

DEAD DOG DISPATCH TRI-STATE GROTTO



ALPENA CAVE, RANDOLPH CO, WV

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** The photo on this month's cover was taken by Tom Griffin in the entrance to Alpena Cave covered with ice.

**** Don't forget, the **JONES QUARRY BOOKLET** is ALMOST GONE! There are 10 left! If you are interested in purchasing a copy of the BOOKLET, contact **BOB BENNETT 304-821-4621(H)** or **304-671-0344(C)** E-MAIL at gimpycaver@comcast.net
The copy will cost \$6.00 each plus the cost of shipping!

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

WE NEED EVERYONE TO KEEP THINKING ABOUT VOLUNTEERING FOR AN OPEN POSITION. WE STILL HAVE 4 POSITIONS OPEN!
PLEASE GIVE IT SOME THOUGHT. WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT!



CAVE EVENTS

2019

MAY 1 --- MAY DAY
MAY 2-5 --- SERA
MAY 3-5 --- Spring MAR – Woodward Cave, PA
MAY 5 --- SINKHOLE DE MAYO
MAY 5 --- Children's Day
MAY 8 --- TSG meeting – 7pm
MAY 11---- Heritage Day (Adam Stephen Day) –
9am
MAY 12 --- MOTHERS DAY
MAY 18 --- ARMED FORCES DAY
MAY 18 --- Cricket Maze Cave Open House –
11am-4pm
MAY 18 --- Poor Farm Trip – See Tom – While
we are there we will be welding the
gate on the cave for the owner, then
we will be taking a trip in the cave
Nice cave with lots of walking passage,
Actually a great cave for young'uns!
For those who want to camp in the
area we will be going into
Sharps Cave on Sunday.
MAY 19 ---- Sharps Cave – see Tom Griffin
MAY 23 --- Lucky Penny Day
MAY 24-27 --- 49th Speleofest – Lone Star
Preserve, KY
MAY 25 --- Homer Full Pit Trash Cleanup,
Pendleton Co, WV – see Tom
MAY 27 --- MEMORIAL DAY
JUN 6 ---- National Caves & Karst Day
JUN 7-9 --- Bubble Cave Weekend
JUN 12 --- TSG meeting – 7pm
JUN 14 --- FLAG DAY
JUN 16 ---- FATHERS DAY
JUN 17-21 --- NSS Convention – Cookville, TN
JUN 20 --- WV Day
JUN 21 --- SUMMER SOLSTICE
JUL 4 ---- INDEPENDENCE DAY
JUL 10 --- TSG Meeting – 7pm
JUL 13 --- TSG Picnic – 12 Noon
JUL 18 ---- HOT DOG DAY
JUL 19-21 --- Karst-O-Rama – Great Saltpeter
Cave Preserve, Mt Vernon, KY
JUL 25 --- National Carousel Day
JUL 28 ---- PARENT'S DAY

AUG 2-4 --- Indiana Cave Capers, Marengo, IN
AUG 12 --- National Middle Child Day
AUG 13 --- Left Handers Day
AUG 13 ---- LEFT HANDERS DAY
AUG 14 ---- TSG Meeting – 7pm
AUG 16 ---- Elvis Died
AUG 29 - SEP 2 --- OTR
AUG 31 ---- Doo Dah Parade – 10am
AUG 31 --- Polyester Power Hour – 1pm
AUG 31 --- WVASS meeting – 630p
SEP 1 ---- OTR Yard Sale – 9am
SEP 1 ---- River Party – 1pm
SEP 2 ---- LABOR DAY
SEP 11 --- TSG meeting – 7pm
SEP 20-22 --- Fall MAR – Shippensburg, PA
SEP 11 --- 9-11
SEP 26-29 --- Fall VAR, Friars Hole
OCT 9 --- TSG meeting – 7pm
OCT 14 --- Columbus Day
OCT 19 --- Bridge Day
OCT 30 --- Devil's Night
OCT 31 --- All Hallow Eve (Halloween)
NOV 1 --- Day of the Dead
NOV 3 --- DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME ENDS
NOV 11 --- Veterans Day
NOV 13 --- TSG meeting – 7pm

******* 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 APRIL ----- **\$16.01**

TOTAL TO DATE: ----- **\$7195.14**

GREAT JOB EVERYONE! Let's continue the giving!

**The money was sent to MAKC.
Keep It Coming!**

DEAD DOG DISPATCH

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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 MAY

Carl Amundson, Eric Berge, Stephen Bowen,
Journey Cosey, JC Fisher, Doyle Garvin, Chase
Griffin, Lucas Hanson, Elysia, Mathias, Pat
Minnick, Meredith Smith

HAPPY BIRTHDAY



REPORTS

TSG Meeting (12 people in attendance) 4/10/2019

John called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.
Elysia gave the Treasurer's Report.
Doc reported the minutes of last month's
meeting March 13, 2019.

Old Business: Completed helmet repair. A
Hyper Touch headlamp was installed
replacing a failing and well-worn light which
will be kept as a backup.
The tent pole committee reports that the pole
restoration is going successfully.
The thumb drive of caving information was
passed from Bob to Doc.
There will be no Wednesday night climbing
class at the James Rumsey Technical Institute
this week due to spring break.

New Business: Permission is requested to
either clean or dig in the Yankauer Nature
Preserve. One of TSG's members, Kevin, is
associated with the preserve and will enquire
on how to gain access for such a project. He
also offers used climbing helmets for sale or
donation.

The New Earth Granary is in search of
wetsuits. They were suggested to investigate
Williamsport Wetsuit Warehouse located at
400 S Conococheague St, Williamsport, MD.
Or check out their website:

<https://www.wetsuitwearhouse.com/>

There was a discussion of the Haas Velox - a
new ascending system employed by arborists.
Also, a scarab device was discussed to replace
a rack system. For more information on tree
climbing gear check

<https://www.sherrilltree.com/>

May 11 is the Martinsburg Heritage Day Festival at the Adams Stevens House, http://www.orgsites.com/wv/adam-stephen/_pgg1.php3

May 18/19 will be the Poor Farm Cave in Pocahontas Country gate repair and visit. The Homer Full Pit Trash Cleanup will be held on May 25 with May 26 being a backup date if permission is granted by the National Park Service. The location of the pit is in the Monongahela Nation Forest.

A trip to Indian River Cave is planned for Wednesday Night Caving, April 24. There seems to be an issue of privacy now that all the brush has been removed leaving the hill side bare. Presently the house is exposed to onlookers going to the cave. There are plans to put up a rope or other safety device for a more stable transverse on the goat trail.

Trips: Willow (Kathy) Robinson talked about the WNC caving trip held on the last Wednesday Night Caving event and reported a huge number of hits on their Facebook page. The Endless Caverns bulb changing event hosted approximately 26 TSG members and guests. Light socket and electrical repairs were also made.

Tom visited Ruby Falls in Tenseness sporting a 120-foot waterfall in the cave.

There was a mention of TSG having a grotto meeting at Crystal Grottoes Caverns in Boonsboro, Maryland on or around July. Members preferred using their own lights while caving after the meeting in the commercial section of the cavern. Waiting for permission.

July is the month for the Grottoes annual picnic. Date to be announced.

Cave Bucks: \$16.01 was collected

The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 PM

Respectfully submitted
Donald 'Doc' Phillips / 32922
Secretary
Tri-State Grotto of the NSS

West Virginia

Pitting with Marion

A few months back Marion informed me that he and Sharon(Jones) would be coming up this way from their home in Tennessee to drop off Sharon's son and girlfriend at the Appalachian Trail Conservancy in Harpers Ferry for a summer long trek on the AP. Naturally this seemed like a good opportunity to do some pitting in West Virginia. Over the years I and others have taken to Marion to most of the deeper and more well-known pits in the state, so this would be a trip more "off the beaten path". No problem....I had a few candidates tucked away.

So, on the morning of April 10th (a Wednesday (it's so nice to be retired) I met Marion and Sharon at the conservancy headquarters and off we went. The plan was to take the back-country route down through West Virginia arriving at Swago Creek in lower Pocahontas County around late afternoon. Along the way we stopped at Beethovens Symphony in Hardy County. We toured the cave as far as the back room to admire the calcite encrusted tree roots. I left a permanent handline at the tricky climb-up just past the 15' downclimb. Our trip only lasted about an hour, after which we continued our drive south to Swago.

Corey and I have been working the rather extensive Hause property (Kyle Hause, owner) for a bit over a year and have found a few small things. On this visit my plan was to take Marion to a pit I'd found on my and Corey's last ridge walk back on a cold February afternoon this past winter. I had purposely left the pit virgin so Marion could have the pleasure of exploring it first (kind of a pet thing with him). Though the pit itself was unplumbed, I had on a previous trip went down about ten feet to the lip to kinda "take a peek". There was a lot of lose rock around the breakover. Marion seems to attract lose rocks, sometimes with the aid of a friend,

sometimes not, so I determined that setting a rebelay bolt to avoid any unpleasant surprises would be the first order of business when we returned to explore the pit. I also managed to get some rocks to rattle down what looked like a crack at the bottom of the pit.

It's a TAG trek up the mountain, meaning a 400' elevation gain, the lower half of which is very steep. Marion is 76 years old now and up-hill hiking is a slow chore for him, with many rests along the way. I'll be entering my seventies in a few months, and he has warned me that I will soon be noticing a marked difference in stamina myself. I've no doubt that will prove to be correct. Following the old adage that the more rope you take, the shallower the pit will be, and through experience finding that the opposite is often true (meaning the less rope on hand the deeper the pit) we carried only two short rope with us, a sixty and a hundred footer.

It took about an hour to get to the pit. We rigged outside and I safetied down the ten feet to the pit where I set a bolt for the rebelay, also clearing away any obvious loose rocks before sending the rest of the hundred-foot rope down the drop. Sharon came in next and was actually the first to descend the virgin pit, which she and I taped at only 25'. She reported a down trending crack at the bottom which she thought might be too tight to negotiate. Marion went down next and ascertained that there was definitely a second drop, but he might need to knock some projections off to access it. I brought my bolting hammer (all I had with me) down and he commenced to wail away. Soon he was able to squeeze into the second pit about eight feet below the base of the 25-footer, and we fed him the rest of the hundred-foot rope. He said he could see the knot at the end of the rope swinging in space. Of course, going by the assumption that if you take less rope with you, it might go, where was the 60' rope? Sharon volunteered to climb back up the 25' pit and 10' entrance climb to retrieve it.

Marion pulled up the rest of the hundred-footer and tied the two ropes together. His descent took him past the knot, which was about fifteen feet off the floor, to a landing which immediately stair-stepped down a couple of additional short pitches to the bottom. This ended as a small room with a too tight crack. Sharon went down next and took quite a

while to pass Marion's knot. When she had finally succeeded in doing so, I lowered the tape and we got 53' for this pretty much free drop, followed by 17' for the stair drop to where Marion had stuffed himself into a crack to avoid any falling rocks.

There was not enough room for three people to be safely out of the rock-fall zone at the bottom, so Marion and Sharon climbed back up to the base of the twenty-five-footer before I went down. About halfway down the 53-footer I was able to pendulum into an alcove where I could put in a rebelay around a large projection, thus negating the need to pass the knot, which I don't like any more than Sharon. I concurred with Marion's assessment that the bottom would need some major alteration if the cave was to be extended any further. Still, from my rebelay bolt at the top of the 25, and allowing for the eight foot vertical climb down to the 53, and the 17' stairstep after that, the pits totaled 102 feet vertical with only about five feet of horizontal displacement. Though it's best rigged with just a single rope, I would not call it a hundred foot pit. The eight-foot vertical climb between the base of the 25 and top of the 53 is two much of an interrupt. With an outside rig and the rebelay bolt a 150-foot rope would rig the whole thing sans knot. The total depth was 112'. I hadn't yet christened the pit, trusting that exploration would likely suggest an appropriate name. We'll call it Hause Triple Drop.

We spent about three hours messing around with Hause Triple Drop and it was dark when we hiked off the mountain. We did manage to find one open restaurant in Lewisburg past ten o'clock, then spent the night at the WVACS fieldhouse. Marion prefers to eat in restaurants and must have at least four cups of coffee before he's approachable in the morning, so back down to Lewisburg we went on Thursday morning to what turned out to be a very palatable buffet breakfast at Shoney's. Then back up to Friars Hill Road just north of the fieldhouse where we parked at the end of Bob Handley's old driveway to visit a very nice pit I had only just recently been made aware of. This pit goes by two names. It was first called Zimmerman Pit back in the day, but was later refound and thought to be virgin. Carroll Bassett told me they called it Rapunzel because it has fifty-foot tendrils of root hair masses hanging top to bottom. Marion said it reminded him of pits

in the Yucatan of Mexico. It is 57' deep and unique. I would be glad to take anyone who might be interested there in the future.

Our next stop was a visit to Carroll Bassett's house just a couple of miles further up the road. The hill behind his house has two pits in the fifty-foot range which an old caving friend, John Fredricks, had taken me to nearly thirty years ago. I knew Marion had not been to these, so a few weeks earlier Carroll and I went up on the hillside so I could relocate them. The hike to the first one was short but extremely steep. I called this Esty Pit before it was turned into the survey as Long'# 2. It's an okay 52-footer.

Next Marion and I (Sharon elected to sit this one out as I'd never been there before and wasn't sure I could find it) hiked up a longer but not very steep valley directly behind Carroll's house to a fairly new cave they named Persistence. Chris Coates had told me about this dig cave a few weeks earlier at WVACS. Carroll gave us good directions and Marion and I found it easily enough, but things went south from there. The cave was pretty much a fifteen-foot climbdown through scary rocks to a pit rigged with bolts to a somewhat shattered rock. It was so ugly Marion refused to do it. I tempted fate though and survived to tell the tale. We taped the pit at 33' and got the heck outta there.

The second pit (on the steep hill behind Carroll's house) I relocated solo because Carroll had to leave for an appointment in Beckley, W. Va., but he told me he had flagged it. I found a flagged hole which seemed like it should be in the proper location, so I was a little baffled when I brought Marion and Sharon there (after another steep climb which Marion didn't like) and Marion started down, majorly bitching the whole way, and repeatedly asking where the pit was. I called this one Bess's Fluted Well, because John (Fredricks) told me it was found by our mutual friend and local caver of note Randy Rumer's sheep dog Bess, and it was "fluted well". This certainly didn't sound like the pit I remembered. Marion insisted that I come down next to see what the deal was. It was a slopey thing over muddy clay mounds, pretty much a horror hole really, and only around thirty feet deep, definitely

not Bess's Fluted Well. I'd found the wrong hole. I spent about half an hour wandering more or less aimlessly on the hillside and never did find the right pit. Later that afternoon we conferred with Carroll and he verified that I had actually located the entrance to a small cave they called Moon Mouse. By this time Shawn Hogbin had showed up. We (Shawn and I) were going to do some other things later, but I had asked him if he could help us locate a "new to me pit" using GPS. He's the competent one where technology is concerned, while Marion and I are, well, you know, not so much. Carroll had told me about a pit supposedly in the hundred-foot range that he and Bruce Fries had found (I'm guessing a couple of years ago) a mile or so north of his house. One does not mention "hundred-foot pit" to me and not receive my full attention. I contacted Bruce and he told me the pit was actually just 65' deep. However, this is West Virginia and not TAG, so you take what you can get, and I had never been to this pit before, so I was still interested. Bruce sent me GPS coordinates. In the meantime, Carroll said that the pit was reported as having recently collapsed, but we went up to check it out anyway. With Shawn's assistance we found it easily enough and it was obvious that the entrance sink had indeed fallen in. It still looked passable though, so with some extensive "gardening" to dislodge all potential projectiles, we deemed it safe enough to drop (one down, one up of course). The 65-foot figure would have to be for the total depth, with the actual pit being more like in the 45-50' range (for some reason I'd neglected to bring my tape). Carroll told me they named this pit Danglefoot, (rhymes with Tanglefoot) because Bruce's feet were left dangling in tree roots when he broke through on the day they found it.

That was the end of our adventures together for this trip. We parted company as Marion and Sharon went their way and Shawn and I went ours. A fun couple of days spent with great friends. Hopefully I'll relocate a few more holes in the coming months and we can all do it again soon, or at least by the NSS convention next year.

Terry McClanathan NSS 12103



New dig (BB)



Grasshopper (Daniel Allen)



No Clue (Tom Griffin)




Porters (Jeff Jahn)



CAVIN CALENDAR

MAY 5TH - JUNE 15TH



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
May 5 CINCO de MAYO CHILDRENS DAY SERA Spring MAR-Woodward Cave, PA	May 6	May 7	May 8  Meeting 7pm	May 9	May 10	May 11 Adam Stephen (Heritage) Day 10am
May 12 	May 13	May 14	May 15	May 16	May 17	May 18 Cricket Maze Open House-11am ARMED FORCES DAY Poor Farm Pocahontas Co Gate Repair & Trip 12pm
May 19 Sharps Cave-see Tom	May 20	May 21	May 22	May 23  Lucky Penny Day	May 24 49th Speleofest - Lone Star Preserve, KY	May 25 49th Speleofest - Lone Star Preserve, KY Homer Full Pit cleanup, Pendleton Co - see Tom
May 26 49th Speleofest - Lone Star Preserve, KY	May 27  49th Speleofest - Lone Star Preserve, KY	May 28	May 29	May 30	May 31	Jun 1
Jun 2	Jun 3	Jun 4	Jun 5	Jun 6 National Caves & Karst Day	Jun 7 Bubble Cave Weekend	Jun 8 Bubble Cave Weekend
Jun 9 Bubble Cave Weekend	Jun 10	Jun 11	Jun 12  Meeting 7pm	Jun 13	Jun 14	Jun 15

DEAD DOG DISPATCH



Endless (Elysia Mathias)



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