

THE SUBTERRANEAN VOICE



The St. Joseph Valley Grotto

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How to Join the SJVG

We have twelve requirements to join our grotto and they all have George Washington's face on them. We do not require anything else. If you wish to receive this publication and be included in caving trips and/or other SJVG functions, just send twelve big ones to the address on this page. That will get you a one year membership in the grotto. If your only interest is in receiving this newsletter, we have a subscription only price of \$10.00 per year.

The SJVG is an internal organization of the National Speleological Society. All grotto members are required to maintain a membership in the NSS to be voting members of the SJVG.

Recreational caving, vertical caving, cave surveying, cave conservation efforts, cave photography, out-of-state trips, camp outs, picnics, parties, friendship, politics and being lost in the woods are all benefits of membership in the SJVG. We have a scheduled grotto trip each month. Someone in the grotto goes caving almost every weekend. If you are interested please contact us.

SJVG Web Mail

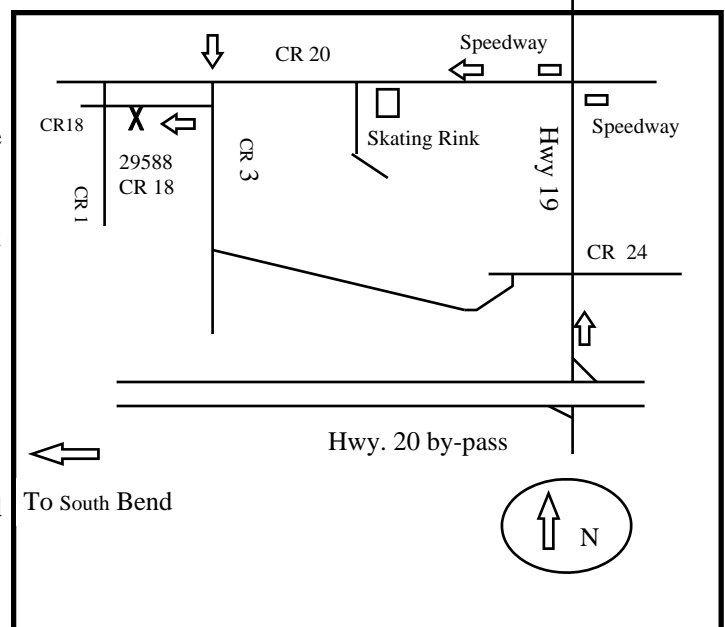
SJVG members are invited to join our yahoo newsgroup. The address for the newsgroup is sjvge-news@yahoogroups.com. Trips are coordinated, topics discussed, jokes made and trial balloons floated. To join please email to Mark Kraus.

How to Get to a SJVG Meeting

Grotto meetings are usually the second Thursday of the month at 7:30 PM. Our meetings are informal and usually include food, beverage and an occasional program.

Directions:

From the intersection of highway 20 and SR 19, go north on 19 to CR 20. There is a Speedway gas station on two of the four corners of the intersection. Turn left onto CR 20, go past the roller rink to the light at CR 3 and turn left. Go south on CR 3 to the first road and turn right on to CR 18. After about 1/2 mile you will see the Cunningham's white house on the left hand side of the road. The address is 29588. Park in back and enter at the rear.



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Speleo-Calendar

Please Note: Trips may be changed due to cave closures. Contact the trip leader or check the message board if you plan to attend a trip.

May 14: Monthly grotto meeting at Tony and Leslie Cunningham's house. See the map on the previous page for directions.

May 15-17: Grotto trip to Castlerock and Pops Caves in Devil's Lake WI. Led by Mark Matthews. Please see trip updates following the calendar for more info.

May 22-24: 38th annual Speleofest hosted by the Louisville Grotto near Bonnieville KY. Directions, a schedule of activities and other information can be found online at <http://louisville.caves.org/Speleofest.html>.

June 6: Tour of the Lost River Karst System led by Robert Armstrong, chairman of the Lost River Conservation Association. Meet at 7:40 AM at the gazebo on the town square in Orleans IN.

June 11: Monthly grotto meeting at Tony and Leslie Cunningham's house. See the map on the previous page for directions.

June 19-21: Grotto trip to Fredericksburg Cave in Lawrence Co. For more info please see trip updates following the calendar.

July 9: Monthly grotto meeting at Tony and Leslie Cunningham's house. See the map on the previous page for directions.

July 11: Grotto trip to Bronson/Donaldson. For more info please see trip updates following the calendar.

July 19-26: Combined NSS National Convention and International Congress, Kerrville, Texas. More information can be found at www.ics2009.us/nss.html

August 13: Monthly grotto meeting at Tony and Leslie Cunningham's house. See the map on the previous page for directions.

August 14-16: The monthly grotto trip will be to Cave Capers at Camp Rivervale in Lawrence Co. Indiana. Go to cavecapers.com for more info and the preregistration form

Pupfest 7: will be held Labor Day weekend. The event is invite only and all SJVG members are invited. RSVPs are requested. Pup says that everyone is welcome to come early and stay late. There will 10 to 12 cave trips every day, a hot tub and a sauna. Those attending are requested to bring an item to donate for the auction.

September 3-7: The Robertson Association hosts the 60th Annual Old Timers Reunion in Beverly WV. Please contact Sidney Hawkins for more information.

September 10: Monthly grotto meeting at Tony and Leslie Cunningham's house. See the map on the previous page for directions.

September 12: Monthly grotto trip to Clicks and Henderson Park Caves. For more info see the trip updates following the calendar.

September 19: Tour of the Lost River Karst System led by Robert Armstrong, chairman of the Lost River Conservation Association. Meet at 7:40 AM at the gazebo on the town square in Orleans IN.

October 8: Monthly grotto meeting at Tony and Leslie Cunningham's house. See the map on the previous page for directions.

October 11: Monthly Grotto trip led by Sharon Schierling. Please contact her with suggestions. Possible vertical trip.

November 12: Monthly grotto meeting at Tony and Leslie Cunningham's house. See the map on the previous page for directions.

November 26: Monthly grotto trip to Pups for Thanksgiving.

December 12: Grotto Christmas party and monthly grotto meeting at Tony and Leslie Cunningham's house. See the map on the previous page for directions

July 12-17, 2010: NSS National Convention, Essex Junction, Vermont

Please note: Sometimes last minute trip changes are necessary due to weather or a change of plans of the trip leader. The meeting time, place, or even the trip destination may change. Participants should always contact the trip leader in advance so their attendance can be planned for and so that they may be notified of any last minute changes. Everyone is always welcome to just show up at the designated time and place, but please realize that by showing up unannounced that you are taking a risk that changes will have been made that you won't know about. If you are planning to go on a survey trip, advance notice is even more important so that there will be an adequate supply of sketchers and instruments.

Trip Updates Continued

The easiest way to receive trip updates is by joining the SJVG Yahoo News Group. Its free and easy to join. The address is sjvge-news@yahoogroups.com. To join contact Mark Kraus. His info is on the inside cover.

May Trip

May 15-17 will be a trip to Devils Lake State Park in Wisconsin led by Mark Matthews. There is climbing and non-caving vertical work planned for Saturday A.M. Mike Wickersham will provide climbing rope, helmets, gear, and a cave rope. Pops and/or Castlerock Caves will be visited on Sunday, Kasey Fiske will meet you at the campsite at 8AM. Mark has reserved campsite 9. Entry to the campground is allowed after 3PM on Friday. There is a limit of 20 people, 8 tents, 7 cars, and 1 small camper allowed per site. The park is located near Baraboo WI. Directions are available through the e.-news group. Please contact Mark at DM7144@aol.com or (574) 825-7144 if you plan to attend

The June grotto trip will be June 19-21 to Fredericksburg Cave in Indiana led Mudpuppy. The cave is on pri-

June Trip

vate land and the landowner is looking forward to our visit. Camping will also be provided along the scenic Blue River. It is primitive camping but there is a structure there that can be used in the event of rain. For more info stay tuned to the yahoo group, email me (Pup) at BHMmudpup@aol.com or call. On Sunday I believe the landowner wants us to check out some new caves? Can't wait to get back to Indiana!

The SJVG grotto trip for July will be the Bronson/Donaldson through trip at Spring Mill State Park. The trip

July Trip

is scheduled for 10:00 AM on July 11th. There is parking at both the entrance and exit. We should plan to camp at Spring Mill. Tony Cunningham is currently the trip leader, but might not be able to make it due to his employment situation. A permit from the park is required for the trip.

The 56th annual Cave Capers hosted by the CIG will be this months grotto trip. It will be June 26-28 at Camp Rivervale. There are self led and guided cave trips planned by the CIG. More details can be found at [http://](http://cig.caves.org/pages/capers.html)

August Trip

cig.caves.org/pages/capers.html. There will be no trip leader for this month. Please post any questions on the e-news

The September grotto trip will be to Clicks and Henderson Park Caves on September 12th. Tony Cunningham is the trip leader. We will meet at Elaine's Restaurant in Salem. Plan to leave for the cave at 10AM.

September Trip

From the Editor

By *Sidney Hawkins*

The newsletter is now available online with all color photos. Mike Wickersham is the new webmaster and the SJVG website has been updated. The cost of the newsletters is increasing. We no longer have free access to a copy machine. If February's newsletter had been printed at Staples they would have cost \$2.06 each for printing. The dues does still cover this but we also use dues money for donations and events. Besides leaving more money in the grotto funds for other uses you would be helping to keep the earth a little cleaner. Please consider this option and e-mail me at hawkinssidney@yahoo.com if you would like to switch to the online version.

Thanks:

Cover: Burnis Piper at the Soft White Shelter .The photo was taken by Dave Tibbets in the winter of 2008.

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Surveying

By Mark Kraus

On Friday January 30, Joy Baiz, Dave Tibbets and Mark Kraus visited Martin State Forest trying to find four known but poorly documented caves. The 8" deep snow made the ridge walking very difficult and we were not able to cover as much ground as we had hoped. The trio was successful in finding, GPS'ing and taking pictures of Willow Valley Cave (a cave that only an anorexic raccoon could love). Abandoning further ridge plodding, we did some drive by searching and were able to document Wiesbach Cave. Due to the cold and , we decided to leave the surveying for another day (probably 10 shots or less, 75 feet or so). That evening we dined on a "Cavers Special" pizza from Fayetteville' s finest pizza emporium.... .. three thumbs up and we all wish we had also ordered the bread sticks.

Saturday 1/31 : Having survived the evenings sub zero temperatures at the Mark III, our intrepid trio headed to Lowes to purchase a snow shovel in anticipation that THE Greene County snow plow had either not plowed the road we would be traveling on, or would have buried the entry lane with now frozen goo.

After shoveling a parking spot (no old men suffered heart attacks to our amazement) we walked the .13 miles to the cave and began surveying in the bitterly cold conditions. The coyote sized entry was too small to enter, but 10 minutes of kicking frozen snow allowed the team to slide down the steep toboggan like run of an entrance. Five hours , 49 shots, approximately 825 feet (if Joy can add) later we exited to the balmy 30 degree weather. Most of the passage past the entrance maze was 3' tall X 4' wide meandering stream passage. The cave continues, but a rock projection would have to be removed to go further.

Surveying

By Dave Tibbets

Friday, February 13, 2009: Mark Kraus and Dave Tibbets, unable to find a third team member, located and grabbed an entrance photo for Two Barn cave. The entrance was somewhat collapsed, so they did not force an entry into this 21 foot cave wannabe. They then proceeded to survey Weisbach cave, reported in 1961 as a 20 foot cave, and checked out two weeks earlier by Mark, Dave, and Joy Baiz. It taped out at about 90 feet, and will now be mapped and assigned an ICS cave number. Moving on, they snapped an entrance photo at one of the Willow Valley caves. This cave will be renamed Willow Valley II so that it isn't confused with the other Willow Valley cave. Next they combed the quarter of the quarter of the section where Willow cave had been reported as a lead in 1961. They found only one feature in this area that could possibly be a cave, so determined that they had, indeed located Willow. An entrance photo and coordinates were obtained. To finish the day, they toured the Willow Valley railroad tunnel (built of brick in 1900) before heading for a most unusual night at the campground.

Saturday, February 14, 2009: Joined by Burnis Piper, Mark and Dave headed for today's first goal, visiting and photographing the entrance to Grotto Cave I. Pushing to the end of the surveyed passage, they squeezed through a constriction to find an estimated 200+ feet of going virgin cave, highlighted by a steel trap still holding a leg bone, with a cache of bones about 50 feet away. Someday the story of this opossum dragging the trap into a sinkhole, falling into the cave, and chewing its leg off only to die of starvation will be interpreted by one of these cavers! After deciding that the map of this cave needs to be redone, the group headed

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across the valley and snapped entrance photos at Soft White Shelter. Another strange night was spent at the campground, but nerves were somewhat quieted by the toasting of the pink marshmallows that Burnis had brought.

Sunday, February 15, 2009: Burnis, Mark, and Dave returned to attempt to enter Willow Cave. After a fruitless hour of work, they decided to leave it for another day. Dave thanks Mark and Burnis for helping to solidify the documentation of Martin County caves for the ICS files.

Continued by Mark Kraus

Strange nights at Martin State Forest..... what Dave really means is strange scary fellow campers at Martin.

This weekend we shared the entire campground with BM 2 (our original name for him, standing for Biker Man 2). Burnis renamed him Shawn of the dead in reference to the original Shawn the biker man. Thus he joins a long line of colorful characters one encounters while camping and caving. Who could ever forget "Redneck Billy" and his num chuks, Opossum Lady, Broken leg guy, the Original BM - Shawn, Manelqua of multiple wives fame and the list goes on.....

Dave and I passed a heavily laden bicycle rider on SR 37 near Bedford. After lunch we passed him again and admired his fortitude for riding with such a heavy load. After surveying, ridge walking and finding our target caves of the day we headed for MSF . I thought we would have the place to ourselves, Dave predicted one or two other campers. Pulling into the MSF campground there were no other vehicles, just a lone bicycle and our buddy BM II.

Dave predicted he was an outlaw from justice, on the run after a mass murder. I just thought he was a hard core bike rider out for early season adventure. After setting up our site, BM II walked by and in the spirit of camaraderie, we invited him over to share our campfire and a fine vintage. Red flags went up immediately when we told him we were from Elkhart and asked where he was from..... he hesitated, mumbled , hesitated you would have thought we were asking for his social security and bank account numbers. Not sure we ever got an answer.....

After dark BM II came over to our campsite (we never did find out his name). A rambling nonstop (and I mean NON STOP) monologue ensue with three out of four sentences being "I don't know". The second glass of wine is where things got bizarre. If confession is good for the soul, this guy is doing all right. Again the non stop monologue

began, except now we found out that everyone in Lawrence county is out to get him, the Bedford police dept has arrested him four times , he has a house in Mexico that he cannot go to, he has not spoken to people for the last two years and he is SORRY! Whew ! I'm positioned to grab a pine 2 x 4 and Dave is just cringing.

Dave and I agree it is well past our bedtimes (8:15) and get ready for call it a night..... it worked as BM II left. Dave glares at me and I can read his mind as he says " I was right", referring to his original assessment.

A restless night ensued as we both clutched our trekking poles as our only means of defense.

Waking I was relieved to see Dave's tent intact and not a torn bloody site of a massacre. When Burnis arrive I think Dave's first question to he was " Are you Packing? " No luck, where is Trae when ya need him ?

Saturday we had another good day in MSF and returned to our campsite, hoping BM II had moved on to Shirley Creek (he hated the smell of horse piss though). He was still there. We dined and were enjoying campfire conversation when the theatrics began. Highly animated loud conversations were heard even though BM II was the only one there. He paced the entire campground and continued the conversations ALL night long. Burnis and Dave had their sharpened marshmallow sticks for defense and I am not sure if Dave had secured the perimeter of his tent with punji sticks as this had been discussed.

Bottom line, we all survived the second night with no loss of life.

See what ya all miss when you stay warm and cozy at home on a freezing February weekend .

Yellow Birch and Buckners

By Shay Furbush

Well the trip started well and ended well. Which is always a good thing. Dave, Mark, and Joy checked out a likely cave prospect while waiting for Shay (me) to arrive. The four of us went to Yellow Birch in the Hoosier Nat'l Forest. John, Joy's brother joined the group and with the company of Pachinco my loyal four-legged friend we traveled off to survey Joy's infamous one shot cave. While traversing the countryside Shay located a small cave but to much disappointment it was far short of the 25ft necessary. On to 1 shot that surprisingly measured a modest 29'1". Although arguably the drip line was another 17ft out, this was supported by the water fall that "dripped" at a very distinct spot. This would however make the entrance to the cave 17' deep 30'high

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and 50-60' wide. Dave who was doing the surveying decided on a more conservative start to the cave. John who enjoys waterfalls more than caves climbed to the top of this waterfall to measure it, and was never seen again.... After measuring this massive cave system Dave, Mark, Shay, and Pachinco hiked to the land bridge to survey the bridge and the hollow under the bridge. Mark and Dave remained safely on the ground while Shay and Pachinco climbed to the top of the land bridge and took measurements. Joy rejoined the group after John failed to reappear from the top of the waterfall previously visited. With much encouragement from Mark and Dave she was coerced into climbing up to Their location to take pictures. Upon completion of this survey task the group returned to the car where John was not. So we hiked the other side of the road and traveled up stream to another waterfall and discussed the prospects of turning the small pool at the base into a grotto swim park. Somehow Shay was elected to do all the work. This will be one of many "pending" projects I believe. We returned to the vehicles again only to find no John. Joy, Shay, Dave, and Pachinco all set off to the last known location of John in hopes of not finding his body at the bottom of a waterfall being devoured by wolves. Mark stayed behind to honk the car horn if John returned. Of course we were just outside of horn hearing distance when John returned. All was well we drove to Sullivan's and had a pleasant evening eating around the fire.

On Saturday the boy scouts arrived on time to join the group. Wrong boy scouts though. Dave, Joy, John, and Shay were joined by Bob from ND who has been 2yrs above ground, we all went into the cave. We spent 5 hours exploring and having an easy and "Dry" caving experience. Everyone who went in came out relatively unscathed and happy. Joy and John went for Pizza and Beer while Dave, Shay, and Bob all finished a fine Chardonnay. Mark would emerge from the cave with the boy scouts to find cold pizza and the cheese sticks all gone. Sorry Mark.

Shay had to leave however Sunday's activities were to include a trip to Empire quarry and a trip looking for geodes. A possible Surveying trip in 2 weeks was also discussed for lost river.

Added By Mark Kraus

Shay made one kind of major error in the story when he said that I emerged from the cave with the Boy scouts. I exited the cave with 1/2 of the group at 4:30

I enjoyed the fabulous Cavers Special Pizza from Fayetteville pizza and kept looking for the cheese and pep-

peroni bread sticks, but the ravenous horde had already devoured them. The pizza was still outstanding and since I had more than 1/2 a pizza, I was doing alright.

Meanwhile back at the cave..... The other half of the group was still in the cave. They had 5 adults, one mildly autistic college freshman and 8 scouts. The leader, Greg Smith, had planned to go to the Quarry room while my group did the Spiral room. He has done this route twice with me and has been going to Sullivan's for the past 20 plus years. His group was younger and less experienced than my group, but for several of the kids it would be at least their third caving trip. His troop is usually well prepared and equipped.

At about 6 PM I was beginning to wonder. They had already been in the cave for 6 hours and that would have been my high side guess as to the time they would spend in the cave.

Joy, Dave, Bob and I hiked the Sullivan's property and did a quad burning hike up to where we have planted trees in the upper field. Good to see the trees growing and some of the Tulip Poplars actually thriving.

Returning to our campsite as the sun set, the cavers still had not returned. I talked to Greg's 20 year old daughter and asked if her dad had mentioned going anywhere else in the cave and she said "no". The group had now been in the cave almost 8 hours and we are getting a little nervous and started talking about going back in, not a very welcoming idea to clamor back into cold moist cave gear. By 8:30 we decided to go back in and do a search. Eight hours would be a long trip for anyone and it looked like something may not be going as planned.

I, Lauren (Greg's daughter), her boyfriend Justin and a Ryan, strong 17 year old who's father was the assistant scout master in the cave with Greg, started to gear up.

Dave, Joy and Joy's brother John were functioning as my brain as they gathered supplies for us to take into the cave. We packed water, Gatorade, food, additional first aid supplies trash can liners, candles, cyalume sticks, AA and AAA Batteries, spare headlamps, chemical heating pads, pencils, note pads and anything else we could think that could help us. My pack now felt like someone had rocked it and the other three were equally weighted down. Perhaps most importantly was the advice from Dave and Joy's words the would stay with me..... " they're Boy Scouts. they are trained to sit and stay if they are lost"

We went through the gate about 9 PM and headed towards the Quarry room. We did quick sweeps of possible side leads or errors that the group could have made on their way out and left notes with exit instructions at each

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intersection as we went deeper into the cave.

At the T room we found the jackets which they had shed on the way in so we knew they were still in the cave.

Dropping down to the river level from the Mountain room it was decision time..... .. would Greg have tried to take his group to both the Quarry room and then the Spiral room ??? I had done it before with him, but that was a pretty big day with older stronger kids. Lauren and I discussed it both of us knowing that the Spiral room was Greg's favorite. We decided we had to check out the planned route first..... .. but where could they be ??? It is pretty much just an out and back from the Mountain room to the Quarry room. Would Greg have tried to go beyond that ? Would he have tried to do the Connection Crawl which is very short on the map but takes three times longer ? Were he or his 21 year old son Michael injured and neither would not leave the group ? To many scenarios to consider as we started up the passage to the North "Y" and the Quarry room beyond. This passage is very similar to the infamous backbreaker, except lower and with water in many places with an occasional 4 foot deep pool. Water levels were low and averaged about ankle deep as we went upstream.

Along the way we were constantly looking for footprints in the mud and sand as we went. Occasionally we would see a smaller foot print or fresh hand print in the mud which lead us to believe they had gone in, but had not come back out. On one sand and mud sandbar I saw a faint "Aaron was here".... There was not an Aaron in the group and our spirits sagged a little..... .. Lauren Justin and Ryan looked at it and corrected me and told me it said "Adam". There was an Adam in the group and I guess he has a history of signing his name in the snow on winter camp outs and hikes (I'll let the reader figure that one out). We were again convinced we were on the right trail and since there were not any footprints over it we figured they had not exited.

When we reached the North "Y" I sent the other three downstream. The passage is big and inviting and is the obvious (but wrong) route to take as you return from the Quarry room.. Most of the water flows that direction but to get to the Mountain room you have to take the other fork (the one we just came from) , crawl a little and the passage is not nearly as friendly or inviting. The Passage the other 3 took would soon get smaller and I told them to return after 5 minutes and meet me upstream at the Quarry room since that was still the best bet and would save us some time if we had to also go to the Spiral room.

I continued up towards the nearby Quarry room, I could

still hear the other three yelling out as I went. I stopped and yelled and swore I heard Greg's voice. I thought I may have been fooled by the sound of flowing and dripping water and yelled again. This time I could definitely hear Greg's voice and the word "HELP" with a chorus of munchkin voices thrown in.

Bellowing back to Lauren, Justin and Ryan to follow me..... they heard me and it soon sounded like a stampeding heard of pregnant water buffalo descending upon me from the rear as I kept going upstream. My old fossilized body reached the Quarry room seconds before the others and we were greeted by 13 jubilant cavers.

Greg told me everyone was fine was and I started to taking to everyone as Greg tended to his now very emotional daughter.

Everyone still had food and water and lights. No one was hungry thirsty or cold. Michael and I talked and he told me when they got to the North "Y" it just did not seem right. Despite having the map, being there before, just coming from there..... it just did not seem right. This was despite identifying 2 of the 3 legs of the "Y"..... they should have just pushed it harder or looked for muddy water from where they had come from.

We distributed the food and water to lighten our loads and I made sure to keep asking them to drink if they were even a little thirsty..... .. they just wanted OUT !

When we reached the North "Y" I split the group, sending the 3 that came with me and Michael on out to tell the others that everything was fine and they could relax. They were told to pick up the note cards on the way out which would tell me that they had made it out.

It was a slow trip out and some of the kids asked me if I thought it would be dark out when we got out..... uh..... it was dark out when I came in. It was now about 10:30 and they had no concept of time. I told them it would probably be well past midnight when we got out.

As we were going out I had Adam come forward for an ass chewing for writing in the sand. He apologized about 10 times with a very liberal supply of "yes sirs" and "sorry sirs" as he made a wave or two and washed the sandy mud back to a natural look. I had a hard time keeping a straight face (not being used to the "sir" treatment.) When we got to the Mountain room I talked a little more to him about writing or marking anything in a cave. He knew better, just did not think it would matter if he did it in the sand..... again a heavy dosage of sirs was thrown my way..... this kid wanted out and was not going to do anything to jeopardize that.

I exited the gate after spotting the first 5 scouts out (the ones small enough to almost be able to walk the

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back breaker). It was now 12:20 and the last of the group exited about 12:45.

It was a very long day !

Thankfully I had eaten a healthy portion of Fayetteville pizza which provided the needed energy to do the back breaker twice in one day. Remember, that's Fayetteville Pizza and the Cavers Special for all of your post caving nutritional requirements.

Wayne Cave

Joy Baiz

For those of you that wimped out -- the three members of the SJVG that braved the cold, the white out travel conditions on the way to Bloomington, and the infamous crawlway had a marvelous time. Mark Kraus decided to go looking for Eagles at Lake Monroe rather than cave -- something about a bum knee! Mark Matthews, Pirate and Joy Baiz joined Dave Everton (our guide and photo god) and a few of Dave's friends for the trip into Wayne Cave on Saturday. Thanks to Mark Kraus (who played chauffeur) we had a rope to assist the decent into the first 10 foot pit and an etrier to help with the next 10 foot drop into the cave. A short crawl to the old portion of Wayne Cave and then on to the rabbit hole entrance to the 1250 crawlway. For those of you who have never experienced this fine piece of Indiana Cave -- it is an experience to remember (and only to be done again once the original memories have faded). An hour trip through belly crawl, army crawl and hand & knees which seems to go on much longer than the scheduled hour! At the end of this crawl the canyon you are bridge crawling comes to a "T" with another canyon creating about a 14 foot drop. At this point your trip leader decided that she would rather return immediately to the 1250 foot crawl than traverse the slim ledge that tips ominously toward the drop. Only the direction and encouragement of Mr. Everton made this traverse possible. A short distance later, we were in the Wells -- very unique high, straight walled rooms, extending 40 feet to the ceiling. One had the "Muck Pit" which tried to suck off the boots of all who ventured in, another had "Moon Milk" running down one wall. Returning to the point of entry into the Wells, we climbed up a breakdown slope into another room similar to the Wells, then around the corner to what looks like a massive breakdown roadblock. Oh No, up the 20 foot climb and on to the RPI Discovery portion of the cave. Wonderfully decorated rooms awaited us in this area. The group rested while Dave practiced his photography skills (see his photos at flickr.com -- link embedded in this email). Several highly decorated rooms were visited before we returned back to the crawlway entrance. Once again, Dave and his friends provided the encouragement needed for the trip leader to do the "fun" traverse across the shelf to get to the entrance of the crawl -- two of Dave's friends decided that the 14 foot canyon was narrow enough to "bridge", so they put their feet on one wall, their hands on the opposite wall and "walked" up the canyon and remained

bridged at the top while I inched along the shelf, promising they would "catch me if I fell" (I am sure they under estimate the force of my body weight in a free fall). All made the trip out to find several inches of white stuff had covered the ground during our 7 hour trip into the cave. A fine dinner at Casa Brava topped off our day and allowed us to recharge in the company of friends before heading home.

Our thanks to Dave Everton for his skill as a guide and to Mark Kraus for providing climbing gear and driving assistance.

Ed Note: This trip took place on Feb. 21.

Henderson Park

By Joel Annabel

I took a group of Boy Scouts into all 3 caves at Henderson Park on March 28. Thankfully, Mark Krause helped me out in this endeavor, though I had some doubts in his capability after losing a group of boy scouts in Sullivan Cave a week ago. Seriously, though, he did an excellent job of leading us through Waterfall, Middle, and Mill Caves. I am happy to say that no Boy Scouts were lost. We had 12 boys and 5 adults. All were very impressed by the waterfall in Waterfall Cave. They were even more impressed by the waterfall in Middle Cave. And the Gunbarrel in Mill Cave was the highlight of the trip!!!!

Surveying

By Dave Tibbets

Saturday, March 28, 2009: Dave Tibbets' emailed agenda included the item "find huge virgin caves," but Shay Furbush, Pachinko, and Mark Matthews decided to show up anyway. They broke camp at 8:30 and attempted to enter Willow Cave. At 9:45 they abandoned their fruitless efforts and returned to the campground which was the designated meeting point in case anyone else decided to go along. Leaving at 10, they proceeded to the parking spot at exactly the same time as the rain proceeded to the parking spot. Having little faith in their leader's predictions, the group geared up with minimal caving equipment and maximum rain gear! Dave had a "maybe kind of close sort of" gps location for Deep Grotto that he obtained by extrapolating information from Caves of Indiana. As they bushwhacked through the forest in the rain the excitement (or maybe it was the discontent) became palpable. When the gps unit showed that they had a bit more than half a mile to go, some exposed rock was seen. Shay and Pachinko checked it out and found a rat hole to explore. Shay squirmed in and said that there was actually some passage. Then he said

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that he could see daylight. Mark climbed a slope and found a second entrance. The group quickly decided that it was SURVEY TIME. A bit of digging made the entrance passable, and a bit more digging made a through trip do-able as well. Having no knee or elbow pads caused everyone to pay a price in pain, but they were in new passage! After connecting the entrances, the team headed for the stream where they found walking passage. The lack of caving gear caused body temperatures to drop quickly, so the survey was abandoned after 169 feet. The cave was scooped for another 200 or so feet of mostly walking passage until a place was reached where breakdown would force a belly crawl in water. It couldn't be seen whether the passage went back up after the breakdown or whether the water crawl continued. The next trip will have to determine that. Two marked stations were left in a short maze section for beginning the next survey trip.

Sunday, March 29, 2009: Waking to constant rain, wind, and temperatures in the high 30's the group abandoned its ridgewalking plans, broke camp, and headed for home.

Buckners Cave

By Mark Kraus

March 21st

Jesse Lambert, a friend of Dave Schang, and I met up with Bill Baus and Virginia White and led a group of 40 through Buckners Cave.

Bills group swept sand and wire brushed in the Volcano passage and my group did the circle route and wire brushed in the stream passage before the crawl up into the volcano.

Unlike last week, no one was misplaced and all returned to the surface as planned.

Surveying

By Dave Tibbets

Friday, April 3, 2009: Joy Baiz and Dave Tibbets began a tour of Martin County with a stop at Williams Bridge. They then visited Trinity Springs. Neither if them was tempted to bathe in the waters due to the skanky smell and the greasy film floating on top. They proceeded so that Joy could check out McBride's Bluff Cave and did some fruitless ridgewalking to try to discover Treasure Cave. They moved down the road and Joy explored the depths of House Rock Cave. After braving the Friday rush hour traffic of downtown Shoals they moved on to

the bluffs of Beaver Bend where Joy checked out Gormelly Bluff Cave and thought about entering Almost Cave. They were unable to locate Rio Blanco, so they headed for the campground where they were joined by Mark Kraus and Bill Kulwicki.

Saturday, April 4, 2009: Bill, Joy, Mark and Dave set out with a plan to survey the 150' or so of the new discovery on Grotto I Cave. Due to Mark's impatience at Joy's speed of reading instruments he began poking around and discovered more new passage in the new passage section. It was mostly walking canyon 15+ feet high, 8- 20 feet wide and the two biggest rooms in the cave were discovered. Only about 400 feet of new passage were surveyed, but the team had the thrill of shining first light on all of it! The survey finally ended at a stream passage that was too low to be pushed (unless someone hardier and skinnier wants to try). The existing map of the cave will now need to be redrafted and the length will be about 50% longer.

Sunday, April 5, 2009: Sensing new blood, Dave talked Bill and Joy into trying to enter Willow Cave. Mark was smart enough to depart for home. After about 45 minutes, this fourth attempt to enter Willow was abandoned until Dave can find someone else foolish enough to try it. They headed for the day's ridgewalking project. Parking at three different spots, many promising dark spots on hillsides were checked out. Dave found one nice hole but it only went back into the bluff for about 12 feet, so he documented the feature for future reference. Meanwhile across the valley, Joy was busy finding an actual cave! named J B Sandstone Cave (if you know Joy you can probably figure out why) it features 3 entrances, about 40 feet of passage, and a 12 foot dome inside. It is obvious that humans had been there before, but this cave is not in the ICS database, so it counts as a new discovery for Joy. Surveying was left for a future trip.

Friday, April 24, 2009:

Shay Furbush, Joy Baiz, Mark Matthews, and Dave Tibbets obtained coordinates and entrance photos of and then surveyed Cedar Bluff Cave and Cedar Bluff Shelter Cave. These were new caves to all 4 cavers. Dave decided to treat his fellow surveyors to some of Martin County's best, so they then proceeded to Split Arrow and Sandy Beach caves where the friendly owner gave permission to visit (after Dave reminded him who had given him maps of his caves). Sandy Beach was a spe-

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cial surprise! Shay and Mark had not visited House Rock or McBrides Bluff caves, so the tour proceeded to these before taking in Jug Rock. On the way to camp, one more look was taken at Willow Cave, but it was no more friendly than before and still has not allowed entry.

Saturday, April 25, 2009:

After surviving the first weekend night of turkey season and the repeated hunter departures from camp beginning at 4:30 A. M. the group headed to Pachinko Parlor with a goal of finishing the survey. 5 hours and 500 feet later, they left, leaving behind virgin water crawl passage for a future survey trip. Shay headed for home, while Joy and Mark did the double through trip of Willow Valley tunnel.

Sunday, April 26, 2009:

Joy, Mark, and Dave surveyed JB Sandstone Cave in 5 shots, then added nearby Sweetie Pie annex before heading north after a great weekend. They visited with Bill, Deb, Steve and Amanda Kulwicki for a short time at Bill's house.

Saturday, May 2, 2009: Joy Baiz, her friend Diane, Mark Kraus and Dave Tibbets drove to Wabash County where they were warmly welcomed by a friendly landowner who invited them into her home, offered bathroom facilities and led a hike to Enyears Cave, a forty footer located beside a beautiful little 12 foot waterfall on Enyears Creek. Coordinates landowner contact information, and entrance photos were obtained for the ICS database.

They next checked out waterfalls and cliffs at the Hathaway Preserve at Ross Run.

Moving on, Salamonie River State Forest provided some hiking, waterfalls, and a chance to survey a cave which turned out to have only 20 feet of passage, so it's only a karst feature. Again, documentation was obtained for the ICS.

They then hit the Salamonie Reservoir for some kayaking.

On the way home they diverted to Hanging Rock, a limestone feature along the Wabash River which was well worth the time. It's a chunk of limestone standing about 80 feet above the river, with flat land all around. If someone had a rope, a 40-50 foot free drop could be rigged here.

A pleasant day was had checking out geological features only 90 minutes from Elkhart.

Maucks & Langdons Caves

By Beth Acosta

Friday April 17th SJVG invaded Stage Stop Camp Ground in Southern Indiana. Joy Baiz, Her Brother John, Mark Matthews, Mudpuppy, Beth Acosta with her Granddaughter Lily, & Niece and Nephew Becky & Billy Stuller arrived Friday Night for a weekend of camping and caving. Well most arrived on Friday Beth with kids in tow googled the wrong campground and ended up in the O'Bannon Woods after midnight. Luckily Pup had both a cell signal and befriended a lovely local couple at the campground and they were able to guide us in. I would have hated to sleep in the car with three children. We were joined in the morning by Mark Kraus, Sharon Schierling, Jordan Ross, and Three friends of Pup's from Evansville Doug, his son Brandon and his father Mike and another caver friend Cary. At 10:30 we set out in a bit of a caravan for Maucks & Langdons caves.

Mark Kraus lead us to Maucks Cave but had decided in advance to forgo caving and plant trees at Buddha Cave instead. Maucks is a good cave a free climb down into the cave, good walking passage with several pits for side trips and a few belly crawls if you wanted to get to the back of the cave. Becky (13 yrs) and Billy (14yrs) both started caving before they could walk but have not been in the past few years. Both were great! and a great help with Lily. I'm sure you'll see them in future speleologs. Lily (3yrs) did great too! she was very excited to get back in a cave and did fine until the belly crawl under a ceiling of soda straws. Crawling under a smooth ceiling was ok but she didn't like the look of all those formations. She (we) did the first 20' crawl but when we hit the 2nd similar crawl she didn't want to go through. She Becky and I waited while Sharon, Billy & Joy finished the cave. The rest were out in the main passage waiting for us having decided getting to the back of the cave wasn't really worth the belly crawls and water .

Next we hiked back to Langdons. Langdon's really does have an elephant trail leading to it. A good cave with interesting climbs. They're not kidding when they said it's heavily traveled. We came upon several other cavers and groups while in there. Including some COOTS from OTR! This was Lily's fifth cave, so by now (if you know Lily) she is a pro. I believe the phrase we heard the most was "I can climb it myself." I really appreciate everyone's help with Lily, and to the group from Evansville for leading us in and out.

The first time I did this cave was 11 years ago with my niece & nephew, Becky & Billy, who were 2 &

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3 at the time. If I remember correctly Billy like Lily was a little pro. Becky on the other hand didn't want her hands muddy. She didn't seem to mind the mud as much this time. ;-)

We headed back to Stage Stop Campground for a nice camp fire and a few games of corn hole. The rain held off until the middle of the night. We woke to a soggy Southern Indiana Spring day. Breaking camp in the rain is always fun. With everyone needing to drive several hours to get home we decided to skip doing any other

caves and instead went to visit the Ragglands who own Bryant's cave. They are really friendly landowners and let us poke around on their land, check out the opening of their cave, their cabin, and some potential new openings on their land. I believe we may be making Bryant's and some of the other caves in the area one of our fall grotto trips.

As always Great Caves, Great Friends, Great Memories!

News and Notes

Membership: Dues were paid as follows: Jason Acosta 1 yr, Kourtney Bowouer 1 yr, Lance McFarrenn 20 mo, Mark Atkins 1 yr, Cory White 1 yr, Ray Rough 1 yr, Wes Stiener 1 yr, Joel Annabel 20 mo.

Alpine Karst

By Tina Oliphant

The original Alpine Karst newsletters of the 1970s were an ambitious project to collect data on the major alpine karst areas of North America (and to a lesser extent, other alpine regions of the world). Finally the first 4 issues from the 1970s are a once again available. With beautiful full-cover cardstock covers, this valuable collection includes not only the newsletters but also contributions from the original series editors--Chuck Pease, Jim Chester and Ron Zuber-- recalling their editorships and the travails of producing those original issues. For good measure, the editor, Tina Oliphant, has also included two widely-read articles from Frank Binney's Inside Earth series. The articles describe early activities by author Jim Chester in Lost Creek Siphon (Montana) and Norm Pace's review of exploration in Montana's Scapegoat Wilderness Area. Both areas have seen considerable interest in the new century with Lost Creek Siphon finally being mapped in 2001 after nearly 30 years efforts and Scapegoat the focus of recent summer and winter "expedition" caving to push the area caves.

Alpine Karst; in the beginning offers us a literary time capsule of wilderness caving exploits and information that feels as fresh and relevant today as it no doubt felt during those halcyon days of the 1970s when the original issues were published. Needless to say, this stuff is today nearly unobtainable any other way. Great vintage stuff.

Alpine Karst Volume 8, 2003. Edited by Tina Oliphant: Cave Books, Dayton OH. Paperback, 216 pages, 8.5 by 11 inches, 44 maps, 17 figures, 61 black and white photos. Color front and back covers. ISBN978-0-939748-68-6. Available from Alpine Karst Foundation for \$19.00 plus shipping at www.alpinekarst.org

Fayetteville Pizza

By Mark Deebel

Yes, the rumors are true, Kristie and I have started a pizza place here in Fayetteville. Opening day was January 22nd, and we have been too busy since then to do much else. So consider this a blatant advertisement for Fayetteville Pizza, located on Hwy 158, five miles west of Bedford. Did I mention that we give a 10% discount to NSS members?

Currently we are open Thurs-Sun, so if you are ever in the area feel free to stop in and check us out.

Cave on!

NSS Ballot

By Cheryl Jones

Incumbent director Lee Florea was, for whatever reason, not included the NSS ballot that will be arriving in your mailboxes soon. Please write his name in if you would like to re-elect him to the NSS Board. Below is Lee's platform.

LEE FLOREA, NSS 37909FE/LF

My active caving began in 1991 near my family farm in eastern Kentucky. Caving was a convenient distraction from my studies. By 1993, I became a NSS member and an active participant in the Green River Grotto. During my time as a college student, the goals of my weekend trips changed from recreation, to exploration, and eventually survey. Expedition work with the Cave Research Foundation and participation in summer field courses at Mammoth Cave completed my transformation from a career in physics to a life-long passion for geology and caving. Recently I returned to Kentucky from a six-year tenure in Florida when I accepted an assistant professor of environmental geosciences position at Western Kentucky University.

These past fifteen years, I have supported the Society, the community, and the environment in a number of ways. For example, I served as the first president of the Kentucky Speleological Survey and I helped to found the Florida Cave Survey.

News and Notes

Additionally, I have worked in a central role with the 2001 and 2008 conventions and with the 2009 International Congress. I have struggled to protect cave resources for many years from interstate highways and coal mines in Kentucky and golf courses and housing developments in Florida. The NSS has achieved public awareness of caves over the past six decades, but now the Society must adapt its strategies to remain in a crucial role of cave research and protection. A coherent vision for a new NSS Office Headquarters is central to that theme.

During my first term as a NSS Director, I have made progress on a number of goals. Specific actions that I have sponsored include:

- 1) A streamlining of our policy regarding scholarships; we are now able to offer two Ralph Stone Awards to graduate students each year.
- 2) A renewal of the NSS Preserves Research Initiative including a line of funding to support awarded grants.
- 3) Board Acts that have resulted in the move and inventory of our NSS Speleo Museum.

If elected to the Board for a second term, I will continue my efforts to see the Society through the present economy, white nose syndrome, and a move to a new headquarters. I will make it a priority to seek solutions and bridge the growing gap between non-scientist cavers and non-caving scientists using my experience in resource protection, policy research, and grant writing.

RBNC New Website

By Dave Everton

Thanks to website creator Blake Holaday (recent Purdue graduate), the RBNC's new website is now LIVE!!!!

<http://www.bucknercave.org>

The old one <http://www.caves.org/grotto/big/rbnc/rbnc.htm> has now been retired and deactivated. If anyone has any of the pages of the old site bookmarked, navigating to any of them should AUTOMATICALLY cause a redirect to the new website. (Another kudo to Blake for that one!)

Thanks also to everyone who helped me test the new request system; that was a huge blast! I loved the creativity of the requests that came in, and hope you had as much fun as I did with it.

Cheers!!

NSS IT Committee Chairman Needed

On Behalf of Tom Rae

IT Committee Chairman Darrell Wells is stepping down. The search is on for someone to take his place. With the importance of our Web site to the Society and its members, the IT Committee Chairman is critical to NSS operations and success.

We are looking for an experienced Unix (Linux) systems administrator, with additional skills as listed below. The volunteer would be responsible for the maintenance and operation of a dedicated virtual private server in a managed hosting environment. Primarily, this includes Apache, MySQL, and

FTP administration. Most common tasks are completed via Parallels Plesk; although, due to legacy configurations from our previous servers, some tasks must be done via the command line.

The time commitment is a minimum of 8 hours per month. However, with several mission critical projects currently underway, the initial time commitment will be greater. The chairman will be expected to respond quickly to e-mail, and address problems as they arise. S/he will also be expected to work with other NSS Committees, Internal Organizations, and advertisers who interface with the NSS server. The chairman may recruit additional members as s/he feels necessary.

Necessary core skills:

- * Linux systems administration
- * Familiarity with Parallels Plesk or cPanel
- * Apache Web server administration
- * Knowledge of HTML
- * Perl/CGI/PHP scripting
- * MySQL administration

Desirable skills:

- * Knowledge of common Web publishing tools, such as DreamWeaver and FrontPage.
- * Javascript, ASP

Note: This position does not include maintenance of content on caves.org.

That responsibility is managed by the webmaster who serves on the IT Committee.

If you are interested in the job, or know someone who should approach, please contact me. If you have any questions about the job, please contact Darrell. admin@caves.org

Cave River Valley

On Behalf of Keith Dunlap

Last Friday (3/13) the 316-acre Cave River Valley property was transferred to the DNR with management responsibility assigned to Spring Mill State Park. It's too soon to tell if this is a good or bad thing (or more likely some of both), but it is what it is. Spring Mill has also posted a revised management plan which can be found at http://www.in.gov/dnr/parklake/files/sp-CRVNAManagementPlan_Mar09.pdf. The revised plan is very similar to the draft released last August. The plan still calls for removing the dams in front of both caves, 10-12 primitive camp sites plus 2 group area, and other developments which may or may not be consistent with such a "natural area". On the good side, the plan discloses that visitation to the caves can be "self-guided" with no fee beyond the standard state park entry fee (\$4-7 per vehicle). Note, Endless will be closed September 1 thru April 15 each year as it serves as an Indiana bat hibernacula.

February Meeting Minutes

February 12, 2009

Members in attendance: Mark Matthews, Sidney Hawkins, Leslie Cunningham, Beth Acosta, Joy Baiz, Mike Wickersham, Dan McDowell, Brian McCrary, Mark Atkins, Sharon Schierling, Mudpuppy and Tony Cunningham. Mudpuppy was the enthusiastic proxy for Mark Kraus.

Grotto Chairman Mark Matthews called the meeting to order at 7:51 PM.

Mark asked if those attending had taken the opportunity to read the minutes of the January meeting and whether there were any corrections. It was mentioned that Mudpuppy had called in during the January meeting to discuss grotto business and that it was not put into the official minutes. Mark then asked for a motion to approve the minutes as corrected. Leslie made the motion. Beth seconded and the motion was passed by a unanimous voice vote.

At Mark's request, Sidney Hawkins then gave a Treasurer's Report for the month of January. The grotto had a beginning balance of \$1349.70. There was a total income of \$70.07 consisting of \$66.00 in dues, \$4.07 in donations. The expenses were \$74.00 for the new PO Box, \$25.00 for paper and \$40.71 for postage totaling \$139.71. The ending balance was \$1280.06. The \$66.00 collected was for the dues of various Cunningham's.

Leslie made a motion to accept Sid's oral report as the official Treasurer's Report for January. Beth seconded the motion and it is passed by a unanimous voice vote.

Old Business:

February Trip: Joy Baiz will lead a trip into Wayne's Cave on the 21st. Dave Everton will actually lead the trip to a few out of the way areas of the cave. There are six SJVG members on the list so far. Mike mentioned that there was a picture from the Wayne's crawlway and a link to the IKC Wayne's Cave page from the SJVG web page.

March Trip: Mark Kraus will lead a Boy Scout troop into Sullivan Cave on the 14th. Grotto members may accompany Mark's group or go off on their own provided they have a leader familiar with the cave. There were no changes in the March plans.

April Trip: Beth Acosta will now lead the trip to Jewell Box, Langdon's and Mauks. The meeting place and time will be published in the newsletter and put out on SJVG email. Sunday will feature vertical caving in the same area.

May Trip: The May trip will be to Devils Lake State Park in Wisconsin the weekend of the 16th. Mark Matthews will be the trip leader. He has reserved campsite #9. The site is

limited to 8 tents and 20 people. Check-in is after 3:00 PM on Friday. Devils Lake has an excellent climbing area with places to rig within walking distance of the campground. Saturday will be for climbing, hiking and enjoying the park. Castlerock Cave and Pops Cave will be visited on Sunday. You should plan on leaving for home directly from the caves.

June Trip: The June grotto trip will be Indiana Cave Capers to be held June 26–28 at Camp Riverdale. We need someone who plans on attending to step up and be the official trip leader. If we can find a qualified individual (Deebel) who is willing, it would be a good idea to post and lead a trip into Lost River Cave at Capers. Mudpuppy somehow held off using the awesome power of the proxy to "volunteer" Mark Kraus for both tasks. Tony mentioned that if enough people are going, someone might want to transport the SJVG party tarp down for the festivities.

New Business:

PO Box: The grotto address has been changed from the PO Box in Granger to PO Box 3052, Elkhart, Indiana 46515. Leslie explained that the Granger Post Office had "lost" all the paperwork changes since the box was first opened. She was told that only Jake Morris could close the box. She dropped the keys and paperwork off at Jake's and he said he would take care of it.

Check Book: Sidney and Mark Matthews have yet to go to Key Bank and change the names on the checkbook, but they will get it done.

July Trip: After discussion it was determined that the SJVG grotto trip for July will be the Bronson/Donaldson through trip at Spring Mill State Park. The trip is scheduled for 10:00 AM on July 11th. There is parking at both the entrance and exit. We should plan to camp at Spring Mill. Tony Cunningham is currently the trip leader, but might not be able to make it due to his employment situation. A permit from the park is required for the trip.

August trip: The August trip will be to Fredericksburg Cave on the 15th. Mudpuppy will lead if he can get out of a previous commitment. Look for more details to be announced later.

September Trip: The SJVG grotto trip for September will be to Clicks Cave and Henderson Park on the weekend of the 12th. Tony Cunningham is the trip leader. The meeting place is Elaine's Restaurant in Salem. Plan to leave for the cave at 10:00 AM.

Pupfest: Pupfest 7 will be held Labor Day weekend. The event is invite only and all SJVG members are invited. RSVPs are requested. Pup says that everyone is welcome to

February Minutes Continued

come early and stay late. There will 10 to 12 cave trips every day, a hot tub and a sauna. Those attending are requested to bring an item to donate for the auction. Tony made a motion that Pupfest be put on the official SJVG calendar. Mudpuppy seconded the motion and it passed by a unanimous voice vote.

October Trip: Sharon Schierling has volunteered to lead a trip on the weekend of October 11th. The location and details will be announced later. Sharon is open to suggestions. Since Bridge Day is the following weekend, Sharon would like to get some vertical work in during the grotto trip.

November Trip: Thanksgiving in Tennessee at Mudpuppy's! The tradition continues. Details to follow.

December Trip: The December SJVG grotto trip will be the Christmas Party.

First Aid Kit: There was a discussion about having a SJVG first aid kit for the trip leader to take along on each grotto trip. No motions were made and nothing was decided.

Web Page: Mike Wickersham has gained access to the SJVG web page and is beginning to make updates and changes. He brought print-outs of the page and posted them on the wall for those attending the meeting to examine. There was discussion regarding posting the newsletter on the web page. Sidney commented that she could track members who can download their newsletters and save money on postage. Also, the newsletter could have more photos and better color if it was printed and distributed electronically. There was concern that more SJVG cavers would forego their dues if they could access the newsletter for no cost on the web. Sidney and Mike agreed that they would explore the possibility of putting the newsletter

in a password-protected area where only members had the password. Mudpuppy made a motion that Mike Wickersham be appointed to the SJVG staff position of web master. Joy seconded the motion and it passed by a unanimous voice vote.

NCRC: Leslie asked how many present had attended National Cave Rescue Commission (NCRC) training. She suggested that NCRC events be put in the calendar and members encouraged to attend. It would be a good idea to make the next NCRC training a grotto event or trip.

Vertical Training: Mike Wickersham mentioned the facilities at Northridge High School and thought it might be a good idea to have the SJVG host a vertical training session at Northridge. He wants the PE instructors at the school to learn rope techniques. After discussion it was decided to hold a vertical session at Northridge along with a SJVG monthly meeting. Everyone agreed that it would be good to do this prior to the May trip. Scheduling the event was problematic due to other things on the calendar including spring break. Several options were discussed. Tony Cunningham made a motion that the April meeting be moved back to the 16th and held at Northridge in conjunction with a vertical training session. Sharon seconded the motion and it passed by a unanimous voice vote.

The February meeting was adjourned at 8:42 PM on a motion made by Tony and seconded by consensus.

Everyone enjoyed Leslie's ham and scalloped potatoes and an excellent presentation by Mudpuppy on his exploits in Lechuguilla Cave.

White Nose Closures

By Sidney Hawkins

Many caves are being closed due to White Nose Syndrome the following list of closures I put together with help from the Caves.org site. The site is very informative and also includes updated info. on decontamination.

All DNR owned Indiana Caves, Mine, and Sinkholes except Twin Mills through April 2010

All Hoosier National Forest owned caves

Caves at the Great Smokey Mountain National Park

All Nature Conservancy caves

All caves on National Forest System lands in the Eastern region except for the Shawnee National Forest



**The St. Joseph Valley Grotto
P.O. Box 3052
Elkhart, IN 46515**