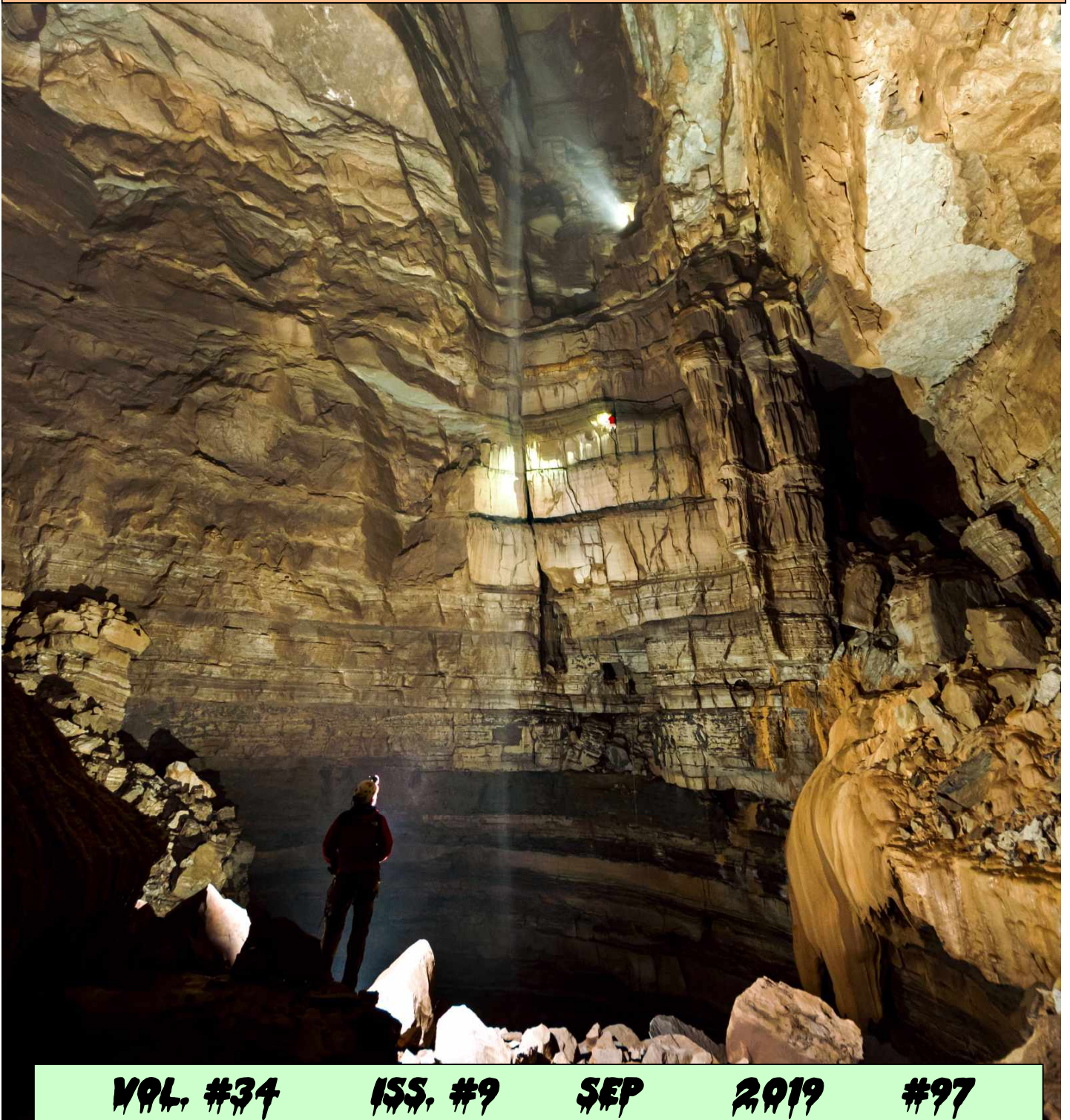


# DEAD RAG DISPATCH TRI-STATE GROTTO

This photo of the main 246' high Enigma Dome in TN was taken by Clinton Elmore, who was also one of the primary climbers and original explorers of the cave.



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**DEAD DOG DISPATCH**

**V.#34**

**I.#9**

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\*\* The photo on this month's cover photo is the main 246' high Enigma Dome in TN was taken by Clinton Elmore, who was also one of the primary climbers and original explorers of the cave.

\*\*\*\* 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](mailto: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!**



# CAVING EVENTS

**2019**

Month of AUG ----- **\$27.00**

TOTAL TO DATE: ----- **\$7288.68**

GREAT JOB EVERYONE! Let's continue the giving!

**The money was sent to MAKC.  
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 2017 ----- <http://nss2017.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/)  
Bob's Web Site ----- [www.tristategrotto.net/Bob/](http://www.tristategrotto.net/Bob/)  
Jerry's Cave Web Site -----  
----- <http://www.caves.org/member/jerry/>  
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/)  
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 SEPTEMBER**

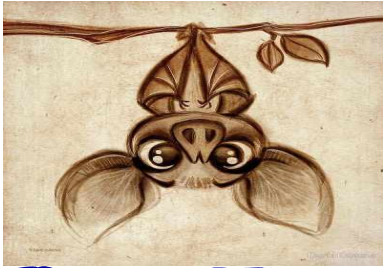
SEP 1 ---- OTR Yard Sale – 9am  
SEP 1 ---- OTR River Party – 1pm  
SEP 2 ---- LABOR DAY  
SEP 7 ---- Donaldson Cave – Shawn Harris  
SEP 8 ---- GRAND PARENTS DAY  
SEP 11 --- TSG meeting – 7pm  
SEP 11 --- 9-11 PATRIOT'S DAY!!!  
SEP 14 --- Hamilton Cave – Cheryl Suitor  
SEP 14 --- Pre-Registration for Fall VAR ends!  
SEP 20-22 --- Fall MAR – Newville, PA  
SEP 22 --- FALL EQUINOX  
SEP 26-29 --- Fall VAR, Friars Hole  
OCT 9 --- TSG meeting – 7pm  
OCT 10-13 --- Fall TAG Cave-In – Menlo, GA  
OCT 14 --- Columbus Day  
OCT 19 --- Bridge Day  
OCT 30 --- Devil's Night  
OCT 31 --- All Hallow Eve (Halloween)  
OCT 31 --- National Knock Knock Joke Day  
NOV 1 --- Day of the Dead  
NOV 3 --- DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME ENDS  
NOV 10 --- Vivian Monger's Birthday (Owner of Jones Quarry)  
NOV 11 --- Veterans Day  
NOV 13 --- TSG meeting – 7pm  
NOV 16 --- Sadie Hawkins Day  
NOV 28 --- Thanksgiving Day  
NOV 29 --- Black Friday!  
DEC 7 --- TSG Christmas Party – 6pm - Bedington Ruritan Club  
DEC 21 --- Winter Solstice  
DEC 24 --- Christmas Eve  
DEC 25 --- Christmas Day  
DEC 31 --- New Year's Eve  
DEC 31 --- Bat Ball, Huntsville, AL – 6pm

### \*\*\*\*\* 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.

Richelle Barber, Zachariah Bowen, Twila Neeld Bracken, Erin Dixon, Jerry Downes, Teresa Elliott, Susan Harbina, Brynn Harris, Matthew Majtyka, Morgan Majtyka, Ann Muldoon, Beau Ouimette, Nathin Roser, Cheryl Rudolph Suitor

# HAPPY BIRTHDAY



## REPORTS

### TSG Meeting (17 people in attendance) August 14, 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 July 10, 2019.

Committee Report: Doc brought in examples of tent poles that are treated plus the new poles. The new poles will be added to the tent at OTR.  
John DiCarlo is in search of a wider 'whacker' bit used for digging with an addition of hearing protection devices, cleanup materials and a possible air filter. A motion was passed.  
Helmets and climbing materials are in good condition and ready for use.  
The TSG website was mentioned and is in need of a picture or two.  
The cave information thumb drive was retrieved and granted to Mike Nally.

New Business: David Smallwood is the contact for surveying Dyers Cave, a project which began on August 3rd. Bob Bennett is also a contact for survey participation.  
Silars Cave will be surveyed on August 17th and 18th

August 21 is climbing class at the James Rumsey Technical Institute, 3274 Hedgesville Rd, Martinsburg, WV 25401.  
August 24 is the Molars Cave trip, which will commence at noon. The Baker underground kayak trip is also planned on Saturday the twenty-fourth of August and is the second annual event beginning around 9:00 to 10:00 am - when the gate is opened.

There is not permanent letterhead for TSG. It was suggested to download a logo from the online site for now.

Virginia Area Regional (VAR) will begin Thursday and end Sunday, September 26th through the 29th, 2019 and will be at Friars Hole Cave Preserve near Marlinton. The event will be hosted by the DC and Baltimore Grottoes. For more information visit their website:

<http://var.caves.org/index.php/events/fall-var>

TSG member Johnny Robinson has a dig possibility which should be looked into.

Old Business: Doc read the letter of appreciation which is going to be sent to Jerry Downs thanking him for the visit to Crystal Grotto Caverns on July 24th. Fifty-one TSG members attended.  
The Whiting Neck area dig went well. Two very large rocks were broken up and excavated from the pit. There was also a very enjoyable visit by the owner who was especially impressed by the endeavor.

TSG has had a twenty-five-year association with the Adams Stevens House. We are presently waiting for an engineer to remark on continuing the dig under said house.

Cave Bucks: \$27.00 was collected.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 PM

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



## TAG Trip 205

At SERA last spring I ran into Zeke McKee and a conversation ensued concerning Enigma Cave in Tennessee. Early on Zeke inherited the survey of the cave, and I inquired as to the current length (the last I'd heard it was just over three miles). He informed me that it was now up over four miles and said they had a new pit over 150' deep (I'd already been to three in the cave that exceeded 100'), and a possible fifth hundred footer which hadn't been dropped or taped yet. Needless to say, all of this caught my attention and we discussed plans for a trip later in the summer.

My August trip for the past couple of summers had been Indiana Cave Capers, but that didn't pan out this year so I thought it might be a good time to visit with Marion and Sharon in Tennessee for a bit. First, I contacted Zeke to see if we could arrange an Enigma trip around my visit. After some scheduling adjustments we finally settled on the weekend of August 10-11<sup>th</sup>. This would be my 205<sup>th</sup> TAG caving trip.

After my usual Friday night drive, I arrived at Marion's in time to catch about an hour nap before he and I went to breakfast, after which Zeke pulled in, and soon we were off to Enigma. Zeke said they hadn't been back in nearly a year because of issues with a locked gate blocking the entrance to the long four-wheel "road" that leads to the cave. In the meantime, Zeke had met with the caretaker on several occasions, resulting in his (Zeke) now having the combination to the lock and permission to resume exploration and mapping. Marion said he thought they had about 90 inches of rain in the past year and a half with much of it coming in multiple-inch gully washers. As a result, the access "road", which was never really very good, had by now deteriorated to the point where only good 4-wheel vehicles had any chance of reaching the parking spot. Fortunately, Marion does have such a vehicle, but even so there were a few anxious moments. There were several deep hog-wallows, but the worst sections were where flooding had washed away all

the soil, exposing huge boulders, some of which were too massive for even the three of us to roll out of the way. We re-positioned as many as we could, and Marion was able to weave his way around the others. It took about twice as long as usual, but we did finally make it to the parking spot, which is only about a hundred yards from the cave entrance.

It was a hot humid southern day, and the cold air blasting from the entrance felt pretty good. We wormed our way through a few twisting downclimbs, then scrambled through some breakdown passages, then traversed around a large twenty-foot pit occupying the entire floor, finally entering a low passage which quickly reduced to a belly crawl. After about four hundred feet of crawling we came to a 12' rope drop into a moderate sized room. The room was familiar to me from previous trips, but on each occasion, I had entered from a different route than the one we had just taken.

Zeke said we would be working our way upwards by climbing a few fixed ropes. First was a 12' climb up out of the room (not the same rope we'd just rappelled down). This was quickly followed by a 59' ascent which put us in a passage where several other ropes were hanging down. We ignored these for the present and started into a passage ending abruptly at a balcony overlooking a lot of darkness. There were rigged ropes both ascending and descending from here. Zeke suggested that I first climb the up-rope to a higher passage at the top of the pit where I could retrieve a long rope stashed there. This I used to re-rig the entire pit top to bottom, thus affording me a fine rappel right down the middle of the shaft. Zeke told me this pit had already been taped at 153', but what he didn't tell me was how unbelievably impressive it was. I'd climbed about 60' up from the balcony to reach the top, paralleling a beautiful flowstone cascading down the walls for the entire ascent. At the top the source of this cascade was revealed to be an immense striated canopy bulging from a low passage spanning about twenty feet around the top of the pit. The drop was totally free and, once past the balcony sixty feet down, belled out to around 30-40' in diameter. Looking down I could see the reflection from a large pool which Zeke said was several feet deep and wall to wall. The entire circumference of this pool, which to me seemed

more like a small lake, was rimmed with colorful flowstone shelving and quite pretty. In my opinion, for a sub-two hundred-footer, this is one of the most spectacular interior pits in TAG. I asked Zeke if it had a special name and he said he was calling it Cipher Dome on his map.

This might be a good time to mention briefly the nature of Enigma. The most notable feature of the cave is the main Enigma Dome, a 246' waterfall pit of stadium dimensions. There is significant horizontal development both at the top and bottom of this dome, but much of the cave consists of multi-level passages interconnected by a plethora of pits, domes, and high canyons. Zeke told me there were over thirty rigged ropes within the cave, making Enigma one of the most vertically complex caves in TAG. Prior to this trip I'd been to three different hundred-foot pits within the cave. In addition to the 246' dome there is a parallel 140' pit dropping from a saddle at the top, plus a 134' pit which accesses a deep canyon elsewhere in the cave.

After bouncing the Cipher Dome, I derigged the long rope which we would need later in the trip. To reach our next objective, dropping and taping the as yet undone "100" pit, required descending partway down the 59' pit we had climbed earlier to a ledge from which we transferred to another up rope. After climbing about twenty-five feet up this we got off into a walking passage which, after about fifty feet ended at the edge of a deep pit. Zeke had forgotten to bring a battery powered drill, so we were forced to rely on my-self-drive petzel back-up. The only good rock was at the very top where it narrowed to less than two feet wide. This doesn't allow for much of a swing with the hammer when installing a self-drive, making bolt setting painstakingly tedious. Finally, after nearly an hour (I'm pretty sure Marion and Zeke took a little nap), I had placed two bolts and rigged a Y-hang. I rappelled to the bottom and ended up back in the room with the two twelve-foot ropes. The pit taped at 101' and Zeke said they were calling it Carrott Top Drop. This gives Enigma five distinct pits in excess of one hundred feet deep. In TAG only Ellisons in Georgia and the Fern/New Fern/Morgue System in Alabama currently have more.

Next we finished climbing the up-rope we had just used to access the passage leading to Carrott

Top Drop. At the top of this a short scramble soon lead to the top of a previously rigged 54' pit which we descended to another mid-level corridor. After a few hundred feet of breakdown passage Zeke and I started surveying into a narrow rift. Marion slithered in ahead of us and had already disappeared. Within about a hundred feet he encountered a shallow pit and called for a rope. Initially Zeke rigged this to a large breakdown block back in the main passage, but soon Marion came to a second deeper pit and the rope did not reach bottom. By this time, I had traversed across the first shallow pit and found a couple of bolts placed at another pit (Zeke later said these were probably installed by Elliot (Stahl) on an earlier trip).

To give Marion the extra rope he needed Zeke had derigged our rope and I had re-rigged it to the bolts between the two shallow parallel pits. Zeke and I continued the survey along Marion's route. By this time Marion had descended the second deeper pit which we taped at 36'. We were expecting this pit to land us back in familiar territory, but to the surprise of both Zeke and Marion it did not. We were in a fair-sized room measuring about 30'x15'. Zeke remarked that in the vertical swiss cheese of pits and passages explored thus far in Enigma, it was hard to believe that there could actually be a virgin room of this size sandwiched between known cave on all sides. He speculated that the thickness of the walls could not possibly be more than just a few feet.

Meanwhile Marion had wormed his way over the top of a narrow fissure to yet another pit. This one was quite awkward getting into and Marion was letting loose a tirade of colorful language as he flailed under a protrusion to gain entry into the pit proper, only to announce that the rope was still dangling in space. Zeke volunteered to ascend the 36' and 9' pits to retrieve another rope. Marion then tied this off and rappelled about 25' to the floor. This time we had connected back into known passage at the bottom of the 134' canyon drop. This area could be most directly accessed by the 134' pit I'd bolted a couple of years past, or you could do a few downclimbs and then drop a 66' pit I'd also bolted on an earlier trip. Marion said there was also another route involving a 110' pit, though too much of this pit was shared by the 134 and therefore



should not be counted as a separate hundred-footer (according to my and Marion's "rules").

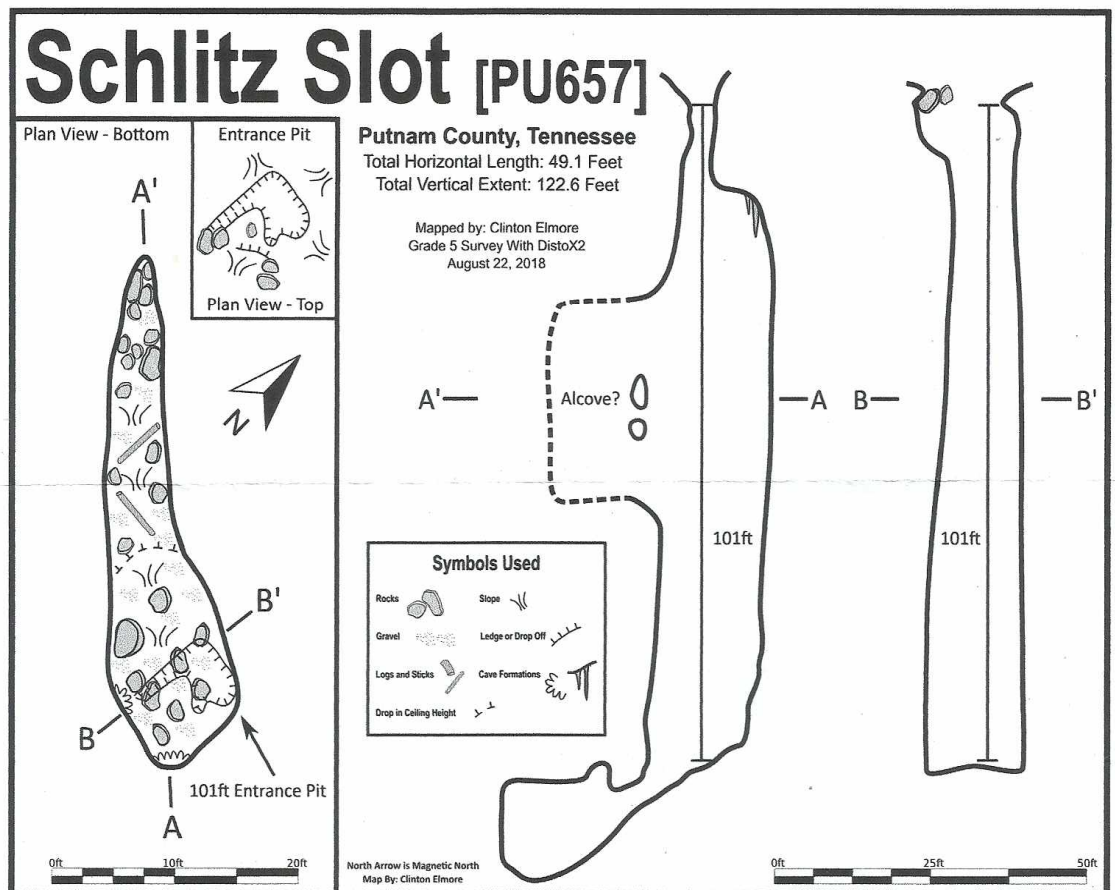
We tied in the survey and used an ascending climbing route (in Enigma there is never a shortage of route selection when you want to get somewhere) to extract ourselves. We ended up back in the room with the two 12-foot rope climbs and exited the cave by the same route we had entered seven hours earlier. This was a

short trip by Enigma standards, but with just the three of us we were able to maintain a good steady pace, so it seemed like we had accomplished a lot, and of course I got two new hundred footers, so I was quite pleased.

The next day Sharon accompanied Marion and I to two pits in western Putnam County, Tenn. Though the eastern part of Putnam is pit rich, with such Tennessee

classics as Ferris Pit (251'), Stamps (192'), Thunderhole (128'), and about a dozen others over one hundred feet deep, the western part of the county is not. In fact, these new pits were recent finds using LIDAR technology. The first was called Vokhoun Well and was unusual in that the top forty feet was in thin bedded shale, no doubt the result of a massive collapse into a large void below. Considering the poor morphological structure, the pit was actually pretty nice. It dropped into a good-sized chamber and Marion and I taped it at 90' deep. There was a second smaller room accessed by a jagged 13' pit, for a total depth of around 115'.

The second pit, called Schlitz Slot for the hundreds of discarded beer cans locals had tossed in over the years, was clear at the far edge of the county (also Putnam) and was a very fine free drop which Marion and I taped at 99.8'. Marion told me that when he and Elliot (Stahl) were there on an earlier trip, they had taped it at slightly over 100'. The



breakover at the top was obvious but the landing point is on a steep debris cone, so Elliot probably positioned the tape slightly lower on the slope than Marion did. At any rate Schlitz Slot was certainly a legitimate hundred-footer. As we were now very close to the interstate, I said goodbye to Marion and Sharon and started my 600-mile trek home. It was a great trip, with new-to-me hundred footers #613, #614, and # 615, and a very fine weekend spent in the company of wonderful old friends.

Terry McClanathan (NSS 12103)

## Labor Day Caving in Greenbrier County

As has been my custom for the past twenty-five years or so, I make myself available to take folks to some of my favorite caves and pits in Greenbrier County over OTR weekend. Todd Roberts called me a while back about doing some caving while he and his girlfriend were attending OTR. I had other plans for Saturday morning and Sunday but told him I was free Saturday afternoon/evening. He said that was fine with him, so we made a plan.

My Saturday morning activity centered around Ryan Coplin, a caver from Parkersburg I'd met earlier in the spring, taking Shawn Hogbin and I to Zigafoose Blowhole in Rader Valley. I'd never been to Zigafoose but Ryan's description of the entrance pit series made it sound like a good candidate to take Marion to sometime in the near future. I'm always on the lookout for new pits or vertical caves to share with him, because it's not easy when you've been to over 4,000 pits, as Marion has, to come up with new ones. Ryan said we would be doing four pits close to the entrance. He cautioned that the owner, who is non-vertical, had installed permanent ladders so he could take his friends into the cave, and these were awkward to rappel around. He wasn't kidding, they were a pain in the butt. I can hardly wait to hear Marion's reaction when he has to deal with them. It's sure to be colorful. We did drops of 46', 17', 22', and a dome climb of 24'. Shawn and I taped them all. These pits were spread out over only about 500' of passages, so considering that Zigafoose is a multi-mile long cave, we didn't see very much of it. Still we had a good time playing there and were out long before our planned rendezvous with Todd.

Everything on the agenda for this day was near Alta, so with a bit of down time before meeting Todd, Shawn and I went down to the Piercy's caves. My log says I'd been to Piercy's Mill four times in past years, but for some reason I'd never ventured into the Annex Cave, so that's how I made use of the extra time. The cave is a little muddy near the entrance but then opens into mostly walking for several hundred feet, and even had some nice decorations.

Todd and his girlfriend, Minori Yoshido were waiting for us when we got back to the meeting spot

so off we went to the nearby Briar Pit. This is one of my favorite pits and I've taken many cavers there over the years, so when Todd said he'd never been there, that had to be rectified. The entrance is somewhat small and awkward, but after a body length, becomes a nice rappel in a shaft about twenty feet in diameter. Total depth is 121', with 115 being free. Order down was me, Minori, Todd, and Shawn, order out the same. We were back at the vehicles with some daylight still left, and Todd said he'd never been to Piercy's Mill., so we drove back down there a second time for the day. The four of us took a quick tour down the stream passage to the breakdown terminus, and then went up into the formation rooms. Still pretty nice after all the years and probably thousands of visitors, and as an added bonus a couple of the deeper rimstones were still full of azure pools. It was just getting dark when we emerged. We all went to Carlitas for a late evening meal, after which Todd and Minori returned to the OTR site, while Shawn and I stayed at WVACS to get some rest before Sunday's trip.

Terry McClanathan

## Trip Report:

Brent Jefferson of Tri-State Grotto hosted the 2nd Annual Event "Baker Quarry Kayak / Float Trip" on Saturday, August 24th. The quarry gate opened around 10 AM and we had 22 Kayakers and Floaters, a 'local'

salamander & some purple mushrooms. Many people were from the Terrapin Trail Club as well as surrounding Grottos. The water level was below normal but still floatable. Floatation devices consisted of plastic single & double kayaks, a foldable kayak, inflatable inner tube & raft.

The objective of the trip is venture in the underground workings of a long-closed limestone mine. The galleries of the room-and-pillar mine are quite large, big enough to swallow those huge mining trucks with the tires that are way bigger than you are. The back & side rooms are flooded, suitable for



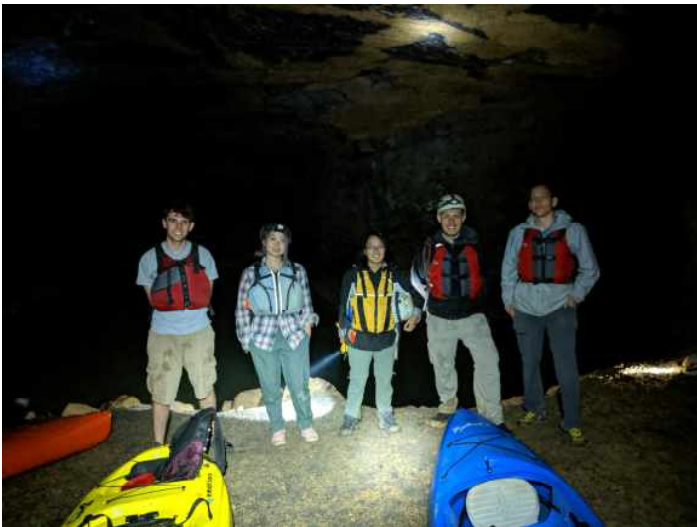
inflatables and kayaks.

We were very excited to have had this event for a second time and plan to make it an annual outing.

--Brent Jefferson







(All photos by Brent Jefferson)



# CAVIN CALENDAR

## SEPTEMBER 8TH - OCTOBER 19TH



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>Sep 8</b> <b>GRAND PARENTS DAY</b>	<b>Sep 9</b>	<b>Sep 10</b>	<b>Sep 11</b>  Meeting 7pm <b>PATRIOT'S DAY</b>	<b>Sep 12</b> FRG meeting 7pm	<b>Sep 13</b>	<b>Sep 14</b> Hamilton Cave see Cheryl Suitor FALL VAR Pre-Registration Ends
<b>Sep 15</b>	<b>Sep 16</b>	<b>Sep 17</b>	<b>Sep 18</b>	<b>Sep 19</b>	<b>Sep 20</b> Fall MAR - Newville, PA	<b>Sep 21</b> Fall MAR - Newville, PA
<b>Sep 22</b>  <b>EQUINOX</b> Fall MAR - Newville, PA	<b>Sep 23</b>	<b>Sep 24</b>	<b>Sep 25</b>	<b>Sep 26</b> Fall VAR, Friars Hole, WV	<b>Sep 27</b> Fall VAR, Friars Hole, WV	<b>Sep 28</b> Fall VAR, Friars Hole, WV
<b>Sep 29</b> Fall VAR, Friars Hole, WV	<b>Sep 30</b>	<b>Oct 1</b>	<b>Oct 2</b>	<b>Oct 3</b>	<b>Oct 4</b>	<b>Oct 5</b>
<b>Oct 6</b>	<b>Oct 7</b>	<b>Oct 8</b>	<b>Oct 9</b>  Meeting 7pm	<b>Oct 10</b> Fall TAG Cave-In, Menlo, GA	<b>Oct 11</b> Fall TAG Cave-In, Menlo, GA	<b>Oct 12</b> Fall TAG Cave-In, Menlo, GA
<b>Oct 13</b> Fall TAG Cave-In, Menlo, GA	<b>Oct 14</b> <b>COLUMBUS DAY</b>	<b>Oct 15</b>	<b>Oct 16</b>	<b>Oct 17</b>	<b>Oct 18</b>	<b>Oct 19</b> Bridge Day



# DEAD DOG DISPATCH



Donaldson Cave (Photo by Shawn Harris)



## DEAD DOG DISPATCH

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