

The Open Cave

The Newsletter of the West Virginia Cave Conservancy

Number 14

Summer 2008



WEST VIRGINIA CAVE CONSERVANCY

"Preserving the cave and karst resources of West Virginia for future generations"

Number 14

Summer 2008

The West Virginia Cave Conservancy is a non-profit, 501(c)3 organization. All contributions to the Conservancy are tax-deductible. Please send all contributions and dues to: WVCC, Inc., PO Box 243, Frankford, WV 24938. For more information on membership, visit our Web site at www.wvcc.net. Please send all contributions to the newsletter to the newsletter editor. Any internal organization of the NSS has permission to reprint materials in this newsletter with proper recognition given to the author and *The Open Cave*.

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Note to Members: Annual memberships expire on anniversary date of initial membership. Be sure to check your address label for anniversary date.

Cover Art: David Socky tempts the Rock Shark
(Photograph by Brian Williams)



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Web Site

www.wvcc.net

President's Message

By Bob Handley
WVCC President

Seven months of 2008 have gone by already and WVCC hasn't acquired even one new cave. It's been a long dry spell with a lot of activity but "no cigars."

We're still working on Bone Cave (of the Bone-Norman Cave System) in Greenbrier County, but it remains tied up in heirship litigation. As I've probably said before, the original judge died of old age a year or so ago and now they've been after the Court Recorder for more than a year for a transcript of the last trial. The case is headed for the West Virginia Supreme Court. We made an offer for the quarry property many years ago (and were assured that WVCC would get it), but there's no way for us to rush things.

We're still talking to the owner of the exceptional karst feature near Williamsburg, West Virginia—The Sinks of Sinking Creek. At our 2007 Banquet, when I mentioned this cave, I thought the deal was coming our way, but since then the Greenbrier County Farmland Protection has entered the picture (the guy may give them

an easement for the whole farm). I remain optimistic though, and feel resolution is near—we're still talking. Hopefully, get it or not, I'll have a report by OTR 2008.

We've looked at several other caves, but for one reason or another, have backed away from them (these were brought to our attention by members or other friends).

Member referrals are vital to us. We got Donaldson Cave that way. WVASS reports 4,367* caves in West Virginia and WVCC is only involved with 6 of them (I know we have 7 but Island Ford is in Virginia). Several hundred of them are caver-owned or otherwise protected, but that leaves thousands of them unprotected. Please continue to help us protect more caves and sign up new members—or old members who've let their membership run out.

Keep smiling; they'll wonder what you've been up to!

**West Virginia Caver, June 2008, V26n3*

The WVCC Calendar

August 11-15, 2008. NSS Convention in Lake City, Florida.

August 29, 2008: 2nd annual WVCC Wine and Cheese Party at the booth at OTR.

August 28-September 1, 2008. Old Timers Reunion in Dailey, West Virginia. Come by and visit us at our booth. Wine and Cheese Member Appreciation party on Friday evening.

September 19-21, 2008: Fall VAR, Covington, Virginia.

September 18-21, 2008: Gating of Trout Cave, Franklin, West Virginia. Volunteers needed and welcome!

November 15, 2008. 11th annual banquet. See article on page 6.

November 16, 2008. WVCC Board of Directors meeting to be held at Lost World Caverns, Lewisburg, West Virginia. 9:30 a.m. Lunch will be provided for a \$5 donation if the meeting goes too long.

March 12-14, 2009. The Third National Cave and Karst Conservancies Forum. Lewisburg, West Virginia.

Save the Date!!

**11th Annual WVCC Banquet
November 15, 2008**

Put it on your calendars now!! The WVCC Banquet is scheduled for November 15, 2008! Place has yet to be determined in Lewisburg, West Virginia, but cocktails begin at 5:30 p.m. with dinner starting at 7:00 p.m.

Registration for the banquet will be available starting at OTR this year. There will be a limited number of seats available, so be sure to register early while you're at OTR!!

Donaldson Cave

Clean-Up Trip

Saturday, May 31, 2008

By Pauline Apling

Donaldson Cave is a little (750 foot) cave in Berkeley County, West Virginia. It is an easy cave for beginners and is relatively close to DC.

We met at the cave parking area at 11 a.m. on Saturday, May 31, 2008, for the annual Donaldson Cave clean-up trip. We had 12 people: Pauline Apling, Bob Hoke, Randi Morse, Laura Blachek, Vrinda Manglik, and novice Scouts and their leaders John Orr, Maria Espinoza, Jeff Johnson, Mark Johnson, Paul Johnson, James Hancock, and Westin Leavitt.

It was raining rather hard as we got ready to go to the cave so we skipped the usual milling around and headed for the cave to get dry. I had a fractured shoulder that had not totally healed so I stayed in the front of the cave and picked up broken glass. Bob led the rest of the group to the lower level of the cave. About 10 minutes later I heard voices coming back my way. Parts of the cave were flooded so they were going to try a side passage. They went down there and were back in about 15 minutes. That area has some small passages and they were flooded also. So that left one side passage to go down using a handline and they could explore the south passage of the cave. Randi took some photos of some old signatures from the early 1900s.

I collected a bag of broken glass in the entrance area (which apparently was formerly a dump site). We didn't get to the areas that may have had spray paint so we'll have to try to clean those areas next year.

We headed back to the cars and ran into Ben Diedrich who was supposed to have been on the trip. He had car problems so he missed the trip. It started raining again. While we were changing clothes, a deluge hit. I couldn't even change my clothes it was raining so hard. I sat on a towel for the drive home. Just as we were pulling out, one of the Scout leaders had car trouble so we gave their battery a jump start. Everyone said they had a good trip even though they saw only 20 percent of the cave and

WVCC Membership Update

By Pauline Apling

WVCC Membership Chair

As of July 2008, the member numbers are listed below. I dropped members whose memberships expired through September 2007. I sent renewals to people whose memberships expire through June 2008.

Our statistics are:

77 Regular members
20 Family members
10 Institution
4 Sustaining members
74 Life members

8 Life institution members

1 Life periodic member

0 Benefactors

16 Complementary

194 members (not including the complementary subscribers)

Island Ford Cave Clean-Up Trip June 25, 2008

By Marian McConnell

"Hi Alex! Thanks for letting us visit Island Ford. Here's a photo and some info from last week's trip."

The above arrived via e-mail from a group who had recently done a clean-up trip in Island Ford Cave.

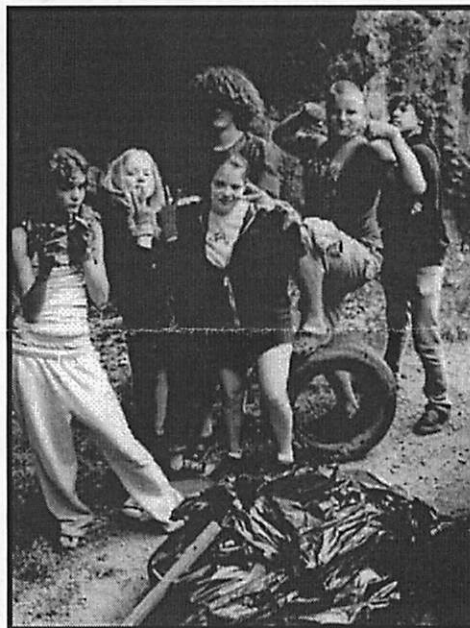
Thanks to the great team from Adventure Links who helped clean-up Island Ford Cave on June 25, 2008!

We worked for about an hour at the entrance of the cave, and collected bags of trash, and even an old tire.

Once in the cave we picked up trash and packed it out; leaving the cave in great shape.

Total time was about 4 hours of conservation. It was a great group.

Thanks to my co-leader, Carl Cornett, for taking the photos.



*Donaldson Article Continued From
Previous Page*

the weather outside was terrible.

The Grotto received a nice thank-you letter from the Scout troop a few weeks later and they said they had a really good time. They even put genuine cave mud on the letter. The leader also sent me an e-mail message saying the group had a good time and he said the kids had said "Bob and Pauline were really cool." Thanks, guys!

An Open and Shut Case

By Ed Saugstad

A crisp, clean January 10th, 2008 saw a quartet of geezer cavers, whose average age was 60+, depart the WVACS Field-station on Butler Mountain for yet another assault on Greenbrier County's Maxwellton Cave. Headed up by Dave Socky, the team included Gordon Cole, Larry Fisher, and Ed Saugstad. The plan was to enter the recently opened entrance near where the original entrance of the cave once lurked, so we drove to a nearby building site that had a paved parking lot (the road to the cave is too treacherous even for 4WD vehicles), and walked down to the entrance. A few inches of rain during the past couple of days had resulted in a massive debris flow that had totally inundated the entrance area. Once more, Mother Nature had demonstrated that she could open or close the cave as she pleased.

So, over to the vertical entrance—thank goodness someone had remembered to bring a rope! Instead of the easy stroll down Cove Creek to our planned survey area that we had been anticipating, it was back to the slow passage through Heaven, down the drop near the waterfall, through several crawlways, and finally to Cove Creek. Once at Cove Creek, there still was a 15 foot nuisance drop to negotiate and then a long stroll in and out of the stream to the Box Car Room (so named because of massive breakdown blocks), where the survey was to begin.

When last visited by a survey crew nearly a year ago, a permanent station had been set, and a rope had been rigged so that Brian Williams could descend for a quick recon.

At that time, a small waterfall that dropped about 20 feet was noted just to the right of the route the survey took. Now, after all the recent rainfall, the waterfall was roaring! Even when separated by only a few meters, the team members had a very hard time communicating. Gordon Cole descended the rope first, and had some difficulty (this area is choked with large, muddy breakdown) determining the best route to take to the stream and establishing a survey station that could be seen from above.

Once that was accomplished, the rest of the team descended, and we clambered over slick, mud-coated breakdown, a wet stream survey commenced. For the most part, the water was knee- to mid-thigh depth, with an occasional yodeling section. After a few hundred feet, another waterfall was encountered, and as further progress would necessitate becoming completely soaked, we decided to terminate this portion of the survey.

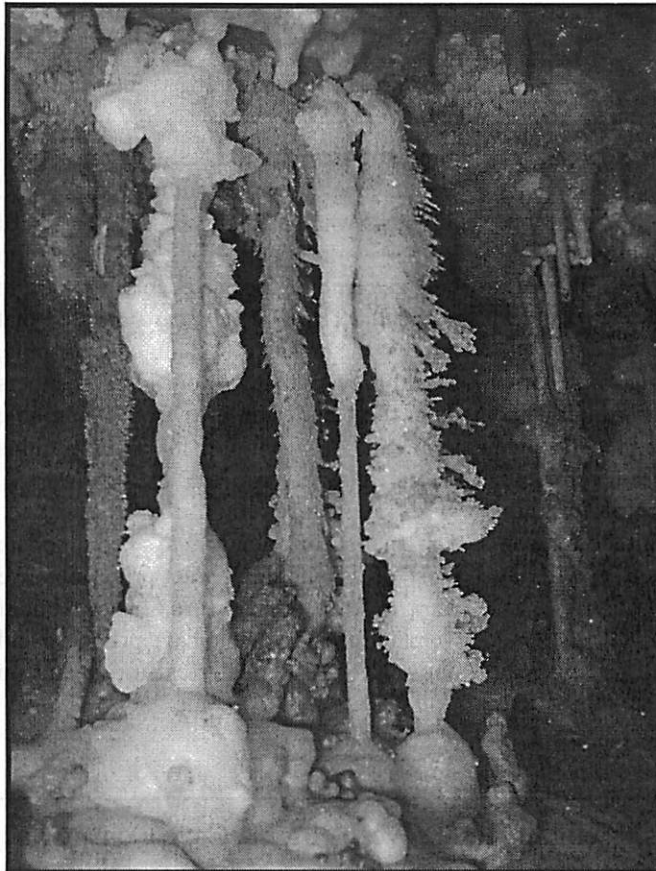
We then backtracked up Cove Creek to a very mazy upper level section, and proceeded to while away a few more hours on our knees or bellies. It was a lot of fun, but finally faced by a potential mutiny, Socky gamely called it a day and we packed up our gear and headed for the exit.

By the time everyone was up and out, it was 1 a.m. on Sunday. We were underground for 13.5 hours and got 762 feet of survey. There is a lot more to do past that last waterfall in Cove Creek, as well as in the maze, but Cove Creek (at least) is going to have to wait for drier weather.

(Editor's Note: The above article was first published in *The West Virginia Caver* in April 2008, V26n2p15. The Epilogue came from an e-mail from Ed Saugstad.)

Epilogue

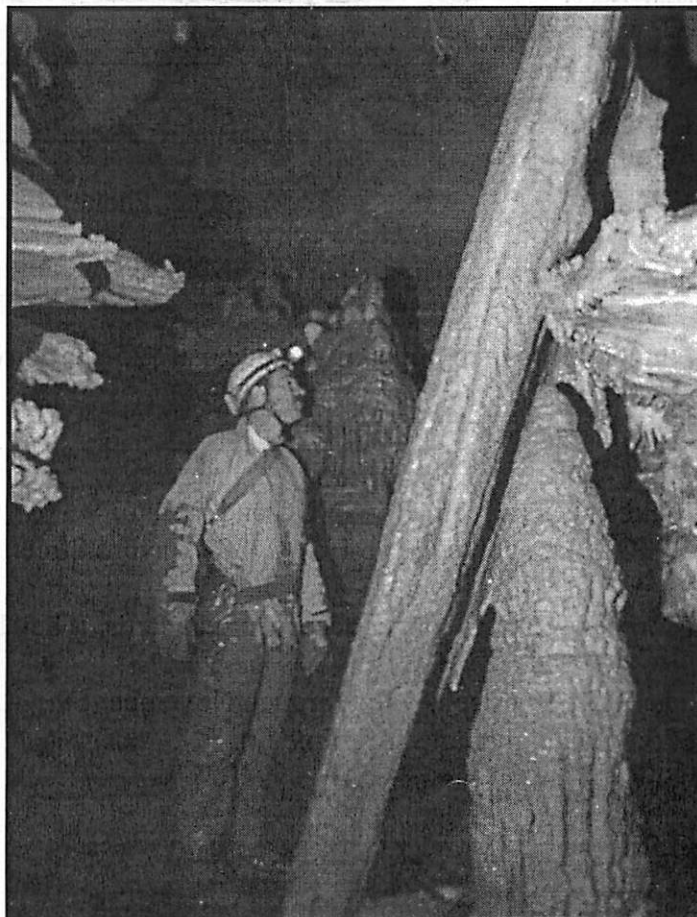
On May 10, two teams (Dave Socky, Gordon Cole, and Ed Saugstad; and Errol Glidden, Ken Haynes, and Larry Fisher) did a leapfrog survey downstream from where we stopped in January. The entire survey was in Cove Creek, which varied from mid-calf to yodeling depth; everyone except Dave was miserably cold by the time we quit. The survey total was 916 feet in a short (10.5 hour) trip. The passage still is going and still wet; the resurvey has passed the 10-mile mark.



Formations in the Heaven entrance passage (top)

David Socky and leaning formations (bottom)

(Photographs by Brian Williams)



News Flash!

This year's annual member appreciation banquet date has been changed. For years, the WVCC Banquet was on the second Saturday in November. This year the date will be on **November 15th**, the third Saturday of the month.

The Banquet will be returning to the Brier Inn with chef Dave Shifflett running the show. The Banquet Committee decided that there would be a two-tier level menu. Those wishing to have prime rib will pre-pay \$30, while those who want the vegetarian main meal or the other entrée, will pay only \$25.

Why the change in dates and pricing, you ask? The date change was due to a sched-

uling conflict with the NSS Board of Governor's meeting, which some of the WVCC directors wanted to attend. Ted Kayes of RASS worked quite diligently to try to help us combine the two events, but alas, to no avail. The WVCC Board decided that moving the banquet to Richmond, Virginia, would prevent many of our loyal members from the Charleston area from being able to attend. We want to thank Ted for all his efforts, though.

The change in pricing is to accommodate those of us who don't want prime rib. We want to keep our price reasonable, but if we paid for everyone to have prime rib and only half of us actually eat it, we end up

paying more for the entire banquet. Therefore, if we only order the number of prime rib dinners that are pre-paid, we won't lose money or barely break even like last year.

If you have a preference for the other entrée, please stop by the OTR both and let us know. Right now, the leading candidates are the marinated pork loin and the chicken francese.

Pre-registration will end on November 5th, so plan to register before that date. Please mail your banquet reservation to:

Yes, I will attend the West Virginia Cave Conservancy's Annual Banquet:

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

E-Mail: _____ Phone: _____

Number of Prime-Rib dinners at \$30 per person: _____

Number of regular/vegetarian dinners at \$25 per person: _____

Amount enclosed: _____

Make checks payable to WVCC and mail to:
WVCC Banquet, c/o Bob Hoke, 6304 Kaybro Street, Laurel, MD 20707

(Sorry, WVCC no longer accepts credit cards. They became too expensive).

The \$25/\$30 price is valid through November 5th. After that, the price is \$35 with no guarantee of prime rib.

Third National Cave and Karst Conservancies Forum

The West Virginia Cave Conservancy is pleased to announce the third National Cave and Karst Conservancies Forum that will be held March 12th through 14th, 2009 in Lewisburg, West Virginia at the Brier Inn. This event will bring together cave and karst conservancies from across the country to discuss topics affecting our organizations.

We are please to announce that Bubble Cave, LLC, will be hosting the event. Bubble Cave has approached various caving organizations for Platinum and Gold sponsorship levels to help keep the cost of the event to a minimum. The current Platinum sponsors are the West Virginia Cave Conservancy and the Cave Conservancy of the Virginias. It is also anticipated that the National Cave and Karst Management Symposium Steering Committee will be a Platinum sponsor.

Our Gold sponsors include the Battlefield Area Troglodyte Society (BATS) of

Fredericksburg, Virginia; Tri-State Grotto of Martinsburg, West Virginia; Blue Ridge Grotto of Roanoke, Virginia; the West Virginia Association for Cave Studies of Maxwelton, West Virginia; and Bubble Cave, LLC, of Berkeley Springs, West Virginia.

A call for papers to be presented is hereby announced. If you are interested in presenting, please contact John Pearson at jpearson@rcc.com or call him at 304-497-3939 to discuss. It is desired to have all abstracts submitted no later than March 1, 2009, for scheduling.

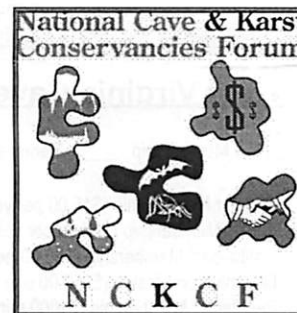
Thursday, March 12th will be the kickoff for the event with our Howdy Party to be held in the early evening, time to be set closer to the event. Food and beverages will be provided.

Friday will be for status reports from attending conservancies and submitted

papers. Tentative topics include emergency management along the lines of the White Nose Syndrome that affected the Northeastern Cave Conservancy this past winter; discussions on how do cavers, cave conservancies, and scientists work together cohesively; property tax issues; and possible deterrents to petty vandalism.

Saturday will be for a workshop on the response to White Nose Syndrome, coordination with state and federal agencies when these types of situations arise, and the process of reviewing management plans in such crises. If White Nose Syndrome looks to be an expanding issue by the time of the meeting, these issues will be critical for cave management and managers.

Now for the cost and registration information, the cost will be \$25 per attendee. This reduced rate is being offered because of our generous sponsors.



Yes, I want to attend the Third National Cave and Karst Conservancies Forum
March 12–14, 2009:

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

E-Mail: _____ Phone: _____

Number of Registrations @ \$25 per person: _____ Total: \$ _____

Make checks payable to WVCC and mail to:
Conservancy Forum c/o Bob Hoke, 6304 Kaybro Street, Laurel, MD 20707.

(Sorry, WVCC no longer accepts credit cards. They became too expensive.)