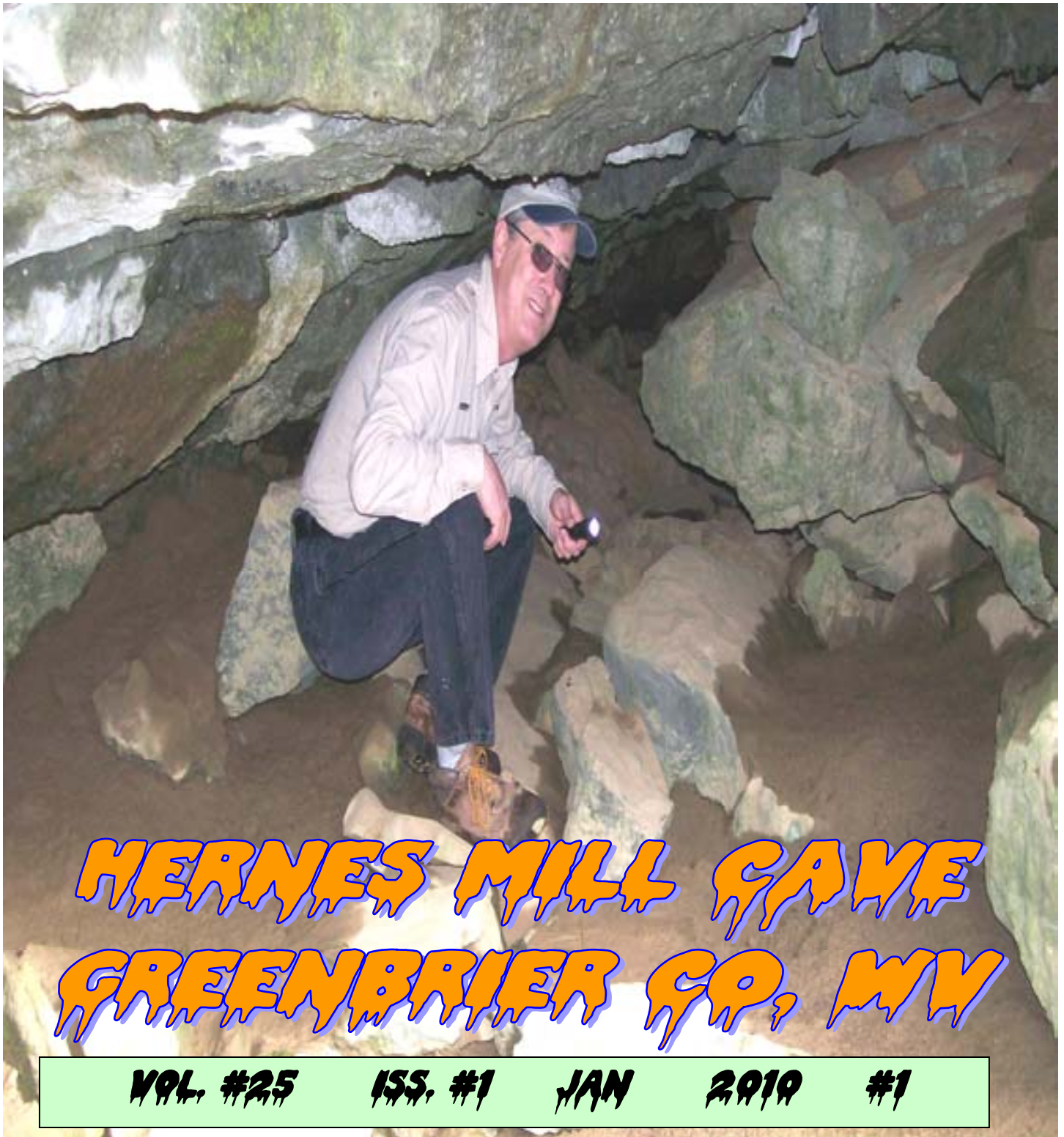


DEAD DOG DISPATCH TRI-STATE GROTTO



HERNES MILL CAVE
GREENBRIER CO, WV

VOL. #25

ISS. #1

JAN

2010

#1



The **DEAD DOG DISPATCH** is a publication of the **TRI-STATE GROTTTO** of the NSS. The OPINIONS expressed herein are not necessarily those of the EDITOR, the GROTTTO, nor the NSS. Material that is unsigned may be attributed to the EDITOR. Material contained within this PUBLICATION may be reproduced by the NSS and its GROTTOS, provided that PROPER CREDIT is given to the **DEAD DOG DISPATCH** and the AUTHOR.

The **DEAD DOG DISPATCH** is a NON-PROFIT monthly newsletter published by the **TRI-STATE GROTTTO of the NSS**. SUBSCRIPTION RATES are \$12.00 per year to SUBSCRIBING MEMBERS, and **FREE** with FULL and ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIPS to the **TRI-STATE GROTTTO**.

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

TRI-STATE GROTTTO OFFICERS

CHAIR ----- Bernie Wootten ----- 301-254-1055
 V-CHAIR ----- Bob Bennett ----- 304-579-4304
 TREASURER--- Jerry Bowen ----- 301-790-0476
 SECRETARY ---- John DiCarlo ----- 301-432-2323
 Member At Large --- ---
 Membership Chair --- Bob Bennett ---304-579-4304
 Newsletter Editor --- Bob Bennett ---304-579-4304
 Conservation Chair--Corey Hackley --301-432-2257
 P R Chair ----- JC Fisher ----- 304-258-4974
 Safety Chair ----- Carl Amundson ----540-955-0611
 Program Dir ----- ---
 Funding ----- Paulette Bennett -----304-579-4304
 Equip. Chair ----Bob Bennett ----- 304-579-4304

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)

DEAD DOG DISPATCH

V.#25

I.#1

JAN

2019

2

FAMILY MEMBERSHIP ----- \$2.00/FAMILY
(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:

CHUCK STANLEY, TREASURER
 TRI-STATE GROTTTO of the NSS
 56 LACK MEMORIAL BLVD.
 GERRARDSTOWN, WV 25420
 304-229-0583

E-MAIL: CaveSpiderHog@netzero.net

For MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION contact:

BOB BENNETT, MEMBERSHIP CHAIR
 TRI-STATE GROTTTO of the NSS
 464 HUCKLEBERRY DR.
 GERRARDSTOWN, WV 25420-0211
 304-579-4304

E-MAIL: gimpycaver@comcast.net

*** The photo on the cover was taken by Bob Bennett in the entrance to HERN'S Mill Cave in Greenbrier Co, WV.

**** 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 AN OPEN POSITION. WE STILL NEED SOMEONE FOR THE FOLLOWING POSITION:

PROGRAM CHAIR

PLEASE GIVE IT SOME THOUGHT. WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT!



CAVING EVENTS

2010

JAN 1 ----- NEW YEAR'S DAY
JAN 13 ----- TSG grotto Meeting 7pm
JAN 16 ----- Adam Stephen Dig - 9am
JAN 18 ----- Martin Luther King Day
FEB 2 ----- GROUND HOG DAY
FEB 7 ----- SUPER BOWL
FEB 10 ----- TSG Grotto Meeting 7pm
FEB 14 ----- VALENTINE'S DAY
FEB 16 ----- FAT TUESDAY (MARDI GRAS)
MAR 10 ----- TSG Grotto Meeting 7pm
MAR 13-14 - Carter Caves Restoration Camp
MAR 14 ----- DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME STARTS
MAR 17 ----- ST PATRICK'S DAY
MAR 20 ----- SPRING EQUINOX
MAR 22 ----- WORLD WATER DAY
MAR 25 ----- MD DAY
APR 1 ----- ALL FOOL'S DAY
APR 2 ----- GOOD FRIDAY
APR 4 ----- EASTER
APR 14 ----- TSG Grotto Meeting 7pm
APR 15 ----- TAX DAY
APR 22 ----- EARTH DAY
APR 23 ----- ARBOR DAY
MAY 5 ----- CINCO de MAYO
MAY 6 ----- NATIONAL DAY of PRAYER
MAY 9 ----- MOTHER'S DAY
MAY 12 ----- TSG Grotto Meeting 7pm
MAY 15 ----- ARMED FORCES DAY
MAY 21-23 - Spring VAR sponsored by Bubble Cave LLC
MAY 31 ----- MEMORIAL DAY
JUN 4-6 ----- BUBBLE CAVE WEEKEND
JUN 9 ----- TSG Grotto Meeting 7pm
JUN 14 ----- FLAG DAY
JUN 17-20 - SERA Cave Carnival, Monteagle, TN
JUN 20 ----- FATHER'S DAY
JUN 20 ----- WV DAY
JUN 21 ----- SUMMER SOLSTICE
JUL 4 ----- INDEPENDENCE DAY
JUL 17 ----- Annual Grotto Picnic - 12pm
JUL 14 ----- TSG Grotto Meeting 7pm
JUL 25 ----- PARENT'S DAY
AUG 2-6 -- NSS Convention, Essex Jcnctn, VT
AUG 11 ----- TSG Grotto Meeting 7pm
SEP 2-6 ---- **QTR**
SEP 6 ----- LABOR DAY
SEP 8 ----- TSG Grotto Meeting 7pm
SEP 11 ----- PATRIOT'S DAY
SEP 23 ----- AUTUMN EQUINOX
OCT 7-10 - Fall TAG Cave-In, Lookout Mt, TN
OCT 11 ----- COLUMBUS DAY
OCT 13 ----- TSG Grotto Meeting 7pm

OCT 16 ----- Bridge Day
OCT 31 ----- ALL HALLOW EVE
NOV 2 ----- ELECTION DAY
NOV 7 ----- DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME ENDS
NOV 10 ----- TSG Grotto Meeting 7pm
NOV 11 ----- VETERAN'S DAY
NOV 13 ----- SADIE HAWKIN'S DAY
NOV 25 ----- THANKSGIVING
NOV 26 ----- BLACK FRIDAY
DEC 8 ----- Wrap Presents for Red Cross 6pm
DEC 11 ----- ALLUAL TSG CHRISTMAS
CELEBRATION at Bob & Paulette's
home 6pm
DEC 12 ----- Christmas caving
DEC 21 ----- WINTER SOLSTICE
DEC 24 ----- CHRISTMAS EVE
DEC 25 ----- CHRISTMAS DAY
DEC 31 ----- NEW YEAR'S EVE

2011

AUG 2-6 ----- 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 November----- **\$11.00**

TOTAL TO DATE: ---- **\$4599.00**

Keep It Coming!

WEBSITE & CAVING LINKS

Tri-State Grotto ----- www.tristategrotto.net/
VAR ----- www.varegion.org/
NSS ----- www.caves.org/
NSS Convention 2010 ----- <http://www.ics2009.us/>
OTR ----- www.otr.org/
MAR ----- www.caves.org/region/mar/

DEAD DOG DISPATCH

V. #25

I. #1

JAN

2010

3

WVCC ----- www.wvcc.net/
 Andy Celmer ----- www.tristategrotto.net/Andy/
 Bob's Web Site ----- www.tristategrotto.net/Bob/
 Ehren Gieske ----- www.tristategrotto.net/Ehren/
 Jerry's Cave Web Site ----- <http://www.caves.org/member/jerry/>
 Vitas Eidukevicius ---- www.tristategrotto.net/Vitas/
 David Hackley's Web Site ----- <http://s180.photobucket.com/albums/x307/clearsig/>
 Todd Roberts ----- http://s63.photobucket.com/albums/h143/Todd_05/
 Bob Gulden ----- www.caverbob.com/home.htm/
 Nikki Fox ----- <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/
 WNS ----- <http://www.caves.org/WNS/WNS%20Info.htm/>
 Containment Procedures ----- <http://www.fws.gov/northeast/whitenosemessage.html/>



MONTH OF DECEMBER

Priscilla Armer, Carrie Cumbo, Corey
 Hackley, Barbara Jefferson, Brent
 Jefferson, Elaine Mauck, Carolyn Pate,
 Phillip Paul, Joe Reeves, Jo Beth
 Wisecarver, Evert Bonito Vis

MONTH OF JANUARY

Eric Armer, Danny Cumbo, Judy Fisher,
 Sonny Floyd, Samantha Hicks, Tim
 McDougale, Van Pell, Todd Roberts,
 Johnny Robinson Sr, Brian Snyder,
 Fiord'aliza Vis

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

CAVING NEWS

WNS!!!

Here are a few links the read up on WNS and
 keep up on the developing news:

NSS Page

<http://www.caves.org/WNS/index.htm>

WNS Donation Page

http://www.caves.org/WNS/Rapid_Response.shtml

US Forest Caves Closure

http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/docs/apr_2009_caves_closure/closure_order.pdf

US Fish & Wildlife Advisory

http://www.caves.org/WNS/USFWS-WNS_cave_advisory_news_rls_2009-03-26_final-1.pdf

WNS Research

<http://www.caves.org/WNS/WNS2009research.pdf>

D-Con Procedures

<http://www.fws.gov/northeast/whitenosemessage.html>

The testimony on WNS before the joint sub-
 committee video

http://resourcescommittee.house.gov/index.php?option=com_jcalpro&Itemid=27&extmode=view&extid=259

Subcommittee on WNS hearing NSS web page
<http://caves.org/WNS/Hearing%20on%20WNS.htm>

Geomyces in cave sediments

<http://www.fws.gov/northeast/whitenose/PDF/WHB2009-03WNSFinal.pdf>

Geomyces in France

http://www.fws.gov/northeast/white_nose.html

Tri-State Grotto
Meeting
Nov 11, 2009

Bernie Wootten started the meeting at 7 pm.

There was no treasurer's report given because Chuck was absent.

Old business

We talked about WNS and money that was collected for it.

There was talk about Federal caves being open or shut. There was a general discussion on WNS.

Bernie asked if the web page was fixed, and if the link to Jerry's site was working. The web page was talked about.

We talked about the next dig. It will be at the Adam Stephen House the Saturday after the January Grotto meeting.

The Grotto Christmas party will be the Saturday after the December meeting.

The WVCC banquet is this weekend.

Jerry Bowen talked about a site to download cave books in PDF. It is
www.Digatelbokkindex.com

Sites cave - did anyone buy it yet? Unknown.

Tri-State Grotto collected \$13.40 in Cave Bucks. It will go to WVCC.

Elections:
Nominations:

Chair - Bernie Wootten
Vice Chair - Bob Bennett.
Sec - John Di Carlo
Treasurer - Jerry Bowen

As there were no other Nominations, there was a motion to Accept by Acclamation. It was seconded and passed.

Bernie adjourned the meeting at 7:45 pm.

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



Authorities: Man falls into pit in cave and dies
Tuesday January 5, 2010 6:26
PM WKYT HomeWYMT HomeStation
InfoWitnessContact Us Overcast

TATEVILLE, Ky. (AP) - A man slipped into a deep pit and was killed Wednesday while exploring a treacherous southeastern Kentucky cave, officials said. Crews worked for hours to recover the body of Steven Troxell, 21, who died of blunt force trauma, said Pulaski County Coroner Richard New.

Troxell and two companions were walking inside the Sloans Valley cave when he fell into the cone-shaped, 30-foot-deep pit. His companions called 911 about 3 p.m. EST, officials said. The coroner said the three were not experienced cavers.

The opening to the cave is located on private property, and it was not clear whether the owners were aware anyone was exploring it, New said. Troxell's body was found about three-quarters of a mile inside the cave, which is part of a system that meanders about 25 miles beneath private and public lands in a part of Kentucky known for its outdoor recreation. The system is one of the longest in the world.

"It's probably one of the most treacherous caves in the county and probably in the cave system," New said.

Outside the cave opening, Troxell's family anxiously awaited word. His mother, Rita Troxell of Somerset, said she was stunned when she got the news her son had been inside the cave. "He was always a scaredy-cat," she said, tears welling in her eyes. "I used to tell him he was scared of his own shadow. That's why I was surprised he went into the cave. "She said her son was a construction worker, but was unemployed.

Steven Troxell had been with friends Brandon Butt, 26, and Brooke Butt, 21, who made it out unharmed, New said. Don Franklin, area manager for the state emergency management agency, said the pit where Troxell was found was dry, but crews had to navigate through a wet, muddy path full of rock falls and vertical climbs to get to him.

"This isn't the first recovery we've had here ... and it won't be the last," Franklin said. In 2006, an Ohio man described as experienced died after falling from a ledge in the cave while attempting to climb out a particularly tricky exit. Though Sloans Valley is a favorite cave system for spelunkers, inexperienced cavers are discouraged from attempting to navigate it, Franklin said.
2009 Associated Press

Daily Independent (Ashland, KY) - Carter Caves bat-killers plead guilty
Published: December 23, 2009 12:08 am
Carter Caves bat-killers plead guilty
By KENNETH HART / The Independent

Ashland — Two men charged with killing endangered bats at Carter Caves State Resort Park in the fall of 2007 have both entered guilty pleas. Kaleb Dee Morgan Carpenter and Lonnie Wales Skaggs each pleaded guilty last week in

U.S. District Court in Ashland to violating the federal Endangered Species Act.

In so doing, the two admitted they went into Laurel Cave on Oct. 26 and Oct. 27, 2007, and killed more than 100 Indiana bats by crushing them with rocks, flashlights and their feet.

The bats were hibernating at the time and were knocked from their perches and killed. Carpenter and Skaggs each face up to a year in prison and a fine of \$1,000. However, any sentences they receive will be imposed after consideration of federal sentencing guidelines.

The two were indicted in October and had been scheduled to stand trial Jan. 7. Magistrate Judge Edward B. Atkins scheduled the defendants' sentencings for 10:30 a.m. Feb. 18.

Carpenter and Skaggs allegedly killed 23 bats the first time they were in Laurel Cave and 82 the second time, according to court records. The Indiana bat, also known as *Myotis sodalis*, is an endangered species. The bat-killings led to the construction of metal gates at Laurel Cave designed to protect the animals during their hibernation, and to the posting of a \$5,000 reward for information on the crimes. Bat Conservation International, a Texas-based organization devoted to the protection of bats, was one of several entities that contributed to the reward fund.

Laurel Cave is one of four at Carter Caves that is home to Indiana bats. All four locations have been deemed critical to the survival of the species.

KENNETH HART can be reached at khart@dailyindependent.com or (606) 326-2654.

Cross Country Caving

by Ehren Gieske

I planned to drive back across the country to Delaware this July and thought it'd be a lot less boring with company. Luckily, Sandia Grotto had a cave trip planned for the 11th, which was close to when I wanted to start heading east. I got up with Corey Hackley and told him that if he got a flight out, I'd drive him back home and take him caving on the way. So the plans got set and after he caught a ridiculous set of flights (Albany to Phoenix to Albuquerque), I picked him up at the Sunport at 9 PM and we headed south in New Mexico.

After several hours of driving (Corey slept through half of it), we arrived at Fort Stanton and started following vague directions to the cave; you know the kind: turn right when you get to the dirt road with the red fence, then turn left at the Y). We were told that the group would probably be at the back of the campground, then discovered the grounds only consisted of a few sites in the first place, and the grotto was at the front. After a spectacular 7-point turn, we joined everyone at about 2 AM. Typical cavers, most of them were still awake, chatting under an awning. After introductions, they shared a nice story about how Linda, the trip sponsor, as it were, had a bug fly into her ear about a half hour before we arrived. The bug decided to eat her ear and after a lot of fuss, was drowned with a bottle of saline, just to stop him from continuing to burrow. We probably passed her and some other cavers on their way to the hospital, since no one there could get the bug out. Linda wound up all the way back in Albuquerque before she found an ear, nose and throat specialist who was on call and could help her. After the story, you could just see everyone kind of scooching down to hide their ears. Eventually we all went to bed to get up bright and early for caving. Fort Stanton Cave starts as a large sinkhole that's surrounded by a big chain-link fence. Once down on the sink, there's an old section on the left, which was once used for Tuberculosis patients (to no avail, of course). We didn't go into that part of the cave, but continued to the right instead. We went through a bat gate and into the Crystal Crawl. This is a wide, 500 foot hands and knees crawl that was covered in selenite needles at one time. Now most

of them have been smashed, though an effort has now been made to ensure that cavers stick to a rock-lined path. The needles that are left are almost all under ledges and require putting your head on the ground to see them.

Soon we came into the lunchroom, where the cave splits off. A couple cavers headed to the old section on the right and the other 6 of us to the "new" section, dead ahead. To the left is a passage that leads to the Snowy River you may have read about in the NSS news at some point. Unfortunately that one's gated and we weren't allowed in. The 'new' section is gated as well and only allows six cavers at a time, hence the split-up, but we had the combination for that one and began the hellhole crawl. This one wasn't actually as bad as it sounds. Although rather long, a good portion of it can be done in a duck walk and sometimes standing. Still after 1500 feet, it was nice to get to the end. We began entering rooms with cave velvet on the orange and black formations. Tiny crystals formed all over the typical formations, making them appear velvety. It's a pretty rare occurrence and not known to be in other caves in the US at this time.

At the end of the crawl we came to an upward climb, rather steep and set up with 2 sections of rope to help climb into the next room. This was followed by another crawl and led to the keyhole slot that had to be dropped to reach the next section of cave. Of course at the bottom of the slot was a little climb-down, so footing mattered, but we all made it through without a problem. A marker was set up so we could find the slot again in all the rubble and we went downhill to another space in the floor; a little tight but much easier to get through. Further down the passage we came to a room where the floor was covered in velvety bumps that resembled large grapes. There were some small bacon formations and flowstone as well. Carol, who was leading us, took us into the back of that section to see Helectite Hall. All the Sandia cavers with us were very proud of this hall and excited for us to see it. It was a pretty section and cram-packed with formations but to anyone who has been in the Helectite Hall of Scott Hollow Cave, let's just call it Stalactite Hall instead and assume it's nice on that basis.

After H Hall, we started heading out. While some took a quick break, Carol decided to take those who were interested into the mud-room, where she remembered there being clay sculptures and lots of mud. Corey followed immediately (Carol is his caving soul mate) and I was just behind them, belly crawling over clay to find the room. Kieffer and Adam followed but turned around shortly. I also gave up after a couple hundred feet, but Corey and Carol kept at it awhile before giving up. They found mud but no sculptures.

It felt like it was probably time to head out and so we started back along the passage, through hellholes and keyholes, back through the lunchroom, through the crystal crawl and all the rest of it. We got out before dark and ventured unsuccessfully into Fort Stanton for dinner. All the restaurants were closed, but hey, who doesn't like microwave burritos from a convenience store?

The next morning, Corey and I packed up and headed out. We were relatively close to Carlsbad Caverns and didn't see a good reason to miss it when we were so close, so 3 hours later we arrived and took the self-guided tour through the show cave, which is fabulous. We wandered a little by the main road to the cave, hoping, I think, to spot another one. All we managed were a couple of rock shelters along a wash, though. And so we headed east through a very bleak New Mexico and north into Texas (much nicer to look at), winding up in Amarillo for the night. Incidentally, if you ever have a chance to drive through the beef capital of the country as we did... don't.

From Amarillo we continued east and stopped for the night in Arkansas at Petit Jean State Park. The park has several rock shelter caves that were used by natives at one time, some nice fossils and a waterfall that Corey was determined to reach (but didn't succeed). After a hike and dinner, we camped for the night. I got up bright and early because the constant thunder was making me wary and read in the car while Corey's tent got poured on. After the weather lightened up, we finished packing and drove to Tennessee. We followed the map to a park whose name I can no longer remember that had an impressively large shelter cave on it, at the head of a lake. In the back of the

shelter there was a passage headed into the hill, but, sadly, it was gated and we couldn't check it out. After a short, unsuccessful hike to hunt for another entrance, Corey ran into a man who told him where he could go caving. He came back to the car with a vague set of directions and after several false starts, we finally got to a cave. We didn't know the name but after a few phone calls, the owner gave us permission to check it out, at which point we discovered it was housing a maternal grey bat colony. Another phone call to let him know the cave was closed in the summer (in case anyone else asked to go in) and the cave got closed entirely... oops. Back on the road, Corey and I followed more rumors to another cave that we also don't know the name of that appeared to be on public land. It had a stream entrance that got uncomfortably low pretty quickly and we wound up on our bellies, crawling over empty rimstone pools before popping up in a room. There were several nice formations in a series of small rooms, but we didn't stay long. Soon we were traveling again, having discovered that we were close enough to Mammoth Cave to drop by. We spent the night sleeping in the car at an overlook and arrived at a very crowded cave in the morning. We took the self-guided tour (don't bother, there must be better tours there) and then followed a trail to some very large sinkholes. I lost Corey for about an hour... apparently he found an ungated entrance and was too excited to bother coming back for me to check it out too. Leave it to Corey to find the only open entrance to Mammoth Cave.

Next we headed out of Kentucky and across West Virginia, with Windy Mouth as our goal. We'd tried it last summer, just before I moved, but had no luck finding the entrance. This year, with better instructions, we found it (I won't admit that I forgot my helmet until we were most of the way there from the parking area) and headed in. More from Corey on that one, if he ever gets around to writing up the report.

**ElMaP – El Malpais Survey Project,
11/7/09 by Ehren Gieske**

I joined up with Sandia Grotto again for a survey trip at El Malpais. We had a group of about 14, which is rather big for those lava tubes, so we split up into a photo trip and a survey trip. I was torn deciding which to go on, but figured I ought to learn to survey one of these days, so joined the second group. The first headed to Four Windows and we left them to visit ElMa 16 (all the lava tubes are labeled this way until something more exciting turns up by way of names). This was a pretty short tube; more of a shelter, really, but was pretty exciting anyway. The main part of the tube took about 3 survey points to complete, the first one being practically outside. It was freezing in there even though the sun was only a few steps away. Some of the cavers who'd been there previously said there were burned sticks at the bottom, so Kieffer, an archaeologist, went down to check them out. Not only were the sticks artifacts, but she found a couple of pieces of ceramic too. The big find was by Sam, though, who spotted a piece that was vivid orange with black designs painted on the inside and a foot or piece of broken handle on the bottom. I was asked not to post the photo online, so it wouldn't be hunted down, but I think it's safe to say no one in TSG will come all the way out just to steal it, so here it is:



After surveying 16, the two groups joined up again and resorted into another photo trip and a glowworm hunt (which I joined). On another trip to ElMa18, some cavers thought they had found a glowworm back in the lava tube and wanted to verify. It wasn't a long tube, but we took our time

going in, as it was damp and was starting to grow a lot of speleothems. There were helectites and coralloids all over the walls, and even a few lava stalagmites. The floor had a lot of bat bones as well, though no sign of living bats was in the part of the tube we went in. Closer to the entrance we made an attempt to see glowing on the walls but had no luck, so we went farther in. After a miserable short crawl over sharp lava and coralloids, we popped into another room and one of the worms was spotted. It's a clear white color and generally unimpressive. We crowded around and turned off our lights and soon everyone was saying "oh there it is!" "I saw one!" "There's another!" We even saw a nice steady glow on the floor behind me. It didn't take long before we realized the intermittent flashing was our 'battery's okay' lights on the helmets. And the steady glow on the floor? Who put their pack there?! Oh well. Most of us took some photos and crawled out, leaving two behind to see if they could spot an actual glow. It seems like it may have done so eventually, which is good news.

We headed back at dusk and made it to the cars just before it became too dark to see black lava cairns on a black lava trail in a black lava field.

TAG Fall-Cave-in 09

Terry McClanathan

WNS has certainly put a damper on caving in the Virginias over the past year. Gas prices are creeping up again, making trips to TAG, Kentucky, and Indiana hard on the wallet. Our caving options are not as varied as they were just a few short years ago. I have a lot of old friends in TAG with whom I seldom get the chance to cave anymore, so for the past several years I've made a special effort to attend the TAG-Fall-Cave-In to socialize and, of course, keep an eye out for any new hundred foot pits.

This year two things attracted my attention. I learned that a small group of cavers unknown to me had found a "new" hundred footer in a Georgia cave called Slot Rock. I had also been informed that trips were resuming in a once popular Tennessee multi-drop called Deep Thrust which had been closed for

quite awhile. Deep Thrust, I knew, contained a 147' pit, and the pit in Slot Rock had not been taped yet, but was thought to be well in excess of 100 feet deep. The lure of two new-to-me hundred footers sent me on the 600 mile jaunt down the interstate with high expectations. I picked up Todd in Winchester and we found ourselves just north of Chattanooga at around 5 AM on the Saturday morning of the Cave-in. We had been driving through sporadic downpours all night. Although the weekend forecast was for clearing, I knew the area around northwest Georgia had received between 10-20 inches of rain in the past two weeks, so I figured water levels in the caves would be high.

Slot Rock is located just north of Trenton, GA, a small town only about 20 minutes from the Cave-in site. I had made arrangements to meet some of my TAG friends who had not been to either of our target caves. Manuel Beers (Atlanta), Brian Killinbeck and Mae Kile (Chattanooga), myself, and Todd would constitute the crew. Marty Abercrombie, who was one of the discoverers, took us to the land owner's house, introduced us, and secured permission. He said he was hung-over from too much partying the night before and would not be joining us, but he did give Brian GPS coordinates and some in-cave pointers on how to reach the pit.

The cave is a short, wet, four pit multi-drop which has been known for over two decades. The last drop was part way down a much higher dome. A few months previous to our visit, Marty and several others had pushed a tight crawl near the bottom of the entrance pit. This led them to the top of the high dome. There were no natural rig points around the top of the dome so they snaked a long rope through the crawl. Of course there were a lot of rub points. They estimated the pit to be about 130' deep. They requested that if I went there, would I set some bolts for a safer rig and tape the drop. Except for the original discovery crew, Marty told us no other cavers had as yet done the "new" hundred-footer.

The entrance consisted of a fluted 50' pit with two passages leading from the bottom. Manuel and I went into a crawl to try to locate the top of the hundred-footer. Too soon we came to a shallower

pit which we realized was the second pitch in the original multi-drop route. By the time we backtracked, Brian had found the correct route. At one point this crawl pinched into a higher tighter constriction which had stopped explorers of the early 80's. Following Marty's directions, we squeezed into this. It remained snug for another forty feet to where it pinched again. A short canyon traverse beyond the second pinch led to our objective.

The top of the dome was only about four feet across, but a short distance down the pit belled out. I set two bolts on opposite walls for a Y-hang rig down the center. A rock drop from here indicated a free rappel, and this turned out to be the case. Most of the top part of the pit was nicely sculptured and averaged about ten feet in diameter. About 50 feet from the bottom a waterfall entered from the fourth pit of the multi-drop route. The rope hung only a couple of feet from the falls but you barely got wet at all. It made for a very scenic rappel and climb. The pit also enlarged in this area to about twenty feet in diameter. We taped the dome at 129'. The Georgia hundred-foot list is not extensive, in fact, over half the total hundred footers are in Ellisons Cave alone. Well, now there is one more to add to the list and it's pretty nice. The crawlway getting to it was a little muddy on this particular day, but all in all not really that bad. We exited Slot Rock, took a quick tour of a nearby cave called Range Pot, with one short drop, and drove over to the TAG Fall-Cave-in with daylight to spare. Some would say I'm getting soft in my old age.

Sunday morning we headed over to Deep Thrust in Tennessee, which is about an hour and a half drive from the Cave-in. Deep Thrust was a popular pull-down trip during the 80's. The 147' terminal pit is a dome which drops down right beside the gaping tunnels of an active underground limestone quarry. After a while the company became concerned with cavers exiting via the quarry and shut down access. It was on my to-do list early on, but before I could act the cave was closed, and so it remained for quite a few years. I recently learned through Atlanta caver Andy Zellner that an agreement had been made between cavers and the quarry allowing access to the cave. The stipulation

being cavers could go as far as the last pit, but had to exit through the cave without interfering with quarry operations, in other words no more pull-downs.

We had the same crew as the day before with the addition of three Indiana cavers, Joe Kinder, Darrin Chapman, and Andrew Kennedy. We took four ropes for the three drops and one tricky climb down which Andy Z. warned me would be difficult to ascend for shorter folk. We were also told that recent heavy rains could make for some wet pits. The cave entrance is the usual TAG 400' vertical gain up the mountain. There was a small stream entering the cave opening in the bottom of a small, steep sided sink. Just inside a short crawl led to the first drop. It sounded a little more than just drippy. The 74' pit splits at the halfway point into a wet route and a drier route. We chose the latter. Beyond this a 100' wet crawl leads to the next pit. The crawl is normally gravel with just a few pools, but on this day it was a fast moving stream about four inches deep, with several deeper sections. There were also a couple of low spots necessitating a good full body soaking. I was glad I chose my PVC suit. Manuel and Brian had gone ahead with the big rope. I followed. At the end of the crawl was a very wet 25 footer. Brian waited for Maye, Todd, and our Indiana companions. I took the big rope from Brian and went in search of Manuel who was route finding using notes furnished by Alan Cressler. At a twelve foot climb down, the one Andy had warned us about; I met Manuel returning from his scouting trip. I climbed down the drop, but the last six feet was undercut and the water was pretty heavy. I knew Brian had a short rope to rig this for our ascent.

I informed Manuel that Brian was waiting at the bottom of the last pit for everyone to catch up. I told him I thought it might be a while. In fact I was wondering if the Indiana fellows, two of whom were a bit on the heavy side, would make it through the low spots in the stream crawl. Before returning to find me, Manuel had been leaving cairns at various junctions. He had stopped at a spot where the route was getting hard to follow. Together Manuel and I decided to continue our search for the big pit, taking the rope with us. Much of the cave at

this middle level was scrambling borehole. There was one breakdown area which caused us some hesitation. Manuel thought it best to wait here for the others. I followed what appeared to be the most traveled route through the breakdown and went on ahead to find the last pit.

Shortly after the breakdown maze, the cave opened up into a large well decorated section of borehole. At a couple of spots the borehole expanded into moderate sized chambers filled with cascading flowstones, columns, and stalagmites/stalactites. Very nice! The borehole terminated in a final chamber with a small, steeply down sloping crawlway at its far end. Air was blasting out of this, so I slid down into a fissure passage which continued angling downward. I figured the 147 had to be nearby. A down climb led to a short pop-through followed by another short down climb. Beyond this beckoned a gaping blackness. I assessed the rigging options and then returned to see if the others had caught up with Manuel. I met everyone about halfway along the route I had just soloed. I was correct in my assumption that the Indiana fellows might be daunted by the stream crawl near the entrance. Two of the three had turned around. That left six of us.

It didn't take long to rig the big drop. It was a large volume pit perhaps fifty feet in diameter. Some small ledges interrupted the drop, preventing a free rappel, but it was still quite an impressive pit. There were just enough drippies to keep you cooled down on the climb. We all enjoyed bouncing the pit. It was pretty cool seeing the big lit quarry tunnels just off to the side. Todd and I had a long Sunday night drive ahead of us, so we routed after ascending the 147, leaving the derigging to the others. Brian had rigged our short rope at the tricky 12-foot wet drop. I was glad because I still flailed on the bottom undercut portion, as the water pounded me. Grace has never been one of my strengths. At least when we got out of Deep Thrust, all our gear was clean. It turned out to be a real nice TAG Fall Cave-in, with two fine caves and two new-to-me hundred footers. The long drive home had memories which brought a smile to my face.

Sluss Pit

I'm always on the lookout for hundred foot pits I haven't been to. Early this past fall I learned of a pit reported to be in excess of that figure in the far south western part of the state. I sort of invited myself on a trip planned for the weekend of Nov. 14th. Our group consisted of Aaron Moses (Va. Tech), and Rick Shortt, and Leanne Barley of Wytheville. Our guides were John Rossi and Don Feathers of Tennessee.

Sluss Pit is a little-known hundred-footer located in cave rich Scott County, Virginia. The pit is offset and the total drop is 138'. There is minimal horizontal development with the total depth of the cave being 141'. The entrance is near the crest of a small but steep hill in a tiny sink. The hole is only about three feet in cross section. It drops 86' to the first landing and for the most part maintains dimensions similar to the entrance, however, about ten feet down it enlarges to about 5' x 15' in diameter for a short ways. Beyond this bell, it assumes a more modest 3 x 5 cross section. At about the fifty-foot level the pit narrows somewhat to 2' x 4'. From the 86 foot landing a 1-2 foot-wide crevice slopes steeply to a drop off, from which a forty foot freefall completes the 138' pit depth. The last forty feet is about 5' x 10' in diameter. A tight slot leads to a short alcove which makes a good shelter from the rock fall zone.

Sluss Pit has a short, but intriguing history. The landowners, Ben and Freda Sluss, said it was first entered around 1980 by a caver from the Blacksburg area. His name had been forgotten, but the owners recalled that he had lost his wallet in the pit. Apparently the pit remained unknown to cavers until it was "rediscovered" by Mountain Empire grotto members Don Feathers and Bill James from Kingsport, Tenn. in 2006.

Ben Sluss was very interested in his cave. He especially expressed a desire to know what was down there and was anxious for it to be explored. Tragically, Don related to me that Mr. Sluss was killed in a traffic accident near his farm just one week before he, John Rossi, Will Clark, and Bill James returned to explore the cave. During the process of their exploration, which included enlarging the slot below the 86 foot level to make it humanly passable, they recovered the wallet lost on the first descent more than 25 years ago. After a couple of decades in the pit, as you might expect, the contents of the wallet were in poor condition. John Rossi still has it and was able to make out a last name of Lutz with a photo and an expiration date of 1980 on what appeared to be some sort of identification card.

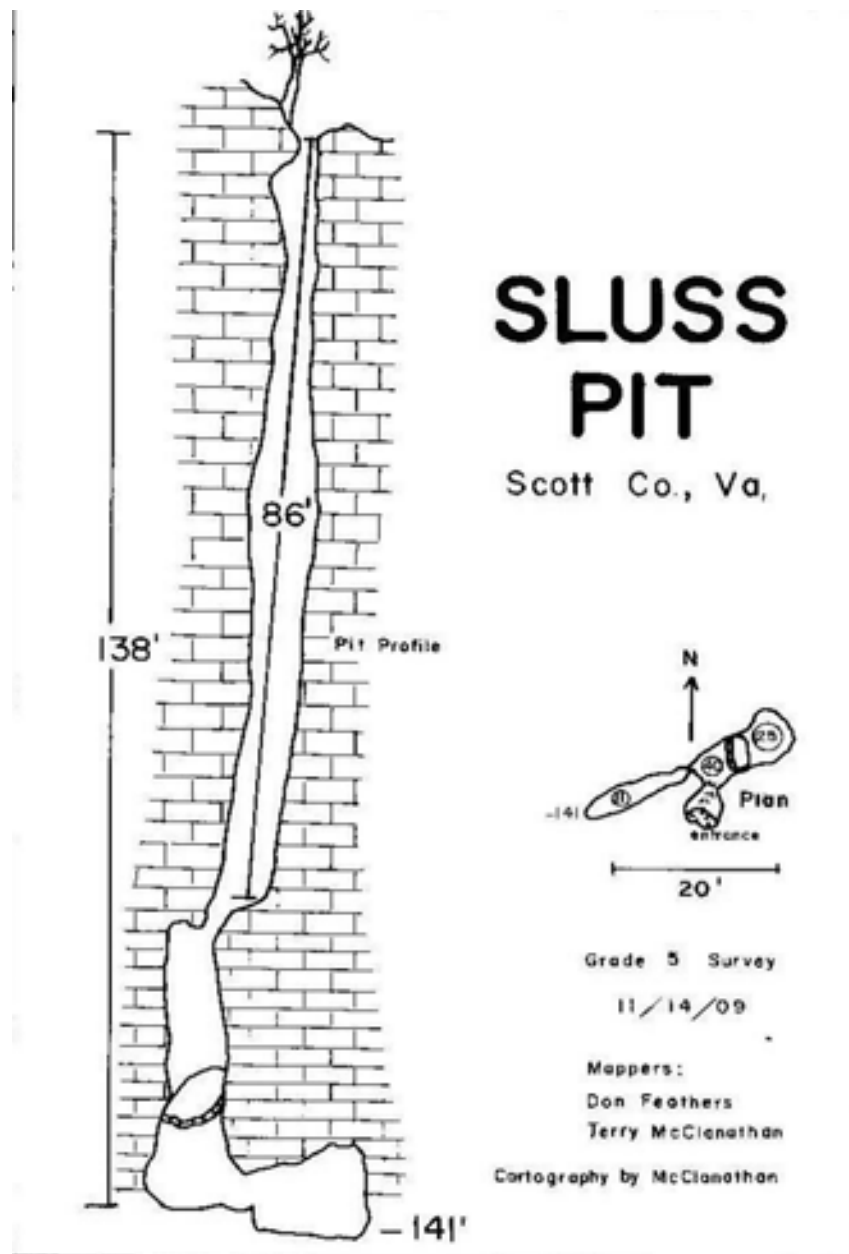
I did some checking around with some old time cavers who were active in south western Virginia during that era in an effort to solve the mystery. Carol and Joe Zokaite kindly sent an e-mail to cavers affiliated with VPI grotto seeking information from anyone who might have known a caver by the name of Lutz who was active during the 70's or early 80's. Several folks suggested Robert Lutz, a famed old time Virginia caver for decades, but mainly active during the 50's and 60's. John Rossi told me the photo appeared to be of a fairly young caver maybe in his twenties. Although Robert Lutz was an NSS member into the mid 90's, his 235 NSS # would have made him an unlikely candidate. He probably would not have passed for a twenty-something caver in 1980.

Michael Frieders, who has been an NSS member longer than I, volunteered that the mystery caver was probably Richard Lutz. He said he remembered Richard was caving actively in the area around that time and was a member of the VPI Cave Club. Michael suggested that I could check the VPI Cave Club Member Book and I would find him listed there. I did, and I saw that his NSS# was 13090, about a

DEAD DOG DISPATCH V.#25 I.#1 JAN 2010 12

thousand after mine, which would have placed him sometime around 1970. The member's book showed that he was inducted as a member of VPI Cave Club on April 19, 1971 with a membership #156. John Rossi said he didn't think the first name signature looked like it was Richard. If Richard Lutz was the first to explore Sluss Pit, it may never be verified. If he was a member of VPI Cave Club in 1971, he must have been an active caver for nearly a decade to have visited Sluss Pit in 1980. However, his name does not appear in any early 80's NSS directories. Whether or not he remained an active caver past that time is unknown. If anyone knows Richard Lutz or if by chance Richard, you yourself, should ever read this and you are our mystery caver, John Rossi would be glad to return your wallet.

Terry McClanathan NSS # 12103



CAVING

H	C	L	A	Y	M	G	Y	P	S	U	M	F	L	O	W	E	R	C	T	C	A	M	P
T	E	R	E	V	I	R	A	K	G	A	R	E	N	F	A	C	O	A	L	R	G	I	S
O	T	Z	H	I	N	A	N	O	O	O	D	E	R	Y	T	L	R	V	R	Y	L	S	T
O	S	G	A	R	E	F	R	F	S	F	T	O	N	B	E	I	U	E	A	S	Y	T	O
T	P	T	E	M	R	F	U	T	R	I	S	O	O	F	R	M	F	R	E	T	P	Y	O
G	E	F	A	E	A	I	T	A	C	T	L	P	I	L	O	B	L	A	P	A	H	C	B
O	L	T	T	L	L	T	G	L	W	O	R	O	O	M	F	S	U	T	B	L	S	T	S
D	E	U	K	U	A	I	A	O	C	V	A	N	D	A	L	I	S	M	A	S	S	R	A
N	O	C	A	B	L	C	R	H	E	A	D	L	A	M	P	E	S	I	L	A	S	W	L
R	T	R	R	E	L	K	T	B	E	K	W	A	T	E	R	F	A	L	L	A	E	A	A
P	H	A	S	V	E	S	I	I	H	N	G	E	E	P	S	K	N	B	O	S	T	R	M
A	E	W	T	N	R	G	T	E	T	E	C	L	S	L	I	K	N	O	O	R	I	T	A
S	M	L	T	A	E	E	L	H	H	E	O	B	O	D	O	T	C	I	N	E	D	S	N
S	T	R	E	A	M	E	I	S	Y	P	R	B	N	V	I	H	C	O	S	T	O	A	D
A	G	Y	R	L	C	O	D	A	T	A	R	U	B	U	E	O	E	H	R	S	H	D	E
G	T	B	E	T	D	N	F	L	A	D	O	B	E	A	R	S	L	R	B	I	T	O	R
E	A	H	I	I	Y	R	O	P	E	S	D	C	A	N	Y	O	N	L	O	L	N	S	O
T	O	T	T	T	A	O	A	S	W	S	E	O	B	R	U	I	S	E	A	B	A	H	T
P	E	I	R	U	L	P	I	P	S	T	A	L	A	G	M	I	T	E	N	R	C	C	F
M	P	K	M	D	E	E	E	U	E	L	T	U	E	S	K	Y	I	L	L	E	O	U	K
O	U	U	C	E	B	R	M	N	L	R	O	M	G	T	T	R	I	B	B	O	N	C	H
U	C	D	I	I	H	P	N	I	G	B	Y	N	A	S	A	N	D	G	N	I	N	I	M
S	U	T	D	C	R	T	H	E	R	M	A	L	U	T	I	E	B	U	T	A	V	A	L
E	E	R	O	Y	M	C	E	T	I	R	E	D	C	R	A	Y	F	I	S	H	G	I	D

Find all the words. Write down the leftover letters in order to spell out a 'secret message'.

Dig	Sump	Stalagmite	Column	Calcite	Ochre	Big Ear Bat	Water
Ore	Clay	Sweaty	Stream	Passage	Borehole	Climbs	Lava Tube
Fossils	Bear	Canyon	Blast	Graffiti	Drapery	Bruise	Ribbon
Bacon	Fern	Salamander	Crayfish	Helmet	Kneepads	Route	Headlamp
Dusty	Foam	Muddy	Pitch Black	Crystals	Soda Straw	Tired	Speleothem
Camp	Fun	Frostwork	Helectite	Cave Rat	Altitude	Amaze	On Rope
Pit	Sand	Fragile	Colony	Glyphs	Corrode	Boots	Crawl
Scum	Age	Waterfall	Gypsum Flower	Stalactite	Belay	Chill	Room
Echo	Years	Dogtooth	Needles	Cricket	Bubble	Sulfur	River
Frog	Frost	Anthodites	Balloons	Blister	Coralloids	Mouse	Mining
Karst	Rocks	Thermal	Vandalism	Mineral	Splash	Gloves	Pearl
Misty	Flood	Sink					



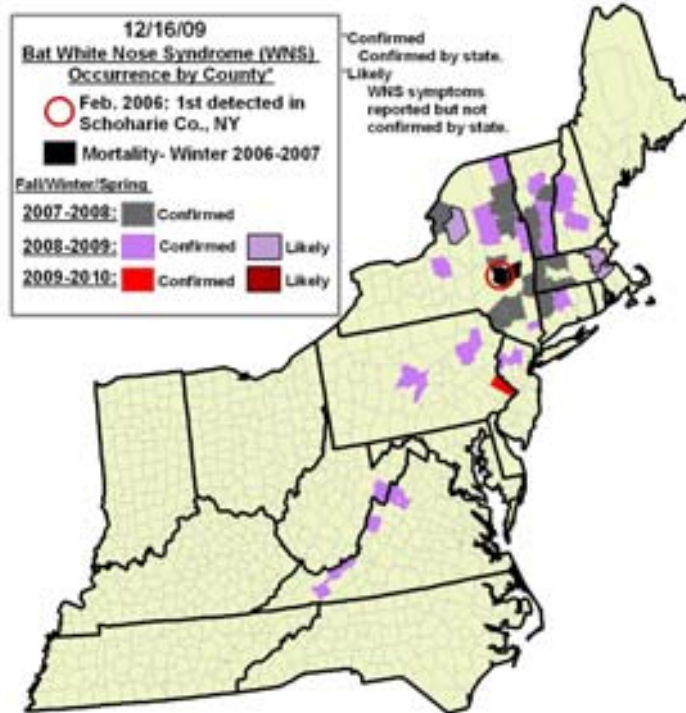
CAVIN CALENDAR

JANUARY 10TH - FEBRUARY 20TH



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Jan 10	Jan 11	Jan 12	Jan 13  Grotto meeting 7pm	Jan 14	Jan 15	Jan 16 Adam Stephen dig 9am
Jan 17	Jan 18 Martin Luther King Day	Jan 19	Jan 20	Jan 21	Jan 22	Jan 23
Jan 24  Birthday	Jan 25	Jan 26	Jan 27	Jan 28	Jan 29	Jan 30
Jan 31	Feb 1	Feb 2 Ground Hog Day	Feb 3	Feb 4	Feb 5	Feb 6
Feb 7 Super Bowl	Feb 8	Feb 9	Feb 10  Grotto meeting 7pm	Feb 11	Feb 12	Feb 13
Feb 14  VALENTINE'S DAY	Feb 15 PRESIDENT'S DAY	Feb 16 FAT TUESDAY	Feb 17	Feb 18	Feb 19	Feb 20

DEAD DOG DISPATCH



Up-To-Date WNS Map

DEAD DOG DISPATCH

TRI-STATE GROTTO OF THE NSS
BOB BENNETT, EDITOR
464 HUCKLEBERRY DR
GERRARDSTOWN, WV 25420-0344
304-579-4304
gimpycaver@comcast.net



TO:

