



BREAKDOWN

Volume 3

Number 2

CHAIRMAN'S NOTE

Hello again. How's caving? With the drought I suspect a lot of favorite caves and projects have afforded access to new passages or to ones that are usually sumped out. We would be more than happy to report on your breakthroughs in the "Breakdown".

By now you have all heard about Roberta Swicegood's cave diving accident in June at Tytoona Cave in Blair County, Pennsylvania. Unfortunately, no matter how safety conscious and careful we are, there are rare occasions when something goes awry and everything goes very wrong. Her absence from the caving community will be greatly felt. It is a regrettable loss.

On a happier note. It was great to see the region so well represented at the N.S.S. Convention, especially one far from home. The convention staff certainly provided a lot of options on how to spend our days and evenings. As usual, there was little time for sleep. It was quite a show, in an area that can stand on its own.

The next region event of the year is coming up after the O.T.R. The hosting grottoes are providing us with a combined region meet, a.k.a. a MAR/VAR. (Lynn Ott will learn its a lot easier to say than VAR/MAR.) You will find a map and other information inside this issue. Please plan to attend. It should be a good time only a few hours from home.

Another event to put on your calendar will be the fall B.O.G. meeting. It will be held on Oct. 28-30 at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, N.J. The Central New Jersey Grotto will be the host. The B.O.G. members feel that the general membership doesn't care what they do since they don't bother to show up at the meetings the B.O.G. move all over the country to make themselves available to local cavers. Lets prove them wrong and make it the kind of event the M.A.R. is known for.

Whatever you plan to attend, I hope to see you there.

1988 M.A.R. OFFICERS .

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FROM THE PENNSYLVANIA CAVE CONSERVANCY

LAUREL CAVERNS: Jim Kennedy reported on a proposal for major excavations in this commercial cave, the deepest and second longest in the state. The management is paying \$10 per foot of new passage, but the minimum dimensions are 2' wide and 6' high. The purpose is to facilitate rescues by creating additional loops and shortcuts, as well as to enhance the commercial value of the cave. It is not known how the new passages will affect the cave's environment.

AITKIN CAVE: Jon Streich of The Nature Conservancy (TNC) discussed the recent gating of this Mifflin County cave. The gate was designed and erected with the help of Roy Powers from the Cave Conservation Institute in Virginia. Aitkin will remain closed through the winter months to protect the large diverse bat population and to encourage the re-establishment of the Indiana Myotis colony that was present until the late 1970's. The gate cost TNC \$3000, but they have no ownership rights to the cave. An easement or lease are long-term options that are being pursued. By now there has been a work weekend to put a second coat of paint on the gate and to clean up the cave. There is also a possibility that the Pennsylvania Game Commission may designate the cave as a Wildlife Propagation Area, similar to Canoe Creek Mine. This would make the penalty for vandalism much harsher. The cave will be open to responsible cavers in the summers, but details have not yet been worked out. TNC is currently looking to manage Eiswert Cave #2 (Lycoming County) in order to protect a sizeable population of Small-Footed Myotis.

RUPERT CAVE: Jim (Kennedy) updated folks on the access to this Mifflin County cave. A spate of digging and exploration has added several thousand feet of decorated fossil passage to the 1500 feet or so of well known and heavily vandalized cave. The entrance building is currently locked and a gate is planned for the entrance into the new section. Trips are limited. Part of each trip into the new section involves reopening of the discovery lead and reburying it at the end of the trip. The cave and the 26 acres surrounding it are still for sale, but at an unreasonable (at least to us) price. Several Nittant members are monitoring the situation, and some talk has been made of starting a private cave ownership/management organization (alla Cricket Maze Cave Association (WV)). The new section is still unmapped although rumors that Bernard Smeltzer, who did the original map, may be interested.

RACCOONS: Several reports were heard that these furry predators have been damaging bat populations in Lemon Hole (Westmoreland County), and in Womer Cave (Perry County).

CAVE LIFE DATABASE: Keith Wheeland reported that information supplied to him by Jim Kennedy from the 1985-87 Pennsylvania Game Commission bat surveys has been entered in the Database. The cave life section of the database was developed with input from several PCC meetings dating back to 1985. As of now, the bat data is the only thing in this section. More information is needed from cavers across the state. A blank data form was printed in the spring 1987 MAR Breakdown. This form was not intended to be a finished product, but will suffice for any submissions to the database. Keith was quick to point out that data can be accepted in any form, but the standardized collection form will simplify input considerably. Samples printouts of the bat data were on hand for viewing.

FALL 1988

VARMAR

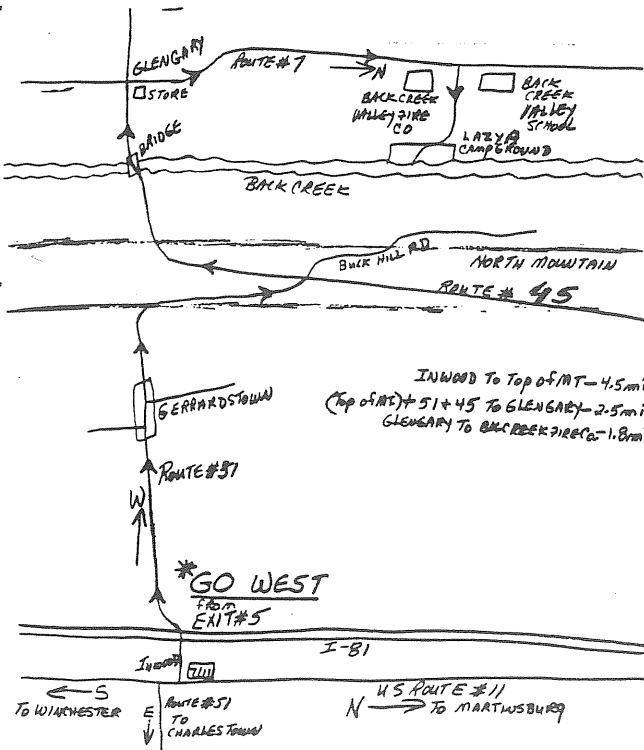
AT LAZY-A CAMPGROUND
GLENGARY, WEST VIRGINIA
IN BEAUTIFUL BERKELEY COUNTY

SEPTEMBER 30, OCTOBER 1 & 2

REGISTRATION BEGINS AT 6:00 PM FRIDAY EVENING

\$11.00 per person.
\$ 7.00 per child (8 yrs. and under).

Sat. evening feed with some of Russ Kennedy's "Infamous" Mexican Chile and a salad.



- (1) North or South on I-81.
- (2) Get off at Exit #5 (Inwood Exit)
- (3) Go West on Route #51.
- (4) Go to top of mountain (4.5 mi.).
- (5) Route #51 & Route #45 intersect.
- (6) Turn left onto Route #45.
- (7) Go to Glengary (2.5 mi.).
- (8) Turn right at Glengary Store onto Route #7.
- (9) Go to Back Creek Valley Fire Co. on right (1.8 mi.).
- (10) Turn right between Back Creek Valley Fire Co. and Back Creek Valley Elementary School.
- (11) Go about 400 yds. to Lazy "A" Campground.

1988 VAR/MAR ACTIVITIES

CAVING: There are 15 to 20 worthwhile caves in the counties of Berkeley and Jefferson here in WV, about the same in Washington County MD, not to mention the caves in south-central PA and northern VA such as Warren Co., VA and Franklin Co., PA. Landowner relations are somewhat sensitive here in the panhandle, so more information on area caves will be presented elsewhere as far as access and closure. There are also good ridgewalking areas with good possibilities located nearby.

C&O CANAL: The C&O Canal runs along the MD shore of the Potomac river, and is an excellent place for hiking and bike riding along its towpath. A number of small caves can also be found along the canal between Shepherdstown, WV and Williamsport, MD. Also a cluster of caves can be found along the canal near Round Top MT just west of Hancock, MD. The canal is accessible near Shepherdstown, Williamsport, and also at various places along its length. For more information, ask someone from one of the hosting grottos.

HARPERS FERRY NATIONAL PARK: The park is located at Harpers Ferry, WV where the Potomac and Shenandoah Rivers meet. The park affords history as well as scenery. The C&O Canal runs just across the Potomac from Harpers Ferry. There are numerous hiking trails including the Appalachian Trail nearby. The rocks on MD Heights across the Potomac from Harpers Ferry attract many climbers and is also a good place to practice SRT. Permission must be obtained from the park service to do any rope work or climbing.

SHOPPING: The nearby towns offer much in the way of shopping. The Blue Ridge Outlet Mall at Martinsburg, WV houses quite a variety of name-brand outlet stores and shops and prices are reasonable. Also there are the nearby malls of The Valley Mall in Hagerstown, MD, The Appleblossom Mall in Winchester, VA, and the Courthouse Square Mall in Martinsburg.

ATV'S AND DIRT BIKES: If you have one of these popular machines, there are two areas located near the campground where they may be ridden.

POINTS OF INTEREST: There are many interesting places and things to do in the area from Washington Co's Fort Frederick and Washington Monument State Parks to Berkeley Co's Sleepy Creek State Hunting And Fishing Reserve with its picturesque lake. There are also many trails here at Sleepy Creek to hike on. There is also Antietam Battlefield located near Sharpsburg, MD that affords a lot of history about the Civil War. The campground joins Back Creek which offers fishing, canoeing, and swimming (weather permitting). Also the nearby Opequon Creek, Potomac and Shenandoah Rivers offer much of the same such as fishing, canoeing, boating, and rafting. For further information just ask one of the local Grotto members.



BALTIMORE GROTTO'S 1988
"GREAT PUMPKIN HUNT"

October 21, 22 & 23 at
the P.S.C. Fieldhouse

Speleoauction

Costume Party

This years Theme is the 60's
(you pick the century!)

Prizes for Winning Costumes
in the following categories:

- 1 Most Original
- 2 Most Creative
- 3 Funniest

BOO BOO BEE DO!

BOG CHOOSES NEW JERSEY

The BOG is coming ... coming to New Brunswick, New Jersey on the 28 thru 30th of October this fall. Don't like the way the Society is run? Tell them yourself, in New Brunswick! Want to introduce some new thoughts, some new ideas? Bring them to a receptive Board of Governors. Want to comment on something? The BOG will be here ... in New Brunswick, New Jersey, October 28-30.

Plenty of camping space, some crash space and hotel space to accomodate you. And there will be a welcome party on Friday the 28th; a costume banquet on the 29th; some caving and/or alternate activities on the 30th. Don't forget it's Halloween weekend.

Final costs are not yet fixed, however reservations for the banquet will be required and will be accepted beginning September 1. Banquet space is limited. Reservations may be made at OTR. For further information contact:

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