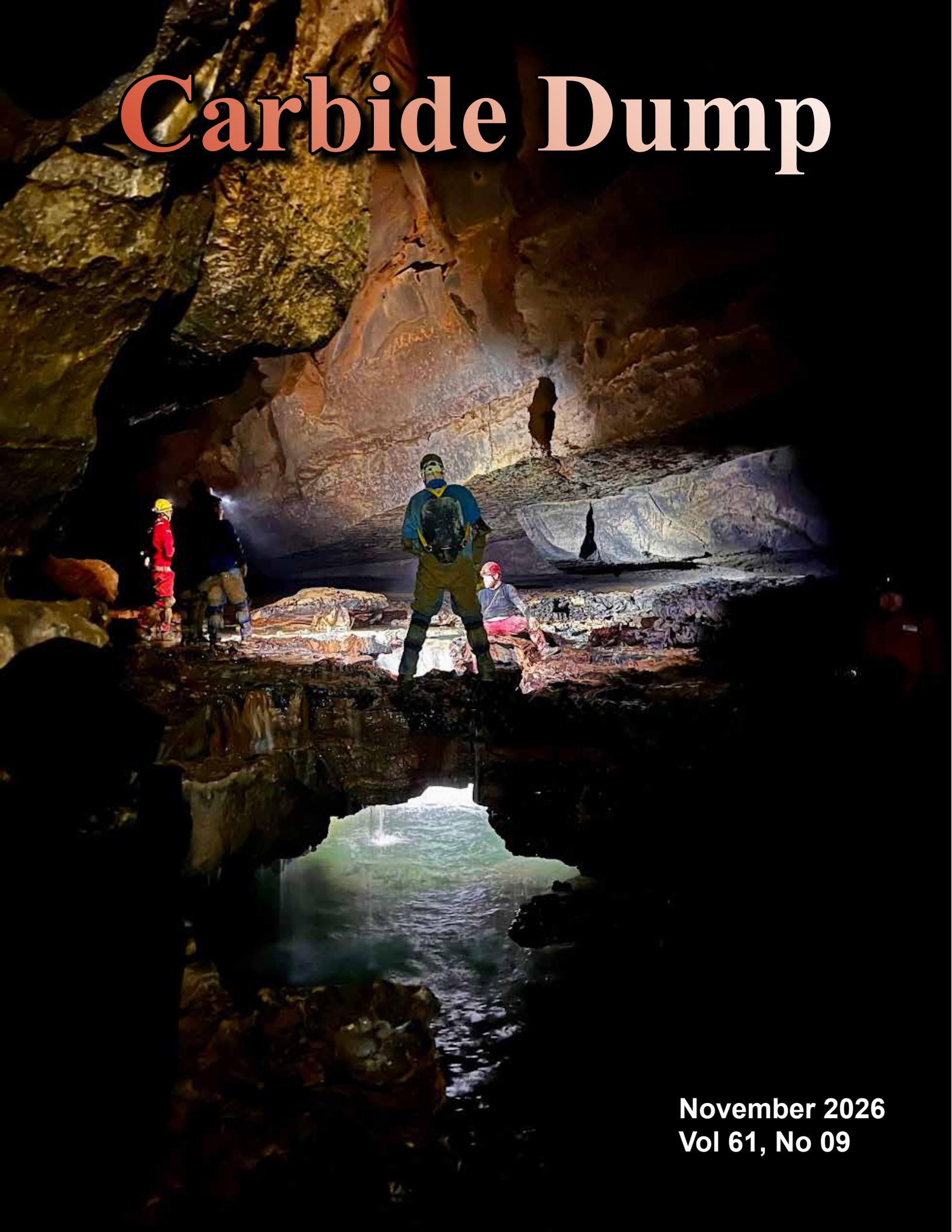
Carbide Dump



November 2026
Vol 61, No 09

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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, Bob Alderson, Jess Hester, Susan Burr, Bambi Marshall, Lauren Appel, Bob Balch, Nick Socky, Brian Williams, Nikki Fox, Mark Minton, Joe Zokaites, David Riggs, George Dasher, and Jerry Fuller.

Cover: Double Waterfall in **Scott Hollow Cave, WV**. Photo taken by Brian Williams

CAVERS CALENDAR

Nov 14: **WVCC Banquet** at Mountain Table, Renick, WV. Guest Speaker: Jason Williams, MD. See https://wvcc.net/banquet/ for more info.

Nov 20: **BRG meeting** 6pm. BRG Elections.

Nov 27-29: **Rock & Mineral Show**, Salem Civic Center, Salem, VA. Adults $5 good for all three days. See this link.

Dec 6: **BRG Winter Party** at Dave & Mary Socky's house. Noon – 5 pm. Pot Luck, BYOB. Contact sockymss@cox.net for more info.

Dec. 12: **WVACS Winter Party**, at the field station. Contact Nick Socky sockyns@gmail.com or 540-529-0413.

Dec. 18: NO BRG meeting.

Jan. 15, 2027: **BRG meeting**, 6 pm at Famous Anthony's - Brookside.

Jan 17-23, 2027: **Hawaii Cave Week**, hosted by the Hawaii Grotto, Ocean View, HI. Email hawaiigrotto808@gmail.com for more info.

Jan 28-31, 2027: **Carter Caves Adventure Weekend, KY**. See link for more info.

Feb. 19: **BRG meeting**, 6 pm at Famous Anthony's - Brookside.

Mar 19: **BRG meeting**, 6 pm at Famous Anthony's - Brookside.

May 2: **MVOR regional meeting**, Shrine Camp, Buckhorn, MO. See Facebook group: MVOR-MVOR.ORG

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

June 26-30, 2028: **2028 NSS Convention**, Stevenson, WA.

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

11/13/2026

Cave Bucks	$ 147.96
Conservation	$ 22.00
Equipment	$ 144.12
General	$4,950.31
Total	$5,264.39

BRG Meeting & Trip Notice

The November 20, 2026 meeting of the Blue Ridge Grotto will be held in a private room at Famous Anthony's - Brookside (6499 Williamson Rd, Roanoke, VA). 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 at the November meeting will be a 26 minute PBS video from the Wildlife Center of Virginia call "Untamed - Bats". (We may not show the whole program because of its length).

Grotto Trip

To Be Announced

(If a trip occurs, below are the most likely details, but they could change)

Date & Time: Saturday, November 21, 2026. Meet at Hanging Rock Orange Market (HROM) at 8:30 am.

Leader: Susan Burr

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

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.

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 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

BRG Meeting Location: BRG has booked Famous Anthony's – Brookside for 2027. BRG meets the 3rd Friday of each month.

Bracelets: BRG has NSS Salamander Bracelets! $2.00 each. They glow in the dark!

WINTER Bat Closure for some caves. Closure may affect different caves (hibernacula).

WV: winter- closed, Sept 01-May 15
VA: winter- closed, Oct 15-Apr. 15

Dues: 2027 BRG Dues are now due!

Membership Proposal: Bambi Marshall, NSS # 75329. Bambi is sponsored by Susan Burr and Nick Schmalenberger. Bambi's membership will be tabled until the 11/20/2026 BRG meeting.

BRG T-Shirts: BRG has 8 remaining BRG T-shirts: $12.00 each. (Red-XL-1, Green-Lg-1, Carolina Blue-Lg-1, Yellow (Gold)-XL-1, Grey-Lg-1 & XL-2, Light Blue-XL-1). Susan will check into the cost & minimum order amount for another batch of T-shirts sometime after the first of the year. Contact Susan at pondlady97@gmail.com for info.

Have You Paid Your 2027 BRG Dues?

THIS LIST IS FOR THOSE WHO HAVE PAID 2027 – THANKS! (27)

Lauren Appel, Joe Banks, Carl Cornett, Miriam Cuddington, Martin DiLeggi, Carrie Doupnik, Joey Fagan (Life), Cheryl Feller, Doug Feller, Cole Frantz, Keith Goggin, Lisa Goggin, Gene Harrison (sub), Jessica Hester, Jeff Huffman, Kelsea Johnson, Kevin Johnson, Duane Owen, David Rose, Suzanne Rose, Ed Saugstad, Marianne Saugstad, Nick Schmalenberger, Gordon Smith (sub), Jen Suggs (sub), Meredith Weberg, Brian Williams.

IF YOU NEED TO PAY YOUR 2027 DUES!!

Dues are $10.00 per person. Family discounts are available. You can pay for multiple years. See announcement on BRG Google Groups or in your mailbox.

Make checks payable to ***Blue Ridge Grotto***.

Mail to: Marian McConnell, 46 Palmer Trail, Troutville, VA 24175 or Use PayPal or Zelle to BlueRidgeGrottoOfficers@gmail.com

THIS LIST IS FOR THOSE WHO STILL NEED TO PAY FOR 2027! (30)

Bob Alderson, Bob Balch (sub), Tom Beaman, Susan Burr, Joseph Caldwell, Jonathan Constatine, Barry Ferguson, Helene Ferguson, Trish Geiger, Ben Hester, Cyndi Hutchison, Ben Johnson, Larry Manning, Dan McConnell, Marian McConnell, Randy Michael, Sharon Mohney, John Pearson, Jenn Perdue, Christopher Rowland, Laura Rowland, Dr. Michael Rowland, Paul Rowland, Renee Rowland, Sarah Rowland/Dukes, David Socky, Mary Sue Socky, Nick Socky, Alex Sproul, John Taylor.



Nick Socky in the Velcro mud crawl in Maxwelton (Nikki Fox)

Revisiting Covet Creek

A Great Savannah Cave System (Maxwelton) Trip Report

Article & photos by *Nikki Fox*

(Article and photos grabbed from the November 2026 West Virginia Caver)

10/31/2026

Participants: Nikki Fox (reporting), Dave Socky, and Nick Socky.

The Socky's and I had our weekend suddenly become free after Initial caving plans fell through. Lucky for us, the low-water period was still in play since October had very little rain. The total for the month was 1.1 inches and the only significant rain event was on October 11 with 0.9 inches recorded. We bounced ideas back and forth to take full advantage of the likelihood that this was the last low-water weekend of the season. We settled on revisiting a bolt climb that was done over 2.5 years ago in Maxwelton's Sweetwater Extension.

This 40-foot climb in Covet Creek was done by Nathan Kearney and Jason Davidoff on April 15, 2023, and there was going passage above a waterfall. Nick had doubts over ascending the rope because of the fact that 1 of the 2 bolts in both the rebelay and main anchor point were not good — they were spinners. It was unsure if the rock was bad at the top or that there was a drill bit problem at the time. Regardless, we had brought in a drill and all the accessories to re-rig the drop.

Travel to the lead was uneventful. Nick drilled a hole to add a nail in a strategic step-up for faster travel to the Fox Hole. I did notice new boot prints en route to the PIE Passage and we figured out why when we arrived at the Fox Hole. Someone had widened the crawl entrance! We all wished we knew who did this as to thank them; it was a nice surprise. More importantly, the cave is a WVCC Preserve and the manager, who happens to be Nick, should have been notified of such an endeavor.

Once we got to the climb in Covet Creek, I was volunteered to go up first as I was lightest. I was okay with that. Me no scared of spinners. Armed with all of the bolting supplies, I drilled a hole without any issue at the rebelay, which was stationed a couple of feet below the lip.

Once we were all at the top, we started the survey of the virgin passage with the AHE (All Hollow's Eve) designation. After a few shots we were out of the rope zone and Nick began the proper bolting of the drop. He didn't have any issues with his task, which meant that the previous team probably had a worn-out bit. He used his height advantage to place two ceiling bolts as the main anchor, thus removing a climbing bolt that was used in the original rigging. We named this 43-foot pit Bad Bit Pit.

Dave and I continued down the passage to an intersection where two separate small streams joined to flow down the pit. Dave, who was running point, chose to take the right (AHE5) passage first. It was an interesting passage that had an older paleo-developed upper section with a newer, active stream development that meandered from side to side lazily in the bottom of the passage. I absolutely love these kinds of passages. Above station AHE9 an upper-level tube was noted, which would need 1-2 bolts to access for protection.



Dave Socky stands in the large pool of water before the first rope in a series of three now in Covet Creek.

After several shots (AHE11) we reached a change of passage character. The low, wide meandering ended and a thin, tall canyon with potential upper level development started. The water depth ranged from 1-2 feet deep here. In 75 feet the canyon opened up into a room about 15 feet wide and 20 feet tall. At the end of this 55-foot-long room was a pinch in the passage that led to a tear-drop shaped room (AHE16) with a small waterfall entering from visible passage above.



Nick Socky in the surveyed passage above the latest bolt climb in Covet Creek

By then Nick had joined us and we headed back to the intersection to start surveying the left turn at AHE5. After a 40-foot shot we got into a room with multiple passages. Both Dave and Nick poked around trying to figure out where to go. When I caught up on my sketch we took the survey to the right, which paralleled the 40-foot shot, and the passage ended with the third bolt climb lead (AHE21).

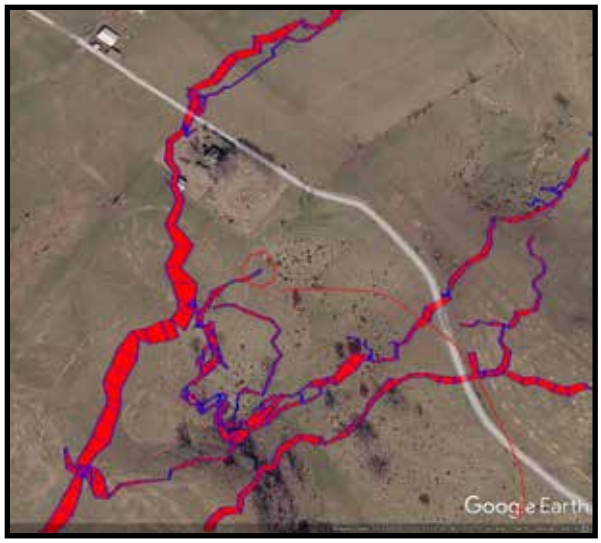
During the last few shots, Nick ran away from his instrument duties to push a crawlway that Dave had already gone in for a way. He was gone for quite some time and upon his return reported that it kept going.

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It's rare these days that a lead like this produces much more to do! Who knows how much passage is still to be discovered and surveyed. We had good airflow the entire day. So grateful for the dilation method since it obviously worked!

Upon entering the data, Nick made an overlay of the new survey on Google Earth and determined that the passage is going north and west into the plateau away from the Arbuckle Sink with around 250 feet of overburden. This leaves a lot of room for that upper paleo development to sprawl across the Great Savannah!



Nick also noted that the Patton limestone at The Retreat is around an elevation of 2,100 feet. Logically, if we could get another 75 to 100 feet of elevation gain, we should be able to break into a Patton upper level layer very similar to Covert Creek (assuming there is no structural weirdness or flowstone chokes).

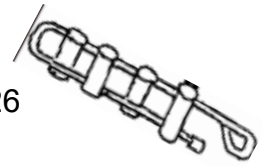
Fingers are crossed for another multi-mile complex in the upper levels with more over burden than Uvala Sink.

The Numbers
Footage: 501 feet
Hours underground: 14



An example of the odd antler-shaped popcorn in the new passage.

Dunn's Cave - Descent of the Pit



A Warm Springs Anticline and Karst Survey Report - Sept 30, 2026

Article by *Bob Alderson*

On Wednesday September 30th Dave Socky, Bill Koerschner, Joe Zokaites and I returned to the butt end of a small section of the cave that we called Bill's Paradise. We had spent 12 or 13 or more trips of stop and go digging to get access this point and are now stopped at the next dig.



**Bob at the top of the pit.
Photo by Dave Socky**

Two trips previously we had surveyed this far. We surveyed a short side lead here that crossed over a mound of flow stone. Crawling over the flowstone, we found a void underneath that we could only see on the way back out. Ducking my head under the flowstone I was looking down a drop. I couldn't see the bottom because it sloped off to the left and all but one of the rocks I dropped down were muffled in mud when they landed. But one rock splashed in water.

On our next trip we came to survey the pit and continue digging. I came with a fifty foot rope and bolting gear to explore the drop. Putting bolts in the ceiling I threw the rope in and squeezed under the flowstone.

Continued page 70



**Looking up from the near the bottom of the pit.
Photo by Dave Socky**

Continued from page 69

Throwing the rope down I was soon rappelling, or more accurately sliding, down the narrow slot between two nearly vertical and very muddy bedding planes. And, the rope was too short. I could see the bottom and could barely see a narrow hole going down into water. I took the knot out of the end of the rope and started sliding down to get a closer look until I realized that sliding back up would be very difficult. There were no footholds or hand holds so all I could do was slide around on the steep mud banks. So I aborted.

The drop continued down to the right through a slot to the water. On the left a steep muddy slope continued up around a corner. I managed to get my jumar on the rope, rigged my ascending gear on and climbed out in the usual SRT manner.

The diggers above had completed their dig to a tight crawl way that I was volunteered to push. It went to a small room, where more digging is needed to continue.

So, On September 30, 2026 we returned to survey the pit. The plan was for Bill and Joe to check the end of the crawlway while Dave and I would survey the pit.

We slogged all our gear in through the sticky mud on the way to the pit. We were better prepared this time with a longer rope, bolts, landscape nails, mason's hammer, an etrier, and Dave's pristine 12 volt Milwaukee drill.

I removed the short rope and anchored a rebelay just under the flowstone and set survey points while Dave read the Disto and made notes. Finally reaching the extent of my earlier descent, I set a survey point on the corner where the passage went up the steep slope to the left. I chopped a small platform in the deep mud to stand in and drilled holes in the wall and placed the landscape nails for hand holds. After removing my rack from the rope, Dave came down and joined me, sitting secure and comfortable on the mud slope.

The plan at this point was to survey up the steep mud slope to the left and around the corner. I started climbing up to see around the corner but couldn't quite get my foot on the one of the nails. So, I unceremoniously slid all the way into the drop that continued to the water. I was wedged against the walls above the water, not able to move up but potentially moving down.

We changed our plans. Dave handed me his drill and I installed a bolt and hung my etrier on it. I could put my foot in it but was unbalanced. The rope reached all the way down into the water so I was able to rig it to the bolt and put my rappel rack on the rope. The bedding plane we had rappelled next to ended a few feet above the water, so I had to rappel down to a small ledge right at the water's edge in order to look ahead. We surveyed to a station on the wall and I ducked down to look ahead. Immediately in front of me the water was over my head in depth, and past that I couldn't see the bottom to tell how deep it was. The water was in a room about 5' wide and the ceiling was about 4' above the water. Dave handed me his Disto and I shot the laser across the lake to the next nearly vertical bedding plane fifteen feet away. There the water continued through a low opening above the water about 8" high and 8" wide. We decided we were not going cross the lake today.



Bob at the bottom of the pit. The drop to the water is below Bob's right leg. Photo by Dave Socky.



Dave and Bob examining Dave's muddied drill. Photo by Joe Zokaites

Climbing up the drop was an exercise in muddy SRT technique. Our ascenders were muddy globs that had no desire to function as they were designed to. The springs in the ascenders would not overcome the mud that jammed them and we had to push to cams up into the rope at every step. Finally, we derigged the rope and packed up. Dave's drill had gotten its first glorious baptism of mud. We carried both ropes and all the gear out through the mud and crawlways we were so familiar with.

Why do we keep going back to the same caves over and over again? Will there be a short swim in our future?



Scott Hollow Cave, WV Trip Report

Article by *Susan Burr*

10/17/2026

Participants: Susan Burr, Jeff Huffman, Jess Hester, Ben Hester, Jonathan Constantine, Bambi Marshall, Brian Williams, Nick Schmalenberger, Tim Boone, and Lauren Appel

When we arrived at Scott Hollow Cave, Mike Dore was there to greet us. I made introductions and discussed with Mike where we were going in the cave. He told me that he is going to sell his house and is building an apartment in the house over the cave to live in. He has some of it partially done now. I don't think it is going to happen very quickly since it sounds like he is doing most of the work himself.

Our goal was to head down "Drag Ass Hill", to the Junction Room, then take that crawling passage they blasted out to eventually get to Mystic River. From there we headed downstream. We showed everyone where the Omega Loop climbup was. Luckily Mystic River water levels were not bad at all. We arrived at the really pretty active flowstone and rimpools on the left next to the river with the waterfall and rimpools on top as well. Lots of pictures were taken there! Next we continued on the way to see "The Ladder" that we are always talking about. This ladder is on top of approximately a 5-foot stack of rocks with mud in between them. I call this the "Scary Ladder"! We did NOT go up the ladder this time. We continued downstream to the sump for everyone to see.



Pretty bacon in Scott Hollow Cave. (Jess Hester)

After playing around at the sump we headed back upstream to find the "Double Waterfall." Did we find it? Yes! Did we go the most difficult route possible? Yes! We all know it isn't a cave trip unless you get lost at least once! It was really pretty there. Lots of pictures were taken there as well. Some of us explored a little further upstream from the waterfall. When we were leaving, I showed everyone the actual route out. Much easier!!!

After the Double Waterfall we headed back out. We did a quick peek into a couple of other areas, but nothing major. Heading up Drag Ass Hill is still as fun as ever! It was a very successful & fun 5 hour trip.



Trying to stay dry after leaving the Double Waterfall. (Brian Williams)



Waterfall & rimpools above the massive flowstone along Mystic River. (Brian Williams)

BRG Christmas Party

BRG Christmas Party will be held Sunday, Dec 6, 2026.

Where: Dave and Mary Sue Socky's house at 6572 Woodbrook Drive SW Roanoke, VA 24018.

Time: Noon to 5 pm.

Details: Pot Luck, BYOB, cavers, family, and friends welcome!

Of course, caving videos and slides will be shown! Bring your own photos or videos.

Stay for the duration, or just for a little while; we would love for you to drop by!

See this link for a Google Map Pin of the Socky's place

Contact Mary Sue Socky sockymss@cox.net or call at 540-529-3954 if you need directions or information.

Please be healthy.

Hell Hole Spelaen Rove Beetle

By *Dave Riggs*

On our 2026-09-12 sensor maintenance trip into Hellhole (Germany Valley, Pendleton County, WV), Connor Wickline and I made our way through the low breakdown toward the Shipp Room and stopped when I spotted a crawling insect that I didn't recognize. It was in very cold passage, crawling above the first thick VBEB guano deposits on the floor. I snapped a few photos with my cellphone, and when we showed them to Garrett Balog later that day he immediately recognized it as a type of Rove Beetle. That family-level ID was enough to get the photos into the hands of several beetle taxonomists (Dr. Adam Brunke at Agri-Food Canada; and with the help of the VA DCR Karst Heritage team, Dr. Curt Harden of the WV Division of Agriculture).

This is the **Spelaen Rove Beetle** (**Quedius spelaeus spelaeus**), a troglophilic rove beetle that is most commonly found in Canada, where its preferred habitat is in cave deposits of porcupine dung. Occurrence records stretch down into the US, where it settles for other mammalian dung like Hellhole's bat guano. These beetles are predators on the other invertebrates which call the guano home. Though they're not cave-adapted troglobites, they're primarily found in cold cave dark-zones.

This species was not included in WVASS B16 **Invertebrate Cave Fauna of West Virginia**, but a literature search shows that they're widespread in the Virginias, with these documented West Virginia occurrences:

- Berkeley: Silers Cave.
- Jefferson: John Brown's Cave.
- Greenbrier: Upper Martha's Cave.
- Pocahontas: Grimes Cave.
- Randolph: Keyhole Cave, Stillhouse Cave.
- Tucker: Cave Hollow Cave.

The Spelaen Rove Beetle had never before been documented in Germany Valley or Pendleton County, WV.

I'm updating all of the above WVASS database records with this species.



CAVE ACCESS

(October 2026)

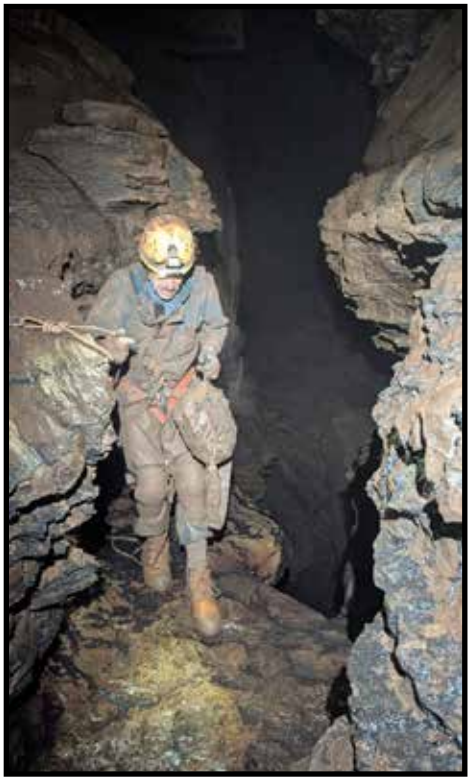
Rehoboth Church Cave (Monroe Co. WV) is CLOSED by the owner, who is different from the parking area. Permission to park is NOT permission to visit the cave.

Bone Cave (Greenbrier Co. WV) Cave is OPEN, but parking space is limited. DO NOT block the owner's gate when visiting the cave.

Norman Cave (Greenbrier Co. WV) Norman currently has NO ROADSIDE PARKING. You can either do a drop-off at the cave or park at Bubble Cave LLC and walk a mile to the Norman entrance.

Breathing Cave (Bath Co. VA) is closed for the winter/hunting season.

New River Cave Preserve (VA). Access policy for New River Cave Preserve, VA, is that EVERYONE, CAVERS and Surface Hikers, needs a permit! Eli Meyer is Preserve Manager. https://permits.saveyourcaves.org/



Dave on the roped traverse in Maxwelton Cave (Nick Socky)

Grotta Trip Log

9/19: Friars Hole, WV. North Entrance to Snedegar Saltpeter Entrance. Susan Burr, Jeff Huffman, Jess & Ben Hester, Jonathan Constantine, Nick Schmalenberger, Tim Boone, and Alex Thompson. This was a through trip involving a 15' hasty rappel at the drop into Snedegar's. Visited the cairns near the sump and the saltpeter vats, too.

9/26: Perkins Cave, VA. Susan Burr, Jeff Huffman, Jess & Ben Hester, Jonathan Constantine, Nick Schmalenberger, Tim Boone, Lauren Appel, a VPI Caver; Laura and Jason were our leaders. We were a 'good' group, so we got to see extra stuff and beautiful white formations.

9/26: Bob Balch, officially, led a group of 7 to **Morrell Cave, TN (AKA Worley's)** for a five-hour trip. We entered via the Dry entrance and shortly encountered a cave rescue training group exiting. There was a nice large curtain display in the breakdown room and some nice straws further on. Unable to connect with the wet passage, some of the group made a short foray into the wet entrance at the end of the day.

10/3: Nick Schmalenberger, Mystik Miller, members of the Central Appalachian Cave Rescue Team visited the Oak Hall Entrance of **Maxwelton Cave, WV**. This was part of a practice rescue training trip. 10/4: Nick Schmalenberger, Mystik Miller, members of the Central Appalachian Cave Rescue Team 'hung out' on the vertical climbing tower at WVACS. Various vertical techniques were practiced).

10/7: North Twin, VA. Participants included David Socky, Bill Koercshner, Joe Zokaites, Jim Schurman, and Keith Sweeney. We moved 80 sleds of dirt (which was about 160 buckets) and got down about 6 feet and in about 8 feet. We made a light and voice connection to South Twin. Potential bypass to the Triplet crawlway.

10/8: Bob Alderson attended a CRF session in **Mammoth Cave NP, KY**. They visited the New Discovery area and prepared a drop for the upcoming Thanksgiving Weekend.

10/9: Bob Alderson's survey group visited the Frozen Niagara section of **Mammoth Cave NP, KY**. They left the tourist trail to an area full of canyons and gypsum flowers. 17 stations set, 73' of resurvey, and 77' of new passage.

10/10: Meredith Weberg and Mary Sue Socky drove to Massanutten Ski area to volunteer with **CaveSim** at the Massanutten Fall Festival. They helped Dave Jackson and assistant Emma Kate get 375 people through CaveSim.

10/10: McClung Cave, WV. Participants included David Socky, Rob Wardell, Fedora Castelino, and Cole Novoa (and Nikki Fox, Jason Delafield, and Alison Pifzl as team 2). Went to Seven Fingers area. Nikki's team went to the dome climb they started last month and surveyed 670 feet of virgin cave, which still goes, but needs a little technical persuasion. Our team killed 9 leads and surveyed 41 feet in one of the fingers.

10/14: Singularity Cave (Pritt), VA. Participants included David Socky, Joe Zokaites, Jonathan Constantine. Surveyed the breakdown lead that had been checked on September 2. Surveyed 280 feet for a fun 8-hour trip. Dug into 3 leads which resulted in a bunch of virgin cave.

10/10: Bambi Marshall attended TAG, and led a trip to **Hermit Cave, TN**. A successful TAG, with LOTS of hurricane weather!

10/21: Singularity Cave (Pritt), VA. Participants included David Socky, Jonathan Constantine, Bob Alderson, Ricky Royer, and Bill Koerschner. Three separate surveys. Jonanthan and I did his lead down the Breakdown crawl, Bill solo surveyed near the bottom of the entrance drop, while Bob, Rick, and I surveyed Bob's lead in the Black Hole. Surveyed 317 feet on a great 9 hour trip.

10/24: Benedict Cave, WV. Participants included David Socky, Bob Alderson, Bill Koerschner, and Nick Socky, Andrew Allard, and Alex Riley. We split up into two teams. Bob, Bill, and Dave tied into PIE43 and surveyed up Rib Bone Creek. Nick and crew continued the survey tied into the RAD survey, going up Mediocre Creek. Good 9-hour trip with a total of 1390 feet of survey.

10/27: Shenandoah Wild Cave, VA. Participants included David Socky, Dave Hubbard, Davis Gunnin, Shea Gunnin, Maggie, Blaine Schubert, and Greg McCoy with Carol Tiderman on the surface. Digging in three separate locations. Got a lot more bones. I helped Shea at the first dig site get 4 or 5 buckets full of water out of the hole. Then, between me, Greg, and Davis we moved 5 bags of mud with bones embedded from the sites out of the cave. Each bag weighed around 30 pounds. They were heavy. We used a pulley with progress capture at the drops and a pull line at the steep slopes. I got my exercise for the day! We got out right around 6 pm for a work filled 7 hour trip

10/31: Maxwelton Cave, WV. Participants included David Socky, Nick Socky, and Nikki Fox. Long assed hard trip back to the 40-foot waterfall at the end of Covet Creek, which is an infeeder just before Sweetwater and a little past Ghost Camp. We surveyed 500 feet of virgin passage on a 14-hour trip. See trip report this issue.



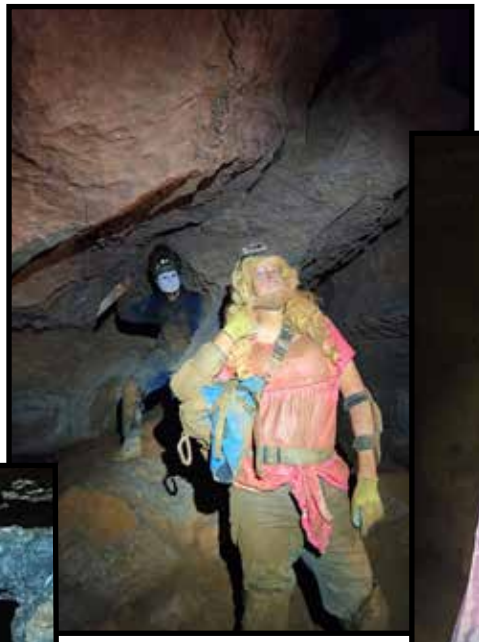
Nick Socky in Maxwelton Cave, WV (Nikki Fox)

BRG Lowmoor Halloween Photos

Blue Ridge Grotto members went to Lowmoor Cave on Halloween on October 31 for some costumed fun. Below are a few photos from the haunting. Photos by Jess Hester and Lauren Appel.



Michael Myers-Ben Hester, Dolly Parton-Jeff Huffman, Victorian Vampire-Bambi Marshall, Ninja Turtle-Jess Hester, Sriracha-Lauren Appel



Look out Dolly Parton! Michael Myers lurking



Bambi - Victorian Vampire



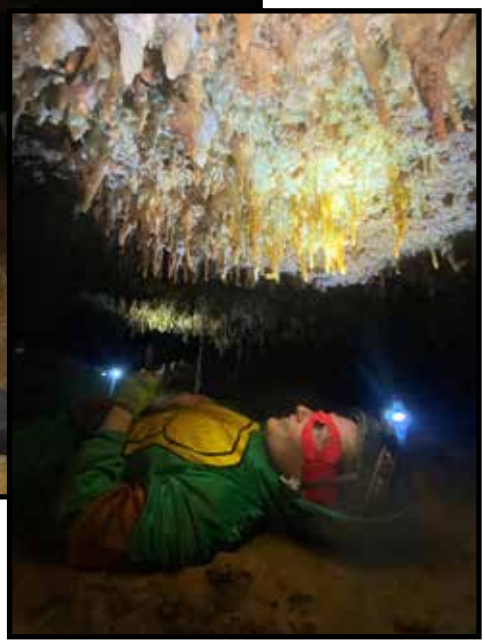
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle Jess



Bambi - Victorian Vampire on the ladder



Dolly Parton with elbow pads?



Turtles like helectites

2026 ELECTION INFORMATION

The November meeting is always extremely busy and well attended, 'cause November 20 is the evening BRG officers are elected for the next year. Whether you want to run for office or railroad your caving buddies, a few basic rules must be followed, as described in the BRG constitution & bylaws (See this link):

1. Voting - in order to vote, you must be an active (paid up) NSS member and a BRG member: aka Regular or Regular Family grotto member status.
2. Candidates - to be an eligible candidate for office, you must be an active NSS member AND have been a BRG member for at least one year.
3. Term of Office - for one year, ending in November. No officer can hold the same office for more than two years in a row. Elected officers are expected to attend all meetings, or be impeached and executed by the grotto.

BRG NOMINATIONS FOR NOVEMBER ELECTIONS

The following sample (and most likely) slate of candidates fulfill all BRG qualifications.

Chair:	Susan Burr	NSS # 53888
Vice Chair:	Mary Sue Socky	NSS # 24206
Secretary:	Marian McConnell	NSS # 37358
Treasurer:	David Socky	NSS # 16334

Nominations will remain open until elections on November 20, 2026. Even if you prefer not to run for office, VOTE! If you can't make it to the meeting, please be sure to fill out the absentee ballot (below) and mail or email it ASAP so it will get to Roanoke before November 20, 2026. You can also email a ballot to the email address listed below:

Mary Sue Socky
6572 Woodbrook Dr
Roanoke, VA 24018
sockymss@cox.net

Handy Dandy BRG Absentee Ballot

Chair: _____

Vice Chair: _____

Secretary: _____

Treasurer: _____

Submitted by: _____ _____
(Your name) (NSS Number)