



ENDLESS CAVERNS

Where there is no end to the fun!

A Special Edition to the
Dead Dog Dispatch

ENDLESS CAVERNS

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PLEASE GIVE IT SOME THOUGHT, WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT.



The photo on the front cover was taken by Jerry Bowen in the stream passage of Endless Caverns

ENDLESS CAVERNS

SPECIAL EDITION TO THE *DEAD DOG DISPATCH*

Volume #30

Issue #1

January 2015

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ENDLESS CAVERNS

"I've never worked in a cave before!"

Bob Williams
2013



HOW IT STARTED

by Jerry Bowen

My parents started me on caving in New Market, Virginia. Two of the first caves I remember my dad taking me to was Rosenberger and Schwartzs Caves, not far from there. We found others too. As a twelve year old boy traveling down I-81, I would look east, eyes big with wonder, and see the **Endless Caverns** sign on the mountain. I even remember it being lighted at night. Like a kid in a candy shop, I wanted to go to that sign, and explore in the cave. Endless? Really? As a young adult, I camped there in the early 1970s, and took the commercial tour. It was only fitting that Endless Caverns would eventually become part of my caving career.

Mary and I jumped into organized caving in a big way in 1995. A few years later, we joined Tri-State Grotto. It seemed like there were much bigger opportunities available being a grotto member. In 2002,

there was a VAR meet at Endless Caverns where Mary and I bought our first set of coveralls from Alex Sproul at Inner Mountain Outfitters. At that time the cave was still owned by the Bordoux family. Much has happened since then. EC Holdings led by Larry Silver in 2006, and Morgan RV Resorts in 2009 became partners and bought the campus. This partnership came off redesigning the campground, adding spaces, upgrading the electricity, plumbing, putting in a pool and a large clubhouse with a stadium sized projection TV system, and so on. Somehow, the campus is associated with NASCAR, the racing folks which must be an umbrella group.

More recently, Morgan RV Resorts hired Mike Stewart as the property administrator. He takes care of the day-to-day needs of running the top-notch motor-home campground and manages cave tours. He helps



Mike Stewart on rope in Endless Caverns.



Megan Stewart and Dave Lucas, tour guides.

ENDLESS CAVERNS

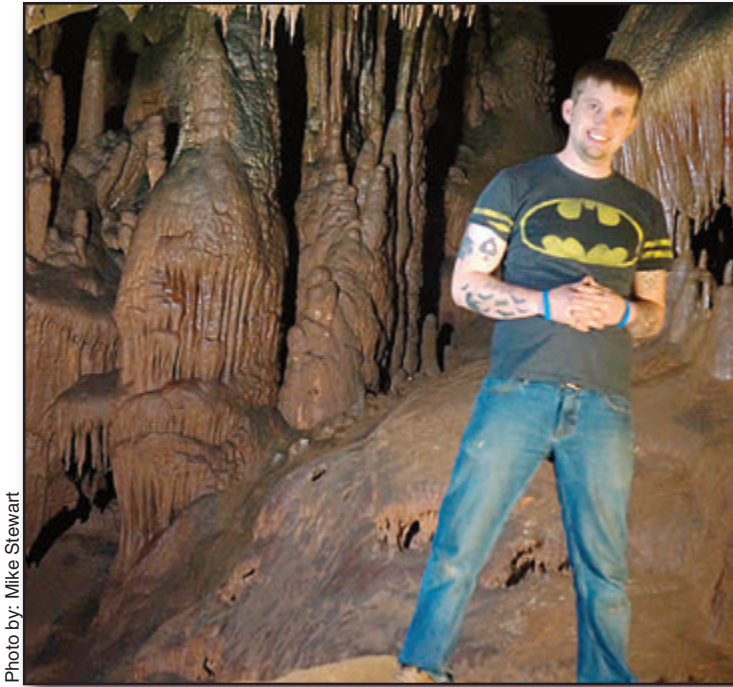


Photo by: Mike Stewart

Dave Lucas, tour guide.



Bob Williams, caver and commercial electrician.

visitors get settled and parked into their spaces and manages his help.

Mike hired a young lad named Dave Lucas as a full-time tour guide. Dave maintains items within the cave like changing light bulbs, splits wood for campground use, and various things that need done at a resort. Mike also hired his daughter, Megan to be a part-time tour guide on the weekends. Megan is a student in Shippensburg, Pennsylvania. There is Migel, the grounds keeper, Lisa and Faye who look after the cash register and gift shop, and Kate, another tour guide.

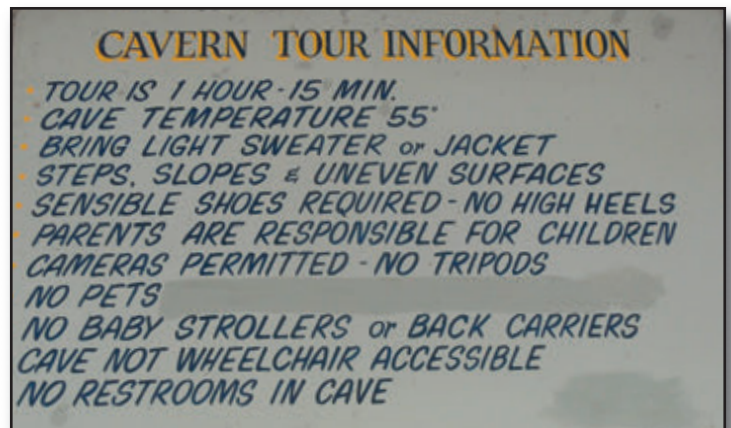
When Morgan RV Resorts purchased the property, there was one part of the commercial trail where the lighting didn't work. It was the Explorer's Loop at the end of the trail. It didn't stop the tour from being shown. They just did an abbreviated trip, not showing that part. It turns out that Endless Caverns has some historic *lead coated* wiring along their trails. The old wiring was failing and needed a good electrician to figure out how to repair the problems.

My friend, Bob Williams is both a commercial electrician and a 1960s caver. When he showed up to camp at Endless a few years ago, he had an NSS license plate and caving stickers on his car and wearing an electricians hat. It was in the spring of 2013. Mike and Bob, both dynamic people, struck up a conversation. Talk went from caving, to electrical work, and then from there, all talk was possible. Dave was hanging around,

listening. Mike and Dave were already exploring the cave and wanted NSS cavers to join them on their forays. It wasn't a hard thing to invite Bob and his friends, so

Bob called me and explained what was going on. By volunteering my help to work on the wiring, I too, was drawn into a friendship with the leadership guys at Endless Caverns. Mike and Dave are still anxious to have Bob or I come down and see a different wild sections of Endless. One time, I even did an in-cave rappel for them, to discover a connection between upper and lower passages. To my knowledge, no one has ever made that rappel before. I have numerous wild trips into Endless and, with Bob, perhaps six work trips to replace or maintain the lead coated wiring and other repairs.

Opportunities started to escalate. □



Sign outside the door of the gift shop.

WHERE IT WENT FROM THERE

by Jerry Bowen

I mentioned earlier that Megan Stewart was attending college classes at Shippensburg University. To manage her expenses, she was waiting on tables at the Copper Kettle, an upscale eating establishment. In the summer of 2013, the National Speleological Convention (NSS) was held in Shippensburg, Pennsylvania. Stephen my son, and I attended the convention, taking various classes going to a few Pennsylvania caves. What we didn't know was, that NSS President Gordon Birkhimer went out to eat with Luddington and others at the Copper Kettle. Megan overheard some of their conversation and inserted the fact that her father was the administrator at Endless Caverns. I found out at a later date, that Megan was given an honorary membership to the NSS through the benevolence of Birkhimer.

By this time, Bob Williams had worked out an

electrical trip, after which a wild trip was planned for later in the evening. Mike, Dave, Bob and I became good friends. Young Dave was asking questions about Tri-State Grotto and resolved to attend a meeting. It just so happened there were two cavers visiting our area from Montana who wanted a cave trip. So on May 8, 2013, I invited Dave Lucas to join Ian Chechet and his friend from Montana on the same day we had a grotto meeting. The four of us went to Jones Quarry Cave, and Donaldsons Cave. Then, John DiCarlo was able to show us two trick basements in Martinsburg where Tri-State Grotto was involved with digs. And later in the evening we all went to a grotto meeting. At the grotto meeting, Ian showed a video powerpoint from a cave they were working in Montana. Dave Lucas really got his eyes opened that day with all of the caving related activity. Dave



Bob changing contactors behind the Cathedral Room



Bob, Dave and Jerry in the gift shop

Photo by: Mike Stewart

ENDLESS CAVERNS



Dave Lucas and Ian Chechet from Montana, in Jones Quarry Cave.

joined Tri-State Grotto, and brought to a second meeting a video creation on Endless that he mixed. A third grotto meeting he attended was the auction meeting of 2013. Dave has jumped into caving with both feet and has been a member in good standing since. Dave is working on a library and wants to start a grotto of his own in the New Market, Virginia area.

July 26, 2013, on one of our electrical work trips, we played in the afternoon. Because I had forgotten how to



Rosenberger Cave, where caving began for Jerry, in the 1960s.

find it, Dave had relocated Rosenberger Cave and wanted to take me there. When we walked into its entrance it brought back a flood of memories. My dad, the kids, I was stuck on a high ledge and well, ask me about it.

Dave has a lot of energy and enthusiasm for caving. It is easy to like this guy and help him succeed. On various trips into Endless, I have noticed needs and have given Dave a rechargeable battery pack and light, a gold line to be used as a handline, and I left a cable ladder at one spot as a permanent loan. He has four books that I have given him, two are surveys on local counties. The list goes on.

The subject of the new Endless Caverns map has come up more than once. In the mid 1990s there was a major effort by VAR cavers to remap the cave which they did. At the same time, a VHS video was made and is on file in the NSS library. A lot of passage that is not on the 1960s map was plotted in the 1990s data. The survey data was recorded, and a line plot was created for Morgan RV Resorts so they could locate their pool and design their septic system. But no one knows how to get a copy of the line plot. Someone high up in the Morgan group is not letting the line-plot go. Craig Hindman, president of the VAR has informed me that Phil Lucas has the survey data and is planning on Dave West drafting a final version of the 1995 map. When that will happen is anybody's guess.

Many people have been participating in work and wild trips. □



Photo by: Dave Lucas

For the sake of a little déjà vu, Jerry at Rosenberger's entrance.

PEOPLE

by Jerry Bowen

On September 19, 2013, there was a wild trip in an uncharted area of the cave. This was the north section, under the parking lot. A bunch of us met in the gift shop basement, went in the exit door, and hit the commercial trail for only a hundred feet. We disappeared into a manhole sized passage and took a really convoluted passage down. We zigged when we expected to zag, and dropped at various places. One drop was about 15 feet. We finally reached a stream passage, but were only able to follow it for 200 feet or so. In this area, we saw some small white, and clear formations. We followed the water until we reached a large flowstone formation which we had to summit. We sent up our best climber, who hooked up a cable ladder, and slung it down. I left the cable ladder there, seeing a benefit for future adventurers. On the other down-side of the flowstone we found our-

selves in the stream passage again, and what a show! The flowstone ribbons were incredible, large, and one right behind the other! The first person to be mentioned is Stephen Bowen, a Tri-State Grotto member, who was photographed while backlighting ribbons (see below). Downstream, we jumped out of the stream passage, and found a large well decorated room on the left. Out of this room went a dry passage that paralleled the stream, and there was a hole going straight up. Both passages led to large rooms that need to be fully explored. We continued in the stream to a sump and were on this night trip for about four hours.

Another weekend, I had camped on Friday night. Don't ask me why there were no pictures of my in-cave rappel that night, but there were none. The next day, June 14, 2014, Mary Bowen (Tri-State Grotto) drove



Photo by: Dave Lucas

Stephen Bowen in uncharted north section under parking lot.



Mary Bowen at the Endless Caverns sign visible from I-81.

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Shirley Williams entering a pool of water.



Shirley Williams IN the knee deep pool of water!

down with the grand kids, James and Micah. They did the commercial trip, and after the rain we went up to the Endless Caverns sign. Notice in the picture (previous page), the old light bulb sockets and the wire track.

Yet another Friday night trip occurred on July 19, 2013. This was after a day of electrical work. Bob was camping with his family. Mike, David and company had invited local friends and we merged two wild trails in one

evening. The first one was a left off the commercial trail which came to a 'T'. We turned left and climbed up a flowstone, went through a window, and slid down the other side. We were faced with another 'T'. Turning right took us to the stream we didn't go in, and turning left to a dry waterfall room. On our second trip in the stream passage (described on the next page) Shirley, the first lady of electrical work, is featured.



Shirley and grandson Blake having fun!



Bob, Dave & Mike show the hand pump for watering Diamond Lake

ENDLESS CAVERNS



Terry McClanathan working on lighting on the Explorers Loop.

The same day only earlier, Terry McClanathan (Tri-State Grotto) had helped us with the wiring on the Explorers Loop. He too, participated in the Friday evening stream passage trip. The second trip started about the middle of the commercial trip where we climbed around the end of a rail, and down to the stream passage. We followed the water downstream, going past the beautiful flowstone ribbon (bacon), shown on the front cover of



Terry McClanathan just before a wild trip on the Explorers Trail.

this tome. All kinds of formations could be viewed, and the stream sumped again at a beautiful display of soda straws. The ceiling looked as if rain was frozen in time.

Below: Three hundred feet on the Explorers Trail comes a handline drop. At the bottom of the drop is the stream. Follow the water downstream, and one will find this canopy over the water. Mike Stewart is pictured here waiting for his group to return.



Terry in stream passage about mid way through cave



Mike Stewart in stream passage past the pump.

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Bob Williams in the Cathedral Room.



Blake Wolters on a caving trip with his grand-dad.

Hard to know when these pictures were taken, but Bob Williams, the commercial electrician is the brains behind the wiring repairs. Bob is a former member of Tri-State Grotto and remains a friend to the membership there. It was up to Mike Stewart to allow him to do the work, and Bob has found helpers to give aid. He uses two of his old-enough grand kids to help, and then he uses me when he can't get them. Typically, I can help on a

Friday which fits into his camping plans. Here Bob is pictured with his caving gear. More recently, Bob has done some vertical work. He did two 'in cave' rappels and ascents. Dave and Mike tried their hand at it too. A few of his grand kids were there to offer support.

Grand Caverns gets all the attention with their 210 shields, but Endless has a fair share of them too. One shield is shown below.



Tyler Wolters in front of a shield, on a caving trip with his grand-dad.



Megan, Dave, and Mike in the middle stream passage.

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Tom Griffin resting on wild trip by the Blackburn Room.



Tom and Terri Griffin 200 feet in on Explorers Trail.

Tom and Terri Griffin are members of Tri-State Grotto. On Friday November 14, 2014, Bob and I did another work trip in Fairyland getting some lights to work. I spent the night in sub-freezing temperatures, in the back of my truck, and on Saturday morning the Griffins arrived. Bob Williams led us to the handline drop, and I, all by myself, led the Griffins down the handline drop to the stream. Climbed the breakdown pile,

negotiated the pit on the slanted rock, and made it to the Blackburn Room. Rested a bit, and went on. There was about a 200 foot low-enough passage that took us to a nicely decorated area. We found two stalactiflats side-by-side, and another one by itself. There were helictites and other pretties. There was one dripwater pool, still dripping.

Tom is interested in the campground.



Alex Mawdsley by a flowstone formation in the stream passage.



Kait van Zandt.

ENDLESS CAVERNS



Dave Lucas observing a broomstick near the Blackburn Room.

We have already talked about Dave Lucas at quite some length. He too is a member of Tri-State Grotto. Some more information on him reveals that he is quite the photographer. He has taken stunning photos with a camera phone. He has since come into a high-dollar camera which he protects with his life. When he learns how to submit photos to the *NSS News*, watch out Dave Bunnell.



Dave Lucas looking at 3 layers of rock in the stream passage.

The campground and cave are closed from mid November through the month of March. The campus opens again on April first. During the winter months, Dave, the gift shop staff and other tour guides are unemployed. I am told this is the best time to explore, because the staff are not distracted by the timeclock.

There is a lot of beauty on the commercial trail, and more on the wild trails as well. □



Dave Lucas is part of the stream.



Wet Dave is an amusing moment for Terry.

PRETTIES IN THE CAVE

by Jerry Bowen

The photos shown in this chapter are taken on different wild trips. The first picture is the awesome flowstone bacon! This flowstone was formed by drips of water flowing down the angled ceiling of the cave. The water had limestone rich deposits which were left as the water eventually dried out. The bacon *look* to the layers is because the water entering from above, brought different minerals with it.

Ours was a night trip. We had gone to about the middle of the of the commercial trail, scooted around the end of the rail, and climbed down to the stream passage. Going downstream, we ran into this marvelous bacon formation. We had a photo assistant hold a light behind it, and when doing so, their body appeared underneath the bacon. In order for the picture to be shown as is, it was necessary to Photoshop the body out.

The series of four photos that follow was with Tom and Terri Griffin. We were on the Explorers Trail and way past the Blackburn Room. This trip was taken on November 15, 2014, and it was one that Mike let me lead on my own. Adventurers are on an upper level trail and need to jump down to a parallel trail six feet lower to find the Blackburn Room. To continue on the Explorers Trail, it is necessary to stay on that lower level, go past the Blackburn Room and turn left. The passage becomes low and alternates low for about 200 feet. It is not horrible. It opens up to a nifty room with a lot of young formations, including the various stalactiflats.

Harlan Bretz was a serious geologist in Missouri in the 1950s. He wrote the book *Caves of Missouri* which was published in 1956. In that book Harlan was the first to coin the phrase *stalactiflat*, which he describes as a



Bacon shown on the front cover.



Two stalactiflats 300 feet past the Blackburn room.

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A few helictites are shown here.



A single stalactiflat hanging by itself.

formation growing to a column. A puddle of travertine hardens on the mud floor. Over time, the softer mud gets washed away leaving a hanging circle. The three shown here are about the size of a dinner plate. At one time, this room had a much lower ceiling. Thank you Harlan for that explanation.

Helictites are a different animal. They are contorted depositional speleothems which grow in any direction,

seemingly defying gravity. I saw one in Tennessee that looked like a corkscrew. There are no rules for them to follow. These are considered rare, but in my experience, I see them frequently. One needs to train themselves to look for them as they are small. Scientists are all over the map explaining how they form. Wind, magnetism and capillary forces or piezo electrostatic potential are some of the reasons given.



A crazy formation by the Blackburn Room.



These clear formations look like frozen water.

Photo by: Dave Lucas

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Another young frozen looking formation.



More crystal pretties

The formations that are really rare are the clear crystal ones, looking much like water. I see helictite activity in this one.

This rare display of bacon flowstone occurs under the parking lot on the north end of the cave. This part of the cave hardly gets visited. This is the same trip described where my son, Stephen Bowen was pictured with more of this. The bacon here has a serrated edge along the bot-

tom, looking much like sharks teeth. There was so many of these formations, it felt like we were passing through an arbor. These formations are formed exactly like the bacon described earlier, except they are longer and have less color. The reason for the serration is a mystery like the helictites.



An array of flowstone bacon in the stream passage on the north end.



Sharks teeth in the stream passage on the north end.

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Photo by: Dave Lucas

Flowstone bacon in the stream passage on the north end.

The Brown Room is another room where there are loads of pretties for the aspiring photographer. One can go there and spend a few hours just snapping pretties.

Pretties show up everywhere in the cave! Some are large and others are smaller. Alex is taking shots of some smaller pretties.

The two lower pictures describes some unusual man-made items. The first picture shows an air shaft going up



Photo by: Dave Lucas

Alex Mawdsley taking pictures of very small pretties.

into the gift shop. One can see the pulley for a fan belt. In the summer time, the fan pulls naturally cool air up into the gift shop lessening the need for lots of air conditioning. In the winter, they put a rug over the grid.

The pump is down in the stream passage, and in historic days, was used to pump water to an upper level to water Diamond Lake in Fairyland.

Electrical work, keep reading. □



Looking straight up into an air shaft that goes into the gift shop.



Historic pump used to pump water up to Diamond Lake in Fairyland.

ELECTRICAL ISSUES

by Jerry Bowen

"I've never worked in a cave before!" Bob said.

Bob was talking to me about the prospect of doing repairs in Endless. I replied back, "So just add the cave to your list of experience. Add it to the shopping centers, the nursing homes and churches you have wired".

As I mentioned earlier, Endless Caverns was originally wired with miles of lead coated cable. It was state of the art for its time. But that was 90 years ago. Bob and I have found the wire has been cut and spliced with tape, and sometimes those splices are buried under dirt. Friends, the splices and the wire are going to fail at some time. When it does, Bob Williams has the experience to figure out what to do.

Some of the repair work we have done is as simple as replacing a three-way switch. When a tour approaches a switch the guide turns on a light ahead, and off a light

behind. In order for the switches to work as described, they need to be three-way switches. The tour then advances to the next array of switches and this goes on every 200 feet for over a mile. We have replaced at least eight three-way switches in two years time.

Our work actually began on the first two-thirds of the Explorers Loop replacing three-way switches. Because of the lead wiring, we still had problems with the last third of the loop. We used UF cable to rewire eight new boxes and fixtures to get the entire loop to work.

Another area we worked in, was at the panel and contactors behind the wall of the cathedral room, and the panel and contactor area by Fairyland. Each of these two areas needed to have contactors replaced. To finish our work in Fairyland, it was necessary to replace the lead coated wire with UF cable, resulting in getting four



Photo by: Blake Wolters

Jerry and Bob as electricians by Fairyland.

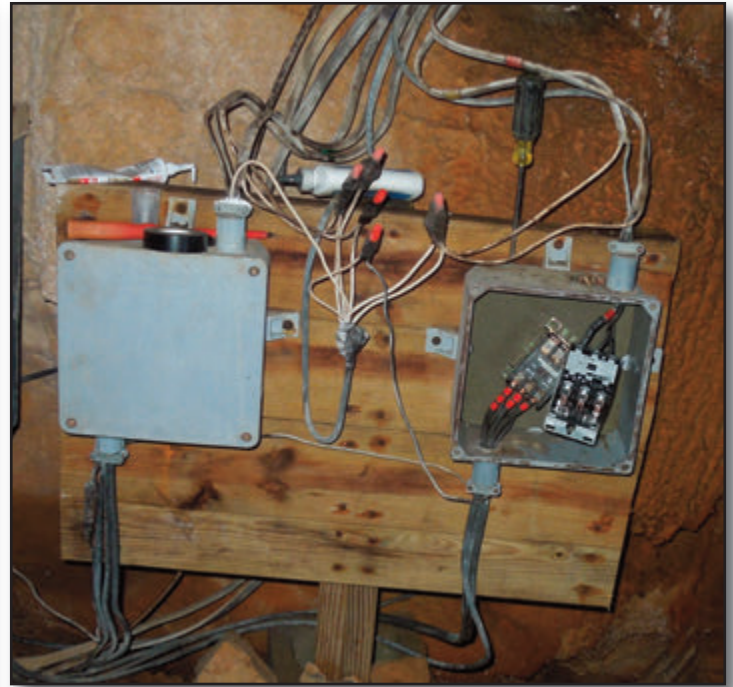


A socket being rewired, near Fairyland.

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Replacing a three way switch on the commercial trail.



A panel (not shown), and contactors behind the Cathedral Room

or five lights going that had been out for a while. The three photos on this page show different areas where the contactors needed to be replaced.

In other parts of the cave, some of the lights don't work. The wiring delivers power, the bulb is good, but the fixture itself is bad. In a number of places, some fixtures we have checked needed to be replaced.

Not all of the wiring is wonderful, so it looks like

wiring repairs will continue. I cannot comment on the electrical health of Endless Caverns commercial trail. But I have been in a lot of electrical routes and have seen where already, much of the lead coated wire has been replaced with UF. It seems to me that Endless is a treasure worth investing in. It has a lot to give!

Endless isn't just a cave. There is a lot to see above ground too! It has the largest lighted sign in the USA. □



Panel and contactor on the Explorers Loop.



A contactor by Fairyland.

ABOVE GROUND

by Jerry Bowen

The parking lot is just a little higher than the valley. When one arrives at the gift shop for a cave tour, the visitor is rewarded with this nice view to the northwest. Just beyond, there is a gate with a four digit code one needs to enter before gaining access to the campground. Once inside, the camping party will notice the new campground is on a hill. Each site is just a little higher than the one before. The sites are terraced with stone, and I have heard more than once, that the campground looks like the Flinstone's Bedrock (yabba, dabba, do!). The Morgan RV Resorts campground designers did a nice job arranging each site, so they each have running water and 30 amps of electricity. They have upgraded the old bath house, the one we remember, and built a completely new bath house, so there are two. There is a playground for the kids.

There is a swimming pool and a large, 8000 square-foot clubhouse. The pool has some of the new features you see at modern pools including a large mushroom umbrella that showers water. The clubhouse can house up to two hundred people and is used for music shows and local events. It has its own set of bathrooms, and an office. It has a large stadium sized projection screen for watching NASCAR races, but it is hooked up to cable for TV and DVD shows as well. In a separate room, there is an arcade with pool tables, air hocky and other games found in arcades. The clubhouse would be especially suited for a VAR dinner and programs.

Walking to the northwest end of the parking lot, one can see a large sinkhole. It is really deep! It looks as if this could connect to Endless Caverns with a little digging.

The folks who designed the gift shop, really had



A shot of the gift shop from the parking lot.



A view to the northwest from the parking lot.

ENDLESS CAVERNS



A sinkhole just off the parking lot must connect to the cave.



A nice carpeted stairway leading to the lower level.

elegance in mind. The entrance level has a large fireplace, but most of the elegance shows downstairs. There is a nice carpeted stairway leading to the lower level where the bathrooms are. Another fireplace graces the lower level, along with the remnants of a copper plated wet bar. It seems that in the old days, explorers would exit the cave and bend their elbow to celebrate. Today, there is a guest register in front of the bar. Several more steps

downward lead to the exit door. Check out the craftsmanship there!

Mary and I were able to hike up to the Endless Caverns sign. The individual letters look like they are thirty feet high and have a telephone pole on either side. The old lighting was a string of light bulbs mounted to the centerline of each letter and was abandoned long ago. The sign is now front lighted, or projected. □



Exit doors for the end of the commercial trip.



Endless Caverns sign seen from the interstate highway.

ENDLESS CAVERNS



A scene from the commercial trail.



Seen from the commercial trail.

Mike Stewart wants to have a VAR at Endless. It is looking like any event will be a spring VAR about mid-April. With the club house, and the large parking area for vendors, the site would be an excellent choice. So it might be in the spring of next year, 2016. Stay tuned for details.

Already announced, Meredith, from BATS, has selected a site for spring of 2015. □

I will end where I began. As a young boy, I had wanted so much, to go up to that sign on the mountain, and explore in the cave. Working there became a random opportunity. I wasn't looking for it to happen, it just bit me in the nose! So this still ongoing experience has filled a desire in my life; with a lot of life in between, I have now gone full circle. □



Seeing the commercial trail.



Jerry, Dave and Bob after a night-time wild trip.

Photo by: Mike Stewart

ENDLESS CAVERNS



Diamond Lake in Fairyland. Notice the large lions tails in the water.



DEAD DOG DISPATCH

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