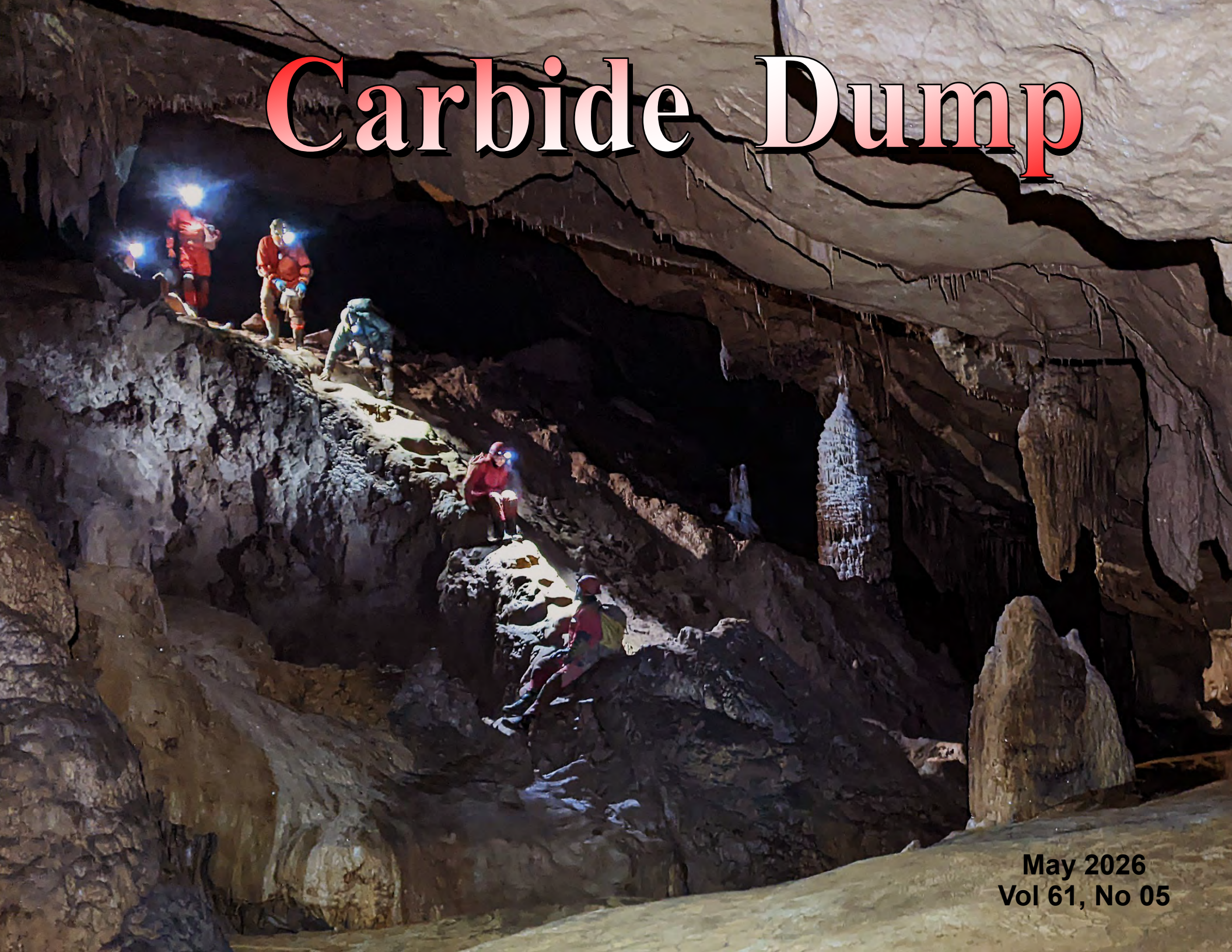


Carbide Dump



May 2026
Vol 61, No 05

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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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Contributors: David & Mary Sue Socky, Susan Burr, Marian McConnell, Ben Hester, Jacob Whitlock, Bambi Marshall, Kelley McCarthy, Jeff East, and Jerry Fuller.

Cover: *Piercy's Mill Cave, WV*. Taken during a photo trip November 17, 2025. Photo by Dave Socky

CAVERS CALENDAR

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

May 9-16: National NCRC Week-long, Mentone, AL

May 15: BRG meeting 6p @ Famous Anthony's – Brookside. Roanoke VA

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

May 22-25: Speleofest, Lone Star Cave Preserve, Bonnierville KY.

May 30 - June 6: Virginia Cave Week.

June 6: VA Cave Day. See page 31.

June 6: BRG celebrates Cave Day at Dixie Caverns with SWVAWC from 10 am to 2:30 pm.

June 12-14: WVACS Classic Weekend in Greenbrier Co. WV. See page 36 for details.

June 19: BRG meeting 6p @ Famous Anthony's – Brookside. Roanoke VA

July 6-10: 2026 NSS Convention, Cor-

ndon, IN (<https://caves.org/convention/2026-nss-convention/>)

July 18: Cave Day with BRG at Meadowbrook Library, Shawsville, VA from 10 am to 3 pm. See page 31.

August 22: BCCS Open House. See www.butlercave.org

Sept 3-7: Old Timers Reunion, Daily, WV.

Fall 2026: Fall VAR hosted by VPI Cave Club. Date & site TBA.

Sept 25-27: Fall MAR @ Newville Lions Club Fairgrounds in Newville, PA.

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

Long Cave Lists

A legacy of Bob Gulden, now maintained by Paul Berger

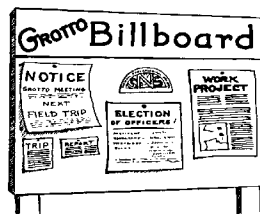
<https://cave-exploring.com/index.php/long-and-deep-caves-of-the-world/>

VAR Limited Access Cave List

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

Treasurer's Report 05/05/2026

Cave Bucks	\$ 147.96
Conservation	\$ 2.00
Equipment	\$ 144.12
General	\$5,474.31
Total	\$5,768.39



BRG Meeting & Trip Notice

The **May 15, 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 PowerPoint slide show about Wishing Well Cave. The slide show was presented by Phil Lucas at the 2011 WVCC Banquet. The slide show should be around 30 minutes or so.

Grotto Trip

Wishing Well Cave, VA

Date & Time: Saturday, Mar 16, 2026. Meet at Hanging Rock Orange Market (HROM) at **8:30 am**.

Leader: Susan Burr & Jeff Huffman.

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

Requirements: Horizontal cave trip with lots of crawling but some nice stuff too. Note: There is no cell service at Wishing Well Cave.

Description

The entrance is a 40 foot ladder climb down an actual wishing well! After doing some sporting cave passage, including the 'boardwalk crawl', there is some pretty nice passage, including loads of formations. Bring your camera. Be warned, this is an intermediate trip with plenty of crawling. But the challenges are worth it.

The goal for this trip is Echo Junction, a large room with big breakdown and lots of formations. South Sugar Run is the main route to get there, while going past "The Declivity" and "Sampson Sea". Several places around Echo Junction that may be worth visiting is the Glass Menagerie and Zeta Dome.



Formations in Echo Junction
Dave Socky 2022

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. See vacaveweek.com for more information.

Blue Ridge Grotto and Cave Day

Dixie Caverns has given Blue Ridge Grotto permission to celebrate **Cave Day on Saturday, June 6, 2026**, in the Dixie Caverns parking lot from 10am until 2:30pm.

There will be a kiosk with cave and bat info, display boards, the squeezebox and we will entertain the public for a few hours.

To volunteer, contact MarySue Socky sockymss@cox.net 540-529-3954.

Hang Out with Koda: Susan Burr has been messaging with the South West Virginia Wildlife Center (SWVAWC), inquiring if their *Ambassador Bat, Koda (and human attendant)* would join BRG at Dixie Caverns on **June 6, 2026**. Susan found that yes, they had that day 'open' and Koda's appearance would be possible for two hours at \$250. BRG at the April grotto meeting agreed to help fund Koda's appearance. Private donations towards Koda's appearance would also be accepted. Contact Susan Burr pondlady97@gmail.com for info.



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 10 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 transac-

tion. Use the this link - blueridgegrottoofficers@gmail.com for PayPal.

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

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

Upcoming BRG Activities

VA Cave Week

Virginia Cave Week, **May 31 -June 6, 2026**, promotes an understanding of Virginia's caves and the surrounding limestone habitats known as karst. Sponsored

Meadowbrook Library

Shawsville, VA **Sat July 18, 2026 from 10 am to 3 pm**. Cave education, viewing of the *Murder Hole* video, show and tell with cave gear, and the squeezebox. Contact Marian McConnell at marian.mcconnell@gmail.com or call at 540-309-4707 to volunteer.

Carpenter Swago Survey

Article & photos by *Dave Socky*

I hadn't been to Carpenter Swago Cave, WV since February of 2023, so when Shawn Hogbin published an upcoming trip for April 18, 2026, I jumped on it. So on Saturday of 4/18 I met Shawn at the WVACS field station for a day trip of surveying in Carpenter Swago (the WVACS field station was particularly crowded because Payal Razdan was hosting a Boy Scout caving event that weekend).

We entered the Carpenter entrance at about 11:30am, rappelling down the 77 entrance drop and then an 18 foot nuisance drop next to a large old log. Of course, even with the drought, we had to drop through a waterfall near the bottom. But if you rappelled fast enough, and maneuvered just right, it was possible to avoid most of the water.

We headed north and then east, traversing along Crumbling Gallery. This was mostly walking through nicely sized dry passage. But after 800 or so feet, the floor opened up and we did an interesting section with rigged traverses. The exposure down to the lower level was about 30 or 40 feet with slopy, minimal sized ledges along the way. Thus the



Shawn in the narrow passage above Crumbling Canyon.

traverse lines. At the end of the traverses was a rigged step across made for long legged persons. It was a bit of an adrenalin rush.

After a bit more of nice walking passage, we reached our survey. It was a climb up to an upper level over the top of the Crumbling Gallery passage. The passage was mostly walking, narrow, and very tall. It was a pleasantly dry. In spite of the fact that our survey was above the Crumbling Gallery, it was a separate passage. However, there were numerous small holes and cracks down to the lower level.

We surveyed maybe about 400 feet before the holes to the lower level got a lot bigger and eventually the floor disappeared and the ledges became small. It finally got to the point that the exposure became too great for my comfort level. Shawn's comfort level allowed him to stem across a bit more and confirm that the upper level more or less merged with the lower level. We were done with this section.

We then went back to where we had started and did cross sections for two surveys where the cross sections were non existent. One section as a stream crawl, but we could mostly avoid the water. The biggest problem was finding old survey stations.

After finishing with the cross sections, we headed back west and climbed a 30 foot rope into the Middle Dome Complex. At the end of the Complex was a stream passage where Shawn wanted to check for water levels and access to the upstream stream crawl.

The water levels were low, so Shawn went about 100 feet and it kept going, although it was tight in spots. He said I probably wouldn't fit.

We then went to survey the down-stream crawl which had a tight start, which I barely fit through. It was really muddy and wet, but it opened up right away. The passage itself was a combination of stoop walk, walking, and crawling with a stream and lots of cold air blowing in our faces. We surveyed perhaps 200 feet until I finally called it because I was getting cold. It was about 7 pm.

After rappelling down the 30 foot climb, we caved up slope for a little while until



Bird nest & eggs near top of entrance

we got to another rope. It was around 60 feet high. The top was an easy off - much easier than the other one.

From there it was only 5 minutes to the bottom of the entrance drop. We both got pretty wet going up.

Near the top was a bird nest on the wall. As I came up to it, I saw a bird sitting on her eggs. My face was just about 2 feet from the nest before she flew out. There were five little eggs in the nest. I only got a quick glimpse of the bird, but I'm guessing it was an Eastern Phoebe.

The top of the pit was only another 10 feet up. It was dusk when we got out. Good trip with 600 feet in the book on a 9.25 hour trip.



Shawn climbing out

Porters Cave

Article by *Susan Burr*

3/21/26

Trip participants: Susan Burr, Lauren Appel, Jessica and Ben Hester, Nick Schmalenberger, Bambi Marshall, Jonathan Constantine, Tim Boone, Meghan Christy, and Tim Klein.

Our group of 10 cavers went to Porter's Cave and included 2 newbies, Tim Klein & Meghan Christy. This was a beautiful day. We saw lots of pretty wildflowers on the way to and from the cave. I was pleased to see the gate was basically clear. I only had to remove a bunch of leaves. I asked Ben to be in charge of opening and closing the gate. Once the gate was open we all headed in.

Once we started into the cave I mentioned that the last time we were there we had seen a cave rat in the first section. I think Ben saw it first, but we saw a cave rat with several babies in that first section! I gave Ben 1500 points for the find. I play the game of giving out points for finding cool creatures in a cave to everyone. Once everyone got a chance to see them and get some pictures we headed into the cave.

I mentioned at the beginning this was going to be a "learn the cave" trip. I would stop at the major intersections and

point out which passages/directions went to which section of the cave. Ben had a map and would locate the area on the map. We did the normal tourist loop with the addition of going through the Keyhole to the Natural Bridge.

When we were at the Keyhole, Meghan was a bit apprehensive. We did manage to get her half way in, but she decided she absolutely did not want to continue. Jess stayed back with her as I led the rest of the group on.

We took what I felt was the safer route to the Natural Bridge, which is the route to the right as you get through the Keyhole. We played around a little and took some pictures and then headed back out.

We didn't want to stay too long since others were waiting on us to return. Well on the way out, Jonathan dropped his cave pack down into a tight crevice. I got most of the group back out of the Keyhole while the rest of us stayed back to attempt to retrieve the pack. We were unsuccessful. It was just too far down.

We decided we would leave it and try to retrieve it another day. When we got back to the rest of the group they came up with a plan to use some webbing and a carabiner taped open with duct tape.



Cave Rat with babies.
Photo by Bambi Marshall

I'm not a hundred percent sure who went back through the keyhole to try and retrieve it, but I was told Tim Klein was the one who actually managed to snag the pack. So this was a successful cave rescue...of a pack.

Once we regrouped we headed back to one of the major intersections. Again I pointed out where each passage went. Our next stop was to Grand Avenue with another Natural Bridge. We played around in there taking lots of pictures and checking out the room. I took them back to the tight passage toward the back of Grand Avenue and had several takers go through. Once we checked out everything we headed back to the major intersection again. I did take several of our group out in a different passage that required climbing out from below the intersection. After going over where the passages converged again, we continued on.

The next stop was the first major intersection we came to when we first entered the cave. I went over where all the passages went, to refresh their memories. Then we headed to the Formation Room. This room has lots of cave crickets and some spiders, fossils & formations. Many pictures taken in here!

We again stopped at the first major intersection and had another refresher of all the passages. We then continued toward the Big Slit. On the way to the Big Slit there is a spot where I had 3 cavers



Grand Avenue in Porters Cave, VA. Photo by Ben Hester

(Continued on page 35)

Warm Springs Project - Howlin' Cave Breakout

Article & photos by *Jacob Whitlock* with comments by *Dave Socky*

Normally, I would have been on this trip, but I was good and stayed at home, taking care of Mary Sue, who had shoulder surgery just two days before this trip. I missed a good trip, but as you will see, the best is yet to come... Dave Socky

Jacob Whitlock reporting:

On April 25, 2026, a group of 11 cavers from RASS and the Warm Springs Project teamed up to work on the dig lead in Howlin' Cave (Formerly the Audible Air Dig) that broke out into cave passage with a mud dig back on April 11, and continued working on the Handstand Hole dig. The group met around 10:00am at Keith Sweeney's house to gear up and carpool to the dig site.



Andrew spotting Chris on the down climb. It is worth noting that this was Chris's first real cave trip and he may now forever expect to discover virgin borehole on every dig.

The team included Andrew Newton, Jacob Whitlock, Amos Mincin, Jim Campbell, Nick Spokes, Connor Smith, Keith Sweeney, Tim Goodloe, Mia Blyseth, Rob Grace, Jason Sargent, and Chris Buckman.

The group arrived at the dig sites at around 11:00 and began digging on the two digs that blow warm (about 68°F) air. Amos and Jim dug on Handstand Hole while Jacob, Nick, Andrew and Chris entered Howlin' Cave to dig on the small clay dig lead that angles down at about 35 degrees, had obvious passage behind it, and lots of warm air.

Jacob moved clay out of the hole, either tossing it farther into the passage or handing off the spoils to Nick who tossed them into a small room adjacent to the dig. After 20 to 30 minutes, the group was able to easily slide through the hole into a room with cave popcorn coating the walls and floor, some of which was very reminiscent to the small cone-like popcorn in the new section in Warm River Cave past the Mouse Hole. There were also some popcorn-like formations on some of the rocks that look very similar to turkey tail mushrooms!

Inside of the room, there was a roughly 15-foot climb down some boulders that required a webbing handline to descend. Beyond that was a 30 to 40-foot dome and **WALKING BOREHOLE TRUNK PASSAGE!**

After Jacob, Andrew, Chris and Nick crawled down past the squeeze, the group called the rest of the crew at the surface to join them. Andrew rigged up a handline, and arm-rappelled down the climb into the dome room.

Some swear they could hear the cave beckoning them on but bravely fought their worst urges. They resisted, and drew the line at a rock about 50-feet past the previous dig that nobody will cross until survey can occur. The passage appears to be angling downwards



Andrew looking into the bore.

and the ceiling comes down to about 6 to 8-feet high past the dome room. It appears to be easy walking passage as far as the group could see.

No buckets or straws were needed and after about an hour in the cave some of the team decided to hang out for a bit while others exited the cave.

While hanging out in the dome room, the team inside the cave could hear hammer blows from the surface directly above them! We believe that the Handstand Hole dig will eventually become a vertical skylight entrance to the cave and will be a great place to haul gear up and out of the cave in the future to avoid having to drag it out of the two squeezes in the current horizontal entrance. Once opened, it also could make for a very short vertical through-trip if one feels so inclined.

(Continued on page 35)

(Howlin' Cave' continued from page 34)

At the surface, Amos and Jim continued picking away at Handstand Hole with occasional help from the others in the group. Eventually, Jim, Jacob, and Nick split off to go check out a few caves near Dogwood Cave just up the driveway from the Hot Air Digs. After sharing stories and celebrating with the surface crew, the group covered the dig and cave back up with pallets and departed.

I really have to commend the team who held back and didn't scoop the virgin cave past the 50 foot limit, waiting until the survey could be started. It took a lot of will power not to run ahead and see what was beyond the limits of their eyes. I know I would have been sorely tempted.

This is a truly exciting breakthrough, especially considering the amount of air blowing out, plus the fact that the air is

very humid and the temperature is around 68 degrees F. This indicates that it likely connects into Warm River Cave. This cave is very close to the Conun-

drums section of Warm River, but there is around 150 feet of vertical distance between the two, so it would be good to find a deep pit or two! Dave Socky



Tim and Mia looking down the trunk passage past the dome from a rock that marked the farthest anyone was allowed to walk in the cave on this trip.

(Porters from page 33)

who agreed to get their picture taken with what looks like Mickey Mouse ears. At the Big Slit some cavers climbed up and over, back to the adjacent section near the formations. When we were headed out Lauren, Ben, Jess, and Jonathan agreed to go through what I call the Newbie Torture Passage. The passage ends with having to come through a VERY small/tight opening and then crawl out a small passage to the main passage. Once everyone made it out we were now on our way out of the cave. We came out climbing up the dry waterfall (that is what I have always called it. Not sure if that is the correct name though.)

Once Ben got back to the entrance room he climbed up to unlock the gate and we all climbed out. Once the gate was locked up we had an after cave group picture and then hiked back out to the cars. We had a really good, approximately 4 ½ hour, cave trip. Afterwards we all ate at Bella's in Clifton Forge.

Side note: This trip was not without having some slow periods when we helped Meghan, in which this was her very first wild cave trip, through some more difficult or "scary" looking obstacles. She took directions very well and made it through everything except the Keyhole, which is the most difficult and awkward thing we had to do. For her first trip she did great and I believe will possibly try another easy cave trip with us.



Lauren on the Natural Bridge by Bambi Marshall



Back Row: Tim Klein, Meghan Christy, Ben Hester, Jess Hester, Tim Boone, Susan Burr, Bambi Marshall. **Front Row:** Jonathan Constantine, Lauren Appel, Nick Schmalenberger. Photo by Ben Hester

Spring VAR 2026

May 8-10, 2026 Endless Caverns, VA

Contact: John DiCarlo (Tri-State Grotto) dicarlo@myactv.net or 301-432-2323

Cost: \$50.00 (\$45 for 16 years old or younger)

Camping: Both tent and RV camping, flush toilets, and hot showers in the club house, with extra porta-pots in camp. There are also nearby hotels.

Caving: There will be self-led and guided trips.

Friday: Arrive, register, set up camp, Friday night sign-up for guided cave trips.

Saturday: Go caving, go exploring, visit friends, relax.

Saturday Dinner: Catered dinner guaranteed to all who pre-register.

Evening Program: TBA

Sunday: VAR Business Meeting: 9:00 AM

Registration: <https://www.zeffy.com/en-US/ticketing/spring-var--2026>

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

CLOSED CAVES

- Cave Spring Cave, Lexington, VA has been sold to the Maury Service Authority (regional water company).

Summer Bat Cave Closure - for maternity colonies.

- ◆ WV: closed May 15 - Sept 1
- ◆ VA: closed April 15 - Oct 15 

(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"

2026 WVACS CLASSIC

June 12 to 14

Cavers!

The *WVACS Classic* is back with a truly classic focus on project caving. The weekend of June 13-14, WVACS will open to those sport cavers, casual cavers, and project cavers with moderate caving experience who are looking to level up with new skills.

Ready to learn how to survey, navigate caves, lead trips? Or maybe you have an interest in bolt climbs, rigging, or technical digs?

This *Classic* will feature brief lessons in a couple of project caving topics, full

day caving trips/digs on Saturday, a catered dinner, a speaker, and networking for your next project caving team.

To RSVP at:

<https://forms.gle/t3Z2hWw3tpvMjtq58>

Pricing will be \$20 for the event (includes lodging) and \$20 for dinner. This can be paid online at the time of RSVP or the day of the event with cash or check.

Reach out to kelly.mccarthy@wvacs.org with questions. 



Grotto Trip Log

1/18: Kamama Caves State Park, Hawaii. John Pearson reported on this trip. There were tons of tourist spelunkers, two entrances, and beautiful ferns.

3/21: Island Ford, VA. Jonathan Constatine visited Island Ford and cleaned out the entrance sump.

3/21: Helictite Cave, VA. Susan Burr led a BRG trip into Helictite Cave. It was a great trip, but at the time, they thought they couldn't find the route into the Attic. As it turns out, they did get to the Attic Room.

3/22: Pig Hole Cave, VA. Nick Schmalenberger visited Pig Hole with Deneshia Ferraris and Bambi Marshall.

3/28: Haynes Cave, WV. Nick Schmalenberger, along with the Greenbrier Grotto, helped lead a Boy Scout trip to Haynes Cave.

4/10: Benedict Cave, WV. Participants included David Socky, Joe Zokaites, and Bill Koerschner. We surveyed the breakdown mess part way down the right-hand lead just before the Y intersection in Persinger Creek. We did the lower level, then the upper part and tied into NDT25 that we had left last month. We found the route into the upper tube that doubles back over the top of the lower passage. We looked at the end of the upper passage and Bill thought he could get through the tight flowstone crack. There was a little bit of air. Good lead if it goes. We surveyed 387 feet on a 7.5-hour trip.

4/11: Benedict Cave, WV. Participants included David Socky, Rob Wardell, and Chad Burrass. We were going to go to the big right hand lead, but Chad couldn't fit through the tight spot near the start of our survey. Once I realized we wouldn't get to our goal, I saw on the map that a loop near the entrance hadn't been done yet. So, we headed back there and surveyed that. We got the loop done, tying into previous stations. We got 360 feet in the book for a nearly 7-hour trip.

4/12: Island Ford Cave, VA. Susan Burr reported on a kids trip to Island Ford Cave with Jeff, Hillary, Theo, Stormy, and Jess.

4/15: Dunn's Cave, VA. Participants included David Socky, Joe Zokaites, and Amos Mincin. Amos was able to knock out a huge piece of the ceiling with his hammer and chisel. It was too big to move so Joe used our technical digging to reduce the rock to rubble. We moved a LOT of rock out. When all was said and done, it was easy to get into the next room. Joe and I surveyed while Amos worked on the next dig. Amos was eventually able to get into the next room only to discover, wait for it, another dig. We surveyed 50 feet.

4/18: Carpenter Swago Cave, WV. Participants included David Socky and Shawn Hogbin. A trip into the Carpenter entrance to survey leads that Shawn wanted to get done. We put 600 feet of survey into the books and had a great 9-hour trip. See the article on page 32.

4/20: Shenandoah Wild Cave, VA. Participants included David Socky, Carl Amundson, Davis Gunnin, Shea Gunnin, Dave Hubbard, and Greg McCoy. Carol Tideman was surface support. It was another science trip today. It was good to cave with Carl again. I was the last one in (except for Carl, who set up the haul lines) and last one out. Dave Hubbard had a spot to himself, but I helped him a little, crouched in the small space just behind him. It got cold. Eventually I went out and put on an extra polypro (as did Hubbard) and ate my sandwich. Talked with Carl until everyone was ready to head out at 3:30pm, making it a 6 hour trip.

4/22: Warm Springs area dig, VA. Participants included David Socky, Bill Koerschner, Amos Mincin and Keith Sweeney. This was a dig that Keith and Bill knew about down the field and into the woods from Dogwood Cave. It was a nice-looking dig that was blowing a little bit of cool air on this temperate day. Amos dug a

while I helped with technical digging. We took turns mucking and hammering. After 3 hours of work, Amos was able to squeeze down a hole and get into a small crawly room. After Amos made it bigger, Bill and I went in to take a look. Unfortunately, there was only one lead, a 6-inch-wide vertical crack going horizontally into the hillside. It looked like it "might" open up a little after 10 feet. It was where all the air was coming from. It would be a mining operation. However, it is a cave and needs a name. But we probably won't be going back except to survey it.

4/22: Hide-A-Hole Pit, VA. Participants included David Socky, Bill Koerschner, Amos Mincin. We took a rope and digging tools and sent Amos down to take a look. We gave him a belay with the rope. He had no problem climbing down the 15-foot-deep pit. Amos dug, mostly with the short, handled shovel. He dug until he got cramps in his hands and proclaimed he was at ".25 Amos's". Amos climbed out and I went in, with a belay. It was pretty easy getting down the narrow pit because of the many ledges. I dug down until I got to a thin shelf of rock that was right at the lip of the pit. It was hard to tell, but it was probably 10 to 12 feet to the bottom. It belled out into a room so it definitely needs vertical gear. The hole down was bigger, maybe big enough for an Amos to get through. I had no desire to try, but once the shelf was knocked out, no problem. I climbed out with no problems at all. We packed up and headed home. Next trip we'll get in.

