



# BREAKDOWN

Volume 24

Issue 1

March 2009

The *MAR Breakdown* is the journal of the Mid Appalachian Region of the National Speleological Society. It is published three times a year; prior to the annual business meeting and prior to the Spring and Fall field meets.

### Subscriptions-

A complimentary copy is sent to each grotto in the MAR. For individuals it works this way: When you attend a field meet \$4 of your registration fee goes directly to the MAR to pay for three issues of this newsletter and other MAR projects. You may also subscribe by sending \$4 to the treasurer. The number of issues you have remaining immediately follows your name on the mailing label.

### Meetings and Meets-

The annual business meeting is held the last Saturday in February. Each spring and fall there is a field meet. Watch for dates.

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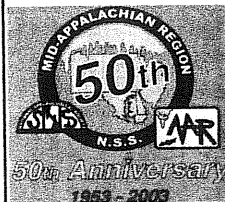
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**NO SPRING MAR IS SCHEDULED  
PLEASE SEE REGISTRATION  
INFORMATION FOR  
SPRING VAR INSIDE**

**FALL MAR 2009  
Hosted by York Grotto  
Weekend of October 3, 2009  
Rupert Cave, Mifflin County, PA**



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## 2009 MAR Business Meeting Minutes - February 28, 2009

**Meeting was called to order by Bob Gulden at 1:35pm, February 28, 2009 at the home of Jay Herbein, Harrisburg, PA**

**Secretary's Report** - A motion was made to accept the 2008 Business Meeting minutes as published in the April 2008 Breakdown. The motion was seconded. Motion passed.

**Treasurer's Report** - The Treasurer's report was read by Treasurer Bette White. Printed copies were distributed.

**MAR Breakdown** - Send any Breakdown articles to Derek Flaig. Material can be in hardcopy or sent electronically to derekcaver2000@yahoo.com.

George Bange maintains the mailing list database for the Breakdown. All changes should be sent to George at riverbat@statecollege.com. George requested people write neatly when registering for MAR field meets as the database is maintained from registration forms.

**2008 Spring MAR Field Meet** - The event was hosted by Commander Cody Caving Club in Hazelton, PA at the Pine Hill Campground. The write up of the event can be found in the August 2008 Breakdown.

**2008 Fall MAR Field Meet** - The event was hosted by Nittany Grotto in honor of their 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The write up of the event can be found in the January 2009 Breakdown.

**MAR Website** - Christopher Catherman continues to keep the website up and running. Christopher reminded grottos to send MAR field meet information to him in a timely manner for posting on the MAR website. Historical MAR

information continues to be added; email Christopher if you have anything to share.

**MAR Bulletins** - Will White reported four bulletins remain in the works: Huntingdon County - Garret Czmor continues to work on this bulletin; Mifflin County - Todd Hancock continues to gather updated information on caves in the county; Juniata Valley - focus on updating information on Kookon, Tytoona and the Sinking Run area; Upper Susquehanna Valley (CCLUM) work on the bulletin continues.

**Pennsylvania Cave Database** - No report

**Game Commission** - Dale Ibberson asked everyone to contact their local senators to voice their support of SB66, the Stony Creek Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. Dale and Judi Stack will be visiting senators in the near future to help support this amendment.

**MAKC** - Kerry Spellman announced Hesston Cave map is complete. The cave will be open this summer. Contact Kerry for information. Kim Metzger announced that the MAKC cave preserves will be open this summer.

**PCC** - Meeting to follow the MAR Business Meeting.

**MAR Incorporation** - Keith Wheeland continues to work on the bylaws for incorporation which includes proactively setting the stage for 501(3)c status. Keith is exploring pro bono work from the law school at PSU.

**NSS Youth Group** - Allen Maddox via email, introduced the NSS Youth Group Liaison Committee. The purpose of the Committee is to introduce organized youth to NSS caves to help them learn

## 2009 MAR Business Meeting Minutes - February 28, 2009

safe and ethical caving. Allen is the Regional Youth Group Coordinator. Information can be found at [www.caves.org/youth/coordinatorguidelines.shtml](http://www.caves.org/youth/coordinatorguidelines.shtml).

**2009 Spring Field Meet** - No grotto or individual volunteered to host the spring field meet. There was discussion about holding the event once a year following a set schedule for grottos to host the event. No action was taken. MAR flyers will be available at the Spring VAR for those wishing to pay for the Breakdown.

**2009 Fall Field Meet** - York Grotto is hosting the event in honor of their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The event will be at Rupert Cave, Mifflin County, PA the weekend of October 3, 2009.

**2010 Spring Field Meet** - no takers

**2010 Fall Field Meet** - no takers

**2011 Spring Field Meet** - Franklin County Grotto volunteered to host the Spring 2011 Field Meet.

### **New Business:**

\* Keith Wheeland and Carol Tideman will be on the NSS ballot for the upcoming elections.

\* ERNCRC will be May 1-9, 2009 in Harrisonburg, VA.

\* Dale Ibberson has 1998 York Grotto MAR guidebook for sale.

\* Kim Metzger presented the idea of a website for WNS status in PA. Kim volunteered to develop the website which would be a tool to check on the status of WNS. The site would have the cave name, county, dated checked and whether there was any evidence of WNS. Information can be directed to Kim.

\* Charlie Eichelberger reported that the

PGC is facing budget constraints in its efforts to work with WNS. There are still a lot of unknowns.

\* Next year will be the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the MAR Business Meeting at Jay Herbein's home. The MAR decided to do some type of recognition in honor of the anniversary.

Respectfully submitted by Karen Bange  
MAR Recording Secretary.

Representatives at the meeting -  
Baltimore Grotto, York Grotto, Nittany Grotto, Greater Allentown Grotto, Franklin County Grotto, Philly Grotto, Commander Cody Caving Club, Seven Valleys Grotto, MAKC, Buffalo Valley Grotto, Bald Eagle Grotto and Central NJ Grotto.

## Pennsylvania Cave Conservancy Meeting February 28, 2009

The following officers were present:

President: Pat Minnick  
Vice President: Christopher Catherman  
Secretary: Karen Bange

Meeting called to order by President Pat Minnick at 3:35pm at Jay Herbein's house, Harrisburg, PA

### **Representation was as follows:**

Bald Eagle Grotto  
Baltimore Grotto  
Bucks County Grotto - Pat Richard  
Buffalo Valley Grotto - Eric Snyder  
Central NJ Grotto - Frank Strahan  
Commander Cody CC - Mike Mastrini  
Franklin County Grotto - Pat Minnick  
Greater Allentown Grotto - Dean Snyder  
Huntingdon County Cave Hunters  
Nittany Grotto - Gary Dunmire  
Philly Grotto - Amos Mincin  
Seven Valleys Grotto - Gretchen Williams  
York Grotto - Dale Ibberson

**Secretary Report** - The minutes from October 2009 meeting were accepted as published in the January 2009 Breakdown.

**Treasurer Report** - Gary Dunmire distributed a copy of the PCC financial summary. Gary reported a drop in the interest rate on the checking account. Gary will investigate this. He will be filing the forms for the IRS online.

**Web Page** - Dave Fricke continues to maintain the PCC web page.

**PCC Breakfast** - Pat Minnick volunteered to organize the PCC breakfast for the fall MAR meet.

**PCC Brochure** - Anyone interested should contact George Banger.

**Mail** - Dean Snyder reported the post office will be charging a yearly rental rate for the PCC PO box. This year the fee was \$57.00 which Dean paid. A motion was made and passed to reimburse Dean half the yearly rental fee for this year, and ongoing. The PO box is shared with Greater Allentown Grotto.

**T-shirts** - There was only one T-shirt design submitted for the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary T-shirt. A motion was made and passed for Gary Dunmire to chair a sub committee that would look into obtaining T-shirts for PCC 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary. PCC

agreed to budget \$750.00 for printing the T-shirts. No authorization was given for spending money at this time. The sub committee will report back at the next PCC meeting. The T-shirt design is posted on the PCC website.

**PA Cave Database** - No report.

**International Congress of Speleology** - No abstract submitted.

### **PROJECT LIST:**

**Baker Caverns**, Franklin County - No change  
**Dragon Cave**, Berks County - No change  
**Red Church Cave**, Schuylkill County - Dean Snyder reported there is a new landowner. Dean and Dale Ibberson have met with the new owner who is conservation minded. The cave remains closed at this time.  
**Merkle Cave**, Berks County - No change  
**Cleversburg Sink**, Cumberland County - The kiosk has been updated. The cave was flooded at last check in January. Franklin County Grotto is the contact for access to the cave.  
**Schofer Cave**, Berks County - no report.  
**Durham Cave**, Bucks County - no change.  
**Corker Hill and Frustration Pit**, Franklin County - Land development by WASHCO Homes is at a standstill because of the economy. PCC would like to provide a survey of the cave location in relationship to possible surface development. Landon Woodward, a professional surveyor, has offered to perform this survey. The NSS has a link on their website with information on working with land developers.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

**Spring PCC Meeting** - To be held during the MAKC Open House. Tentative location Lincoln Caverns, Huntingdon County. Details on PCC website.

**PCC Grill** - Joe Shlock reported he obtained a quote for stainless steel replacement of the grill. The quote was \$178.00. A motion was made and passed for PCC to issue \$200.00 to Joe to purchase the necessary materials to resurface the grill.

**Bat Protection** - PCC affirmed it's conservation policy to support bat protection in light of the spread of WNS into the region and further south. Information on WNS and bat protection can be found on the NSS website.

03/13/09

Dear Fellow Cavers, Vendors and Grottoes,

Do you want the bad news first or the good news first?  
Well, since it's my choice lets start with the bad

As many of you know, the spread of White Nose Syndrome has increased much faster than predicted. WNS has recently been discovered in VA and WV and reports continue to come in of suspected or confirmed infected sites. As everyone knows Virginia recently issued a voluntary moratorium until April 15<sup>th</sup>. It is uncertain whether they will lift the moratorium at that time.

As any conscientious caver should be we are concerned with the increased caving traffic that a VAR event brings and the impact that it would have on the spread of WNS. In addition, if the moratorium is lifted there remains a concern for the bats and the ever increasing spread of WNS. For this reason Tri-State Grotto has elected to hold a non-caving VAR. There will be no official grotto led trips during the VAR.

Tri-State Grotto would encourage cavers to refrain from recreational caving in the Virginias and all points North. In addition, Tri-state encourages all cavers to decontaminate before and after every trip in other parts of the country.

NOW, ON TO THE GOOD NEWS

## VAR is still on!!!

Due to an effort to cut the cost to the caver a decision has been made to move the location to Crystal Grottoes Caverns in Boonsboro, MD and eliminate the catered meal. This will cut the price down to \$20 for adults and \$17 for kids 6 and up with pre-registration. As before prices will increase by \$3 at the gate. There is also the possibility of a day pass price for those that live close and are not interested in camping. Those who have already pre-registered will be refunded the difference to reflect the new reduced fee. Anyone who has pre-registered and wishes not to attend may receive a full refund.

No trips, No fun you say? Not so! We are currently working on planning several activities and presentations. Some of the things we have in the works are:

1. Vertical training workshops from Friday to Sunday with skilled vertical cavers who will be able to provide training and help with technique. Bring your own gear and get some practice in, or if you are new to vertical caving and want to learn we should be able to have an assortment of gear to try. There is also a possibility of a climbing contest.
2. For experienced vertical cavers, Maryland Heights is only about 20 miles away and offers a spectacular outdoor rappel/climb (around 180 feet) looking down over Harpers Ferry and the Potomac River.
3. Good kayaking can be had on the Potomac (The Needles) and Shenandoah Rivers (Millville as well as Great Falls (Little Falls). Light kayaking and canoeing on the Antietam and Monocacy Creeks so bring your boat! There

are also three outfitters in Harpers Ferry area that run trips, BTI Whitewater, River & Trail and River Riders. Good Fishing is also present on the above waterways as well as the C&O Canal.

4. There are plenty of biking trails in the area near Antietam Battlefield, the C&O Canal and Western MD Rail-trail.
5. There are several civil war sites and historical places of interest nearby.
6. There is plenty of beautiful hiking at nearby state parks, ex. Catoctin mountain State Park, Cuningham Falls State Park, the Appalachian Trail the C&O canal and a little further Green Ridge State Forest and Paw Paw Tunnel.
7. Pending discussions with the owner, a possible dig to improve the commercial tour path in Crystal Grottoes as well as an in cave Cave Photography workshop will be in the works.
8. A GPS and Geocaching workshop and / or scavenger hunt.
9. A gear disinfectant workshop.
10. We are working on arranging several presentations hopefully including a presentation on WNS, Hellhole, Mt Aetna Cave and hopefully others.
11. As always there will be the usual evening activities, music, dancing, squeeze boxes and socializing with other cavers. Due to the change in location there will no longer be a restriction on alcohol. Well contained campfires may be permitted if approved by the owner.
12. We are working on arranging free commercial cave tours into Crystal Grottoes.
13. Possible outdoor / emergency first aid workshop

The changes in our plans did not come lightly. Rather than canceling the event during this time of distress we feel that the VAR is an important opportunity to get together, share information and promote bat and WNS awareness. We are adapting to our circumstances and surroundings as any good caver does and intend to host an important and memorable VAR. Your support is integral in pulling this event off.

Stay tuned in the coming weeks as we confirm activities and finalize our new plans. We hope to see you all in April.

Bernie Wootten

**SPRING VAR 2009 REGISTRATIOM FORM**  
**APRIL 24-26, 2009**  
 Crystal Grottoes Caverns

Boonsboro, MD  
 HOSTED BY TRI STATE GROTTTO

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Others you are paying for \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Grotto/Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Adult (16 + years)		\$20.00 x	_____	=	\$ _____
Children (6-15 years)		\$17.00 x	_____	=	\$ _____
Children (0-5 years)		Free x	_____	=	\$ <u>0.00</u>
Sunday Morning Breakfast		\$ 4.00 x	_____	=	\$ _____
T-Shirt	Small	\$12.00 x	_____	=	\$ _____
	Medium	\$12.00 x	_____	=	\$ _____
	Large	\$12.00 x	_____	=	\$ _____
	X-Large	\$12.00 x	_____	=	\$ _____
	XX-Large	\$15.00 x	_____	=	\$ _____
		<b>Total Due</b>		=	\$ _____

Please remember the continued concern for the spread of WNS, clean all gear before arrival  
 (See Decontamination protocols)

<http://www.fws.gov/northeast/whitenosemessage.html#containment>

**March 24, 2009 is Pre-Registration Deadline To order T-Shirts**

Cost if postmarked after March 24: Add \$3.00 per person

Make checks payable to the Tri State Grotto & Mail with Registration form to:  
 Bernie Wootten 431 Liberty St., Hagerstown MD, 21740