

DEAD DOG DISPATCH TRI-STATE GROTTO



HEART OF GOLD, WHITE CO, TN

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#103

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FAMILY MEMBERSHIP ----- \$2.00/FAMILY
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*** The photo on the cover was taken by the project leader of HOG, Jim Fox. It shows a gypsum flower in Heart of Gold Cave, White Co, TN.

**** 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

2021

~~SEP 2-6 --- OTR --- Cancelled!~~
~~SEP 4 --- Doo Dah Parade --- 10am --- Cancelled~~
~~SEP 4 --- WVASS meeting --- 630pm --- Cancelled~~
 SEP 4-6 --- NOTR – Franklin, WV – see Doc
 SEP 4 --- Dead Dog Cave – see Adam Haines
 SEP 5 --- Adam Stephen Dig – 6pm – see Ashby Haines
SEP 6 --- LABOR DAY
SEP 8 --- TSG meeting – 7pm – Live & Virtual
 SEP 9 --- Teddy Bear Day
 SEP 9 --- FRG Meeting – 7pm – Thunwa Restaurant
 SEP 9 --- Meeting with Izaak Walton League – 7pm
SEP 11 --- Remembrance Day – 9/11
 SEP 12 --- Chocolate Milkshake Day
 SEP 12 --- Grand Parents Day
 SEP 13 --- National Peanut Day
 SEP 18 --- Cheeseburger Day
 SEP 20 --- Wife Appreciation Day
 SEP 21 --- Miniature Golf Day
 SEP 22 --- National Ice Cream Cone Day
SEP 22 --- AUTUMNAL EQUINOX
 SEP 25 --- National Comic Book Day
 SEP 25 --- National Daughter Day
 SEP 28 --- National Son Day
 SEP 28 --- National Super Hero Day
 SEP 29 --- National Coffee Day
OCT 1-3 --- NCRC OCR – Martinsburg, WV
 OCT 7-10 --- Fall TAG Cave-In – TAG
 OCT 10 --- Black Coffee Cavern conservation Project – 10am – see Tom Griffin
 OCT 11 --- Columbus Day
OCT 13 --- TSG Meeting – 7pm – Annual Auction – Live & Virtual
OCT 15-17 --- Fall MAR/VAR – Grand Caverns
 OCT 16 --- Bridge Day
 OCT 28 --- Chocolate Day
 OCT 29-NOV 1 --- SERA Summer Cave Carnival – Walling, TN
 OCT 30 --- Devil's Night
 OCT 31 --- All Hallow Eve – Halloween
 OCT 31 --- National Knock Knock Joke Day
 NOV 1 --- All Saints Day – Day of the Dead
 NOV 2 --- Election Day

NOV 5 --- Hot Sauce Day
NOV 7 --- DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME ENDS
 NOV 10 --- Marine Corp Birthday
 NOV 10 --- Vivian Monger Birthday (Owner of Jones Quarry)
NOV 10 --- TSG meeting – 7pm – Nominations for Grotto Officers – Live & Virtual
 NOV 11 --- Veterans Day
 NOV 13 --- Sadie Hawkins Day
NOV 13 --- WVCC Banquet – 7pm
 NOV 21 --- World Hello Day
NOV 25 --- Thanksgiving Day
 NOV 26 --- Day After Thanksgiving
 DEC 4 --- National Cookie Day
 DEC 7 --- Pearl Harbor Day
 DEC 8 --- National Brownie Day
DEC 8 --- TSG meeting – 7pm – Grotto Elections
DEC 11 --- TSG Grotto Christmas Party – 6pm
 DEC 21 --- Winter Solstice
 DEC 22 --- Short Person Day
 DEC 23 --- FESTIVUS DAY
DEC 24 --- Christmas Eve
 DEC 24 --- National Chocolate Day
DEC 25 --- Christmas Day
 DEC 26 --- National Candy Cane Day
 DEC 30 --- National Bacon Day
 DEC 31 --- Annual BAT BALL – NSS Hdqtrs
DEC 31 --- New Years Eve

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 AUGUST ----- **\$34.00**
 Correction to Cave Bucks ----- **+\$8.00**
 Correction to Cave Bucks ----- **+\$6.01**
TOTAL TO DATE: ----- \$7632.83

GREAT JOB EVERYONE! Let's continue the giving!

Keep It Coming!

WEBSITE & GIVING LINKS

Tri-State Grotto ----- www.tristategrotto.org/
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/
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/>

GROTTO BIRTHDAYS

SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Zachariah Bowen, Twila Neeld Bracken, Erin Dixon, Doug Duncan, Angel Garrett, Susan Harbina, Craig Hindman, Matthew Majtyka, Morgan Majtyka, Ann Muldoon, Beau Ouimette, Gerald Roberts, Nathan Roser, Cheryl Suitor

Happy Birthday!



REPORTS

TSG Meeting, August 11, 2021 (attendance:19/7 virtual)

John called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

Elysia's gave her Treasurer's Report and Doc read the last meetings minutes. Cave bucks: \$34.

New Cavers at the Meeting: R. J. and Keith.

Committee Reports: Tent poles are complete.

-The tent pole committee is concluded.

-TSG's Helmets and lights are in great condition maintained by Doc and Adam.

Old Business:

-Earl gave a presentation on the NCRC, and at present they are testing a new communication system. The NCRC is offering seminars in the Martinsburg area. Blacksburg also has an NCRC seminar. For further information contact Earl at wvcaver216@gmail.com.

-Saturday, August 28, there is a kayaking trip planned for Bakers Quarry. Contact Brent Jefferson for further information at bjefferson22@gmail.com. Space is limited. There isn't a trip planned to Carol's Crack Cave.

New Business:

-There is a need for a new lock box for Jones Quarry Cave's gate.

-The picnic this year is to be held at the Hawthorne House at Summit Point, WV on August 14th starting at twelve and going to six. Vertical gear will be available or bring your own gear.

-John Foxx was mentioned and has a serious medical condition in which he is hospitalized. John has passed away.

- John is looking for a designer for a three-way fold pamphlet for Crystal Grottos and TSG.
- OTR will be held on September 2-6. This year's theme is the Hatfields & McCoys. Also, the new hot tub is ready at the site.
- VAR will be held at Grand Caverns on the weekend of October 16.

Contact Tom at caver182@gmail.com for more information.

- A trip to Kee Cave is in the making for August 28, contact Earl at wvcaver216@gmail.com.
- White Nose Syndrome was mentioned and is still prevalent in different parts of the country.
- The next Wednesday night caving trip is planned at 6:00 pm for Donaldson's Cave.
- Crystal Grottos has more events in the making. More lights have to be exchanged and the caves sump pump needs a cover.
- Adam plans to do a trip to Dead Dog Cave.

Caving:

- Doc and Sir Adam went to Kee Cave in Pendleton County.
- Ashby and Angel went to Argo Cave. They were the first visitors in fifteen years.
- Ashby, Adam, Angel and Elysia visited Silers, Jones Quarry and Whittings Neck Cave.
- A Jones Quarry Cave trip was held on Wednesday night, June 21.
- Ashley, Chris, and a host of other of others went to Breathing Cave.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:40 pm

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

Cleanup and Conservation at Jones Quarry Cave.

By Donald 'Doc' Phillips

On July 21st, Tri-State Grotto members made a visit to Jones Quarry Cave for this month's Wednesday night caving adventure. In the end of

June, the owner of JQC granted us access for the event. Participants would be the first visitors to the cave since the pandemic started. Because of the long time period the quarry was vacant, the owner suggested that we bring rakes and other top-soil combing devices in order to clean out and remove any sharp objects that may have accumulated in the last year and a half in order to prevent tire damage or personal injury. But rakes would not have been enough.

Adam, Ashby, and Angel Haines, including SirAdam Grigsby and myself arrived an hour early in order to start the project. Adam Haines brought a large niobium magnet attached to a cord and dragged it through the ashes and soil. I brought a rolling magnet that constructions workers use to collect nails and other metal objects. Tim Jordan brought another rolling magnet later during the cleanup.

As the heavy magnet pulled through the debris, its progression was slowed by the weight of what it attracted within a couple of feet. The magnet was thickly coated with nails, staples, screws and shape metal shards, giving it the appearance of a huge rusty sea urchin. Repeated magnet action did not seem to slow the accumulation and collection of iron debris.

When I rolled my magnet bar across the ashes, it was ground to a halt within a foot by attached metal and when lifted, resembled a vicious Cholla cactus. I thought it was astounding that this kept repeating over and over again. Employing gloves, the rusty metal was removed with careful effort and dumped into a plastic five-gallon bucket, filling it almost three quarters full. If any more metal were added to the bucket, it would have been too heavy to carry safely for disposal.

We took turns using the magnets until the harvest of the rusty metal started to slow. The magnet roller could now advance a greater distance than before and the other magnet started to attract less iron junk. Three five-gallon buckets were filled.

The owner arrived and removed the buckets of the debris. Apparently, there were bon fires involving wooden pallets, crates, and other wooden objects held together by nails, staples, baling wire, and myriad of other metal fasteners

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that accumulated in the ashes. As a side note, labor hours range around twenty-eight dollars. Considering that a half dozen of us labored for approximately an hour and a half each, the price tag would come to a little over two hundred fifty bucks. That does not include the other arrivals that also helped clean up the area.

Caving is always a pleasure in JQC. I limited the trip to a dozen cavers in order to have a safe excursion and create an atmosphere that was not overwhelming. Cavers of all ages and sizes climbed over the rock wall, traversed the birth canal and crossed the bottomless pit. JQC is always a challenge and the core of amazing cave exploration. The cleanup effort was rewarded with terrific caving and outstanding company.



Collecting Nails (Photo by Elysia Mathias)



More Nails & Staples (Photo by John DiCarlo)



Jones Quarry Cave Wednesday Night Caving

By John DiCarlo NSS 25744

Falling Waters, WV - At the appointed time for the trip, Tri State Grotto members started showing up. As people suited up, the younger crowd headed toward the entrance. The rest of us were still getting ready. Some people come in late, and we waited for them. Heading in we made our way up the slope. The rope helped a lot. We climbed through the gate, made our way into the cave to the first room, and waited as people caught up. We started down the rope one at a time checking out the views. We made it to the bottom and looked around. This is the tallest room in the cave.



People were headed in different directions. I headed up to the Upper Room. Coming up into it I noticed it was foggy. I took a few pictures and turned around and made my way back down.

Arriving at the intersection of the big room, we picked up the rest of our “older” group, as they had made their way down the rope by then. We headed to the Mud Room.



Filling up the room we looked around as it has some massive flowstone coming down the wall. Here we had to climb up a wall to follow the continuing passage. This passage had a lot of formations too.



We came to an intersection, turned left, followed that passage through a hole, and popped out into the back room. A few people went up the slope toward a back entrance. They soon returned. At this point we turned right, went through some scary rocks and drops, and came out in a little room with some nice columns.

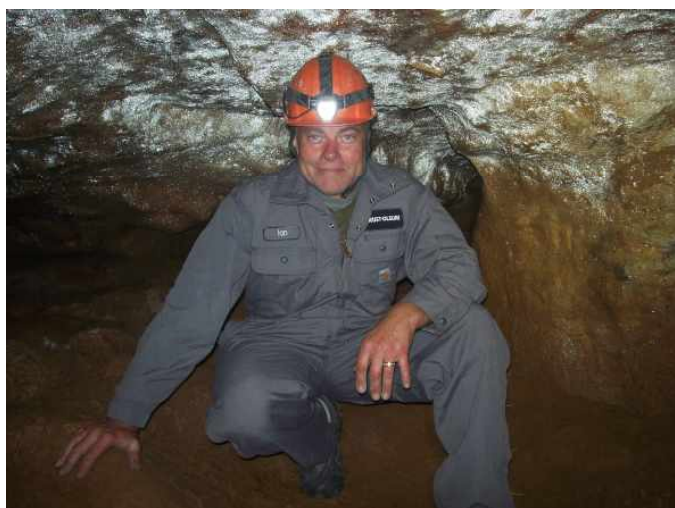
Turning right we went through the room with the floor tilting 45 degrees down to our left. Here we joined up with the younger group that went in first. We turned right at the end of the room and climbed uphill through a hole into the Dome Room. Lots of pictures were taken here.

Turning right we crossed the bottomless pit and looked over the balcony into the Big Room. Turning around we crossed the Razor Blade into a small room.

Turning left we belly crawled 15 feet. Hitting an intersection that we were in before, we turned left and went down the passage to the wall in the Mud Room that we had climbed up. Crossing over the room we made our way back to the Big Room and had to wait our turn going up the rope. When the last person was up, we pulled the rope up and coiled it around a boulder.

We made our way through the entrance passage and out the gate. We dropped down the rope to the quarry floor. Here we gathered for a group picture and ended our adventure.





Obituary for John Warren Fox
NSS 17432RE, FE
1947-2021

John Warren Fox, age 73, passed away on Thursday, August 12, 2021, at his home in Radford, VA. He was born December 22, 1947 in New York City, NY.

When John focused his energies on an interest or activity, he did not just join an organization – he participated enthusiastically, usually contributing his time as a volunteer. Various aspects included caving, music, computers, scouting, and civic duties, commonly serving as an officer within the corresponding organizations. He was honored for his speleological work, including the Virginia Region (VAR) with the 2005 VAR Outstanding Service Award and the National Speleological Society (NSS) as a Fellow in 2007.

John started caving in 1973 and joined the NSS in 1976. In the years following, he caved primarily with fellow members of the New River Valley (NRVG) and Blue Ridge (BRG) grottoes. He joined TSG Nov 2019 at the WVCC Banquet.

He regularly volunteered to provide DJ services for numerous civic and VAR meetings, providing his own sound equipment and extensive playlist of music.

John had a fascination with all types of music which he willingly shared. He'd previously attended 46 OTRs), and DJ the music for the Fall 2021 VAR meeting.

John's friendly and helpful presence will be sorely missed by the many members of the organizations that he served.



(All Photos by John DiCarlo)



Dead Dog Cave 9-4-21 - Adam Haines

Here is a short cave trip report for the DDD.

Ashby Haines, Angela Rao, and Elysia Mathias and myself. The cave was very slick, but a fun time was had by all. Gary Mathias waited patiently topside & helped with the relocking of the gate.

Trip Report: 3rd Annual Baker Quarry Underground Trip (by Brent Jefferson)

On Saturday, August 28, 2021, we hosted our 3rd Annual Baker Quarry Underground Trip and had 19 People brave the hot & humid August morning trek to the quarry. Bob & Paulette Bennett set up a welcoming tent in the grass area in front of the quarry to check-in everyone, and once it was verified that they had a helmet & completed waiver form, each person then made there way to the quarry gate. Entry through the gate started about 10:30 AM.

We were greeted by local frog at the kayak drop point which we picked up and took back outside (so he wouldn't become a frog pancake).

People brought their single and double kayaks, and even a foldable kayak, and were wearing appropriate caving gear. The inside quarry air temperature was about 55 degrees and water was 48 degrees, outside temperature range was 85–92 degrees. After lowering all kayaks to the quarry floor, I walked with all kayakers to each water spot to show them where they might drop-in.

Since there are 3-parallel passages, each about 700 feet long that were also interconnected, it could be easy to get lost or disoriented.

The water level was below normal but still maneuverable. Everyone broke off into separate groups & headed to 1 of the 3 water (lake) areas. Stephen Jefferson found some blasting wires while kayaking, still in great condition and estimated to be there about 70 years.

A man-made Cairns rock formation was also found ... artist unknown.

Matt & Buck Baldwin had fun with their underwater lights which made the water glow green ... looked amazing!!



(Photos were taken by contributors from NRVG, BRG, & other VAR cavers. The photos were provided by Karen Kastning)

We also sung Happy Birthday to Buck Baldwin who had just turned 16, then had lights-out for a few minutes and listened to the drip-drops hitting the water surface.

The final groups exited the quarry around 4:30 PM and were met with Birthday cupcakes & toppings for the Birthday Boy.

All in all, the trip was successful and fun, and I am looking forward to another annual kayak trip next year.

--Brent Jefferson

Trip Report (by Nicole LaFragola)

Arrived to Baker's Quarry on a gorgeous morning where the sun was starting to heat the day. We all carried our kayaks one by one up the trail to the gate opening where we were greeted by a gust of winter's air and Brent to hand our boat's off to. Nothing ever quite prepares you for the beauty of the underground world. After we crawled in, our eyes drew upward to the ceiling with a crane of the neck. After a quick tour of the various water passages and things to look out for, we were off to explore. Pretty quickly we realized just how cold water can stay when sunlight never reaches it. It felt like icicles within seconds. I did a triple check of our inflatables even with most of the water being under 6 feet deep. That didn't stop one of our members from taking a tumble in though. They were really a real trooper and stuck it out for a bit after taking a frigid dip. We got to paddle all 3 passages and take in the perfectly clear emerald green water that closely resembles the shores of a Greek island. Near the end, we sung up a happy birthday to a fellow caver and had a few peaceful moments appreciating the silence and darkness of the quarry. The time flew by quickly and before we knew it, it was time to head back above ground where the summer's humidity was waiting. What an experience!

Thanks!

Nicole LaFragola

Trip Report (by Eliza Orrick)

Thanks for a fun trip! It was super cool to kayak in the quarry. I have never had an experience of kayaking underground before and was definitely one I will remember! Though will have to say- not sure if my favorite part was crawling through the

hole to enter the quarry, kayaking in the water (especially when we had everyone turn off the lights), or the look on Stephen's face when he tried

to pick up a frog 🤪.



(Photo by BB)



(Photo by Eliza)



(Photo by Nicole)



Dynamite Wire (Photo by Brent Jefferson)



(Photo by BJ)



(Photo by BJ)



(Photo by BJ)



(Photo by BJ)



OH NO!!! Another Year of OTR Cancelled.

By Donald 'Doc' Phillips

Not again! As though last year's cancellation wasn't bad enough, OTR has been cancelled for yet another year. 2020 and 2021 is a bust! On Monday, August the 30, 2021, at about six pm eastern standard time, the notification of cancellation was released by the TRA Board of Trustees. It appears that our yearly pilgrimage to Randolph County to attend this beloved caving festival was once again shelved for yet another year. The Randolph Elkins Health Department did not grant a permit for the occasion because the event did not feel safe health wise to them and that the local hospital was full. At that point the TRA campground staff began the process of disassembling the OTR area. It was reported then that pre-registrations and merchandise purchases were going to be refunded. What an immense effort and burden for all of the OTR volunteers, not to mention all the additional participants that help set up the event. I think I can safely say that everyone was looking forward to the festival after being shut down and quarantined for so long last year. We waited approximately 730 days for this OTR - now adding another 365 days, making it a grand total of about 1,095 days. I state the obvious when I say, 'what a drag - will we ever get a break'?

As for myself, before the cancellation notice, I began piling up my gear at home in the hallway leading to the garage starting with a camp cook kit, camp stove, a tent or two, clothing bags, costume bags, sleeping gear, pop-up tent, camp tables and chairs, and so on. Let's not forget the caving gear including charged batteries and clean cave coveralls and boots. I also went food shopping for easy breakfasts, canned stews, tasty udon noodles, lots of French bread and cheese and even filled the cooler with all types of libations. Well, to be candid, that's all food that I will sooner or later consume at my leisure. I was planning to do so in the picnic atmosphere of a big campout that always seems to make food taste a little better.

I will miss the experience of running away from home to go on a vacation. My enthusiasm begins while loading up the Tundra and heading west on Interstate 66. In a few miles down the pike I

get the feeling of leaving it all behind and anticipate the upcoming reckless abandonment of the weekend that will be dedicated to caving, camping, music, company and beer.

I also enjoy the long ride out to Daily, West Virginia. I like driving through the green mountains with their steep roads, maneuvering through Moorefield and Petersburg and passing Seneca Rocks. I relish the benefits of fresher air, and comfortable country temperatures. The ride alone heralds the promise of an invigorating weekend to come. Towards the end of the trek through the mountains and heading south from Elkins, I would turn onto Back Road and find a deeper sense of rural life with open green fields and hay bales. Then, right in the middle of peaceful farmland, a colorful tent city appears.

The venture continues with registration, setting up my campsite and bumping into friends. In no time at all I end up with the first visit to vendors row.

The smell of the grass and hay underfoot, the crunch of the gravel road as cars and trucks pass by, the scent of the bonfire that has yet to be lighted mixed with the aroma drifting from the food vendors are all unique and prevalent. Soon I hear the slam of the port- o-potties door and realize that the fun has begun.

Not to be maudlin about missing another OTR, I keep in mind how exciting it will be to once again return to this Labor Day ritual of getting away for a weekend and keeping company of like-minded people with the same goal of connectivity and enjoyment.

The anticipation has started!!



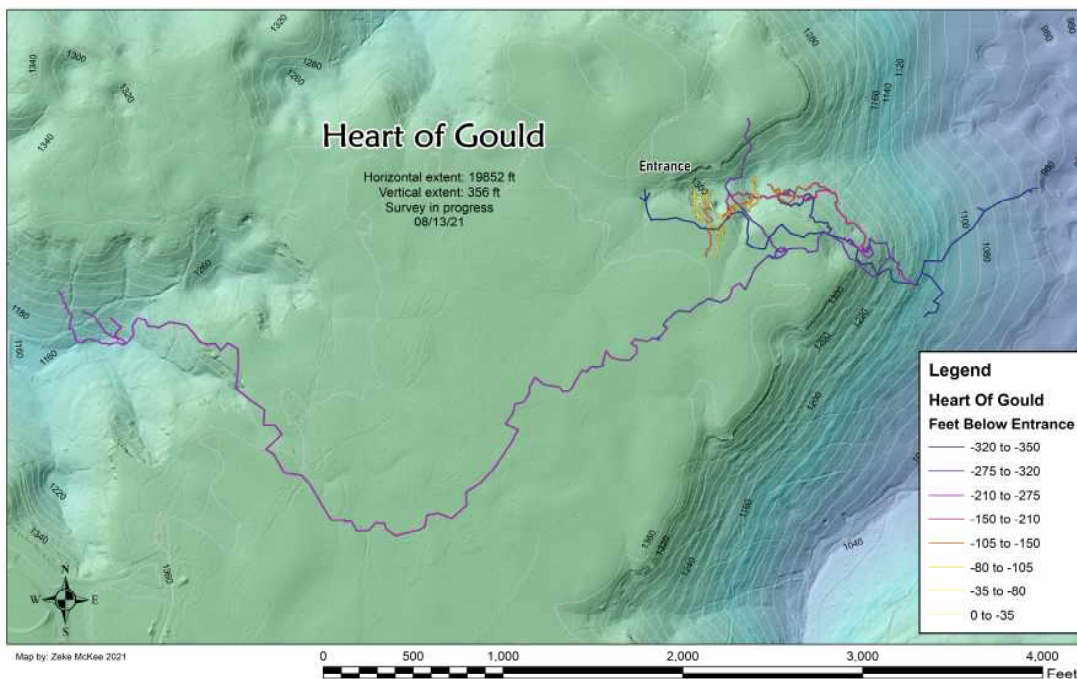
Perseverance Pays Big Dividends in Heart of Gould (All photos by Jim Fox)

It is widely known in caving circles that Tennessee has more caves than any other state, with well over 10,000 documented in the Tennessee Cave Survey (TCS). Part of the reason why there are so many caves in the state is due to a proliferation of what are often referred to as “Hartselle contact caves”. The Hartselle is a non-carbonate rock unit usually consisting of sandstone or shale. Many hundreds of caves form along the boundary separating the Hartselle from the underlying limestones. The vast majority of these caves are small, with only a hundred feet or so of passages, and a small percentage may contain a pit or two. They are of such abundance that Marion O. Smith refers to them as “nerd holes”. It should be pointed out that Tennessee, as well as all of TAG, has minimum standards before a hole can be entered into the TCS as a cave. To be eligible there must be at least 50 feet of combined horizontal and/or

vertical: for example, a 15-foot pit with 35 feet of passage would qualify; or if it's just a pit, the roped portion must be at least 30 feet. If Tennessee applied the same “standards” that exist in Maryland, Pennsylvania, or even West Virginia, which is essentially if you can get your body into it, it's a cave, then the number of caves in Tennessee would be closer to 20,000. This is the story of how perseverance on the part of a few optimistic and determined cavers paid off big-time in one of these “nerd holes”.

Marion and I have been friends for nearly half a century. About fifteen years ago “Monkathons” became harder to plan. “Monkathon” is a term coined by Marion to describe my trips to

TAG (211 to date) where emphasis is on maximum caving with minimum sleep; I do all the driving and any who accompany me are welcome to sleep on the way down and on the way back home, though many of my road-trips are solo. A vertically significant “Monkathon” must also include at least 800 feet of “new-to-me” pits. By 2005 I'd visited most of the 450-plus hundred footers in TAG, which is why it was becoming difficult for me to put together new significant vertical trips. Marion took it upon himself to remedy this dilemma on my behalf. Since I'd been to most of the hundred footers, he started organizing trips where we would concentrate on clusters of pits, none of which were individually very deep, but the collective totals would add up to a few hundred feet of vertical on one circuit of a mountainside. It was on the second of these trips in June of 2008 that Marion introduced me to Heart of Gould. My log says he took me to 1,117 feet of “new-to-me” pits that weekend. Heart of Gould had five pits in the 55 feet or less range for a total of 247 feet of vertical work.



Map showing the line plot for HOG. The Gypsum Borehole is the long passage extending for over a mile and a half to the left.

Fast forward to 2021 and Heart of Gould had become one of the great success stories of recent cave exploration in Tennessee. Zeke McKee,

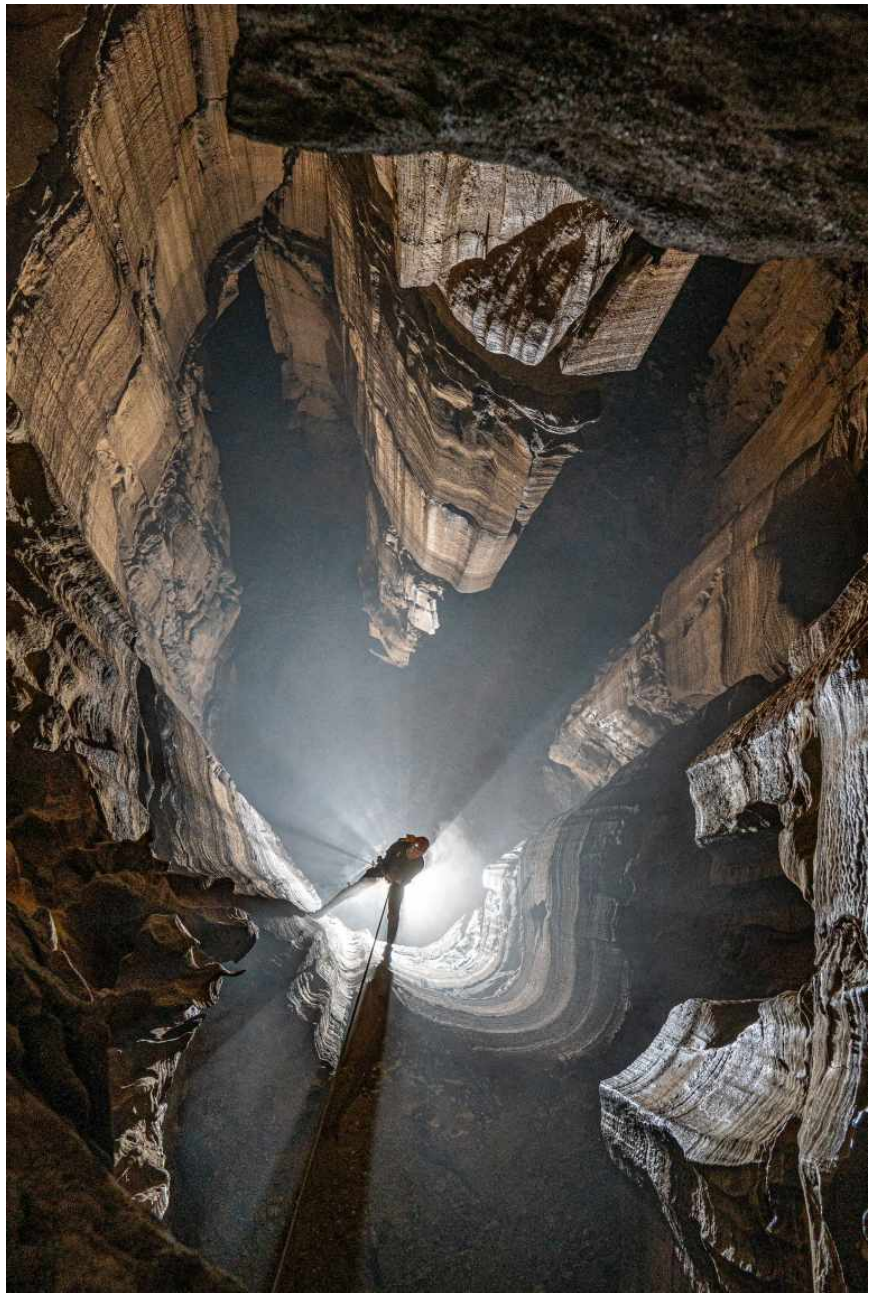
who is one of the primary explorers and surveyors of the cave, provided me with the following history of Heart of Gould in a recent article he wrote for the *Southeastern Caver*.

“Nashville caver Doug Plemons was the first to notice the cave in August of 1990. Soon after, a large group, including TCS coordinator Gerald Moni, explored the cave down five drops to an estimated depth of 220 feet and a length of about 560 feet. The drops were all under 55 feet, although one of the domes was estimated to be around one hundred feet high.

For the next three decades (1990-2019) activity was mostly limited to just a few tourist trips, including Marion and me in 2008. That would soon change. In order to be thorough, area caver Jim Fox planned to climb the high dome noted by the original explorers back in 1990. This turned out to be 107 feet. Exploration by Jim and Zeke around the top of the dome found more cave, but on Jan. 17th, 2021, on a trip with Marion and Justin Huffman, there was a rockfall which resulted in Jim breaking his thigh bone (the 107-foot pit has since been christened Fractured Femur Dome). A full-scale rescue ensued, and Jim was expediently and safely extricated.

Seemingly unfazed by his ordeal, Jim was back in the cave just four months later. He and Zeke initiated the survey at this time. A short while later they were joined by Marion, Jon Zetterberg, and Robert Oakes for further survey in the many leads they had found. Subsequent trips yielded many thousands of feet of additional survey. A significant time and effort saver was affected in September 2020 when Jim, Zeke, and Marion completed the excavation of a crawlway off the bottom of the second drop from the entrance. The mappers eventually found an active streamway which led to the lowest point in the cave. By spring of 2021 Heart of Gould was nearly two miles long, 356 feet deep, and could boast 26 combined pits or climbed domes, making it one of the most vertically challenging caves in TAG. Some twenty cavers have participated in the survey, though Jim, Zeke,

Marion, Chris McMichael, and Robert Oakes have been the stalwarts. Many of the new discoveries were attained through the dome climbing exploits of Jim and Chris.”



Chris McMichael rappelling a 60' dome in HOG.

My second trip to Heart of Gould was last April when Zeke took me there so I could collect the 107-foot Fractured Femur Dome. I reported on this trip in the May grotto newsletter. Heart of Gould was our second cave for the day, and as the hour was growing late, I declined Zeke's offer to show me more of the new things they had found in

the cave at that time. Shortly after this trip, on June 7th 2021, Jim and Chris discovered a passage which changed the nature of the cave from a vertical jungle gym to a horizontal borehole, while also effectively doubling the length of the cave. Marion called me with the news to tell me that he'd just spent over 15 hours in the cave touring to the halfway point in this amazing passage, which unfortunately for Marion, can only be accessed after negotiating thirteen rigged drops and climbs. He said that even though he was first into the cave and last out, and was moving at a slow pace, he was still totally wasted. Bear in mind, Marion will be 79 years old in September, and I wonder how many of the young, tough cavers who are in their 20's and 30's today will still be doing hard caving trips 40 years from now.

The trip sounded intriguing to me so I made arrangements with Zeke for August, Friday the 13th as it turned out. He also recruited Jon Zetterberg and Cody Munday, both had been there before, for surveying. I left Thursday evening around 8PM but a major traffic blockade around Staunton delayed me by several hours and I ended up getting to Marion's house just before daybreak Friday. Oh well, sleep, for me at least, is overrated. Following a hearty breakfast, courtesy of Sharon, it became apparent that Marion was planning on joining us, though he claimed he wasn't sure just how far into the cave he would go. I wasn't to meet Zeke until 10 that morning so Marion said he was going to get an hour head-start, and he would see us somewhere around the fourth or fifth drop.

As I stated earlier the entrance to Heart of Gould is at the Hartselle contact, and is a walk-in to the first drop, a broken 55-footer. Past this is a 26-foot pit, at the bottom of which is the 60ish foot short-cut crawl dug open by Jim, Zeke, and Marion the previous September. Next are two rigged up-climbs of 36 and 20 feet. A further bit of traversing soon leads to successive pits of 60, 15, and 49 feet. The two deeper ones drop into very nice domes which are actually quite spacious and very pretty. In fact, there seemed to be coalescing domes everywhere, indicative of the complex nature which challenged exploration in this part of the cave. We caught up with Marion somewhere in this area.

At the end of the three pit-series it's necessary to climb a 60-foot rigged dome and then

drop a 24-foot pit. Beyond this the way on is through a jagged canyon which is several hundred feet long. I didn't want to hassle with my vertical gear through this, so I took a little break to pack everything away, and also give Marion a little time to catch up.

Zeke, Jon, and Cody proceeded on ahead. After a brief rest, and having seen or heard no sign of Marion, I started into the canyon. It soon transformed into a multi-level fissure and the correct route was not very obvious to me. I flailed my way through this obstacle without making voice contact with the others until I came to a rather gnarly section. Here I hesitated, as it occurred to me that I could easily be on the wrong level and may have missed the proper route altogether, which as it turned out I had. I thought it best to return to the other side of the canyon and wait for Marion at the base of the last 24-foot pit. I knew he had been in this part of the cave on his marathon trip a few weeks earlier, though I wasn't sure exactly what he might remember regarding the correct route. I hadn't been waiting long before I heard Marion scuffling, and cursing, above. He inquired as to where the youngsters were, and I informed him that they were probably way ahead and already surveying.

We started into the canyon traverse, third time for me, with Marion lagging behind eliminating offending projections with his hammer. Apparently, there were a lot of things that Marion found offensive, because he was doing an awful lot of whamming. He said at one point he remembered dropping to a lower level, which was probably where I made my mistake the first time through. We did eventually get to the next roped drop which was only 16 feet deep. This was immediately followed by a 17 foot up-rope, which brought us to the infamous drop # 12.

Sitting across the breakfast table from Marion that morning, he had already regaled me on the delights of drop 12. At the top of the 17-foot climb-up is a 30-foot crawl. Drop # 12 is at the other end with no sit-up room. Marion said you had to approach the pit while crawling backwards. I found I could turn around part way through so that the actual backing-up portion was only about ten feet. Still, it was quite tricky. It's necessary to crawl

out over the pit entrance, really nothing more than a small hole flush with floor level, with no room to do anything except lie on your stomach, until you can get your rack attached to the rope below the knot, which is in an awkward position due to the confined space. Drop 12 was only 17 feet but it was the most difficult to negotiate of all the pits. Marion struggled even more than I and was suffering from severe vertigo when he finally touched down. He declared that he thought it would be unwise for him to continue further into the cave.

A short duck under an overhanging wall puts you at the lip of the last pit, a 54-foot free rappel into a large breakdown room. Marion and I had been moving slowly, so by the time I got to the 13th pit, Zeke, Jon, and Cody were returning after surveying about a thousand feet of passage. John and Cody said they would be heading out with Marion. Zeke stayed behind in order to tour me through as much of the cave as I wished.

A couple of quick scrambles with Zeke leading the way brought us to the beginning of the recent June discovery passage. This started out as a somewhat tacky trek lasting for about a thousand feet but walking all the way. The passage gradually transcends into a dry borehole where gypsum covers walls, floor, and ceiling. This lasts for about a thousand feet and the entire passage is profusely encased in all manner of gypsum-based speleothems. The floors glisten with fine dust interspersed with delicate needles. Walls and ceiling are blanketed with flowers, curls, lips, and combs. In one area are what Zeke referred to as “beards”. The likes of these I’d never seen before. They seem to consist of tightly interwoven strands of angle hair so densely massed that they do indeed resemble a white beard. They even oscillate back and forth with the air currents. Zeke said this was as far as he and Marion had gone on Marion’s epic trip earlier in the summer.

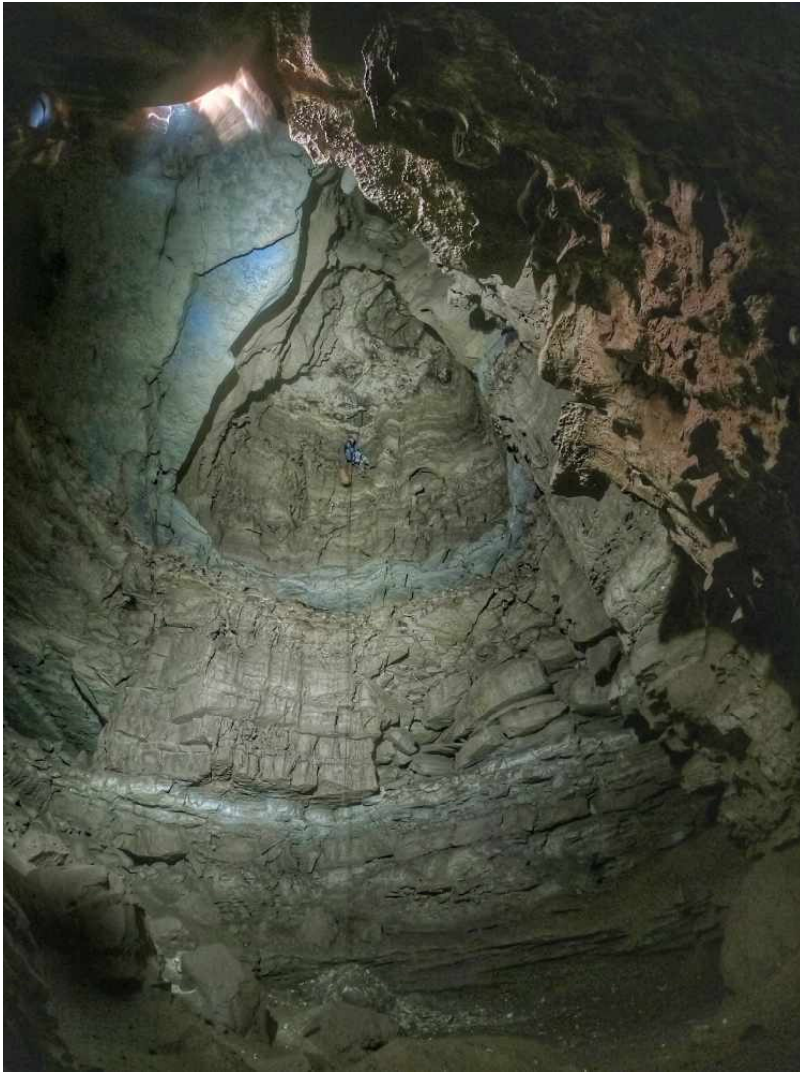


Gypsum Beards in HOG

From the “beards” we continued down the borehole. Zeke thought we were only around the half-way point, so there was still a lot of cave to see. We strolled along, largely unencumbered by any major impediments, for several thousands of feet. At one point we did have to scramble up over a short section of thin-slabbed ceiling collapse, but it only lasted for about a hundred feet. There were also a couple of short stretches where we did hands and knees, but this was mostly because it was just easier than trying to duck-walk through the occasional three-foot high reductions in ceiling heights. For the most part traversing the entire 8,000-foot-plus borehole required minimal expenditure of energy. While it may not have been hundred-foot-wide Run to the Mill borehole, it was certainly one of the most just plain delightful caving experiences I’ve had in a long time.

Near the end of the gypsum borehole were three domes, all dis-toed at over a hundred feet high. Zeke checked these out while I continued down a muddy hands and knees drain along the lower left wall which ended after about 400 feet at a small syphon-pool. Zeke later informed me that this was the most remote point in the cave with a surveyed length of 10,697 feet from the entrance,

and that I was only the third person, the other two being Jim Fox and Justin Huffman, who had ever been that far. One hour later we were back at the base of the 54-foot 13th pit and getting mentally prepared for the barrage of obstacles between us and the entrance. I was figuring on a slow exit.



*The 13th and last pit enroute to the back of HOG.
This is a 54-footer and drops into a large
breakdown room.*

Four of the thirteen pits were up-climbs on the way in, so four would be rappels on the way out. That left nine rope climbs for the exit. Getting up and out of drop # 12 was every bit the pain I thought it would be and threading back through the fissure/canyon (fourth time for me on this trip) was a slow grind. Zeke could have made it out a lot faster without me in tow, but he was gracious and

patient enough to hang back with me. It was around 10:30PM when I finally got to the top of the 55-foot pit just inside the entrance. As was the case a few weeks earlier with the Cyclops trip, it was only of twelve hours duration, but I felt like I'd been on a real caving trip. Translation...I was tired. I may be almost eight years younger than Marion, but I think I'm getting old.

Heart of Gould is located in White County, Tennessee. White has more caves than any other county in the state, with well over 1300 recorded in the TCS. This number includes Blue Spring, which at over 40 miles is the longest cave in all of TAG. After Blue Spring the next longest caves all hover around the four-mile mark. Zeke informed me that Heart of Gould is currently the fourth longest but added that when all the known passages in the cave are surveyed there is a good chance it will be poised to move up to the Number 2 spot in White County. It is already the deepest cave in the county as well. The progression of Heart of Gould from a 500-foot-long contact cave to the 4-plus miles which comprise its complex labyrinth today is an inspirational testament to what can be accomplished through an unrelenting passion to see what lies beyond the next constriction, or what beckons at the top of that high dome. The unflagging determination of cavers like Jim Fox, Zeke McKee, Marion, and others has been well compensated through the secrets unveiled within Heart of Gould, and all involved have my sincere gratitude and appreciation.



*Cobble filled passage off the bottom of breakdown
room near the 13th pit.*

FALL MAR VAR 2021 Registration Form

October 15-17, 2021

Grand Caverns, Grottoes, VA

Name:			NSS#	
Street Address			Grotto:	
City/State/Zip				
Phone:		Email:		
Emergency Contact	Name:		Phone:	
Other Members of your household attending with you (one form per household)				
Name		Email Address		
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
Now for the Details....				
	Weekend Registration (#)	Vegetarian Meal (#)	Advanced Registration Price*	Total
Adults (15+)			\$33	
Children (5-14)			\$25	
Children (under 5)			FREE	FREE
PCC Breakfast Donation			\$5	
T-Shirts XS			\$15	
S			\$15	
M			\$15	
L			\$15	
XL			\$15	
XXL			\$17.50	
3XL			\$18.50	
4XL			\$19.50	
TOTAL				

*To qualify for the Advance Registration price, registrations must be post marked by October 1, 2021. We cannot guarantee dinner or a t-shirt for those who do not make the Advance Registration deadline. On-site registration is \$38 per adult and \$30 per child (5-14 years old).

Registration includes (MAR/VAR) membership and guidebook Please make checks payable to Charlottesville Grotto and mail to: Edward Smith, PO Box 343, Earlysville, VA 22936. or for online payments use paypal.me/BlakeJordan61 and use 'friends and family' so no extra costs are added.



CAVING CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER 5TH - OCTOBER 16TH



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Sep 5 ADAM STEPHEN DIG 1PM OTR CANCELLED	Sep 6 OTR CANCELLED LABOR DAY	Sep 7	Sep 8  Meeting 7pm Live & Virtual	Sep 9 FRG Meeting - 7pm Izaak Walton League Meeting - 7pm Teddy Bear Day	Sep 10	Sep 11 Remembrance Day - 9/11
Sep 12 Chocolate Milkshake Day Grand Parents Day	Sep 13 National Peanut Day	Sep 14	Sep 15	Sep 16	Sep 17	Sep 18 Cheeseburger Day
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 Comic Book Day Daughter Day
Sep 26	Sep 27	Sep 28 National Son Day Super Hero Day	Sep 29 National Coffee day	Sep 30	Oct 1 NCRC OCR - Martinsburg, WV	Oct 2 NCRC OCR - Martinsburg, WV
Oct 3 NCRC OCR - Martinsburg, WV	Oct 4	Oct 5	Oct 6	Oct 7 Fall TAG Cave-In	Oct 8 Fall TAG Cave-In	Oct 9 Fall TAG Cave-In
Oct 10 Fall TAG Cave-In Black Coffee Cavems - Conservation Project - 10am	Oct 11 COLUMBUS DAY	Oct 12	Oct 13  Meeting 7pm - Grotto Auction Live & Virtual	Oct 14	Oct 15  Fall MARVAR - Grand Cavems	Oct 16 Bridge Day  Fall MARVAR - Grand Cavems

DEAD DOG DISPATCH



TSG 2021 Summer Picnic (Photo by Jerry Bowen)

DEAD DOG DISPATCH

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