



# BREAKDOWN

Volume 27. Number 1. April 2012

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 \$3 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 \$3 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.

**Chair:** Paul Winter  
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## PCC Meeting Sunday, June 10, 2012 10 am Rupert Cave Preserve, McVeytown, PA

No frills weekend camping will be available  
No dogs allowed

Everyone planning to attend is requested to contact  
Karen & George Bange for details and head count  
[riverbat@eawireless.net](mailto:riverbat@eawireless.net)



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## **MAR Business Meeting Minutes** **February 25, 2012**

The meeting was called to order by MAR Chair, Bob Gulden at approximately 1:40 PM, February 25, 2012, at the Mount Laurel Community Park, Harrisburg, PA.

**Treasurer's Report:** The Treasurer's Report was read by MAR secretary, Paul Winter. Printed copies were distributed. Total income of the year was \$1,482.85, with \$697.14 in expenditures.

Net Income for the year was \$785.71.

**MAR Breakdown:** Please note that the MAR Breakdown editor has changed. The new editor is currently Gretchen "Red" Schock. Send any Breakdown articles for publication to Gretchen. Material can be in hardcopy or sent electronically to [redcaver@verizon.net](mailto:redcaver@verizon.net).

George Bange reported that the MAR Breakdown was released and sent out. Christopher Catherman discussed the digital release of a back issue of the MAR Breakdown that was missed last year during the changeover of editors. The April 2011, Volume 26, No. 1, MAR Breakdown includes the 2011 MAR Business and PCC minutes. George Bange also requested that the MAR Field Meet Registration Form Template, available on the MAR website, be clarified by adding the note along the lines of "Same Household" to prevent incorrect submissions. It was also reported that there are 1375 outstanding credits.

George Bange maintains the mailing list database for the Breakdown. All changes to mailing addresses and all MAR field meet registrations should be sent to George at [riverbat@eawireless.net](mailto:riverbat@eawireless.net). Please write neatly when registering for MAR field meets since the mailing list is maintained from the registration forms.

Also, it was determined that, if there is no fall field meet, the August issue of the Breakdown will not be published due to limited content.

**2011 Spring Field Meet:** The Spring MAR field meet was with Franklin County Grotto and was held in Shade Gap, PA. A report of the successful field meet was given by Pat Minnick. [88 MAR registrations.]

**2011 Fall Field Meet:** The Fall MAR field meet was with Bald Eagle Grotto and was held at Woodward Cave, Woodward, PA. A report of the successful field meet was given by Sarah Ulrich. [75 MAR registrations.]

**MAR Web Site:** The MAR webmaster, Christopher Catherman, reported that there have been no major changes to the website and it continues to be functional. As of recently, the majority of issues of the MAR Breakdown, since its inception in April 1986, have now been scanned and available digitally on the MAR website. [Please send any corrections or additions to [Christopher Catherman](#).]

**MAR Bulletins:** MAR Vice-Chair, Gary Dunmire, announced that MAR Bulletin #21: *Karst of Sinking Valley and Kookan Cave, Huntingdon and Blair Counties* has been completed and is now for sale for \$27.50.

**Pennsylvania Cave Database:** No Report. [The topic will be discussed at the PCC meeting, following this meeting.]

**Pennsylvania Game Commission (PGC):** No Report.

**MAKC:** Kim Metzgar gave the update on the MAKC's ongoing cataloging efforts at their library in Blairsville, PA. It is a huge cave information resource. It was also reported that DCNR has opened Barton and Coon Cave in Westmoreland County. Lemon Hole has not yet been opened.

**Pennsylvania Cave Conservancy (PCC):** Pat Minnick reported that there have been positive developments for Corker Hill Cave - to be discussed at the PCC meeting.

**MAR Incorporation:** No report.

## **New Business:**

**2012 Spring Field Meet:** No field meet is planned for this year.

**2012 Fall Field Meet:** A possible meet is in the works for a field meet to be held at Crystal Cave located near Kutztown, Berks County, PA. Tentatively scheduled for late September or early October.

**MAKC Booth at the 2012 Convention in WV:** The possible sale of MAR Bulletins at the upcoming NSS convention by the MAKC was discussed. The sales would help promote Pennsylvania caves for the 2013 NSS convention. A motion was made to determine if the MAKC and MAR can both profit from the sale of MAR Bulletins by the MAKC at the convention, in which case, Bulletins could be made available to the MAKC to sell. Also, Bette White is to be consulted on the matter. The motion carried.

**Facility Fee Increase:** The rent for use of the Mount Laurel Community Park has been increased to \$100 for next year. A motion was made to pay the new rent cost and continue using the park for the MAR meeting site. The motion carried.

**2013 NSS Convention:** A special NSS convention planning meeting is to be held after the PCC meeting to discuss various issues associated with the 2013 NSS Convention to be held at Shippensburg, PA.

Some highlights:

- A budget is in the works.
- In general, things are looking good.
- Russ Kennedy is promoting the reputation of the NSS to help assuage their fears of allowing alcohol on site.
- As of the time of this meeting, only 18 months until convention.

[If interested, please contact [UAIMH@verizon.net](mailto:UAIMH@verizon.net)]

**MAR Elections:** Elections were held for the 2013 MAR officer positions.

*Chair:* -Paul Winter

*Vice-Chair:* -Gary Dunmire

*Secretary:* -Hope Brooks

**Stalagmite Returned to Mystic Cave:** After 50 years, a stalagmite was returned to Mystic Cave in Pendleton County, WV. After 50 years in Pennsylvania, the formation was returned with the cooperation of the landowner.

## **Upcoming events:**

**Spring VAR:** Hosted by Tri-State Grotto at the Poor Farm Festival Grounds in Williamsburg, WV. April 27-April 29, 2012

**NSS Convention:** Lewisburg, West Virginia. June 25-29, 2012

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 2:29 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul Winter

*MAR Recording Secretary*

## **Representatives at the MAR meeting:**

- Bald Eagle Grotto
- Baltimore Grotto
- Commander Cody Caving Club
- Franklin County Grotto
- Loyalhanna Grotto
- MAKC
- Nittany Grotto
- York Grotto
- Philly Grotto
- Seven Valleys Grotto



<i>Fulton County</i>	Ken Jones, Pat Minnick, & Don Arrowood
<i>Huntingdon County</i>	Garrett Czmor
<i>Lebanon County</i>	Brett Johnson
<i>Lehigh County</i>	Mike Spencer
<i>Lycoming County</i>	JD Lewis
<i>Mifflin County</i>	Todd Hancock
<i>Northampton County</i>	Mike Spencer
<i>York County</i>	Brett Johnson

**OLD BUSINESS:**

The status of the lawsuit between the Juniata Valley Audubon Society and the Pennsylvania DEP has been settled. The lawsuit was in response to the PA DEP issuing a mining permit within the Heller Cave Biological Diversity Area in Catharine Township, Blair County. A hearing was scheduled to begin Monday, February 27<sup>th</sup> but the case was reported to be settled on Friday, February 24<sup>th</sup>, citing that the company will not be mining the area.

**Project List:**

**Dragon Cave** (Berks County, PA) – No update was given.

**Red Church Cave** (Schuylkill County, PA) – A group of volunteers removed the old, 600-pound gate and Craig Hindman installed a new entrance gate. Craig has been reimbursed for the cost of materials. There may be future project plans to keep the removed dirt from sliding back into the cave entrance. Dean Snyder will develop a management plan with the landowner. The cave should be open in a few months for NSS members only.

**Merkle Cave** (Berks County, PA) – Dean Snyder continues to have access for work at the cave but stated he has not visited recently.

**Cleversburg Cave** (Cumberland County, PA) – The scientific study is ongoing and the water levels are being actively monitored.

**Schofer Cave** (Berks County, PA) – No update was given.

**Durham Cave** (Bucks County, PA) – No update was given.

**Corker Hill and Frustration Pit** (Franklin County, PA) – Pat Minnick reported that WASHCO Homes sold the property to a local farmer who plans to farm the land. Ken Tayman and Gordy Ley have been in contact with the landowner to propose that Franklin County Grotto manage access control to the cave. There is no longer a need for a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) since access can be negotiated through cave owner relations.

**Tippery Cave** (Huntingdon County) – No update was given.

**Peiper Cave** (Cumberland County) – Members from York and Franklin County Grottos participated in a clean-up project in early November 2011.

**Dreibilbis Cave** (Berks County) – Cave is open and bat counts continue to be conducted. Counts are diminishing. No recent trip inquiries have been requested.

**J4 Cave** (Centre County) – An initial proposal had been submitted to Graymont. Graymont recently met with Gary Dunmire and Keith Wheeland with a J-4 Management Agreement prepared by their lawyers. Keith and Gary are currently reviewing and developing changes to the MOU to return to Graymont. Negotiations are being conducted between Graymont and Nittany Grotto. The agreement will be for a 5-year term. Some requirements of Graymont’s proposed agreement are to have a third party inspect the quarry walls, utilization of waiver forms, and the installation of an entrance gate. Craig Hindman moved, and Bryan Crowell seconded, to approve the PCC to contribute up to one thousand dollars towards a gate project if the negotiations are finalized. The motion passed.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

No new business was discussed.

**Next meeting:** In light of the fact that there is no scheduled Spring MAR, the next meeting of the PCC will tentatively be held at the Rupert Cave Preserve in McVeytown, PA on Sunday, June 10, 2012.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 pm. Motion made by Dean Snyder and seconded by Ed Kehs.

Respectfully submitted,  
Gretchen Schock, Recording Secretary

# Stalagmite Back Home

By Jim Hook, Source: Public Opinion January 22, 2012

## Franklin County Grotto members put carbonate stalagmite back into West Virginia's Mystic Cave

A three-foot-tall stalagmite is back home in West Virginia after spending nearly 50 years in Franklin County.

The 100-pound chunk of calcium carbonate was displayed at a college, supported a bird bath and survived the Agnes flooding. But for most of its 48 years on the road, the rock has been hidden in storage.

Four members of the Franklin County Grotto returned the formation in October to Mystic Cave in Pendleton County, W.Va.

"When you own formations you might unintentionally encourage people to acquire one for themselves," said Grotto Chairman Kenneth Jones, Chambersburg. "That's why we prefer that people not own cave formations. It's a monkey-see, monkey-do thing."

Jones suggested that the organization of spelunkers return the stalagmite. Glen Sarvis told them he had stored the stalagmite about 20 years for a friend in his barn near Mechanicsburg and he was intending to sell the farm.

"When I brought up subject they were quite excited about doing that," Sarvis said. "It seemed the right thing to do from the ecological and conservation standpoint. Everybody is pleased the way it worked out. I'm thrilled we were able to do it."

The group got permission from the owner of the cave, wrapped up the mineral and drove three hours to the cave.

"Even with four of us carrying it, it was a chore some places," Sarvis said. "We had to go down a waterfall and up another waterfall to get to the Formation Room."

Sarvis, a 69-year-old retired biology teacher, joined John Boswell of Carlisle, Gordy Ley of Fairfield and Stitch Rentzel of Messiah College, Grantham, to reset the stalagmite. They positioned it between chunks of broken travertine to hold it upright. The spot is probably upstream from its original location, according to Sarvis.

Sarvis suspects that the stalagmite was broken off the cave floor during a flood sometime before 1962 when he first visited the cave. He said he knows the

man who took it in 1962 or 1963, but identifies him only as "Rich."

"I can't imagine him breaking anything," Sarvis said. "I assume he had other people with him. I can't imagine one person carrying it."

He suspects Rich picked up the piece from the clutter where two streams meet near the cave entrance.

State governments have since enacted laws to protect caves. West Virginia's cave protection law imposes penalties of up to \$500 and six months in jail for disturbing a cave formation without the owner's permission. Pennsylvania's law carries a fine up to \$100.



Glen Sarvis, project initiator, with "kidnapped" stalagmite

When a reporter contacted Priscilla Teter, the 94-year-old owner of the cave, she was concerned that the spelunkers might be in trouble for returning the stalagmite.

"It's all right, isn't it?" Teter said. "They were good enough to bring it back. It doesn't make any difference to me because I've never been in the cave. I didn't know it was gone to tell you the truth. I couldn't say anything about it anyway. It didn't belong to me."

Her aunt, the late Hester Raines, owned the property when the stalagmite was taken, she said.

"I'm sure she didn't go in the cave," she said.

Sarvis pieced together the story of the stalagmite that covered a greater distance in a half century than it had in its previous thousand years:



- Rich took the formation in 1962 or 1963 and in the fall of 1963 allowed it to be displayed in the window of the bookstore in Old Main at Shippensburg State College.
- A member of the SSC Grotto was suspected of removing the stalagmite and it was found in his front yard supporting a bird bath.
- Rich took it back and kept the stalagmite until the 1990s when he moved it to Sarvis' barn. He died in 2005.

Rich claimed that the stalagmite saved his shed in 1972 when the remnants of Hurricane Agnes flooded the Conococheague Creek. It was braced against the upstream side of his cabin on Social Island Road. His neighbor's cabin was washed away.

The Mystic Cave stalagmite was shaped over thousands to tens of thousands of years, according to Thomas Feeney, associate professor of geography and earth science at Shippensburg University.

Water drips through carbon-rich soil and rock, he said. When the drops enter a cave, carbon dioxide comes out of the water like carbon dioxide comes out of a soda drink. Thin layers of mineral form stalactites on the ceiling. A drop splashing to the floor leaves a thin film, and layered over time shapes a stalagmite.

Stalagmites are not rare, but returning them is, Feeney said.

"Quarrying operations break them up all the time when they encounter them," Sarvis said. "We try to protect them when we can."

Cave vandalism is always going to be a problem as long as people go in caves and figure there's treasure to harvest, Sarvis said.

The Mystic Cave stalagmite is back on display in the darkness where spelunkers can rediscover the treasure by lamplight.



Mission accomplished: Glen Sarvis, a 69-year-old retired biology teacher, joined John Boswell of Carlisle, Gordy Ley of Fairfield and Stitch Rentzel of Messiah College, Grantham, to reset the stalagmite

### Stalagmite timeline

A stalagmite from Pendleton County, W.Va., has been more active in the past 50 years than most other karst formations.

**1962 or 1963** -- Taken from Mystic Cave.

**Fall 1963** -- Taken from a display in the Shippensburg University State College bookstore, then retaken by the man who took it originally.

**June 1972** -- Survives Agnes flooding of the Conococheague Creek at Social Island.

**Early 1990s** -- Moved to Glen Sarvis' barn near Mechanicsburg

**2005** -- The man who removed the stalagmite from the cave dies.

**March 2011** -- Sarvis wants to sell his farm and asks fellow spelunkers what to do with the stalagmite. They suggest returning it.

**October 2011** -- Returned to Mystic Cave.

-- Source: Glen Sarvis

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## Mid-Appalachian Region Bulletins [including reprinted Bulletins]

NSS Member Price List

Effective March 2012

1-4	Bulletins Caves of Shippensburg Area #1-4 <b>REPRINT</b>		<b>7.00</b> + postage <b>A</b>
5	Caves of Western PA <b>REPRINT</b>	29 caves, 19 maps	<b>8.00</b> + postage <b>A</b>
6	Caves of S. Cumberland Valley <b>REPRINT</b>	93 caves 69 maps+6 large maps	<b>17.00</b> + postage <b>B</b>
7	Caves of Fulton Co, PA <b>REPRINT</b>	4 caves, 4 maps	<b>5.00</b> + postage <b>A</b>
8	Caves of Blair Co., PA <b>REPRINT</b>	89 caves, 40 maps	<b>7.00</b> + postage <b>A</b>
9	Caves of Huntingdon Co., PA <b>REPRINT</b>	94 caves, 36 maps	<b>10.00</b> + postage <b>B</b>
10	Caves of Snyder Co., PA	20 caves, 14 maps	<b>5.00</b> + postage <b>A</b>
11	Caves of Centre Co., PA	71 caves, 56 maps+1 large map	<b>10.00</b> + postage <b>B</b>
12	Caves of Mifflin Co., PA	47 caves, 31 maps+5 large maps	<b>10.00</b> + postage <b>B</b>
13	Caves of Perry Co., PA	13 caves, 6 maps	<b>5.00</b> + postage <b>A</b>
14	Caves of Bucks Co., PA <b>REPRINT</b>	24 caves, 6 maps	<b>5.00</b> + postage <b>A</b>
15	Caves of Lehigh Co., PA <b>REPRINT</b>	25 caves, 13 maps	<b>6.00</b> + postage <b>A</b>
16	Caves of Northampton Co., PA	24 caves, 13 maps+1 large map	<b>6.00</b> + postage <b>A</b>
17	Caves of Northumberland Co., PA	20 caves, 10 maps	<b>5.00</b> + postage <b>A</b>
18	Caves of Berks Co., PA	64 caves, 32 maps	<b>10.00</b> + postage <b>B</b>
19	Caves of Bedford Co., PA	54 caves, 33 maps	<b>7.00</b> + postage <b>A</b>
20	Caves of Westmoreland Co., PA	337 caves, 187 map/10 large maps	<b>29.50</b> + postage <b>C</b>
21	Karst of Sinking Valley and Kookon Cave Huntingdon and Blair Counties	103 pages with color photos, 4 fold-outs, 2 large maps	<b>27.50</b> + postage <b>B</b>

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