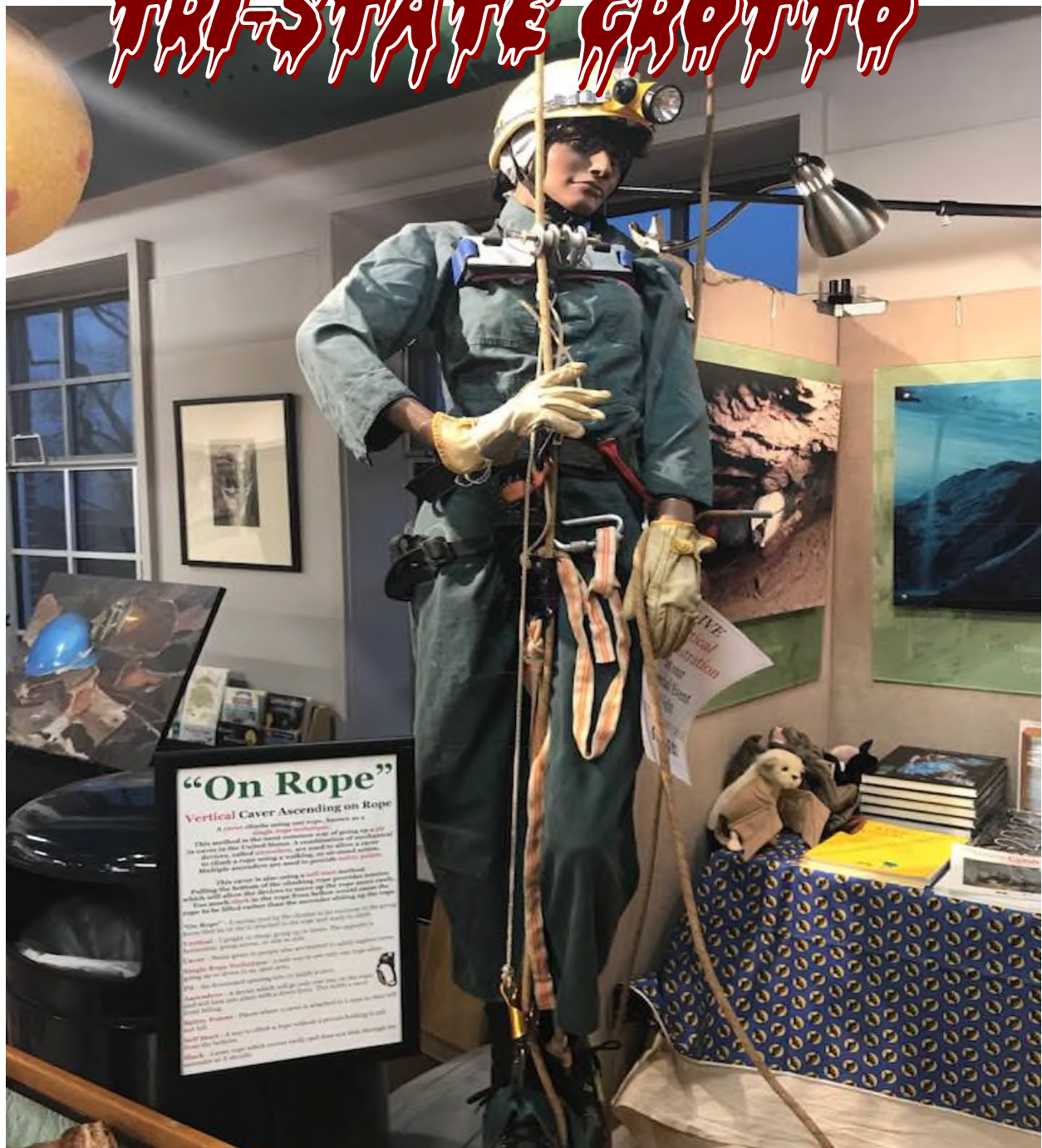


DEAD DOG DISPATCH TRI-STATE GROTTO



THE "CAVE BABE" AT THE DISCOVERY MUSEUM

VOL. #33

ISS. #3

MAR

2018

#21



SUSTAINING MEMBERSHIP ---- \$50/YEAR
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**** This month's cover shows the "Cave Babe" at
 the Discovery Museum in Winchester, VA. Photo
 by Bob Edmonds**

****** Don't forget, the JONES QUARRY BOOKLET is
 ALMOST GONE! There are 10 left! If you are interested in
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 The copy will cost \$6.00 each!**

*******10 LEFT!*******

**WE NEED EVERYONE TO KEEP THINKING ABOUT
 VOLUNTEERING FOR AN OPEN POSITION. WE
 STILL HAVE 5 POSITIONS OPEN!
 PLEASE GIVE IT SOME THOUGHT. WE NEED YOUR
 SUPPORT!**



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GROTTTO.

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

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LIFETIME MEMBERSHIP ---- \$200.00

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CAVE EVENTS

2018

MAR 3 --- Trout Rocks Bat Count – see Earl Sutor
MAR 7 --- Fox Skull Cave – 6pm
MAR 8 --- FRG meeting – Jalisco's in Ft Royal –
6:30 pm
MAR 9-11 --- WVACS weekend
MAR 14 --- PI DAY
MAR 14 --- TSG meeting – 7pm
MAR 17 --- ST. PATRICK'S DAY
MAR 17 --- Crossroads Cave – see Earl Sutor
MAR 21 -- Vertical session – James Rumsey – 6pm
MAR 23 --- Endless Caverns – Change lightbulbs –
10am
MAR 30 --- GOOD FRIDAY
APR 1 --- EASTER
APR 1 --- ALL FOOL'S DAY
APR 2 --- PB&J Day
APR 7 --- National Beer Day
APR 7 --- Sites Cave – see Earl Sutor
APR 11 --- TSG meeting – 7pm
APR 13-15 --- WVACS weekend
APR 16 --- TAX DAY
APR 17 --- BAT APPRECIATION DAY
APR 21 --- Sharps Cave – see Earl Sutor
APR 21-22 --- Grand Caverns restoration weekend
– Contact Meredith Weeberg
**APR 27-29 --- Spring VAR – Hungry Mother
Retreat**
MAY 1 --- MAY DAY
MAY 3-6 --- 67th Annual SERA Cave Carnival –
Scottsboro, AL
MAY 5 --- CINDO de MAYO
MAY 5 --- Spring WVASS meeting at 1pm –
WVACS Field Station
MAY 9 --- TSG meeting – 7pm
MAY 11-13 --- WVACS weekend
MAY 12 --- Adam Stephen Day
MAY 13 --- MOTHER'S DAY
MAY 25-28 --- Speleofest – Lone Star Pres, KY
MAY 28 --- MEMORIAL DAY
JUN 8-10 --- Bubble weekend
JUN 8-10 --- WVACS weekend
JUN 13 --- TSG meeting – 7pm

JUN 14 --- FLAG DAY
JUN 17 --- FATHER'S DAY
JUN 21 --- SUMMER SOLSTICE
JUN 22-24 – NCRC-OCR – Chambersburg, PA
JUL 4 --- INDEPENDENCE DAY
JUL 11 --- TSG meeting – 7pm
JUL 14 --- Annual TSG Picnic
JUL 14-15 --- WVACS Classic - see Dave Sockey
JUL 30-AUG 3 --- NSS Convention – Helena, MT
AUG 8 --- TSG meeting – 7pm
AUG 30-SEP 3 --- OTR
SEP 1 --- WVASS Fall meeting at 630p – Lutz
Rock, OTR
SEP 3 --- LABOR DAY
SEP 11 --- PATRIOT'S DAY
SEP 12 --- TSG meeting – 7pm
OCT 5-7 --- Fall TAG Cave-In – Westfork in Little
River, AL
OCT 8 --- Columbus Day
OCT 10 --- TSG meeting – 7pm
OCT 11 --- VETERAN'S DAY
OCT 20 --- Bridge Day
OCT 31 --- ALL HALLOWS EVE
(HALLOWEEN)

***** CAVE BUCKS *****

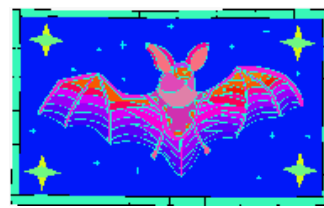
CAVE BUCKS is a voluntary donation for cave purchases. The money is collected at each monthly meeting and sent to the Conservancy of choice. The money SHOULD NEVER be kept past the week it is collected.

Month of FEBRUARY ----- **\$24.00**

TOTAL TO DATE: ----- **\$6799.52**

The money was sent to SCCI.

Keep It Coming!



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WEBSITE & CAVING LINKS

Tri-State Grotto ----- www.tristategrotto.net/
VAR ----- www.varegion.org/
NSS ----- www.caves.org/
NSS Convention 2017 ----- <http://nss2017.caves.org/>
OTR ----- www.otr.org/
MAR ----- www.caves.org/region/mar/
WVCC ----- www.wvcc.net/
Bob's Web Site ----- www.tristategrotto.net/Bob/
Jerry's Cave Web Site -----
----- <http://www.caves.org/member/jerry/>
Bob Gulden ----- www.caverbob.com/home.htm/
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/
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

GROTTO BIRTHDAYS

MONTH OF MARCH

Journey Cosey, Mason Griffin, Kevin Mulligan,
Craig Sanbower, Eliza Marie Vis,

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

REPORTS

TSG Meeting
2/21/18

John called the meeting to order at 7:15 pm.

Jerry gave the Treasurer's report.

Doc gave a report on the poles.

Doc gave a report on the Helmets & vertical gear.

Doc can spend as much as \$10 on Velcro to upgrade the helmets.

Bob gave the Library report. Nothing new.

New Business: Earl gave a report on a new book that Tom bought for him.

Earl is still working on Mystic Cave.

John found an article about a boy that was rescued from a PA cave.

Tom discussed the Grotto buying 600-foot spool of rope & also purchasing 2 hose reels to wind the rope on.

Bill brought up a topic about how the NSS can increase the NSS membership. There was a very long and involved discussion.

John talked about Bog Column Cave and how we can help to preserve it since the property above the cave has been sold.

Old Business & Trips: The next Adam Stephen dig is Sat, Feb 24th starting at 9:30 am. We need lots of help!

Kai Hanson wants the Grotto to lead a scout trip to Dyers Cave.

Heritage (Adam Stephen) Day is Sat, May 12 starting at 10am. We can use some help leading trips to the 2 digs.

Bill talked about the caving event at the Discovery Museum in Winchester, VA on Fri, Feb 23 starting at 7pm.

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The next vertical practice is Wed, Feb 28 at James Rumsey starting at 6pm.

Wed, Mar 7 is the next Wed Night caving at Foxskull cave starting at 6pm.

Doc talked about the adult trip to Big Column cave. About a dozen people were on the trip.

Cave Bucks: \$24.00

Respectfully submitted

Paulette Bennett

Secretary, Tri-State Grotto

Alabama Pitting 2018
By
Terry McClanathan (NSS 12103)

It had been nearly two years since I'd had a vertically significant caving trip and I found myself getting a little antsy. A vertically significant trip can be of any continuous duration, though most tend to be just one weekend, but must include at least 800 feet of "new to me" pits. I'd made prior arrangements with my good friend Atlanta caver Andy Zellner for just such a trip to be scheduled for the last weekend of February. This time frame coincides with a window between deer hunting and turkey hunting in TAG. A major portion of mountain land in TAG is tied up by hunting clubs during the fall, winter, and spring, so the month between deer and turkey is a good time to go pitting in TAG. Temperatures are much more conducive to hiking over the mountains without the threat of poisonous snakes, annoying mosquitoes, or the oppressive heat and humidity that accompany the summer months.

Andy rents a house near the Russel Cave National Monument in Alabama and I arrived there after my usual all night Friday trek from Maryland around 8am Saturday (Feb. 24th). Andy informed me that some others would be caving with us on Sunday but for the day(Saturday) it would be just the two of us.

Our first stop would be a Jackson County, Ala. classic called Guys Cave which was a bit over 450 feet deep. The big drawl explaining the popularity of Guys Cave was that the cave had no long crawls. This is rare among TAG deep caves due to the geology of the region. Most of the TAG multi-drops form in the Cumberland Plateau, which is basically the southern equivalent to our Allegheny Plateau. In most locations the Cumberland Plateau consists of a thick top layer of sandstone caprock overlying two limestone units called the Bangor (top) and the Monteagle (bottom). The Monteagle is usually thicker than the Bangor but each is around 200 feet. These two limestones are separated from each other by a relatively thin sandstone/shale layer known as the Hartselle Formation. The presence of the Hartselle is the reason why there is such a profusion of shallower pits in TAG which end after about 200 feet of depth. If water cannot breach the Hartselle the cave or pit simply "dies". However, if the water is successful at eroding through the Hartselle and into the lower Monteagle, then there is nothing to stop the cave from reaching base level at the valley floor some 200 to 400 feet lower. There are over seventy caves in TAG which have accomplished this and have depths ranging between 400-600 feet. Where it is thicker the Hartselle acts as a major barrier and usually manifests itself as a long muddy low crawl frequently 400-600 feet long and descriptively referred to as a "hog waller". The biggest pits tend to develop within the Monteagle and are therefore encountered on the far side of the Hartselle crawl, meaning that long ropes have to be transported through the "waller". This makes the absence of a Hartselle crawl in Guys Cave a rare treat.

Andy sorted through his rope pile, adding two of mine, and selected eight short ropes ranging from 30 to 90 feet for the eight separate pits in Guys, with the deepest being only 66 feet. A long 4-wheel drive "road" took us up the plateau and across the top to a parking area about half a mile above the entrance. With just the two of us we had quite a few ropes to tote, though fortunately none were very big. The only drawback to wet multi-drops in TAG at this time of year is that February, March, and April are typically the wettest months. Andy said that two of the eight pits would likely find us

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climbing in the waterfalls, but added that we could probably come up with a dry route to bypass the last and wettest drop. Back in the '70's quarter inch neoprene wetsuits were deemed necessary for safely exploring such caves, but nowadays a PVC suit over poly seems to work fine and is not nearly as exhausting to climb in as a full wetsuit. Also TAG water seems noticeably warmer than West Virginia water. Though there is actually only about a five-degree difference, TAG waterfalls just don't seem to produce that instantly numbing effect which occurs when being pounded by a West Virginia waterfall.

The order of pits in Guys is 23' (entrance), 19, 13, 45, 36, 20, 66, and 31 feet. Andy's assessment that the second and fourth pits would be the wettest climbs proved correct. I personally would have balked at the maelstrom thundering down the last 31-footer. Even in my younger, stronger, and more daring days I was never really a "beat you to your knees" kind of caver. Fortunately we were able to climb out over this pit and within a hundred feet or so found a dry rig which took us back down to stream level via a 60ish foot rappel. Guys was indeed a fine cave. Passages were beautifully sculpted with scallops and waterfilled potholes. As is the case with most TAG multi-drops everything was clean washed. Climbing in the waterfalls got my gear cleaner than it's been in quite a while. Andy even took me on an upper level tour of some very pretty formation corridors. Guys was an exciting cave to explore and a great place to spend a few hours playing underground. We exited around mid-afternoon and still had time to stop by several additional pits (45' Majors Pit, 88' David and Marshall Pit, and Briar Patch Cave with drops of 50 and 62'; all in Jackson County) on the way back to Andy's house. Total new vertical for the day was 527' so we were off to a good start for the weekend.

On Sunday we were joined by Jake Lieber, and Riley Blackwell. Our objective was to tape two high domes recently climbed by Lee White and Riley (maybe others) in Savor It Well, a fairly shallow Madison County multidrop at only about 300' deep. The second pit in Savor It Well is 107 feet deep and I had been there about three years ago. Andy had also been there before, but not in quite a while.

Andy had some verbal instructions from Lee (who was unavailable due to plying his dome climbing skills in Mexico for the next two months), but neither of us had any real good notion as to how to get to the two new domes. Riley, however, had been assisting Lee with his climbs and proved to be a very capable guide.

The plan for the day was for Andy and I to get a head start early Sunday morning. Another pit not too far from Savor It Well had just been found last autumn and was reported to be over 100 feet deep. Andy and I were going to drop this on our way. This pit was named Marshall's Treasure Plunge and was a fairly spacious spiraling drop totaling 117', ending in a well decorated formation chamber. After bouncing this we proceeded on to Savor It Well, arriving just a couple of minutes before Jake and Riley.

Although Savor It Well is not a notoriously wet cave, Riley informed us that since it had been raining quite a lot over the past couple of weeks the third pit, a 66-footer, could be a wet climb. Also there was the small matter of a 100 foot low crawl below this (the 66' pit) which would be carrying at least several inches of water. On the plus side she thought the big domes would only be drippy at worst. I didn't think climbing two big domes in a PVC suit and poly was a very good idea. PVC suits tend to get very hot when you're not actually in the water and would be especially suffocating with the effort of ascending a big pit. I opted for my regular cave suit over poly even though it sounded like a good soaking was imminent. I reasoned that even though I'd be wet, the exertion of climbing should keep me warm, but since my cave suit is more breathable than PVC, and if I climbed slowly (at 68 years of age this would not be a problem) I should not get too overheated.

Savor It Well was first explored by the legendary Smith duo (James H. and Marion O.) back in the 1970's, but the nature of the cave has undergone a dramatic metamorphosis during the past year. A little over a year ago mappers discovered a complex maze of interconnecting passages which led them to the base of two very high domes. Lee White, a young TAG caver who has exhibited extraordinary

competence in scaling big domes within the past few years was “recruited” for the task. Marion and I, two total incompetents when it comes to technical aide climbing expertise, have been supporting Lee’s efforts through donations of rope and finances for hardware. Of course we did have ulterior motives to our generosity. The deal was once Lee had completed climbing the domes, he was to leave them rigged for Marion and I. That way everybody wins.

On Lees first effort back in the early fall of 2017 he initiated his climb in the first high dome he encountered. He found going passage at the top and informed the surveyors of this. Upon their return they were confused by the absence of any rope hanging in the pits they had found. It was only then that they and Lee realized that the big pit Lee had climbed was entirely new. The discovery of so many high domes has vaulted Savor It Well into an elite class among TAG caves. It boasts a minimum of four hundred footers, two of which will exceed the 200-foot mark. There also seems a good probability that there may be additional high domes in this complex area. At present, excluding the plethora of pits found in Georgia’s Ellisons Cave and Alabama’s Fern System, only two other TAG caves can lay claim to having four distinctly separate hundred footers, and neither of these has more than one pit deeper than 200 feet. Furthermore, Savor It Well is in a great position to eventually connect to nearby Paul’s Cave which has one of the deepest and wettest pits in TAG. The Cataract (in Paul’s Cave) is 296 feet deep and is wet even in the driest of times.

The entrance to Savor It Well is a very awkward 12’ drop. A hundred feet of scrambling and a thirty-foot low mud crawl leads to a 107’ slightly offset pit. A nice scalloped sluiceway continues from the base of the 107 for several hundred feet as a walking passage to the top of a wet 66’ broken pit. The 66-footer and the subsequent stream crawl were both, as Riley cautioned earlier, quite wet. A low spot near the end of the crawl forced a quick ear dip, but after that opened up to hands and knees dimensions, and finally to walking passage. From here Riley lead us by a circuitous route through a complex of domes, one of which had a rope disappearing into

the darkness above. This was the first dome Lee had mistakenly climbed. While I started climbing with my 100-meter tape in tow, Riley led Andy over to the bigger dome. About halfway up the pit was a hanging rebelay just below a narrow saddle dropping into a shallow parallel pit. I was climbing slowly so as not to overheat, and by the time I’d negotiated passing the rebelay Andy had returned to the base of the drop. Fearing that the tape might get hung up on the saddle if I tried to lower it from the top, I fed the end down to Andy from the saddle and continued my ascent, reeling the tape out at twenty-foot intervals until I reached the top. We measured the dome at 179’ high. Except at the very top, most of the dome averaged over twenty feet in diameter with wall contact only at the midway point at the rebelay/saddle.

Next Andy took me over to the “big” dome. Jake and Riley were in the process of photographing this when we arrived, with Jake operating the camera and Riley visible as only a pinpoint of light high above the floor setting off flashes. This might be a good time to point out that Shawn Hogbin had been to Savor It Well with Lee about a month earlier and had already climbed both the big pits. Shawn informed me that Lee and Riley had christened the higher dome “Very Hungry Caterpillar” because of its propensity to consume huge quantities of rope. When Riley touched down she told me the pit had two hanging rebelay to negotiate. There seemed to be an inordinate amount of bounce to the rope as I started my ascent. This suggested it must be a long way up to the first rebelay. The rope hung dead center in the dome which was about fifty feet in diameter. “Very Hungry Caterpillar” is a truly awesome shaft. My climb was meticulously slow, as I didn’t want to become overheated, but the lights of those below gradually receded into dimness. When I finally reached the lower of the two hanging rebelay I lowered the end of the tape to Andy. As it wound out past the 230’ mark it dawned on me why the climb had seemed so long. Ascending 230’ on a free hanging rope in wet poly under cave suit is kinda like work and a bit tiring. The two rebelay were close together and I soon popped my head up over a muddy lip. The rope continued upslope at about 30 degrees to another anchor point, but the actual breakover was the muddy lip. Andy and I

taped the pit at 254' from the lip, with another ten feet vertical up to a perfectly flat ceiling, giving a total dome height of 264'. This makes "Very Hungry Caterpillar" the biggest pit found in TAG within the past twenty years.

By the time we exited Savor It Well and hiked back to Andy's truck, it was early evening. I left Andy's house at around 7pm for my ten-hour drive back up the interstate. The total new vertical for the weekend came out to 1029'. Many thanks to Andy for setting everything up with Riley and Jake, his unfailing guide service, and his gracious southern hospitality.



"Terry climbing near the bottom of Very Hungry Caterpillar Dome in Savor It Well (Jackson County, Alabama). This dome was just recently scaled by a team lead by Lee White and is one of the biggest in TAG. Terry and Andy Zellner taped it on February 25th at 254' high." (Photo credit goes to Jake Lieber)

Big Column Cave

By John DiCarlo, NSS# 25477

Baker Heights, WV-Tri-State Grotto Met up at Sheetz at noon on Saturday January 27, 2018. This was set as an adult trip because of the amount of delicate formations.

We drove to the cave and suited up. Moving over to the entrance Big Column Cave. We looked around and pointed out the filled entrance to Duffeys Cave. In had sunk down at least three feet.



Doc handed his rope up from the opening for someone to tie it to a tree, and he threw it down into Big Column Cave. One by one we climbed in.



We saw two bats side by side here and they looked different. One was covered with water droplets and looked white. The other was brown. They were both the same size.

We saw bats in other rooms of the cave too as we went along.



Gathering in the first large room, we started off through. Of course we had to belly crawl through the latrine. We could see that it had recently been used by a fox. As I was in front I could hear “eww” from people behind me thinking about having to crawl through the scat. I had gloves on and, with the back of my hand or more accurately the backs of my fingers, flicked the logs off to the side so they wouldn’t have to crawl over them. This set off another round of eww’s and I heard, “he moved them with his hands!”



No big deal as I continued to crawl down the passage. We regrouped two rooms later at the top of a drop-off. Here we looked around and took pictures. The line of formations on the ceiling was outstanding.



I was even able to get a shot of the Big Column that the cave was named after, through a window.

We climbed down the slope and saw the butter tub that was seen the first time anyone was ever in the cave. You can see teeth marks from the animal that drug it in.



Moving on we climbed up the other side and passed the Moai to get to the room with the Big Column.

Of course many people wanted their picture taken with the Big Column. It may not be the biggest column in West Virginia, but it was the largest in Jefferson County.



Here our group split as we sent the new people through the canyon. We said everyone had to do it once.



Doc and I took a shortcut and met the cavers on the other side as they popped out. I knew I couldn't fit through. On our first trip I went through and had to chimney up over the second pinch. Once was enough.

We moved up the far slope and checked out the heavily decorated dead-end side passage. Next we sent people one by one to look at Fairyland.



As we sat there we checked out all the helictites on the ceiling. Last time we were here we saw a mouse run across the room and disappear into a very small hole.



We made our way down the slope and back up the other side to the entrance room. One by one we climbed out to the outside world. We put what was left of the cedar tree back in the hole.



Moving over, we gathered at the entrance to Chapman Cave. Several people went down into it. They went all the way in and down to the stream. They had to help one another out of the stream passage. Take that as a word of warning not to go down there by yourself as you may not get out without help. Someone will find your body there in a future trip. This cave does not get a lot of visitors as it has a small entrance that can be a job to get out of.



We regrouped and checked out the sinkhole next to it. It had been dug once in the past and given up on. Doc climbed down and could feel cold air coming out between the rocks.

We moved on and checked out Opequon Cave on the other side of the road.



After that we walked back to the cars and changed. We drove back to Sheetz and dropped off the riders, as we had combined cars because of the limited parking space at the caves. In one spot, we checked out four caves in two different counties.



CAVIN CALENDAR

MARCH 11TH - APRIL 21ST



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Mar 11 WVACS Weekend	Mar 12	Mar 13	Mar 14  MEETING 730 PM PI DAY	Mar 15	Mar 16	Mar 17 Crossroads Cave - see Earl Suitor  ST PATRICK'S DAY
Mar 18	Mar 19	Mar 20	Mar 21 Vertical practice - James Rumsey - 6pm	Mar 22	Mar 23 Endless Caverns - Change lightbulbs - 10am	Mar 24
Mar 25	Mar 26	Mar 27	Mar 28	Mar 29	Mar 30 GOOD FRIDAY	Mar 31
Apr 1  EASTER ALL FOOL'S DAY	Apr 2 P.B. & J DAY	Apr 3	Apr 4	Apr 5	Apr 6	Apr 7 NATIONAL BEER DAY Sites Cave - see Earl Suitor
Apr 8	Apr 9	Apr 10	Apr 11  MEETING 730 PM	Apr 12	Apr 13 WVACS WEEKEND	Apr 14 WVACS WEEKEND
Apr 15 WVACS WEEKEND	Apr 16	Apr 17  BAT APPRECIATION DAY	Apr 18	Apr 19	Apr 20	Apr 21 Sharps cave - see Earl Suitor

DEAD DOG DISPATCH



The Imes men are in the spotlight at Donaldson Cave (Photo by John DiCarlo)



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