

# DEAD DOG DISPATCH TRI-STATE GROTTO



**EARTH DAY CAVE, TN (ALAN GROSSE)**

**VOL. #29**

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**DEC**

**2014**

**#137**



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

\*\*\* The photo on the cover was taken by Alan Grosse in Earth Day Cave, TN.

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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 304-821-4621(H)** or **304-671-0344(C)** E-MAIL at [gimpycaver@comcast.net](mailto:gimpycaver@comcast.net) or **JUDY FISHER 304-258-4974(H)** or **304-258-1822(W)** E-MAIL at [jcf@access.mountain.net](mailto:jcf@access.mountain.net)

**WE NEED EVERYONE TO KEEP THINKING ABOUT VOLUNTEERING FOR AN OPEN POSITION. WE STILL NEED SOMEONE FOR THE FOLLOWING POSITIONS:**

**PROGRAM CHAIR**  
**MEMBER at LARGE**

**PLEASE GIVE IT SOME THOUGHT. WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT!**



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# CAVIN EVENTS

## 2014

NOV 1 ---- Ridgeway - Hardy Co - Lost River  
NOV 2 ---- DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME ENDS  
NOV 4 --- Election Day  
NOV 8 --- WVCC Banquet – 7PM - Lewisburg  
NOV 9 ---- SADIE HAWKINS DAY  
NOV 11 -- VETERAN'S DAY  
NOV 12 -- TSG meeting – Nominations – 7pm  
NOV 27 -- THANKSGIVING  
NOV 28 -- BLACK FRIDAY  
DEC 10 -- TSG meeting – Elections – 7pm  
DEC 13 -- Annual Christmas Celebration at Bob & Paulette Bennett's home – 6:30 pm  
DEC 14 -- TSG caving – set trip up at party!  
DEC 21 -- WINTER SOLSTICE  
DEC 24 -- CHRISTMAS EVE  
DEC 25 -- CHRISTMAS DAY  
DEC 31 -- NEW YEAR'S EVE

## 2015

JAN 1 ----- NEW YEARS DAY  
JAN 14 ---- TSG meeting - 7pm  
JAN 19 ---- Martin Luther King Day  
JUL 13-17 --- NSS Convention – Waynesville, MO

## 2016

JUL 17-23 --- NSS Convention – Ely, NV

### \*\*\*\*\* CAVE BUCKS \*\*\*\*\*

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

Month of December ----- \$19.00

TOTAL TO DATE: ----- \$5709.50

The money was sent to SCCI!  
Keep It Coming!

## WEBSITE & CAVING LINKS

Tri-State Grotto ----- [www.tristategrotto.net/](http://www.tristategrotto.net/)  
VAR ----- [www.varegion.org/](http://www.varegion.org/)  
NSS ----- [www.caves.org/](http://www.caves.org/)  
NSS Convention 2014 ----- <http://nss2014.caves.org/>  
OTR ----- [www.otr.org/](http://www.otr.org/)  
MAR ----- [www.caves.org/region/mar/](http://www.caves.org/region/mar/)  
WVCC ----- [www.wvcc.net/](http://www.wvcc.net/)  
Andy Celmer ----- [www.tristategrotto.net/Andy/](http://www.tristategrotto.net/Andy/)  
Bob's Web Site ----- [www.tristategrotto.net/Bob/](http://www.tristategrotto.net/Bob/)  
Ehren Gieske ----- [www.tristategrotto.net/Ehren/](http://www.tristategrotto.net/Ehren/)  
Jerry's Cave Web Site ----- <http://www.caves.org/member/jerry/>  
Vitas Eidukevicius ----- [www.tristategrotto.net/Vitas/](http://www.tristategrotto.net/Vitas/)  
David Hackley's Web Site ----- <http://s180.photobucket.com/albums/x307/clearsig/>  
Bob Gulden ----- [www.caverbob.com/home.htm/](http://www.caverbob.com/home.htm/)  
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>  
WV Caver ----- <http://wvcaver.speleo.us>  
WNS ----- <http://www.caves.org/WNS/WNS%20Info.htm/>  
Containment Procedures ----- <http://www.fws.gov/northeast/whitenosemessage.html/>  
Crystal Grottoes Caverns ----- [www.crystalgrottoescaverns.com](http://www.crystalgrottoescaverns.com)

## GROTTO BIRTHDAYS

### MONTH OF DECEMBER

Corey Hackley, Brent Jefferson, Janey Pate, Evert Bonito Vis

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY



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Hey, everyone , go to the TSG website (www.tristategrotto.com). It is up and running! The website is updated and looking good. Everyone give John Scrivener a big hay! Nice Job John!

## FACT OR CRAP!

Coca Cola executives one considered replacing the caffeine in coke with bat droppings! (Find the answer on page 6.)



### Two Weekends in TAG (Monk)

Marion O. Smith and I had been trying to get together for a trip in his neck of the woods for months, but our schedules just would not mesh. We finally settled on the first weekend in October, even though the TAG Fall Cave-in was the very next weekend., and that would mean two long back-to-back drives for me. Oh well, if one wishes to do new pits, then one must go where the new pits are.

Corey joined me for the first weekend. I always like it when Corey accompanies me because we talk caving most of the way down and back I81 and the drive goes much quicker. We arrived at Marion's around 5 AM (this would be a three day trip) so we had time for a short snooze before the day's activities commenced.

On previous trips Marion had already taken me to most of the easy access pits in the area, so he said we would be spending the day doing a bunch of parallel pits in just two caves. Our first stop was a cave called Velvet Green in White County, Tennessee, not to be confused with a larger, deeper cave called Green Velvet in the same county. Velvet Green is a contact cave, meaning it forms near the top of the low elevation hills common to this part of the Cumberland Plateau, where the sandstone cap rock overlays the carbonates. Contact caves are usually short, with or without pits, and

notorious for loose breakdown (in fact Marion had just been trapped in such a cave last spring). Some contact caves feature multiple pits, but all dropping from the same level, so such caves don't tend to be very deep. In Velvet Green we did five pits of 27, 23, 31, 97, and 49 feet. There was a parallel shaft to the 97 footer which could be accessed from a higher rig point, so thinking it might be over a hundred, I dropped this also. It ended higher at the bottom, though, so it only taped at 96 feet. It also was connected at various points to the 97 footer so it didn't really count as a separate pit. We spent about five hours in Velvet Green.

Our next stop was a cave called Calfkiller Plunge in neighboring Putnam County. This short contact cave was a shallow multi-drop, meaning pits were in succession, not parallel. It had four drops of 63, 29, 20, and 89 feet. Calfkiller Plunge was about 200' deep. We spent about three hours in the cave. For the two caves the pits totaled 379', so I thought we were off to a pretty good start to our vertical weekend.

On Saturday we were joined by Sharon Jones. Marion was taking us to a relatively new cave called Enigma. It's located in Van Buren County back a long 4-wheel road paralleling the Rocky River Gorge. Paradox, a long and significant vertical cave (it has four pits exceeding a hundred feet dept and is a couple of miles long) is on the opposite side of the gorge to Enigma.

Enigma is apparently a kind of "secret" cave which Marion had been keeping mums about, although several other cavers were also in on the surprise. The cave opens at the bottom of the gorge and blows considerable air. A short passage leads to a traverse line skirting a shallow pit. Beyond this a walking canyon leads to a bolt climb of 30', above which the passages become larger and more diverse. There were large rooms separated by hands and knees crawls and multi-level canyons. We dropped a 70' pit into a large dome complex with high leads visible. Marion pointed out a short rope climb which he said was an alternate route but we did not go that way.

After the four of us climbed back to the top of the 70' pit, we retraced our steps back to a diverging passage which lead to deep canyon. Marion related that he was pretty certain he knew where the bottom of the canyon was, but that this

particular pit had never been descended to verify suspicion. I set a bolt to avoid an awkward lip and we backed up to a large wedged breakdown block. The pit was free and voluminous but only 66 feet deep. Marion said that it did indeed drop into where he'd expected.

After derigging the 66' pit we once again retraced our steps, this time all the way back to the bottom of the thirty foot up climb near the entrance. From here we took off in a different direction down a tall, flat floored canyon to a 23 foot up climb. Marion told us that the inviting passage at the top had been accessed by Thany Mann, who had lassoed a projection sticking out over the top. Once up the short drop we proceeded through several hundred feet of scrambling passage to a pop-out into what was obviously a very vast space. The distant murmur of a water falling from a great height was the only sound audible in the darkness.

On occasion, as I eluded to earlier, Marion likes to surprise me with a nice pit. From our earlier phone conversations in setting up this trip I kind of figured that Marion might be keeping a new hundred footer under wraps. When I'd asked him what tape I should bring, he said it didn't matter, so thinking conservatively, I packed my hundred foot tape, and left the hundred meter tape hanging in my basement. Of course if he'd told me to bring the hundred meter tape, that would have sorta given away the surprise.

A vast space did indeed loom before us. We stood high on a breakdown mountain overlooking an immense room. Sten lights on turbo just barely revealed a distant bottom where two gossamer threads ascended upwards into blackness. Far off to the left a waterfall descended from this same blackness. This was obviously no mere hundred foot dome. The pit before us was huge, with a bottom shaped like an enormous football measuring perhaps 100+ by 200+ feet, and a top that was way out of sight. My hundred foot tape and the extra fifty foot length I'd brought just in case, was going to be quite inadequate here. On the upside, though, this would be good excuse to return later with the hundred meter tape.

Marion said the climb was initiated last summer by John Harman, a GVKS caver and friend of mine. However, most of the climb was done by Derek Bristol, one of the two high wall climbers who had

just last winter completed the 526' Perseverance Dome in Hellhole. Marion also said there had been no official taping of the dome but it was thought that present progress put it at around 210 feet. From the floor the rope went up about 120 feet free to the first hanging rebelay. Several additional rebelay follow as the rope snakes higher up the wall. Corey and I took slightly diverging routes near the top. I angled up and slightly to the left on fixed ropes to a lead in breakdown, while Corey climbed more or less straight up. Work on the dome has not yet been completed and the top of the waterfall has not been reached. Considering that we were there during a dry time, as evidenced by the bone dry Rocky River gorge outside, I would imagine that during the wet months of winter and spring bolting would be a daunting undertaking.

Even on this dry day the spray and steady breeze at the bottom was bone chilling. The scouring of the large breakdown and clean washed nature of the bottom of the pit suggests that it would be an awesome spectacle during times of high water. Marion told us that as far as he was aware the dome had not been christened with a special name. It certainly deserves one because it is one of the most impressive in-cave pits in TAG. Rope work in Enigma totaled 399' and our trip lasted about nine hours.

Our cave for Sunday was another White County cave called Earth Day. Marion had taken me to this one shortly after its discovery in '09. At that time we did a couple of drops including a hundred footer. Since then Elliot Stahl had traversed around the top of the hundred footer and found another parallel pit of 115' on the far side. More recently he had continued the traverse around the 115 and discovered another pit thought to be in the ninety foot range. Even Marion had not dropped this pit yet, knowing that he would be bringing me here soon.

Earth Day has a very scenic entrance leading steeply down to a vertical fluted wall. In '09 Georgia caver Andy Zellner had traversed along narrow ledges around the top of the entrance to access an obvious passage above this wall. A rope is rigged there now making things much easier (and safer) for cavers to enter the main cave. Climbing the 29' rope leads to a 100 foot scramble over teetering breakdown to the first hundred foot pit.



Earth Day (Grosse)

This pit drops into an elongated dome complex resembling a tall meandering canyon. A rope has been rigged down the far side of the canyon at the end of Elliott's first traverse. We ascended this 85' drop and entered a short passage at the top which led to the 115' pit. Here Elliot had established a tyrolean line high across the pit to a narrow window on the other side. Once past this obstruction, the third pit is encountered. I went down first as Corey fed me the tape. The pit is a nice smooth walled sheer drop of modest dimensions (about 5'X10') ending in wall-to-wall water. As I neared bottom Corey informed me that the hundred foot tape was completely rolled out. I used my boot to mark off three extra feet above the water line. Always nice to get a bonus hundred footer. The pit was 103 feet deep and I later learned is called Belly Flop Drop. I changed over above the water and climbed out. Corey came down next,

followed by Marion. Sharon opted not to do the tyrolean and stayed on the other side of the 115. We all bounced this pit on our way out and Corey and I retrieved several of Marion's ropes. The traverses were left rigged. Earth Day, while only a short cave, now belongs to an elite group of only nine TAG caves boasting three or more hundred footers.



Earth Day (Grosse)

After Earth Day, we went back to Marion and Sharon's house to pack up for the return trip to Maryland. My total new vertical for the trip was 1045 feet, and Corey's was a bit more since he had never been to Earth Day before. It was a fun trip. Many thanks to Sharon and Marion for their always gracious hospitality. We look forward to returning in the future for more caving adventures.



## TAG Fall Cave-in Oct. 10-12<sup>th</sup> (Monk)

Corey could not join me this year for the cave-in due to obligations at VAR, which was scheduled for the same weekend. I had no specific caving plans for Saturday so I'd contacted Alan Cressler, an old time caving friend from Atlanta. He was taking a group to a large Georgia cave not far from the cave-in site. Case Cave is in the Cloudlands Canyon State Park, is gated, and requires a permit. It has a short entrance drop and several miles of passages with some very large rooms. The forecast for the weekend was stormy, and I passed through several heavy downpours on my Friday night drive to northwest Georgia, one particularly nasty storm just before I arrived.



Case Cave (Grosse)

The permit had a limit of fifteen cavers. I knew almost everyone in Alan's group and several were very good friends. Besides Alan, Marion and Sharon were there. So was Elliot Stahl and his new girlfriend Julia McMinn. David Stahl (Elliot's Dad), Brian Killinbeck, Paul Aughey, Tabby Cavendish, and Jeff Moore had also been caving with me on multiple occasions.

With fifteen of us, it took awhile just to get everyone down the entrance drop. This was a rather awkward broken pit of 45' just inside the gate. Once inside cavers split into smaller groups and started touring. Sharon and I were second and third down the entrance drop and we immediately took off in search of the large rooms. Alan and Marion opted to

look for civil war era signatures. Some others were planning on photo trips to various parts of the cave.



Case Cave (Grosse)

Passages were mostly well traveled and easy walking. Vandalism seemed scant for such as easy access cave, but then I have no idea how long the cave has been gated. The big room resembled more of a huge trunk passage measuring hundreds of feet long, nearly a hundred feet wide and much of it approaching fifty feet high. Down the center for much of its length steep, slippery banks descended to a deep lake. One of the largest sections was called the Moon Room and was floored by giant mud cracks giving it a broken cratered landscape. At various times other members of our troupe of fifteen would mingle and sometimes form into new groups for additional touring. All in all it was a fun trip in a nice easy cave, and perfect for a rainy day. Most of us spent about four or five hours

underground. This left plenty of time Saturday night for socializing and the cave-in and enjoying the colossal bonfire.



Case Cave (Grosse)

Sundays agenda was pre-determined by Marion. It involved some unfinished lead checking in a pit cave he had taken Corey and I to during 2013 TAG. This was a Jackson County, Alabama cave called Seventeen Stitches. Upon exiting the cave last year Marion noticed a slot on the far side of the second drop. A rock toss indicated the existence of another pit on the other side. However, on that '13 trip it was already very late Sunday afternoon and Corey and I had to start home. He had to sit on that lead for a whole year, quite a feat considering that Marion is not noted for his patience where virgin pits are concerned.



17 Stitches (Grosse)

Participants in Sundays venture were Marion, Sharon, Elliot, Tabby Cavendish, Alan Grosse, and myself. It looked to be another stormy day but at least we all managed the 400 foot vertical hike to the entrance without getting dumped on. Elliot went first, followed by Marion and then I. The cave starts as a slide-in to a narrow twenty foot pit with a gnarly lip. This is followed by a 35' drop, then a 71, and finally 18 to the bottom. Marion's lead was on the far side of the second drop about halfway down. By the time I caught up Elliot had already successfully traversed over to the inviting slot, climbed down the other side, and was placing two bolts for rigging the undescended pit. The room around the top of the pit was well decorated, in fact this was the prettiest area in the cave. We taped the new pit at 74', but unfortunately it was dead-bottom. All six of us bounced the pit. Our in cave time was only about two hours.





17 Stitches (Grosse)

There were also two other pits on the hillside which most of the group had not been to. Sharon and I were the first to exit so we took the extra rope and went to rig the easier to find of the other two pits. I'd been to this one with Marion in '13. It has a large open air entrance beside an old logging road and is as nice 57' pit called Shining Rock Drop. By now the clouds had darkened and thunder was echoing all around us. As Sharon and I were getting ready to climb back out the sky opened up and we

got drenched. I was just starting a second ascent, hoping I could find a dry overhang at the bottom to get out of the rain, when the rest of the group arrived. All except Marion bounced the pit as quickly as possible. By the time we derigged the rain had slackened to just a steady drizzle.

I had not been to the third pit, so even though I was soaked and becoming chilled, and the hour was getting on towards late afternoon, I decided to stay a bit longer. Elliot's GPS point soon took us to the small entrance to Lloyds Pit. A climb down over ugly breakdown led to a contortion squeeze into the top of the pit. Once you were past the squeeze and actually in the pit, Lloyds was a very pretty 82' shaft. There were some massive flowstone cascades at the bottom and we poked around for awhile, finding nothing that went. Getting back up through the constricted top of the pit was every bit as unpleasant as I imagined.



Lloyds (Grosse)

It was around 6PM when we got off the mountain, but at least the storms had subsided. I had dinner at a local restaurant with Marion and Sharon. Then it was time to start the 630 mile trek back up the interstate to Maryland. To keep me company on the way I had nice memories of another fine TAG Fall Cave-in.

## ANSWER TO FACT OR CRAP!

### FACT!

During WW II caffeine was rationed and scarce; consequently Coke executives considered replacing Coke's caffeine content with bat guano extract, a substance that could be synthetically converted into caffeine. They did not pursue this idea out of fear that the public would discover the truth and stop drinking Coke. What a crappy idea!



Lost River Talus Cave (Griffin)



Lost River Shelter (Griffin)



Lost River #4 (Griffin)



Lost River #2



Lost River #3





Lost River #4 (Griffin)



Slot in Cliffs at Lost River (Griffin)



Lost River #4 (Griffin)



Going back down slot (Griffin)





Rapps (Bowen)



Breathing (Berge)



Rapps (Bowen)



Benedicts (Fox)



Rapps (Bowen)



# CAVIN CALENDAR

## DECEMBER 7TH - JANUARY 17TH



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Dec 7	Dec 8	Dec 9	Dec 10  Meeting 7pm Annual Elections	Dec 11	Dec 12	Dec 13  Annual Christmas Celebration
Dec 14 Grotto Cave Trip to Mystic	Dec 15	Dec 16	Dec 17	Dec 18	Dec 19	Dec 20
Dec 21  SOLSTICE	Dec 22	Dec 23	Dec 24  CHRISTMAS EVE	Dec 25  CHRISTMAS DAY	Dec 26	Dec 27
Dec 28	Dec 29	Dec 30	Dec 31  NEW YEAR'S EVE	Jan 1  NEW YEAR'S DAY	Jan 2	Jan 3
Jan 4	Jan 5	Jan 6	Jan 7  Meeting 7pm	Jan 8	Jan 9	Jan 10
Jan 11	Jan 12	Jan 13	Jan 14	Jan 15	Jan 16	Jan 17



# DEAD DOG DISPATCH



FERN CAVE (Nikki Fox)



## DEAD DOG DISPATCH

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