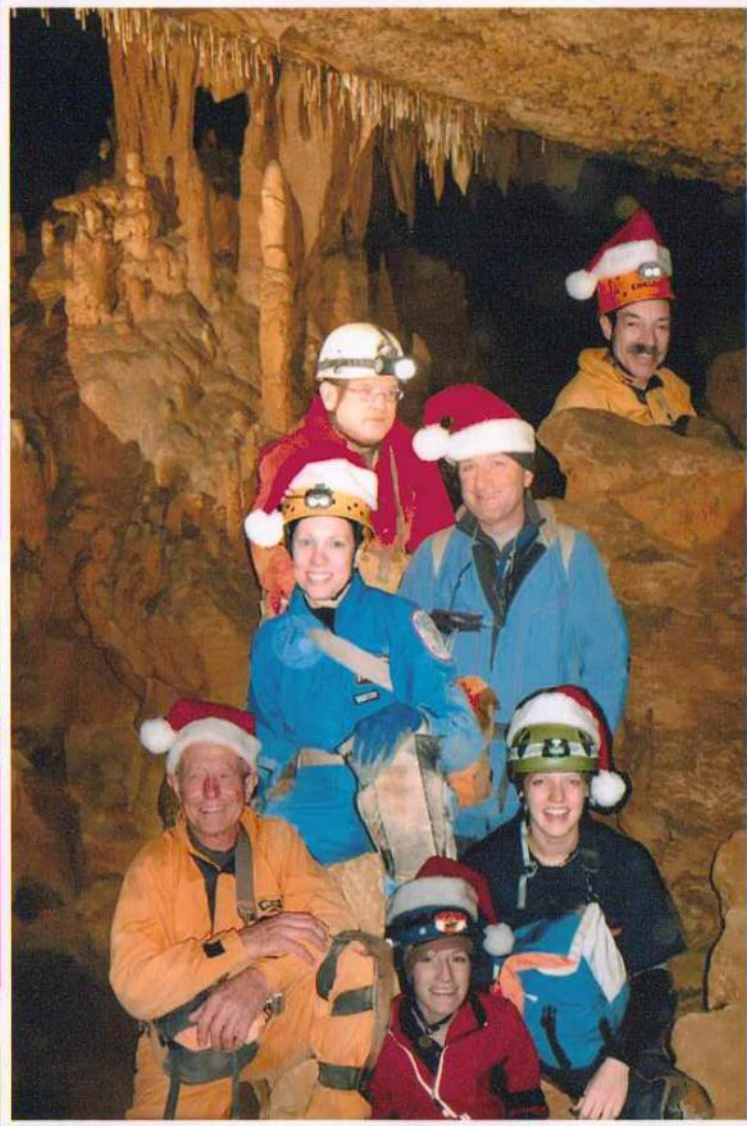


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**PEACE IN EARTH  
FROM THE  
BLUE RIDGE GROTTTO  
2011**

**December 2011—Vol 46, No 10**

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 Al Stewart.

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The Blue Ridge Grotto holds its monthly meetings every third Friday of the month at 7:30 p.m. in the second floor meeting room of the Vinton Firehouse, 120 Jackson Ave, Vinton, VA 24179.

**GROTTO OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES**

<u>Chairman</u>	<u>Vice-Chair</u>	<u>Secretary</u>	<u>Treasurer</u>	<u>Safety &amp; Techniques</u>
Pat Sims H: 540-725-8675 pjsims@cox.net	Mary Sue Socky H: 540-989-7693 sockymss@cox.net	MariAn McConnell C: 540-309-4707 marian.mcconnell@gmail.com	Trish Geiger H: 540-344-1754 onecaver@cox.net	Dan McConnell H: 540-966-1345 pitresq@aol.com

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You can access the *Carbide Dump* electronically at: <http://blueridgegrotto.org/carbidedump.htm>

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**Contributors:** David & Mary Sue Socky, Marian McConnell, Trish Geiger, Pat Sims, Susan Burr, Charles Kahn, Jerry Fuller  
**Cover:** 2011 Blue Ridge Grotto Land Owner Christmas Card. Card design by Marian McConnell, original photos by Brian Williams and Doug Feller, layout by Dave Socky. (L-R, front to back: Carl Cornett, Lisa Hall, Stephanie Petri, Susan Burr, Brian Williams, Doug Feller Dave Socky)

# CAVERS CALENDAR

*NOTE: the US Fish and Wildlife Service is closing wild caves and mines on federal lands until more is known about White Nose Syndrome, a fungal disease that is killing bats. Learn more about decontaminating your cave gear and preventing the spread of White Nose Syndrome (WNS) in bat colonies by visiting <http://www.caves.org/WNS/index.htm>*

**Dec. 16:** NO BRG MEETING. Instead – see below

**Dec. 17:** BRG Christmas Party, Dan & Marian McConnell's house. Pit bopping during the day, Pot Luck Party from 5p - 11p. More info on page 61

**Jan. 1, 2012:** Happy New Year!

**Jan. 7-8, 2012:** Resurvey of Grand Caverns/Cave Hill. Survey, exploration projects. Contact Carol Tiderman [ctider@ymail.com](mailto:ctider@ymail.com) to reserve a slot.

**Jan. 20:** BRG meeting, 7:30p Vinton Firehouse.

**Jan. 21:** BRG trip to ridge walk and explore caves in Botetourt Co. VA. Marian McConnell is leader.

**Feb. 17:** BRG meeting, 7:30p Vinton Firehouse

**Mar. 16:** BRG meeting, 7:30p Vinton Firehouse

**Apr. 20:** BRG meeting, 7:30p Vinton Firehouse

**April 28-29:** Spring VAR, Hosted by Tri-State grotto. Location to be determined.

**May 3-6:** SERA Cave Carnival, Estill Fork, AL. Hosted by Birmingham Grotto. A "Wild West" theme with a steak dinner at the Saturday

night banquet! For info, see <http://www.bhamgrotto.org/>

**May 25-28:** (Memorial Day Weekend) 41<sup>st</sup> Kentucky Speleofest, at Lone Star Preserve, Bonnieville, KY. Hosted by Louisville Grotto. See [Louisville.caves.org](http://Louisville.caves.org) for more info.

**June 25-29:** NSS Convention in the Greenbrier Valley of WV. See [www.nss2012.com](http://www.nss2012.com) or Contact John Pearson [jpearson@rcc.com](mailto:jpearson@rcc.com) or 304-497-3803.

**July 19-22:** Karst-O-Rama, Great Saltpetre Cave Preserve, Mt. Vernon KY. Hosted by GCG. For info, see <http://karstorama.com>

**Aug. 5-9, 2013:** NSS Convention in Shippensburg, PA.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

### Treasurer's Report November 16, 2011

General Fund:	\$4759.56
Conservation:	\$266.59
Equipment:	\$246.12
Petty Cash	\$100.00
<u>Cave Bucks:</u>	<u>\$143.30</u>
Total:	<b>\$5515.57</b>

### Election Results

It was quick and painless. All the current BRG officers will serve a second term in 2012:

#### Chair

Pat Sims NSS 52145

#### Vice Chair

Mary Sue Socky NSS 24206

#### Secretary

Marian McConnell NSS 37358

#### Treasurer

Trish Geiger NSS 28182

## THANKS!!

Susan Burr presented a gift certificate for \$35 in gas to Alan Staton on behalf of the group for his help on 9/17/11 when Stephanie Petri injured her leg on the BRG trip. Alan is a medic and assessed her injuries, helped her out and took her to see a Sports Medicine friend in Covington, then drove her all the way back to Roanoke (Jessica Jones went back with them and drove Stephanie's car home for her since it was a stick-shift).

### Grotto Equipment Inventory

Currently there are 9 helmets with functioning LED lights, one helmet with no light or chin strap, and two non-functioning lights. The group voted unanimously to purchase additional chinstraps and two replacement "\$12 Energizer lights" to test them. Update:

Mary Sue Socky bought two of the 6-LED Energizer systems (\$14.88 each). One light was used in Maxwellton Cave WV, and did fine on its first trip. Pat Sims is looking into replacement chinstraps.

### Land Owner Christmas Cards

The BRG 2011 Landowner Christmas Card is on the cover of this month's **CARBIDE DUMP**. Thanks go to Marian McConnell for creating the cards – landowners have said they appreciate them.

### BRG Christmas Party

Mark your calendar - **December 17, 2011**, is the date for the BRG Christmas Party. This year's party will be held at Dan and Marian McConnell's house. Rappelling in the Daylight Cave (entrance pit of Catawba Murder Hole) will be offered 10 am to 4 pm. The "Pot Luck" party will be from 5 pm to 11pm. Contact Marian McConnell 540-309-4707 or [marian.mccconnell@gmail.com](mailto:marian.mccconnell@gmail.com) for more information.

### Ridge walking the karst

- Marian McConnell has received landowner permission to check out some "virgin" caves on the Blue Ridge Vineyard property near Eagle Rock, VA – for the January 2012 BRG trip.
- Dave and Mary Sue Socky have been contacted by a landowner in Floyd, VA who would like to invite BRG to look for caves on his property.
- More leads have developed for caves in Botetourt Co. VA and those elusive Franklin Co. VA caves. Does anyone want to check these leads out, (preferably after hunting season)?

### MayaCon—2012 NSS Convention

HAVE YOU SEEN the MayaCon 2012 video? Check it out at <http://www.nss2012.com/>

## Meeting Notice

There will be **NO** Blue Ridge Grotto meeting for December 2011. Instead, we will be having the BRG Christmas Party at the Dan & Marian McConnell's place on Saturday, December 17. See the announcements on this page for more details.

## Grotto Trip

### Catawba Murder Hole

(Daylight cave)

### Botetourt Co, VA

**Date & Time:** Meet at Dan and Marian's place **10:00am or later** December 17, 2011.

**Leader:** Dan McConnell

**Requirements:** This is a vertical cave. Dan will check everyone's vertical gear before they can rappel.

**Trip Limit:** none

See "BRG Christmas Party" on this page for contact info.

### Vertical Work

If you want vertical training, or wish a vertical practice day, please contact Dan & Marian McConnell 540-309-4707. Practices can be held in Catawba Murder Hole entrance pit.

### NSS and WNS

3/7/2011: An updated brochure about WNS is now available the NSS Web site, from both the WNS page <http://www.caves.org/WNS/index.htm> (under Education and Outreach) and the NSS Brochures page <http://www.caves.org/brochure/>

Print copies to give to youth groups, cave owners, cavers, and anyone who might be interested.



# Grotto Trip Log

**October:** Trish Geiger went to **Iceland** but did not get to do any caving. She did go touring, visited a glacier and relaxed in thermal pools at some hot springs.

**11/5:** Members of the VAR Grand Caverns Resurvey, including Mary Sue Socky, went through **Grand Caverns**, identifying historical signatures, checking on leads (nothing went), removing flagging tape, and picking up trash (and put it on top of an emergency box to prove to those who said there wasn't anything to pick up). The Resurvey folks hope to get back to their projects in currently closed Fountain Cave, pending DCR assessment.

**10/29: Gap Cave, VA/KY** -David Socky, Bob Alderson & Joe Zokaites made their callback time with 20 minutes to spare. They did a 19-hour trip and surveyed 240' (just 20'

short of making the cave 17 miles). Average survey shot was 7'; tight, small, muddy, wet passages. Saw lots of bats and no signs of WNS.

**11/12:** Marian McConnell and Carl Cornett led a Roanoke City Parks & Recreation Trip for a large Boy Scout Troop from Raleigh, NC to **Tawneys Cave, VA**. Took them caving in 2 groups. Although Marian sent the list of what to bring and wear and went over the list with the Scout Master, many were not prepared. One father showed up wearing "feet" shoes; he got exhausted just walking up the trail to the cave so he wisely decided not to do the trip. Saw one bat in Pancake Alley. We did not go past the well casing; the hibernaculum is off limits.

## Membership Updates

Thirteen cavers attended the November 18, 2011 BRG meeting. They watched the first half of "**13 Bak'Tun**", the 2012 NSS pre-convention video.

If you go caving, please remember to "cave regionally" and to clean and decon all of your gear after every trip.

Know of a potential caver? Bring them to a BRG meeting, sponsor them on a BRG activity, do lots of fun things with the best cavers around ~

*Cave Softly and Safely*

## PAY YER DUES!!

2012 BRG dues are \$10.00 for regular or associate members, \$5.00 for additional family member.

Make checks to **Blue Ridge Grotto**.

Include a piece of paper with your current address, phones, email, NSS number (and NSS expiration month), and primary grotto affiliation.

You can pay for multiple years.

Mail dues to:

**Trish Geiger**  
**BRG Treasurer**  
**7318 Scarlet Oak Drive**  
**Roanoke, VA 24019**

OR

show up at the **Dec. 17, 2011 BRG Christmas Party**, or the **Jan 20, 2012 meeting** and pay your dues then.

Sorry, No PayPal.



**These cavers have already paid for 2012:**

Sharon Bruce, Susan Burr, Joseph Caldwell, Carl Cornett, Bill & Miriam Cuddington, Martin DiLeggi, Bill Farlow, Trish Geiger, Elliot George, Chris Heptinstall, Dave & Mary Holtschneider, Dan & Marian McConnell, Greg McCorkindale, Randy Michael, Jen Perdue, Stephanie Petri, Pat Sims, Dave, Mary Sue & Nick Socky, Alex Sproul (subscriber), Alan Staton, Al Stewart, Al & Alice Stubbe, Bob Thren, Dave Wickersham.



## VAR NEEDS A NEW SQUEEZE BOX

Reprinted from VARListServ 12/6/2011

Hi Folks,

Sadly, I have to report the demise of the Guillotine Trough. After 6 years, and many many through trips (darn, shoulda' kept count!), I had to take the Trough out of service.

Safety was a major concern in designing the Guillotine Trough, and I always gave it a thorough inspection after bringing it home from a VAR. Alas, my most recent inspection showed wear beyond what could be reasonably and safely repaired.

So, Now Is Your Chance!!!!

If you have been contemplating making a squeeze box with new and exciting features, we have an opening! And when you get the email from organizers of a VAR asking you to bring it... you'll find it a great way to meet lots of new people.

I tried to remember after each VAR, but just in case.....

**Many Thanks** to all of you who helped me operate the Guillotine Trough. I look forward to the next squeeze box to show up, and who knows... I may even go through it myself!

(You go first!)

Charles Kahn

# GIRLS ONLY!

By, *Susan Burr*

On the Saturday after Thanksgiving, November 26, 2011, Trish Geiger, Stephanie Petri, Cyndi Hutchison and I went on a "GIRLS ONLY" cave trip. While the group was small in number, our trip into Porter's Cave was filled with camaraderie among friends, lots of fun and humor. The main goal was for me to learn to lead a basic cave trip in there. I was fairly confident that I would be able to get the group in and out of the cave. After all I had been in there numerous times before, but usually relying on Doug Feller to lead us.

I had discussed the proposed route with the group. We were going to go in by the register and head to the Keyhole, but not go through the Keyhole. We would then head toward, what I thought was the next logical place, the Formation Room, then to what I call the "Big Room," where the Natural Bridge is, then to the Slit and exit out that end of the cave.

All went well with the exception of



**On the Natural Bridge - Cindy, Trish, and Stephanie.  
Photo by Susan Burr**

me missing the "Big Room." Apparently I had bypassed it. We ended up back-tracking to go there, and determined that it should have been the second stop on the "tour."

Since there were only four of us on the trip, we were able to cave at a nice leisurely pace, and take as many breaks as we wanted. Stephanie and I took our cameras to see if we could take half decent pictures in a cave. I even attempted to use the tripod and timer on the camera so I could get in some of the shots. We also took several obnoxious pictures that we could not post to the public. Girls will be girls.....

Overall the trip was a huge success, and we are hoping to plan another one after the first of the year. The objective of this trip was met; the bonus was all the laughter and fun we shared together.



**Left to right - Susan, Cindy, Trish, and Stephanie  
Photo by Susan Burr**

