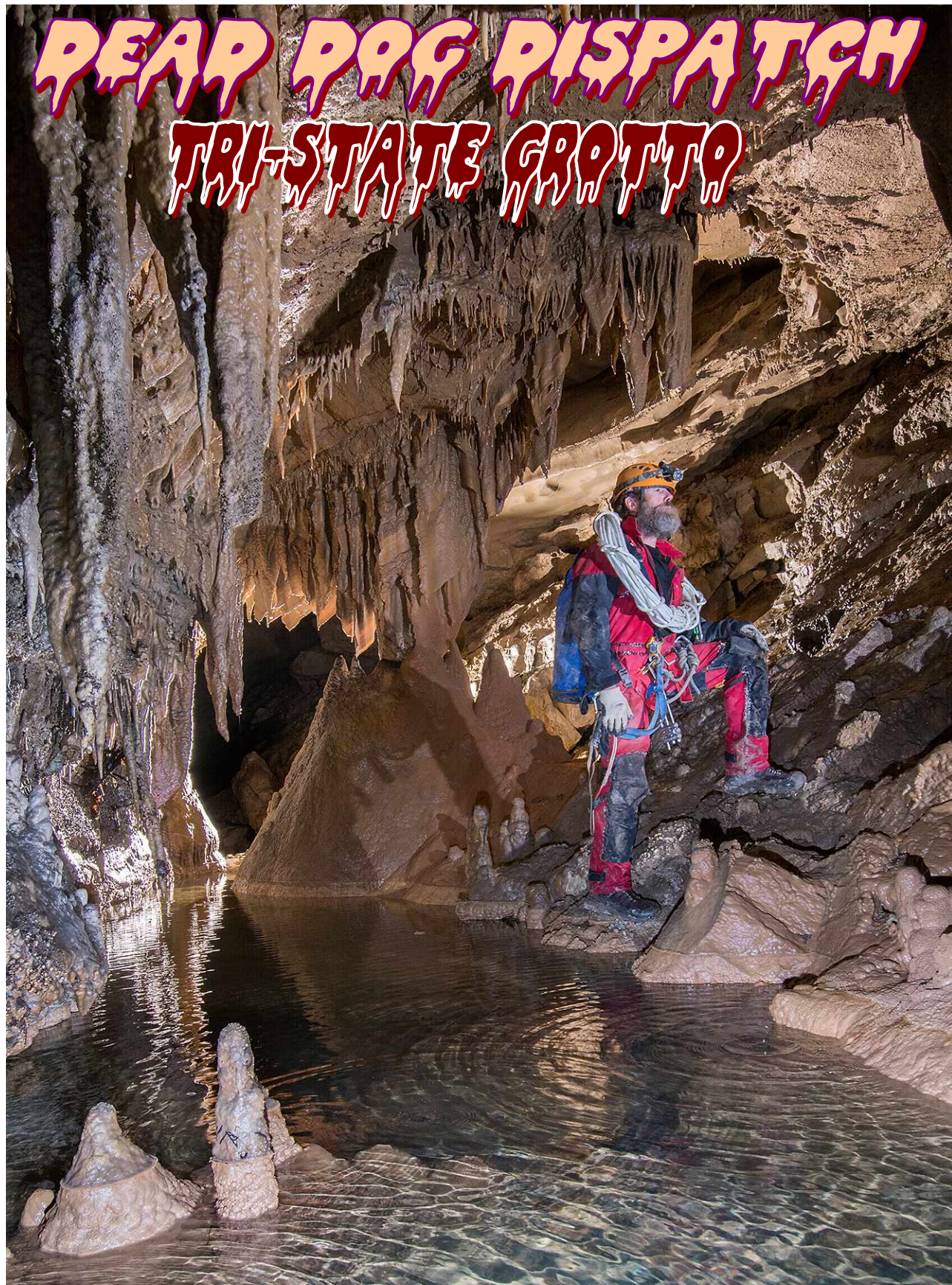


DEAR DAG DISPATCH TRI-STATE GROTTO



MOUNTAIN DAVE IN STOVE CAVE, GREENBRIER CO, WV

VOL. #35

ISS. #9

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2020

#97

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** The photo on this month's cover was taken by Nikki Fox. It shows Mountain Dave in a highly decorated passage in Stove Cave, Greenbrier Co, WV. It is just before the 57' drop into the Travertine Dog Room.

**** 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!



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CAVING EVENTS

2020

CAVE BUCKS

SEP 3-7 --- OTR - Cancelled

SEP 7 --- LABOR DAY

SEP 9 --- TSG Meeting – 7pm (Virtual)

SEP 11 --- Remembrance Day (9/11)

SEP 12 --- Chocolate Milkshake Day

SEP 13 --- Grand Parents Day

SEP 20 --- Wife Appreciation Day

SEP 21 --- Miniature Gulf Day

SEP 22 --- AUTUMNAL EQUINOX

SEP 22 --- National Ice Cream Cone Day

SEP 25 --- National Comic Book Day

SEP 25 --- National Daughter Day

SEP 28 --- National Son Day

SEP 28 --- National Super Hero Day

OCT 12 --- Columbus Day

OCT 14 --- TSG Meeting – 7pm

OCT 17 --- Bridge Day (Cancelled)

OCT 30 --- Devil's Night

OCT 31 --- All Hallow Eve (Halloween)

NOV 1 --- Day of the Dead

NOV 1 --- DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME ENDS

NOV 3 --- Election Day

NOV 10 --- Vivian Monger's Birthday
(Owner of Jones Quarry Cave)

NOV 11 --- Veterans Day

NOV 11 --- TSG Meeting – 7pm -Nominations for
Officers

NOV 14 --- WVCC Banquet – 7pm (Cancelled)

NOV 16 --- Sadie Hawkins Day

NOV 21 --- World Hello Day

NOV 26 --- THANKSGIVING DAY

NOV 27 ---Day After Thanksgiving

DEC 4 --- National Cookie Day

DEC 9 --- TSG Meeting 7pm – Elections Officers

DEC 12 --- Annual TSG Christmas Celebration –
6pm

DEC 21 --- WINTER SOLSTICE

DEC 22 --- National Short Person Day

DEC 24 --- Christmas Eve

DEC 24 --- National Chocolate Day

DEC 25 --- CHRISTMAS DAY

DEC 30--- National Bacon Day

DEC 30 --- Annual NSS Bat Ball

DEC 31 --- New Year's Eve

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 AUG ----- **\$00.00**

TOTAL TO DATE: ----- **\$7505.80**

GREAT JOB EVERYONE! Let's continue the giving! (No Cave Bucks for August. We held meeting On-Line).

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

WEBSITE & CAVING LINKS

Tri State Grotto ----- www.tristategrotto.net/
VAR ----- <http://var.caves.org/index.php>
NSS ----- www.caves.org/
NSS Convention 2020 ----- <https://nss2020.caves.org/>
NSS Convention 2021 ----- <http://nss2021.caves.org/>
OTR ----- www.otr.org/
MAR ----- www.caves.org/region/mar/
WVCC ----- www.wvcc.net/
Bob's Web Site ----- www.tristategrotto.net/Bob/
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/
Crystal Grottoes Caverns
www.crystalgrottoescaverns.com
Silers Cave -----
<https://www.karst.org/index.php/category/preserves/silers-cave-preserve/>

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GROTTO BIRTHDAYS

SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Zachariah Bowen, Twila Neeld Bracken, Susan Harbina, Matthew Majtyka, Morgan Majtyka, Ann Muldoon, Gerald Roberts, Cheryl Suitor,

Happy Birthday!

REPORTS

TSG Meeting, August 12, 2020

TSG Meeting, August 12, 2020

John called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm. The meeting was again held online because of the pandemic.

Elysia read the treasurer's report and it was approved.

Bob read the minutes and they were approved.

Old Business

Website – Ashby has not had a chance to work on it yet. It was destroyed by a virus and there is no copy. He will have to start from scratch with a new server. It was suggested that a site called Wayback Machine archives websites, and that might be a way to get a copy of the old grotto website.

Elysia set up Facebook Pay for the Grotto to receive dues and other payments through Messenger. Money paid goes directly into the Grotto bank account. There is no fee to use a debit card.

Sarah Furnace survey is still going on. There is an open house this Saturday August 15. August 29 there will be a survey trip there to teach how to survey. It will be 5-6 hours of work.

Don Arrowood gave updates on a couple caves in Pennsylvania. There is nothing new at Baker Cave, but they are currently working on the house over it. Fantasy Cave is now open and they are running trips. If interested, just call to arrange. He also reported on the Recreational Use law in Pennsylvania. If you do not charge for the activity, you cannot be held liable.

New Business

Elysia reported that a group of them fixed the gate at Baker Quarry, which had been tampered with on both sides. The broken lock was cut off and replaced with a new one. Elysia also described the layout of Baker Quarry and navigating Carols Crack on a recent trip, which requires swimming under water. Tri State Grotto is the manager of the quarry.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Lynn DiCarlo



I would like to announce that at the recent Virtual 2020 National Convention, Nikki Fox was named as a Fellow of the Society!! Nikki, this is an honor that is well deserved! Everyone congratulate Nikki!! (BB)

TRIP REPORTS

Sinks of the Run: A Bit of TAG in Greenbrier County

As those who know me are aware, I tend to gravitate towards the vertical. In fact, I have a number of favorite pits or pit caves that I've taken friends and acquaintances to regularly for decades. I try to work around the schedules of others when possible, which has become much easier since my retirement, but I generally relegate an annual pit bopping trip to OTR weekend since many "out of staters" often attend this event. There are a surprising number of hundred foot and sub-hundred-foot pits in Greenbrier and Pocahontas counties which are actually pretty decent.

One of my favorites has always been Sinks of the Run. I checked through my documents file and it doesn't appear that I've ever written a detailed article about the cave. This is not too surprising as there have been access issues over the past thirty years, and I never felt very comfortable talking about trips there. The cave was found and initially explored by Bill Jones way back in 1970, and there is a feature article describing Bill's find in the August 1971 NSS News. It's located on the eastern side of Muddy Creek Mountain in southern Greenbrier. I first visited the cave in 1976 and thought it a fine cave with some very nice pits, but I did not know anything regarding access, so I didn't return until the early 1990's. During this time very few cavers were even aware of the cave's existence and visitations were infrequent. Land record research by Bill Balfour suggests that the entrance is on a sliver of land owned by a corporate entity and surrounded by other properties.

For many years I had permission to cross the extensive property below the cave which was owned by Mr. Wilcher. He knew he did not actually own the cave, but his property went right up to it. He seemed to like me, and I had many a fine chat with him over the years. Sometime in the late '90's he informed me that he was fine with me being on his property, but he was not comfortable with me

taking folks he did not know up to the cave (crossing his property). Mr. Wilcher was a wealthy man, and this sounded like "lawyer" talk to me. Not being allowed to take people with me sort of defeated the purpose of going there, but I understood his concern, so I considered other options.

The topo map indicated that there seemed to be a way to access the cave from the top of the mountain. An overgrown logging road trended in the right direction, and after about a mile hike, while losing 600 feet of elevation at a gradual incline (no steep parts), this led me to within only a few hundred feet of the entrance. There were never any "no trespassing" signs at the logging road. I used this route for the next several years. I'd always made it a point to have only one trip per year (over OTR weekend) in order to minimize attention. During the last NSS convention at Lewisburg, some folks that I'd taken to the cave previously led multiple trips there with large numbers of people, thus increasing visibility. Soon after this a local farmer, Randy Rumer, who was also an old caving friend, told me that he'd run into the "owner", and said "owner" had expressed dissatisfaction with the fact that many cavers were going to the cave without permission. Prior to the next OTR (in 2014 I think) while in the area I drove up to the access point to see if there had been any changes. I always did this before leading a trip there. I was dismayed to find abundant fresh "keep out" signs posted along the logging road. Based on my earlier conversation with Randy, I assumed these had been put there by the "owner". In my 2015 update on West Virginia hundred footers for the *West Virginia Caver* I indicated that the cave should now be considered closed.

Fast forward to 2019 and a series of unplanned, but ultimately fortuitous (at least for me) events occurred. I'm not going into these events here because it would be a long story, except to say that I met the person responsible for the new "signs" and found out that I had been mistaken in my previous interpretation. (I'll blame my old friend Randy for that. Afterall, what are old friends for?)

As I mentioned earlier, the cave entrance is apparently sandwiched between two extensive properties, one above and one below. It would

appear that no one really ever had actual “permission” for the cave itself, and it seems that Randy’s “owner” was really not. This often occurs with remote mountain holdings where boundaries can be erroneous. Sometime I should tell the story of Paint Rock River Cave in Alabama and the mess it got me into. The person I met that hot August day in 2019 turned out to be the “property manager” for



the owners of the upper land tract (above the cave). I related my forty-plus year history with the cave to him and he turned out to be a pretty nice fellow. He lives nearby and told me that he and his family valued their privacy and preferred not to be bothered, however, he was willing to grant

permission to cross the land to cavers “he knew by sight”, and apparently I’m one of those(there are only a very few).

I was elated to once again have access to one of my very favorite caves, and I set up a trip for the upcoming OTR weekend for Ryan Mauer and Shawn Hogbin. Over OTR(2019) the three of us toured to the bottom of the cave. Well, at least Shawn did. The last short drop plops one into an “over your head pool” and I’m a non-swimmer, Ryan tried but wasn’t real comfortable with it, while Shawn just jumped in. He reported that the passage ended a few hundred feet beyond the pool, that it might be diggable, but there was no obvious air flow.

Ryan decided that the cave should be re-surveyed and after working out arrangements with the property manager added it to his growing list of West Virginia projects. During this past spring and early summer, he led several productive survey trips and found nearly 2,000 feet of virgin passages, including a very nicely decorated formation room of moderate dimension. I’d always considered Sinks of the Run a great pit cave, but formations were lacking, so Ryan’s discovery got my attention. I hadn’t done any caving since March due to covid-19, so I thought this would be a good opportunity to get back underground.

On July 25th Ryan, state geologist Wayne Perkins, West Virginia University Student Grotto members Ben Shaffer and Allie Smith, and I went to the cave. Ryan had several objectives, including photography in the formation gallery which he dubbed Speleogasm, aid climbing to a couple of high leads, and survey. Wayne and Allie had never been to Sinks of the Run before so it was decided that I would take them to the bottom, or at least as far as they wanted to go, while Ryan and Ben worked on the climbing leads. I was also assigned to do a tie-in survey between the top of the first drop and the passage coming back from the second drop. This

seemed like a pretty minimal contribution to an otherwise great sporting trip so I was fine with that.



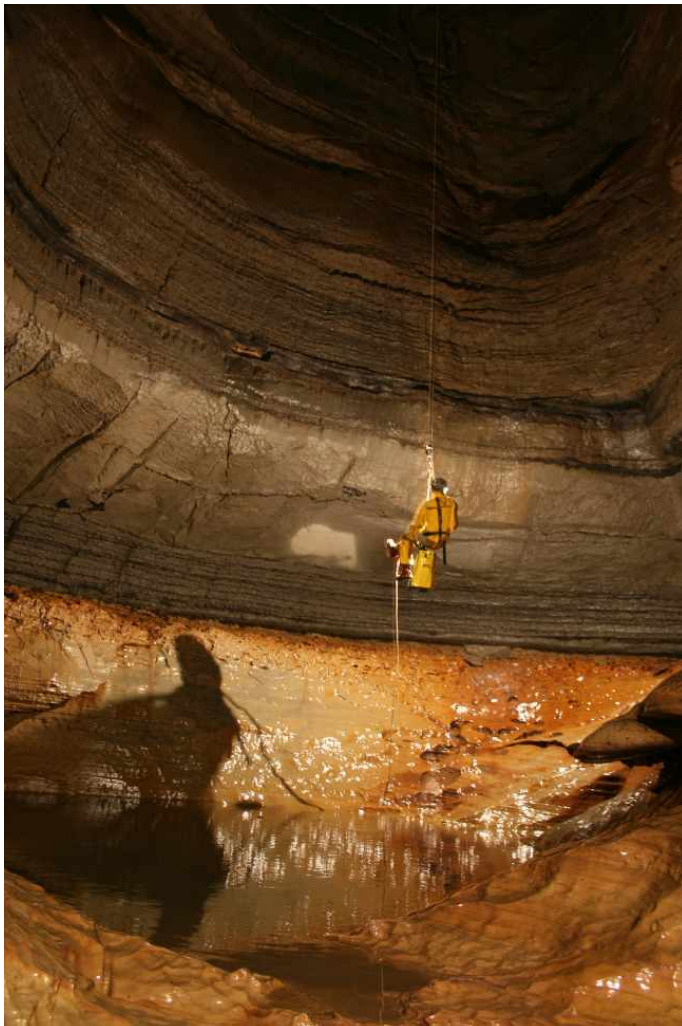
I'll use this opportunity to provide a brief description on the nature of the cave. I've always maintained that Sinks of the Run is the finest multi-drop wet cave in West Virginia. It's a very active stream cave and as such the main passage is clean washed with beautiful scalloping, potholing, and numerous plunge pools. Expect to get wet from knee to crotch wading through pooled up sections in the main stream passage. The first three drops can be rigged dry during normal flow conditions, though there may be some spray near the bottom of the big drop. The overall passage dimensions range

from comfortable walking to immense. A trip to the bottom might require that a knee touches the floor in one or two places for tall cavers. In other words, no crawling and no tight spots. Six pits must be negotiated to reach bottom. The first two are deep and voluminous at 77 and 105 feet respectively. The last four are shallow at 17, 14, 16, and 10 feet.

After admiring the impressive upper level formation gallery that Ryan had found just the previous weekend, our group of five split up. While Ryan and Ben were engaged in the real work, Wayne, Allie, and I took our ropes and set off to rig the first drop. A hundred feet or so before the drop the passage enlarges to a black canyon where the bottom falls out into a passage over one hundred feet high. Copious bolts provide a variety of rigging options. I chose the most distant, hoping that it would facilitate our task of tying in the survey. This provides for a free rappel of 77 feet. You land on a gently sloping, beautifully scalloped shelf beside a large circular plunge pool. On the other side of the pool we located our tie-in station. From the top of the 77-footer to the tie-in required only three shots, so it wasn't very long before our "requirement" had been completed. Then it was off to the big pit. Though it's only 105 feet deep, it's one of the nicest pits in the state. The drop is totally free beside an arcing waterfall with perfectly circular banded walls. You land in the shallow end of an even larger (than the 77-footer) plunge pool, but a scramble to a wide ledge quickly puts you back on dry land. The chamber is absolutely huge.

On the far side of this chamber the cave continues as a comfortable walking/wading passage while the stream cascades from one pool to the next. It eventually plunges into a shallow canyon, but high ledges on the right lead to a bolted, dry rig point allowing for a 17-foot drop to the now rapidly moving stream below. A short ways further the stream once again drops into a shallow (14 foot) pit. This pit has a natural rig which avoids the waterfall

near the top. However, halfway down the water hits a ledge and becomes a horizontal fire hose. Getting down you can avoid the worst of it if you're quick enough, but it was obvious that climbing back up was going to yield a drenching. The water plummets over a couple of additional ledges into deep potholes (ask Shawn about one of these) before roaring down the fifth drop. The pit is only 16 feet deep but there is no way to avoid the full force of the falls. In dry conditions the waterfall is minimal providing little more than a quick cool off and is not an issue. On this day that was not the case. There were perhaps half a dozen fire hydrants of water sluicing down the pit. Not sure if Ryan and Ben would find extensive passage, and we could be



called upon to survey for hours, we opted not to get hammered by doing this pit and ended our tour. We still got nailed pretty good by the horizontal blasts from the bottom half of the fourth pit as we ascended, but it was nothing compared to the head

pounding bashing we would have received had we decided to do the fifth drop.

Ryan and Ben were in the process of completing their high lead checking, and reported no going passages found. Even though Sinks of the Run is now a project cave, the unpredictable nature of potential high water conditions led Ryan to caution that drops should not be left rigged for future survey trips so we pulled all the ropes. Our trip lasted ten hours.

For the vertically competent, Sinks of the Run is a fairly easy cave, and certainly one of the finest vertical experiences in West Virginia. Access is somewhat tenuous and permission will most likely be granted only to those persons who the property manager is familiar with. The property manager keeps a close eye on things and will not hesitate to send trespassers on their way. Then, too, the threat of flooding is very real. I first located the cave back in 1976 over one of those very wet OTR weekends when flooding was rampant. Water was running from every gully, so I reasoned that all I had to do was hike along the base of Muddy Creek Mountain until I found a dry streambed. I did so, and in following this up the mountain I came to a stream in flood with a brown whirlpool violently swirling against a headwall. I was looking at the entrance to Sinks of the Run, except there was no entrance. Massive logs deep in the cave, and all manner of flood debris high on the walls throughout the cave, attest to the maelstrom that regularly churns though the passages during high flow periods or following heavy downpours. Any caver-related high-water incident, rescue, injury, or heaven forbid, death would obviously be detrimental to future access.

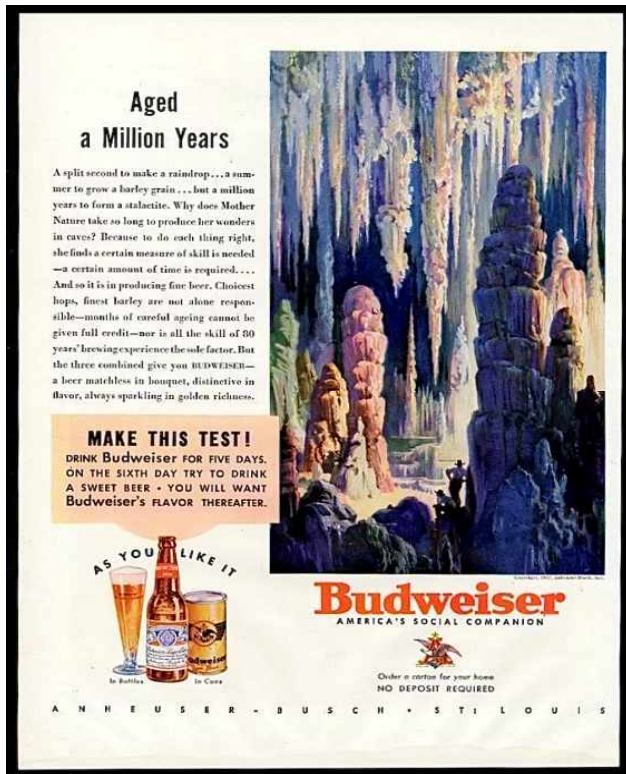
While the property manager is very interested in the cave and is willing to allow conditional trips, they are by their own admission a private family. You don't choose to live on top of Muddy Creek Mountain if you're fond of crowds. As long as things remain as they are now, I would be willing to assist anyone interested in visiting the cave, but even I plan on doing so only once or twice a year, and only under the safest (meaning driest) of conditions. How many times have otherwise well-meaning cavers jeopardized access to a cave simply by going there too frequently? Sinks of the Run

provides too fine a caving experience to risk landowner burnout through over-visitation.

Terry McClanathan (NSS 12103)

(All photos were supplied with permission from Brian Masney)

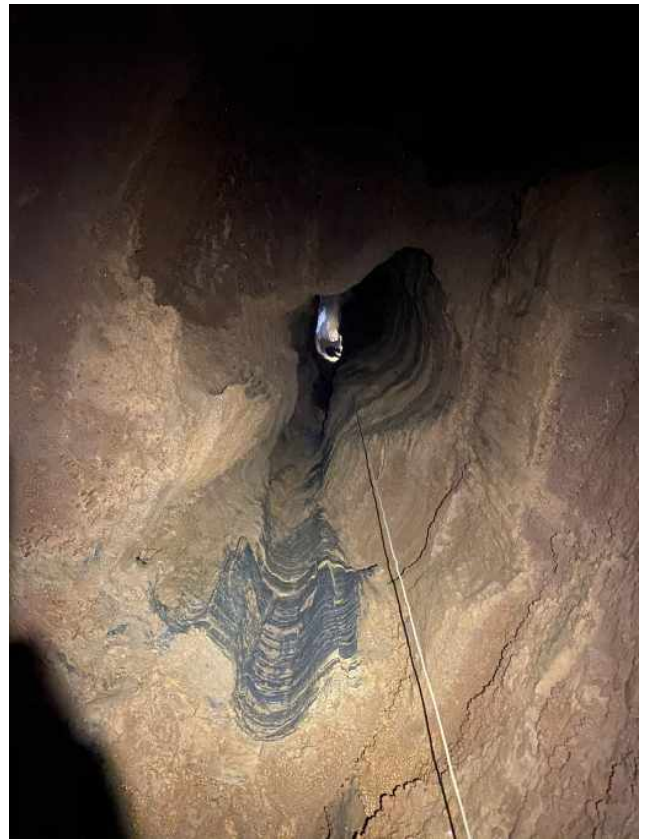
MEMORIES



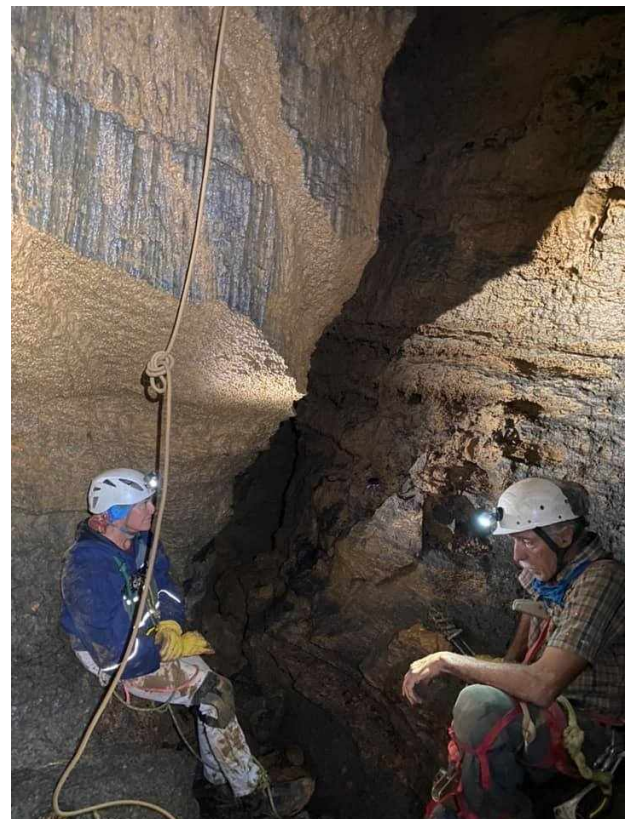
Jerry Bowen purchased this on Ebay



Nathan in Breathing (Ashley Hitchcock)



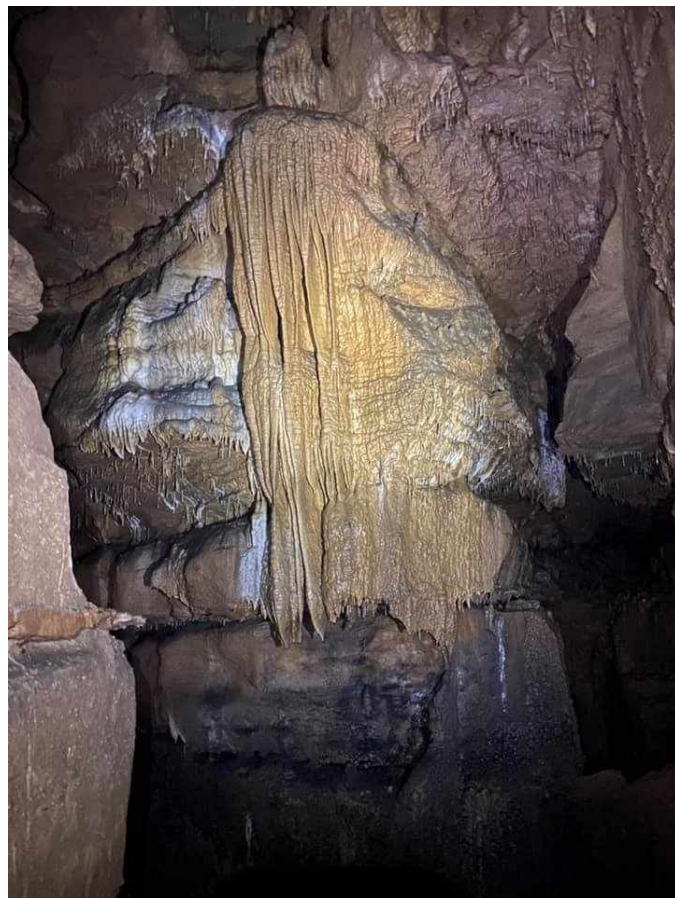
Kimble Pit (Tom Griffin)



Terry waiting to climb in Kimble Pit (Tom Griffin)



Cross Roads Cave (Shawn Harris)



Cross Roads Cave (Shawn Harris)



Cross Roads Cave (Shawn Harris)



Lawsons Horseshoe Cave (Doc Phillips)



CAVIN CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER 6TH - OCTOBER 17TH



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Sep 6 OTR - Cancelled	Sep 7 OTR - Cancelled LABOR DAY	Sep 8	Sep 9  Meeting 7pm - Virtual	Sep 10	Sep 11 Remembrance Day	Sep 12 Chocolate Milkshake Day
Sep 13 Grand Parents Day	Sep 14	Sep 15	Sep 16	Sep 17	Sep 18	Sep 19
Sep 20 Wife Appreciation Day	Sep 21 Mineature Golf Day	Sep 22  Equinox Ice Cream Cone Day	Sep 23	Sep 24	Sep 25 National Comic Book Day National Daughter Day	Sep 26
Sep 27	Sep 28 National Son Day National Super Hero Day	Sep 29	Sep 30	Oct 1	Oct 2	Oct 3
Oct 4	Oct 5	Oct 6	Oct 7	Oct 8 Fall TAG Cave-In Cancelled	Oct 9 Fall TAG Cave-In Cancelled	Oct 10 Fall TAG Cave-In Cancelled
Oct 11 Fall TAG Cave-In	Oct 12 COLUMBUS DAY	Oct 13	Oct 14  Meeting 7pm	Oct 15	Oct 16	Oct 17 Bridge Day Cancelled

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Key Cave (Doc Phillips)



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