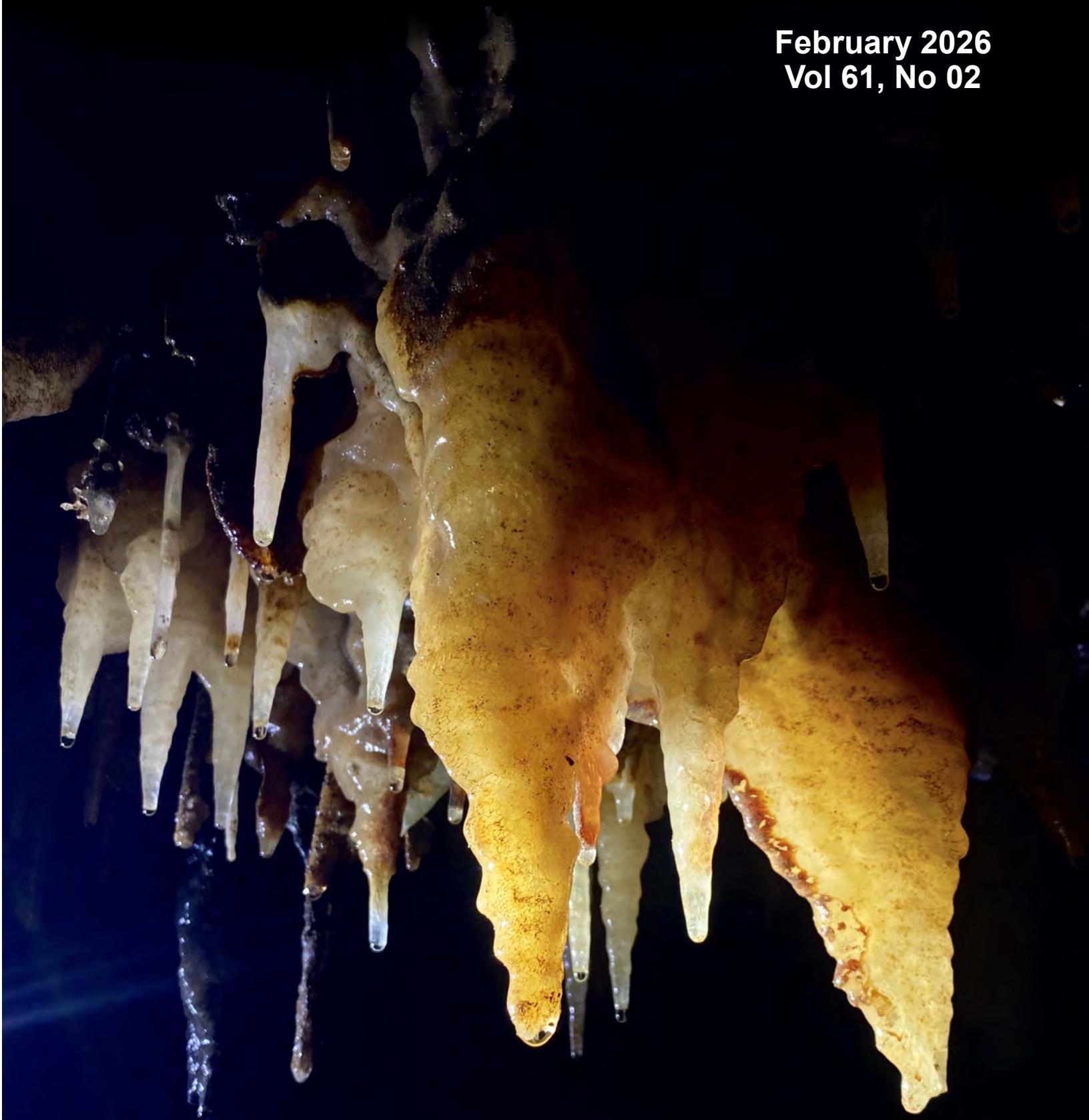


Carbide Dump

February 2026
Vol 61, No 02



The **Carbide Dump** is published monthly by the Blue Ridge Grotto of the National Speleological Society in Roanoke, Virginia. Distribution date is approximately the second week of each month. An issue may be skipped if insufficient material is received. Contributions of articles and artwork are invited and will be gratefully acknowledged. Art work originals will be returned. Contributions should be sent to the editor. Regular and associate grotto membership (\$10) includes a **Carbide Dump** subscription. Subscriber rate is \$10.00. Exchanges with other grotto and caving organizations are invited. Direct exchange mail to Mary Sue Socky.

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The Blue Ridge Grotto holds its monthly meetings every third Friday of the month at 6:30 pm at Famous Anthony's-Brookside, 6499 Williamson Rd, NW Roanoke, VA, 24019.

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Cover: Formations in Paxton Cave, VA. Photo by Lauren Appel.



Feb 20: BRG meeting, 6:00pm for dinner, meeting at 6:30pm at **Famous Anthony's-Brookside**, 6499 Williamson Rd, NW Roanoke VA 24019.

Mar 20: BRG meeting, 6:00pm for dinner, meeting at 6:30pm at **Famous Anthony's-Brookside**, 6499 Williamson Rd, NW Roanoke VA 24019.

Apr 17: BRG meeting, 6:00pm for dinner, meeting at 6:30pm at **Famous Anthony's-Brookside**, 6499 Williamson Rd, NW Roanoke VA 24019.

May 1-3: VAR Graffiti Cleanup at Lowmoor Cave, VA. See page 13 for info and RSVP.

May 8-10: Spring VAR @ Endless Caverns, VA. Hosts: Tri-State Grotto.

May 15-17: SCCi's Homecoming 2026 at the Little River Property (former TAG Fall Cave-In site).

May 30 - June 6: Virginia Cave Week.

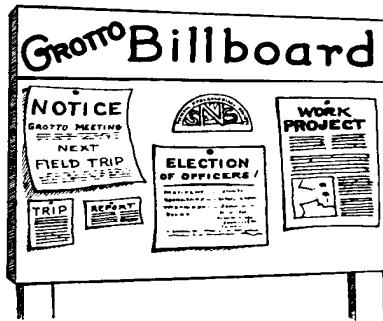
June 6: VA Cave Day

June 12-14: WVACS Classic Weekend in Greenbrier Co. WV.

July 6-10: 2026 NSS Convention, Corydon, IN (<https://caves.org/convention/2026-nss-convention/>)

Aug 22: BCCS Open House, more info soon. See www.butlercave.org

June 14 -18, 2027: 2027 NSS Convention. Del Rio, Texas.

**Long Cave Lists**

A legacy of Bob Gulden, now maintained by Paul Berger

<https://cave-exploring.com/index.php/long-and-deep-caves-of-the-world/>

VAR Limited Access Cave List

<https://var.caves.org/index.php/conservation/closed-caves/closed-cave-list>

**Treasurer's Report
02/13/2026**

Cave Bucks	\$ 117.96
Conservation	\$ 2.00
Equipment	\$ 144.12
General	\$ 5,522.90
Total	\$5,786.98

BRG Meeting & Trip Notice

The February 20, 2026 meeting of the Blue Ridge Grotto will be held in a private room at **Famous Anthony's - Brookside** (6499 Williamson Rd). Come around 6 pm to order dinner with the meeting starting at **6:30pm**. Click [here for the location of Famous Anthony's](#).

The program will be a slide show about caving (not) in *Antarctica*, by Dave Socky.

Grotto Trip

Lowmoor Cave, VA

Date & Time: Saturday, February 21, 2026. Meet at Hanging Rock Orange Market (HROM) at **8:30 am**.
NOTE: At the HROM, park in parking lot to the left of the store, near the steps

The Carbide Dump

& creek. The front park & ride is closed.

Leaders: Jeff Huffman and Susan Burr.

Coordination: Susan Burr 540-580-9409
pondlady97@gmail.com

Requirements: Beginner horizontal cave trip.

Limit: Open

Description

This is an easy beginner trip. Parking will be in the mine and access to the cave proper will be through the mine. The mine will probably be pretty cold, but the cave proper is warm. The natural entrance is probably really hard to get to with all the snow and ice. Lowmoor is a warm cave, with lots of walking in large passage. There is a little climbing around, a few crawls, a little mud here and there, but the cave is mostly dry. There are some nice formations, crystals, aragonite, and regular stalagmites, stalactites, and columns.



NCRC Level 1 Blacksburg March 7-14, 2026

Registration is now open for the NCRC Level 1 class to be held March 7-14, 2026 in Blacksburg VA. Please help spread the word! See this [link to register](#). Before you register, make sure that you are able to complete the required entry skills and have the required equipment: see [Required skills & Entry Prep](#). Please register ASAP, as space is limited. If you have questions, please email wilordorff@blacksburgrescue.org

Correction: 2026 Fall VAR DOES have a host! **VPI Cave Club** will put on their usual . Date & site TBA.

Mill Creek Sink Nature Preserve - The NSS is proud to announce a major legal and conservation success in the protection of our Mill Creek Sink Nature Preserve.

Following 12+ hours of expert testimony and public comment, the local Planning and Zoning Board voted unanimously (4-0) to deny the Special Exception Permit for a minor stormwater utility on a portion of the proposed Tara Forest development.

This achievement was made possible by the rapid mobilization of the Litigation to Protect Caves Fund and the overwhelming support of our members. To date, our community has raised over \$5,000—reaching 50% of our fundraising goal. This funding directly supported the expert legal representation provided by Jane Graham (Sunshine Law), whose evidence proved instrumental in the permit's defeat.

While the developer may appeal or reapply, this unanimous denial marks a critical milestone in safeguarding the fragile karst, biodiversity, and drinking water quality of the Mill Creek Sink system.

(Continued on page 13)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BRG Meeting Minutes – can be read on the BRG webpage at: <https://blueridgegrotto.org> under the 'BRG Organization' button.



NSS Membership: Would you like to join or renew with the NSS? See this [link](#) for details.

T-Shirts: There are 12 remaining T-shirts! \$12.00 each. L or XL, various colors: red, gold, grey, green, light blue, etc. Contact Susan Burr pondlady97@gmail.com for more information.

BRG Online Payments: BRG can now accept payments through ZELLE, a 'free' cash app. Use the following email through your banks' ZELLE app: blueridgegrottoofficers@gmail.com

BRG will also continue to maintain the BRG PayPal account (which charges fees). Anyone who pays BRG through the PayPal account will be charged a \$1.00 convenience fee for the transaction. Use blueridgegrottoofficers@gmail.com for PayPal.

New Membership Proposal. Ben Hester submitted his membership letter to Blue Ridge Grotto at the Jan 16, 2026 BRG meeting. Ben is sponsored by Susan Burr and Lauren Appel. Ben has been caving with BRG since 2013. Ben and BRG associate member Jessica Hes-

ter enjoy the challenge of caving. Since returning to caving in 2024, Ben has been on 9 BRG trips! Ben's membership letter was read by Susan Burr. His proposal is tabled until the next meeting.

OMG Tom Beaman finally retired!

New email for Tom Beaman -
tbeaman1945@gmail.com

Jan 2026 Program: The January 2026 BRG program was "Bats Bats Bats". Paige Manter, our guest speaker, is an Outreach Coordinator at the SWVA Wildlife Center as part of the Education Department. She is also a permitted private rabies vector species rehabilitator. She has worked with bats extensively and has a particular fondness for them. Paige showed us the kinds of "tree" and "cave" bats found around VA and described their care and rehabilitation. Great presentation! BRG 'passed the hat', and collected \$480.00 for SWVWC! This is in addition to the \$100 fee the center charges for presentations. Blue Ridge Grotto loves and supports this important regional wildlife center.

ROCKs - the Warm Springs Valley Project meets every Wednesday, and some Saturdays. Contact Dave Socky if you would like to participate at the following email: sockydr@cox.net.



Shenandoah Wild (D. Socky)

Warm River Cave – Beyond the Mouse Hole

Article by *David Socky*

(NOTE: Warm River Cave, VA is closed except for science and survey trips through the Warm Springs Project group with express permission from the owner.)

January 17, 2026

The “Milling About” factor was definitely making it’s effects known as the large crew met at the parking area for the Warm River Cave trip on January 17, 2026, at 10am. Seven to eight vehicles and 12 cavers milled about and eventually coalesced into four separate teams. Two teams of four aimed to go to the breakout beyond the Mouse Hole: Corey Hackley, Keeley Owens, Renee Erickson, and Noah Synowiec would pick up at the end of the WRG survey. Jason Sargent, Marissa Loftus, Andrew Newton, and Dave Socky would tie into the TDV survey and take the northeast passage. Bob Alderson and Aidan Ward decided to do a bolt climb back in Aberrant Canyon, while Mark Minton and Yvonn Droms would work on a dig near the gate in the entrance area.

We all started into the cave at different times in order to keep from getting jammed up at obstacles. Corey’s team ended up getting to the breakout area first followed by us as the second breakout crew. We helped carry in some of the bolting gear for the Aberrant Canyon team. We dropped off the bolting gear at the turn off for Aberrant Canyon just before the Ear Dip. We then took a break at the Hot Tub so Marissa could place a data logger at the infeeder. It was pleasant lounging around in the Hot Tub’s 95-degree (or so) water.

The trek to the upstream sump was une-

ventful except for some route finding issues at the end of Grabby Way which caused us to go the long way around. But we soon got back on track. Getting to the Mouse Hole was a pain, but the Mouse Hole itself was easier than I had remembered. Before going through, Marissa installed a data logger in the hot infeeder. And then it was time - Marissa went through headfirst with helmet off, but I found it easier to go through feet first on my back. I didn’t have to take my helmet off. The route to the climb up was gnarly. The climb up itself was not too bad – lots of fun stemming, but the last part where you climb straight up with tiny crumbly foot and hand holds in dribbling water was somewhat unnerving. But once up at the top of the climb, the large room with multiple passages was a pleasure.

After taking a break and getting geared up and ready to survey, we started our PBG survey (PBG stands for Peanut Butter Gummies – because Andrew’s gummy bag leaked on the way in and mixed with his peanut butter. Yum).

We tied in the TDV9 and put in three shots into a side canyon to the west. There was a dome 25 feet into the canyon with a possible lead at the top, but it was determined to be a class ‘C’ lead. The canyon went ahead for another 20 feet but ended. We then headed to the north, running immediately into a section with multiple loops. The loops were on the right (east) and were at a higher level with a bit more breakdown. At one of the intersections at station PBG7, there was a large upper level to the north which we did not get into. Most likely it

came back out to our main passage near PBG10. It will need to be surveyed on the next trip to the area. This whole area was covered in mud colored popcorn with little fingers of friable calcite growing out of the popcorn itself. The floor and walls



**Andrew in lower part of the loop
(Dave Socky)**

were just covered with it. It was hard to avoid.

Continuing northeast from PBG10, the canyon narrowed a bit, and the floor became very muddy with pools of water. It was determined that we were traveling upstream, but it was hard to tell since there wasn’t much flow. The boot sucking mud was ankle to calf deep in places, making it hard to walk. The canyon was high, starting out 30 to 40 feet high. But as we proceeded, the ceiling slowly got lower. Both walls were covered with popcorn, plus there were lots of soda straws, draperies, and stalactites all over – mostly brown. At station PBG10 the popcorn disappeared from the left wall, but there was still plenty on the right wall. After PBG16 the popcorn disappeared from the right wall too. A large block of breakdown spanned the passage at PBG17 creating a natural bridge and foretold the breakdown collapse at PBG18. The route forward at stream level was blocked by breakdown collapse, but a large upper



**(L to R) Andrew, Jason, and Marissa at PBG6
(Dave Socky)**

(Continued on page 11)

(Continued from page 10)

level could be seen about 15 feet above the top of a large vertical breakdown block. Andrew tried climbing up but was stopped by a scary overhang. Nails would make the climb easy.

It was at this point that Corey's survey team caught up with us since they had finished their survey. While I finished sketching, Corey found a place to climb up into the upper level. He reported several funky climbs and a few tight spots (technical digging to make access easier may be required) but got up far enough to where he found more large passage heading off into the darkness. The climb up at PBG18 may lead to the same area Corey got to.

At this point it was close to 8:30pm. Our turn around time was set for 9pm in or-

der to make it out by a planned midnight exit. It would take more than a half hour to do anything constructive, so we decided it was time to head out. It took a while to get everyone down the climb down since it had to be done one person at a time because of the danger of rock fall. Having a handline and traverse line installed may make the climb a little easier and safer, especially if this becomes a trade route.

On the way out, our team of four caught up with Corey's group at the Hot Tub, so we joined them for a nice soak. We stayed for about a half hour until our skin started to wrinkle and our bodies cooled down because the water temperature was hot, but still below body temperature.

Everyone went out through the breakdown except Marissa, Jason, and Andrew. They went via the stream crawl so Marissa could see about data loggers in the historic section.

Everyone was out by midnight. The PBG survey got 413 feet of survey while the DMM team finished with 313 feet for a total of



Right wall popcorn & left wall mud & rock (Dave Socky)



Andrew in the formation encrusted passage (Dave Socky)

726 feet for the day. Bob's bolt climb (See Bob's report) still requires more bolting, so it is still rigged. Mark and Vonnie made progress on their dig which looks very promising. It was a good trip! 

Greenbrier Poor Farm Cave, WV

Article by *Jeff Huffman*

On a rainy January 10, 2026 Jeff Huffman, Kelly Perkins, Mystik Miller, Jenny Varuska, Randy Wilfong, Betty Bridges, and Caroline Domeika went to Greenbrier Poor Farm cave. We entered the cave around noon and exited around 3:00 pm. Caroline and Betty were newbies that attended the YMCA with Kelly. Kelly had Mystik arrange the trip.

We entered the cave and took the passage to the left first. We did the loop from low to high and climbed down the area near the entrance. Everyone did great with the exposure and climbing. Mystik aided everyone with foot and hand holds to ensure the safety of newbies.

Next, we took the passage to the right. Yep, that passage!!!  The **infamous** rescue of 2023. Well, infamous to our Grotto.

We climbed up the breakdown and entered "Doug's Crawl". For some reason "Doug's Crawl" seemed easier to maneuver than I remembered.. Everyone made it through the squeeze and approached the pit on the other side. Jeff suggested that we climb down instead of traversing the pit since we had new cavers.

As we progressed through the cave, everyone was made aware to watch their footing and of especially slippery areas. A few people did slip at times but

we had no injuries.

The group took a break at the infamous spot that has left an unfond memory for many of us. Mystik talked about that day and she mentioned that another person got injured about 10 feet away from that same spot.

After making it to the back of that passage and viewing the formations, we returned to the entrance safely and exited the cave. Thankfully, the rain had subsided and we were able to change without getting wet. We left Poor Farm and met Ed Slepston at The Asylum restaurant for a delicious meal and socialization. 

Paxton Cave, VA

Article by *Susan Burr*

Blue Ridge Grotto Trip, 1/17/2026

Participants included Jeff Huffman, Susan Burr, Lauren Appel, Jessica Hester, Ben Hester, and Shira Goodman.

On the drive to the cave we all got to see an adult Bald Eagle. That was a huge treat for me!

On the trail heading to the cave there is a small hole in the ground. It was opened up enough so you can now get into it. Ben decided to drop down into it to check it out. It is a very small room. He did find a spotted slimy salamander which I could see looking through the opening. Once he got out we continued to the entrance which was a semi frozen



Paxton Cave Formations
(Lauren Appel)

waterfall. Lots of pretty ice formations.

In the cave we did the normal tourist trip. Of course we got lost in the maze at the beginning, but figured it out quick enough. This was Shira's first wild cave trip and she did fantastic! She also got to see several bats up close and personal. Kind of fitting after our grotto meeting program.

Just before we got to the first formation room we saw another group. I believe some were from Front Royal grotto. They asked if we knew where we were going and we replied yes. When we asked if they knew where they were going, they said no. I thought they were going to follow us, but they did not. We did eventually see the group as we were heading out. They were still heading in. I cannot remember the man's name, but he thought he knew me. He said he was part of DC grotto and his name was on the cave map as part of the Gansta Mappers. Apparently he was teaching the group the cave (*Editors note: most likely this was Miles Drake*).

When we were in the Christmas Room, some of us explored some of the side passages we hadn't been in before. It is still very mazy in this section as well, so we didn't stray too far. We did get to see even more formations though.

Before we headed out of the cave we checked out the beginning of the Historic section. This section has lots of pretty formations as well. We ended up having a great 4 hour trip.

On the way back to the cars,



Jessica framed by formations
(Ben Hester)

Lauren decided to slide in to the hole next to the trail. She wanted to see if she could see the spotted slimy salamander that Ben saw. She ended up finding a spotted salamander so I slid down into the hole. This was my first spotted salamander I have seen. We also saw 2 baby salamanders. Guess the spotted slimy salamander was hiding from us :)



Spotted Slimy Salamander
(Ben Hester)

VA Cave Week

Virginia Cave Week, May 31 to June 6, 2026, promotes an understanding of Virginia's caves and the surrounding limestone habitats known as karst. Sponsored by the Virginia Cave Board, the week is used to highlight the importance of caves and karst and provide resources and educational opportunities to engage the community in conservation efforts. Educators are encouraged to involve their students using in-class activities and visitation to the state's numerous commercial caves.



BRG Winter Party

(L to R, T to B) Keith Goggin, Dave Socky, Jeff Huffman, Hillary Huffman, Lauren Appel, Jen Suggs, Helene Ferguson, Barry Ferguson, Alex Sproul, Mary Sue Socky, Lisa Goggin, Marian McConnell, Susan Burr, and Trish Geiger. Not pictured: Tom Beaman and Mary Lou Holland.



Great Savannah Cave System Update

As of January 16, 2026 the Great Savannah Cave System, WV is 55.37 miles long. McClung Cave is 26.13 miles and Maxwelton Sink Cave is 29.24 miles (of which Sweetwater is 12.71 miles!).

Only 3998 feet of survey is needed in order for Maxwelton Sink Cave to break 30 miles! And that will also put the Great Savannah Cave System over 56 miles!



Inspiration Point in McClung Cave. Photo by Martyn Farr



VAR Graffiti Cleanup at Lowmoor Cave

May 2 - 3, 2026

Brush up on your conservation goals. Pack up your elbow grease and some grotto members, and then join the VAR Conservation Committee efforts to scrub graffiti from a much-maligned Virginia cave near I-64's Low Moor exit.

Camping is available Friday & Saturday evening at the RASS field station.

Lunch and water will be provided Saturday, but please bring your own snacks and extra water. The cave is mostly dry and much warmer than most Virginia caves.

Sponsored by VAR Conservation Committee—we need and appreciate volunteers!

Supplies to Bring

- Wire and plastic brushes
- Extra toothbrushes
- 1- to 3-gallon containers
- Spray bottles for water
- Rags

Details and sign-up can be found at [this link](#). Please RSVP to help us plan lunch and how many cave walls we may be able to clean. Ken Walsh

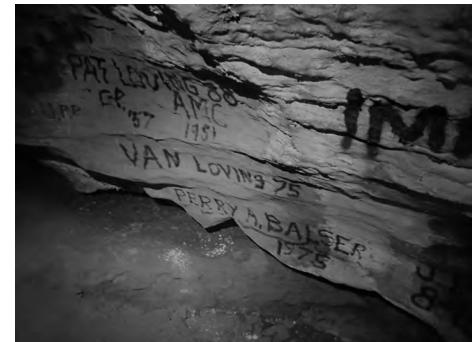


Photo credit: Mark Daughridge

2026 NSS Convention Info

Howdy Cavers!!! On behalf of the 2026 NSS Convention crew, we are excited to welcome you to historic Corydon, Indiana for the big event - July 6-10! Join us in the Ohio River Valley for a week of great times, amazing friends, and the beautiful caves and wild places of southern Indiana and Kentucky! Hundreds of caves within an hour's drive await, as well as the longest cave in the world just three hours away in Mammoth Cave National Park! Other excursions include hiking in Hoosier National Forest and other nearby state parks (O'Bannon Woods, Clifty Falls, and Spring Mill State Park), floating on the scenic Blue River, or visiting one of the many beautiful commercial caves in the region. Other sights worth visiting include downtown Louisville, West Baden Springs Hotel, Holiday World, and the National Cave Museum, to name a few! The 2026 Convention will also feature copious learning opportunities at various sessions and workshops throughout the week as well as dozens of fantastic cave vendors, Junior Speleological Society activities, and more! Guests can have the

joy of listening to tunes and enjoying a cold beverage at the campground each evening with old and new friends. Pre and post-convention camps are also being planned for those arriving early or staying late in the area. There are plenty of adventures for everyone! Stay tuned as more information will continue to be added to the website ([caves.org/convention](#)) and social media pages ([facebook.com/NSSconvention](#))

Questions? Want to volunteer? Email us at 2026convention@caves.org

Can't wait to see y'all there!

Sincerely, Your 2026 NSS Convention Team. "Hundreds of Caves, Hundreds of Miles"



(Announcements continued from page 9)

VAR Limited Access Cave List can be found at this [link](#). Please send changes and updates to Brad Blase at blase@virginiacaves.org or Dave Socky at sockydr@cox.net

CLOSED CAVES

- **Rapps Cave, WV:** new restrictions. **Cave is now closed Oct. 1 - May 1** for hibernating bats!
- **Cave Spring Cave, Lexington, VA** has been sold to the Maury Service Authority (regional water company).

Winter Bat Closure for some caves. These closures are primarily for hibernacula.

- ◆ WV: closed Sept 1 - May 15
- ◆ VA: closed Oct. 15 - Apr. 15



D Socky

Grotto Trip Log

11/22/2025: Graham Pit & Triplet Cave, VA. Participants: David Socky, Rick Lambert, Keith Sweeney, Andrew Newton, Aubrey Stallard, Conner Smith, and Mia Blyseth. Graham Pit has a tight vertical entrance (climbable) which opened into a small room. It continued to the right. A smaller crawl presented itself with a 6-foot climb down into another small room. Unfortunately, there were no leads out of this small room. We surveyed the whole thing in 7 shots for a total of 74 feet. Jason Sargent joined us at Triplet Cave. Rick Lambert went in immediately and started working on widening the keyhole slot. Jason and Andrew worked on digging out the dig face and actually got into it for a body length and a half, but it was really tight. It was nice because we didn't have to bring spoils out to the entrance anymore. The spoils are used to fill up holes in the walking canyon just preceding the dig face.

12/20/2025: BRG trip to Tawney Cave and Link's Cave, VA. Jeff Huffman, Susan Burr, Bambi Marshall, Jessica Hester, Ben Hester, Tim Boone. Went to Tawney's. Dry conditions, nice formations. No bats in the hibernaculum. Could not find the Emerald Room. Links Cave still has tons of bugs and spiders, and some nice formations, too.

Jan 2026: Robert Balch went ridge walking on Laurel Mountain Preserve, near Bassett, VA. There are limestone areas – Robert found a shelter cave.

1/10/2026: On a rainy January, Jeff Huffman, Kelly Perkins, Mystik Miller, Jenny Varuska, Randy Wilfong, Betty Bridges, and Caroline Domeika went to **Greenbriar Poor Farm Cave, WV.** We entered the cave around noon and exited around 3:00 pm. Caroline and Betty were newbies that attended the YMCA with Kelly. Kelly had Mystik arrange the trip. The group visited the entire cave, including the area where Doug Feller broke his leg in 2023. After the cave trip, they met Ed Slepston at The Asylum restaurant for dinner.

1/10/2026: McClung Cave, WV. Participants included David Socky, Joe Zokaites, Errol Glidden, and Deneshia Farraris. We went back to the 12-foot-high lead that Bob had bolted up on the previous trip along the GDS passage (Geezer Deluxe Survey). It was easier getting off the rope than I thought it would be, but the tight crawl at the top of the drop was a pain. It was a gnarly crawl for about 2 body lengths. Then it opened up just enough that it was comfortable to sketch. We actually got to survey some walking passage, but after a very tight crawl the lead ended in a 10-foot diameter room. We surveyed 200 feet of virgin cave on a good 7-hour trip. On the way out, water levels were noticeably up from a rainstorm during the day.

1/14/2026: Shenandoah Wild Cave, VA. Participants included David Socky, Blaine Schubert, Davis Gunnin, Shea Gunnin, Casey Tucker, Joe Zokaites, and Greg McCoy. Carol Tiderman was surface support. While the rest of the team went to do Peccary bone stuff, Joe and I went to the Aragonite Room to find and dig open the crawl that Rick Royer had gotten into that possibly connected with a surface dig. But we couldn't find the crawl. It was really muddy, goopy, and climby. It was hard to move around because so much mud would stick to our boots that it was hard to walk, let alone climb up steep stuff. We finally gave up and headed back to the bone site. Davis found a fifth Peccary and maybe a sixth. Bones all over the place. Collecting was finished by 3p. Bones were packed up and we slowly made our way out. Good 6-hour trip!

1/17: Warm River Cave, VA. (NOTE: *Warm River Cave is closed except for science and survey trips through the Warm Springs Project group with express permission from the owner.*) Participants included David Socky, Jason Sargent, Marissa Loftus, and Andrew Newton-Team 1, Bob Alderson and Aidan Ward-Bolt Climb team. Corey Hackley, Keely Owen, Renee Erickson, Noah Synowiec-Team 2. Mark Minton and

Yvonne Droms-entrance dig team. Two teams went beyond the Mouse Hole. Bob and Aidan did a bolt climb in Aberrant Canyon, and Mark & Vonnie worked on a dig near the entrance. A total of 412 feet of new survey was done for a 12-hour trip.

1/21: Dunn's Cave, VA. Participants included David Socky, Joe and Carol Zokaites, and Bob Alderson. Joe, Carol, and I surveyed in the NW branch while Bob dug at the sand/clay dig above the Dark Hole. We were stopped by a 14-foot drop. One or two more survey trips should finish the NW branch of the cave. We surveyed a total of 298 feet on a fun five hour trip.

2/4: Dunn's Cave, VA. Participants included David Socky, Bill Koerschner, and Bob Alderson. We had to use crampons and micro spikes to get to the cave since the snow-covered ice was too slippery with just regular boots. Coming back out, though, we glissaded down the hill - lots of fun! We finished the survey of the smaller NW branch, except for two side leads on the southeast side of the branch. The 14-foot-deep pit turned out to be free climbable. Bob put in three nails using my drill to make the climb a little safer. We surveyed to the very end of the section, pushing all leads as much as we could. It was 6 hour trip with 160 feet surveyed.

2/7: Benedict Cave, WV. Participants included David Socky, Nick Socky, and Andrew Allard. This was a day trip on a cold (15 degrees F) Saturday. It was a little slippery from the ice getting into the entrance but not bad. We surveyed mostly big walking trunk passage. I enjoyed the break from sketching very much. Andrew was good at pushing all the tight side leads, most of which didn't go or were too tight. We finished up at the main intersection where the trunk passage splits into two passages. We surveyed 1062 feet in 6 hours! It was a good trip.



Vote for your Favorite Five

These **CARBIDE DUMP** covers from 2025 are eligible to be entered in this year's NSS Cover Art Salon.

Send your votes by email to Mary Sue Socky at sockymss@cox.net.

Selected **CARBIDE DUMP** covers will be displayed at the NSS Cover Art Salon during the NSS Convention, July 6-10, 2026 in Corydon, IN.

Anyone can vote. Any number of times!

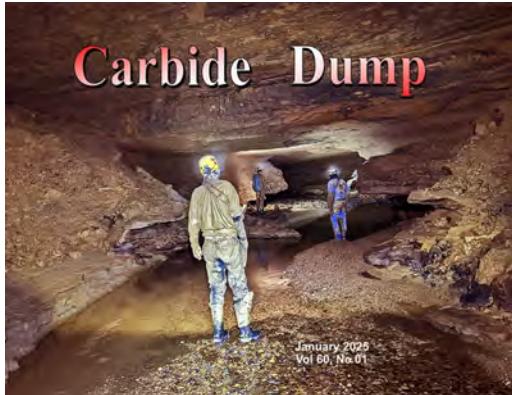
Vote 5 times for your favorite. Or, vote only for sketched artwork. Vote for any photo that has green in it. Vote against your previous

vote – we don't care! BRG knows how to pick 'em!

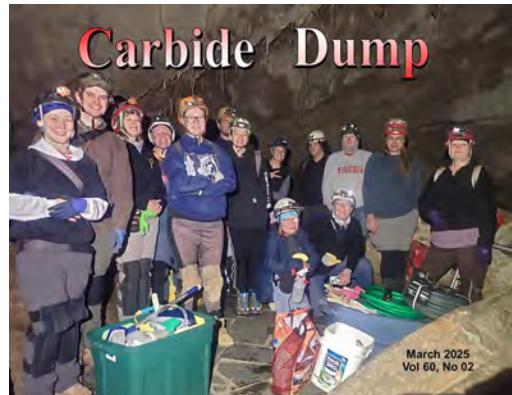
Voting ends April 25, 2025.

The covers are much more stunning in color – look at them on-line for the best viewing at <https://blueridgegrotto.org/carbidedump.htm>.

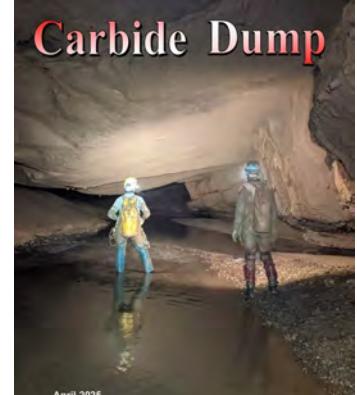
Below are covers from the 2025 **CARBIDE DUMPS**



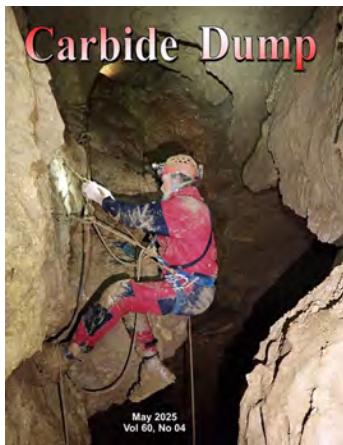
Jan 2025 v60 n1



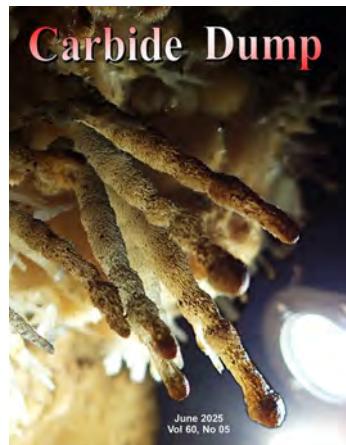
Mar 2025 v60 n2



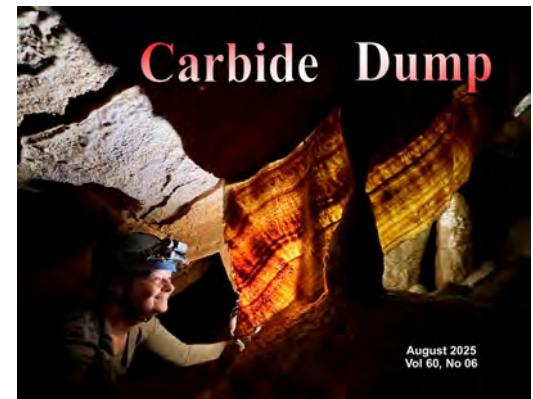
April 2025 v60 n3



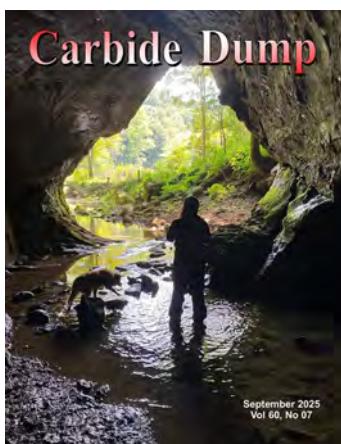
May 2025 v60 n4



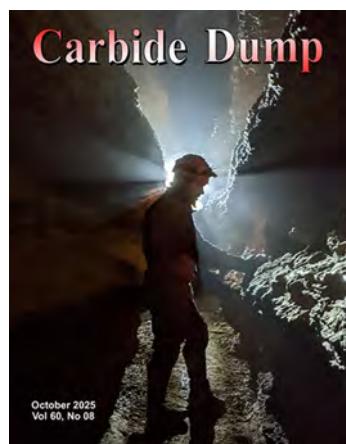
June 2025 v60 n5



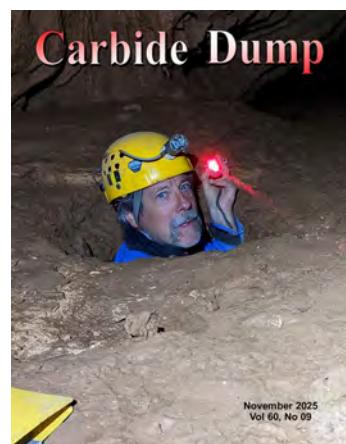
August 2025 v60 n6



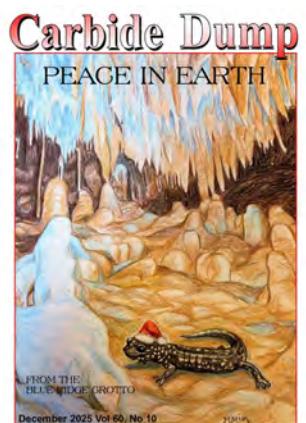
September 2025 v60 n7



October 2025 v60 n8



November 2025 v60 n9



Dec 2025 v60 n10