



# BREAKDOWN

Volume 11, Number 3, January 1997

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 Sat. in February. Each spring and fall there is a field meet. Watch for dates.

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## MAR Business Meeting set for Sat. Feb. 22, 1997

The Mar business meeting will be held Saturday February 22 at the home of Jay Herbein in Harrisburg at 1:30 p.m. Make sure your grotto has a representative at the meeting. Cavers who are interested in what is happening in the Region are welcome. See page 5 for details and a map.

After the meeting there will be refreshments and beverages served at the Herbeins. Then the festivities will move to Dale Ibbersons home where again food and beverages will abound. Please note that donations of food or cash are appreciated by the hosts of these two parties.

This year Dale has some additional treats lined up in the form of cave videos. It seems that Dale has become adept at making his own videos of local caves. They include Alexanders Caverns, Rupert Cave, and Black Log Cave. In addition, Dale has located a 16mm movie which was made in Alexanders Caverns in the 1940's. He plans to convert it to video. It too will be available for viewing at Dale's.

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# Carmody and Wheeland — Off to Prison

— Keith D. Wheeland

*An adaptation of this article was published in the Nittany Grotto News, Vol. 43, No. 3, Nov. 18, 1996*

On October 19, 1996, Teresa Carmody and I gathered up some caving photos, brochures, and our helmets and lamps and drove in the rain to the State Correctional Institution at Houtzdale, Pa. to participate in an Expo on Leisure Education for the inmates.

The Houtzdale facility is a medium security prison on 205 acres with a secure, fenced area of 69 acres. Inmate capacity is 1578 and the staff complement is 458. It is a prototypical institution offering educational development, vocational training, and a correctional industry, in addition to the usual services.

We were there as part of a group of other exhibitors. Our aim was to provide the inmates an opportunity to expand their horizons by identifying new recreational pursuits for life after incarceration.

Before the visit, we were subject to a security check. We also were required to provide a detailed list of the items we were bringing to the Expo. One interesting note, we were not allowed to bring maps of the local area.

After we signed in and relinquished the car keys to be secured in a safe, we were led through a metal detector and stamped on our left hand with a special code written in invisible ink. Through a series of doors, unlocked and locked behind us, we arrived at a guard station. Behind us was a sliding locked door, and in front of us the same. We showed our left hand in a little window and the guard verified that it was marked with the correct code. Not until then, did the door in front of us open. We were now in the prison yard where inmates went about their business. We were escorted through the rain

into another building in the complex, and there to the gymnasium where the Expo was being held.

There were representatives from the Fish and Game Commission, a ham radio club, the Shavers Creek Nature Center, a sports club collector, a body building club, and SCUBA diving. We were there representing the Nittany Grotto.

The tables were arranged around the center of the room like wagons expecting an Indian attack. Approximately 900 inmates were ushered into the gym in groups of 125 by residence hall. They walked around the tables going one way around the perimeter of the gym, stopping at the tables which interested them most. Each group was allotted approximately 15 minutes in the gym, and were ushered out before another group came in.

We struck up conversations with many of the inmates. Most of those who stopped were interested in the photographs and some took the brochures we offered. Many had visited show caves with Crystal Caverns and Laurel Caverns getting the most mention. Some had even done some wild caving in sandstone and fewer in limestone caves. Some thanked us for coming.

This was the first Expo of this kind in any prison in Pennsylvania. We were thanked a number of times by the staff for our participation. Teresa and I were pleased that we could be a part of it. I suppose we could say in conclusion, "It was not such a bad place to visit, but we wouldn't...". You get the picture. ❖

# The MAR Review - Highlights of the Mid Appalachian Region

Bert Ashbrook

*Note: If your newsletter is not reviewed in this column, send a copy to Bert Ashbrook, 1257 Lehigh Parkway South, Allentown PA 18103-3875.*

The August 1996 issue of the **Cumberland Valley Caver**, published by the Franklin County Grotto, contains a fine description and map of **Flemmings Trough Spring Cave** (Huntingdon County, Penna.). Johnathan Daniels describes a trip in which he got through low airspace about 100 feet from the entrance. Beyond, 500 feet of new cave were eventually surveyed. Ken Jones' map accompanies the article.

Pittsburgh Grotto's **Netherworld News** from June 1996 summarizes 1995's accomplishments at **Overholt Blowing Cave** (Pocohontas County, WVa.).

Survey from the entrance to the First Waterfall is complete, as are several other sections. Gary Storricks writes that the resurvey project could be completed in 1996, but it will require hard work and dedication to do so.

Unfortunately, Storricks writes in the August issue that the cave was closed by the owner, and that the project must cease. On a brighter note, the tentative date for the grottoes 50th anniversary celebration is 18 October 1997. Pittsburgh is going to host the BOG meeting in Spring 1997.

As usual, the cavers in Happy Valley have been busy, if the September 1996 issue of the **Nittany Grotto News** is any indication. The entrance to **Spider Sink** (Clinton County), which was closed by flooding in January 1996, has been reopened, but things have changed inside! *Ed note: Now blocked with debris. Again!* Bryan Crowell offers excellent maps and descriptions of three small caves, **Rimrock Pit Cave** and **LeeCave** (both Warren County --

Who ever knew there were caves in Warren County?) and **Treestand Cave** (Clinton County).

Lee Cave is the longest of the bunch, at 135 feet. Andrew Fluke offers a map of an extension to **Miller Cave** (Centre County).

**The Cave Hunter**, newsletter of the Huntingdon County Cave Hunters, reports in its August 1996 issue that the NSS is negotiating with the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy to acquire **Tytoona Cave** (Blair County).

The new editor of the Greater Allentown Grotto's **Pack Rat Scat** is George Jaegers. His first issue, Fall 1996, contains another Dean Snyder history article on the legend of **Morgan Cave** (Berks County). Dean's new book on **Pinnacle Cave** has been published. ❖

*Ed. Note: Here are a few other items I came across which may be of interest. (Also I needed to fill up this corner.)*

In the Dec. 1996 issue of **The Baltimore Grotto News**, Joe Kaffl reports on his sump diving trip into **Alexander Caverns** (Centre County) in October 1996.

In the October 1996 issue of the **York Grotto News**, Jay herbein reports on Jay Reich's synopsis of the paleontological excavation in **Bootlegger Sink** (York County).

The Winter 1996 issue of the **Loyalhanna Troglodyte** has an article and fold-out map of **Con Cave** (Westmoreland County) by Walt Hamm. ❖

# MAR Weekend With a TAG Caver

## (September 27-29, 1996)

Jennifer Murray

*Reprinted from the Nittany Grotto News, Vol. 43, No. 3, Nov. 18, 1996*

For the Fall MAR (Mid-Appalachian Region) meet weekend, hosted at Woodward Cave by the Nittany Grotto, I had an out-of-state guest join me for the fun, festivities, and most importantly, for the purpose of giving us a program! Chris Kerr of the Smoky Mountain Grotto, located in Knoxville, Tennessee, made the drive to State College in late September, and as far as I'm aware, this is the first time that a TAG caver has come north to do Pennsylvania caves. So I hoped to show Chris a nice cave or two, and the MAR meet seemed like as good a time as any.

Our first stop was J-4, on Friday the 27th. After being delayed by my late return from work and by preparing for the campout, we did not get to the J-4 parking lot until 9 pm. However, the late hour didn't daunt us much—we just put on our gear and headed for the cave. Chris's first reaction was to look at the pipe entrance and say, "You mean I'm supposed to fit through that?"

Fit he did, though, and as the cave of course opens up, we then spent about four hours leisurely wandering through the passages, making our way back to the Dome Room before turning around. We then had to make a stop at the grocery store before going on to the Woodward campground, so we arrived very late (3 a.m. I think), to find that MAR really stood for "Mosquitoes And Rain" because we were being accosted by both.

After a very short sleep (more like a nap), I was back up Saturday morning and ready to join the MAR meet's official trip to Alexander Caverns, led by Dave Hollick of the Bald Eagle Grotto. Since this is one of Pennsylvania's finest caves, I was glad that Chris had the opportunity to see it. We spent probably four or five hours underground enjoying the formations in both the old tourist section and the new section. Paddling the boats up and down the water passage is also one of the

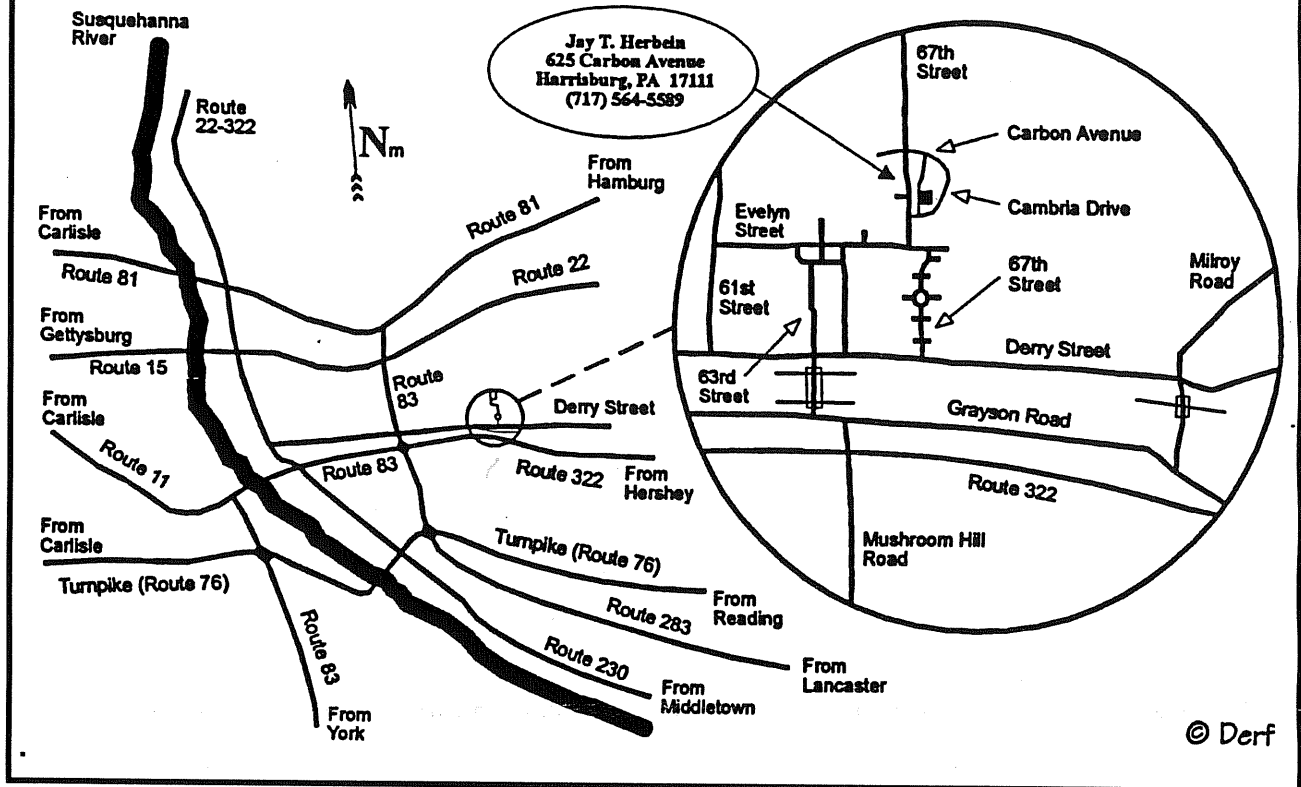
highlights of an Alexander trip, and this trip got the extra bonus of being serenaded by Chris with his Tennessee accent, singing some cave tune about having "cave mud in his blood." When we exited the cave, it was still raining, and when we got back to the campground, it rained even more, yet the rain could not dampen the spirit of the mosquitoes that still surrounded us in droves.

To escape the Mosquitoes And Rain, we all migrated to the Woodward pavilion, where Andrew Churlik served us a fine sweet and sour chicken dinner. After that, Foom gave away some exciting door prizes (with Bette White getting the best one!) and Keith Christenson showed a few slides from the Woodward resurvey project. Then Chris gave his slide program on caving in Systema Huautla down in Mexico, and the rest of the evening was spent like all cave gatherings, with much beer drinking and even more cave conversation.

The rain finally let up late Sunday morning, about the time that we gathered for the official Woodward Cave tour led by the owner himself, Pete Bird. Pete has a nice cave, and he gave us a very entertaining tour. After the tour, we packed up and got ready to leave. Chris and I stopped at Deerbone Cave on the way home, and we rappelled into the entrance, but we did not spend long underground due to the strong smell of natural gas in the air—not a good time to be in a small cave with limited air flow!

As for the rest of Chris's stay in the area, he saw two more caves, Hineman and Mount Rock. We estimate that he saw close to two miles of Pennsylvania caves while he was here, which is a fair amount of cave. Moreover, he made a copy of the Bear Cave map for "the next time," so marvel of marvels, a TAG caver may actually make a second trip north! ❖

**Plan View Map of Business Meeting Site.**  
**Maps to Dale Ibberson's will be available at the business meeting.**



**From the East on Route 322:**

Turn right on Mushroom Hill Road (look for the Walmart and Sam's Club) at the second traffic light after Hummelstown.

**From the West on Route 322:**

Intercept Route 322 toward Hershey. Turn left on Mushroom Hill Road (look for the Walmart and Sam's Club).

Once on Mushroom Hill Road, proceed one block to Grayson Road (T-intersection) and

turn left. Travel one more block and turn right onto a bridge which crosses the railroad tracks. Turn right on Derry Street. Follow Derry Street to 67th Street which will be a left hand turn up the hill. (The street sign has been missing for several years so watch street numbers.) Follow the inset map above to reach Jay's house.

Note: If you are driving from the West on I-83 N., there is no exit at Derry Street. Use the Route 322 exit.

**1997 Butler Cave Conservation Society Expedition Schedule**

May 24	weekend
September 13	weekend
<hr/>	
October 4	Annual Membership Meeting & Pigout

Only experienced and fully qualified cavers will be accepted for the work trips on the expedition weekends. Cavers may be assigned a cave other than Butler Cave. Call Al Grimm for details. (540) 943-3766

# Hosterman's Pit Update

— Keith D. Wheeland

*This information was adapted from the Penns Valley News, December 1996. The Penns Valley Conservation Association (PVCA) and Trout Unlimited (TU) have filed an appeal to the issuance of the mining permit for Con-Stone, Inc.*

## Appeal Update

We have replaced our legal counsel and his expert witness with new counsel and have involved mining experienced geologists and engineers.

Our new counsel is Greg Knight from Harrisburg. He is very aggressive, listens to the technical experts, and was highly recommended from the Allenwood Toxic Waste Incinerator fight by the Union County Planning Commission and their technical experts.

Our technical team is:

Jim Casselberry, P.G. Hydrogeologist of Casselberry Associates

Alan Stagg, P.G. Geologist of Stagg Engineering, with 30 years of mining experience

Ramesh Venkatakrisnan, PhD, P.G. geologist of Golder Associates

Todd Rees, PhD, P.E. engineer of Golder Associates

Jay Stauffer, Jr. PhD aquatic biologist, professor at Penn State University

Depositions of Helen Fahy representing PVCA and Jack Williams representing National Trout Unlimited and the PA Council of TU and Jim Casselberry were taken December 16. More will follow. It appears that the actual hearing will take place in April. Our expert witnesses need to gain access to the site in order to

perform tests and write their expert witness reports. Con-Stone will not allow them access.

We decided to narrow down the issues that were listed in the appeal to the ones that will lead to a revocation of the permit, making a relatively simple and straightforward presentation of the key issues that are of concern. This has merit for several reasons. It makes it easier for the hearing board judge to understand the issues and it will cost less to fight.

Our technical team has unanimously concluded that there is no way to mine the site without large quantities of silt being discharged into the Exceptional Value (EV) springs and streams. The site contains a valley of sinkholes that are connected to an underground conduit system that discharge to the EV streams, Pine and Elk Creeks, just before their confluence with Penns Creek.

Currently soil has been stripped from part of the area, blasting and removed rock have exposed cave systems. Sediment and mud stringers (weathered limestone mud seams) are being washed into the sinkholes with precipitation. Large volumes of sediment and mud are showing up in Pine Creek. PVCA's instrument as well as the monitoring by the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) have documented this.

Mining is not permitted by law to change the background quality of the EV watershed. Background total suspended solids at Pine Creek Station 26 is less than 3 mg/l. DEP's own monitoring has shown that mining has resulted in a significant measurable change.

The monitoring has also proved that this permit is NOT a non-discharge permit.

Remember that in March, 1996, DEP said "don't worry, this is a non-discharge permit...The exceptional value watershed will not receive limestone sediment from the quarry and this is the toughest permit that we have ever issued." The Fish and Boat Commission's Environmental Services Section Chief, John Arway states that as long as the miner follows all the permit conditions they don't expect a problem.

We asked DEP about the term "impact" within the permit. DEP's Assistant Counsel, Marc Ross, answered, "the Department interprets the term "impact" as any change in which the Department believes that such change would

threaten the aquatic system or the fish living in Pine Creek and /or Elk Creek. The Department would document such an impact with inspection and/or sampling reports.

We have met with DEP and will meet with them again to work out an acceptable interpretation of impact that would warrant an investigation by them. ❖

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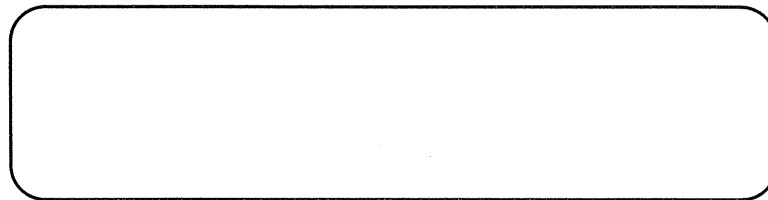
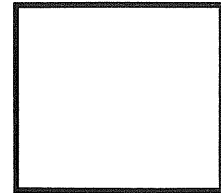
*Ed. Note:* On September 30 and October 1, 1996, members of the Nittany Grotto, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, and Mercyhurst College visited Hosterman's Pit to remove bone deposit samples for further study. The next issue of the *Nittany Grotto News* will contain a complete account of the trip. ❖



Photo by Keith Christenson. Piloting by Bert Ashbrook.

An aerial view of the Con-Stone Quarry at Aaronsburg and the entrance to Hosterman's Pit with the holding ponds at lower center.

MAR Breakdown  
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## Mid-Appalachian Region Bulletins

NSS Members Price List		Caves	Maps	Large Maps	Cost	Postage Code
No.	County					
8	Caves of Blair Co., PA	89	40		6.50	A
9	Caves of Huntingdon Co., PA					OUT OF PRINT
10	Caves of Snyder Co., PA	20	14		2.00	A
11	Caves of Centre Co., PA	71	56	1	9.00	B
12	Caves of Mifflin Co., PA	47	31	5	7.00	B
13	Caves of Perry Co., PA	13	6		5.00	A
14	Caves of Bucks, Co., PA					OUT OF PRINT
15	Caves of Lehigh Co., PA	25	13		3.25	A
16	Caves of Northampton Co., PA	24	13	1	5.50	A
17	Caves of Northumberland Co., PA	20	10		5.00	A
18	Caves of Berks Co., PA	64	32		7.00	B
19	Caves of Bedford Co., PA	54	33		5.50	A
20	Caves of Westmoreland Co., PA	Over 300 features.			29.50	C

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- C US Postage: \$3.00 each bulletin.

Non-US Postage: \$2.00 each first copy, \$1.50 each additional copy.

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