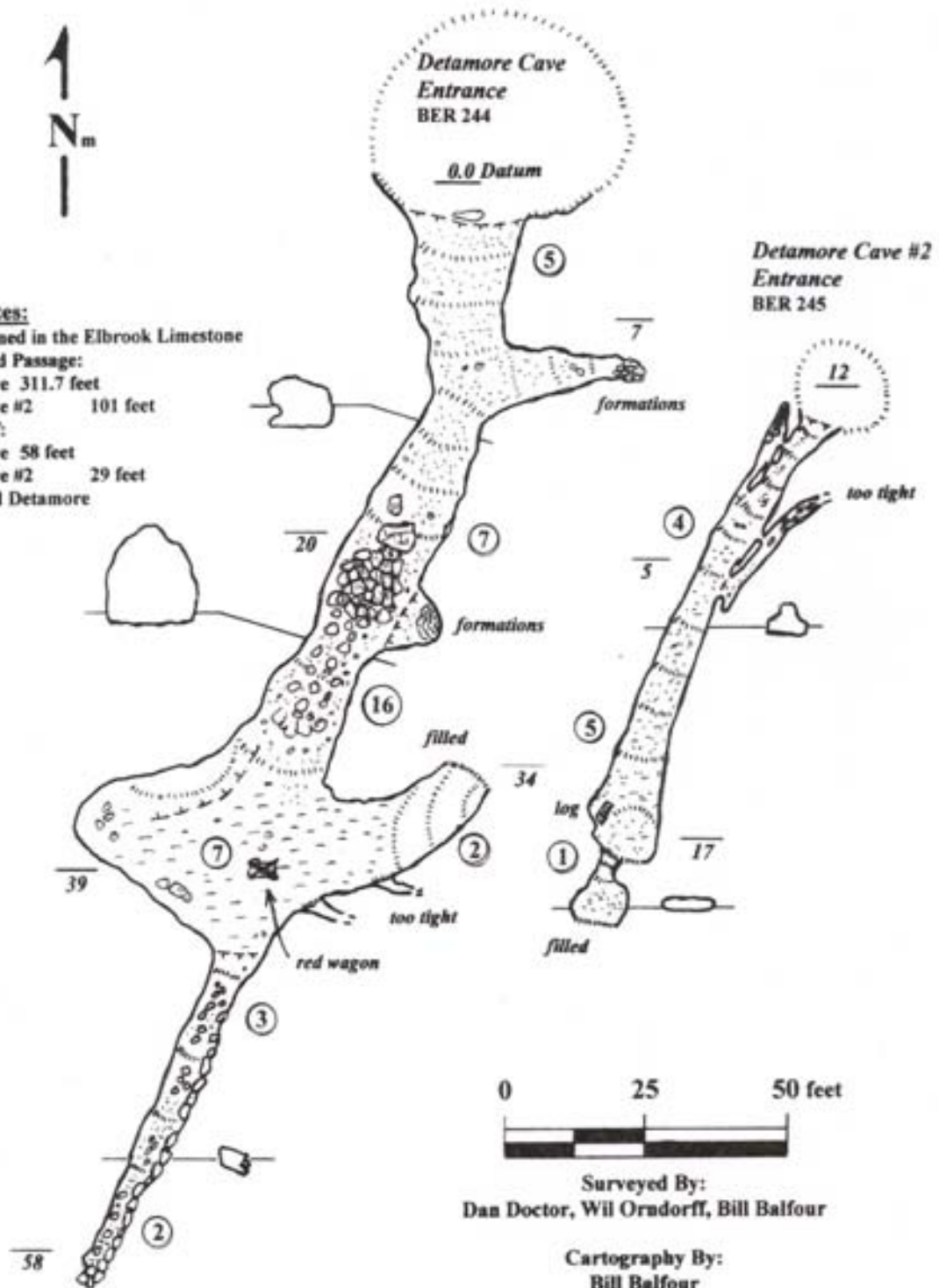
BERKELEY COUNTY

WEST VIRGINIA



General Notes:

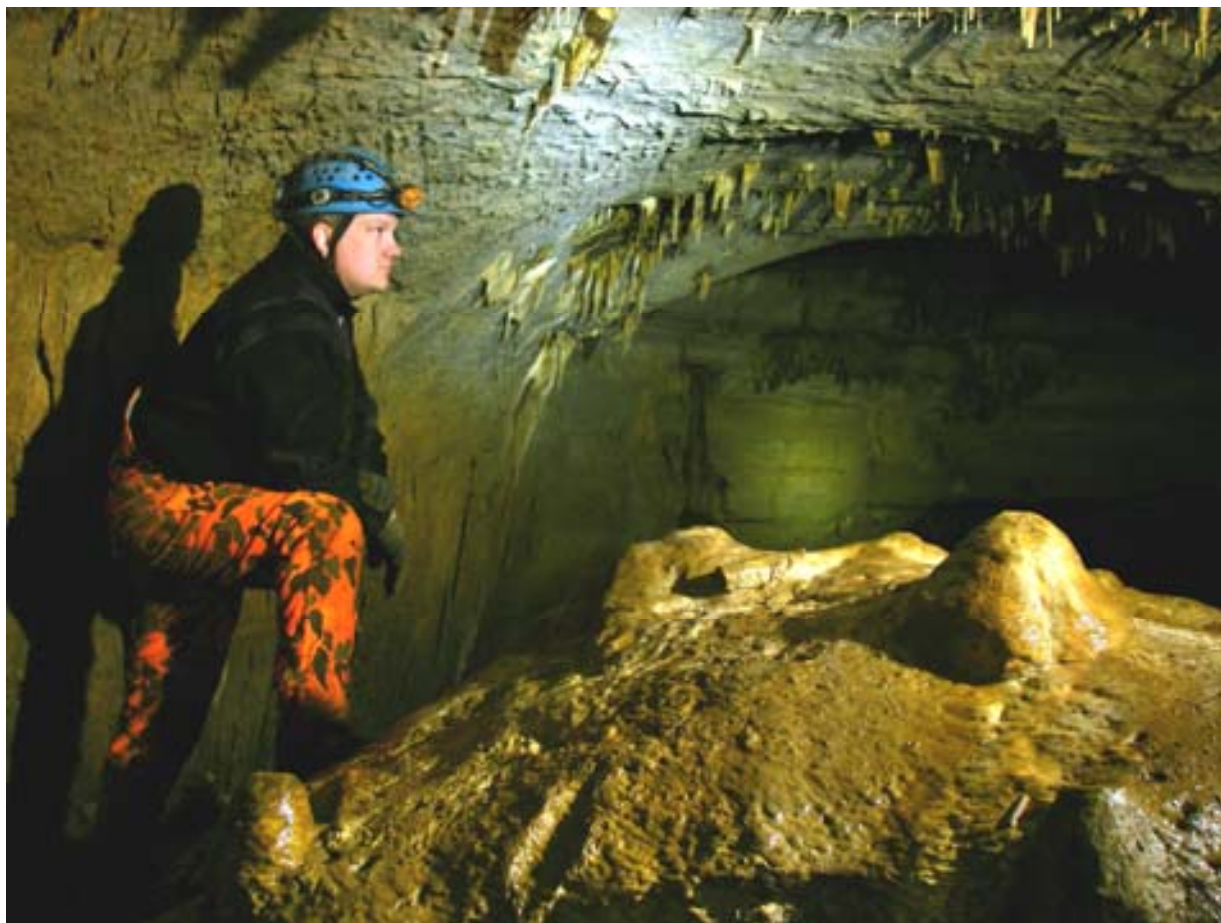
Caves are formed in the Elbrook Limestone
 Total Surveyed Passage:
 Detamore Cave 311.7 feet
 Detamore Cave #2 101 feet
 Vertical Relief:
 Detamore Cave 58 feet
 Detamore Cave #2 29 feet
 Owner: David Detamore



Surveyed By:
 Dan Doctor, Wil Orndorff, Bill Balfour

Cartography By:
 Bill Balfour

4/10/2008



Sean Wootten in Howell Cave



Nikki Fox Squeezing in Howell Cave

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CAVIN CALENDAR

FEBRUARY 8TH - MARCH 21ST



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Feb 8	Feb 9	Feb 10	Feb 11 GROTTO MEETING 7PM	Feb 12	Feb 13	Feb 14 VALENTINE'S DAY Breathing Cave - see Bob
Feb 15	Feb 16 PRESIDENT'S DAY	Feb 17	Feb 18	Feb 19	Feb 20	Feb 21 Jones Quarry Cave - see Brent Jefferson
Feb 22	Feb 23	Feb 24	Feb 25	Feb 26	Feb 27	Feb 28
Mar 1	Mar 2	Mar 3	Mar 4	Mar 5	Mar 6	Mar 7
Mar 8 DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME STARTS	Mar 9	Mar 10	Mar 11 Grotto Meeting 7PM	Mar 12	Mar 13	Mar 14 Adam Stephen Dig 9AM
Mar 15	Mar 16	Mar 17 ST PATRICK'S DAY	Mar 18	Mar 19	Mar 20 VERNAL EQUINOX	Mar 21

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Bob in very low passage

- 1- WNS FOUND IN HAMILTON CAVE!!!!!!!!!!!!
- 2- TAG BOOTY
- 3- DETAMORE CAVES

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