



BREAKDOWN

Volume 39, Number 2, August 2024

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-

Event notices and MAR Breakdown newsletters are distributed electronically. When you attend a field meet, the email address provided on your registration form is added to the distribution list. You may also add yourself to distribution by going to <http://eepurl.com/P2f5j> and completing a short registration form.

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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Host needed for 2024 Fall MAR Field Meet!



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2024 Spring MAR Field Meet McClure, PA

By Rick Smith



The 2024 Spring Mid-Appalachian Regional (MAR) Field Event, hosted by Bald Eagle Grotto, took place from May 17th to 19th at the Bean Soup Festival and Fairgrounds in McClure, Pennsylvania. This was the first time the event was held at this location, and it drew 140 cavers for a weekend of exploration and fun. The fairgrounds offered a fantastic setup for camping, and congregation, making it the perfect base for the weekend's activities.

Bright yellow signs, along with the Bald Eagle mascot, Jack the Eagle, dotted along route 522 helped to guide cavers to the event.

Cavers started arriving on Friday around 5 PM, and Jesse and Mary Young were ready to assist with registration until late in the evening. They ensured that everyone received their meal and door prize tickets, setting the stage for a well-organized and enjoyable weekend.

Saturday morning began with coffee and donuts to help wake up the crowd and get everyone energized for the day's adventures.

The event featured both guided and non-guided cave trips. Participants explored McClure Cave and the historic Alexander Caverns, the crown jewel of Bald Eagle Grotto. Other cave trips included Maitland Cave, Kookan Cave, McAlisterville Cave, SeaWra Cave, Milroy Cave, and Womer Cave, all within 30-45 minutes of the campgrounds.



*Formations in McClure Cave
(photo by Tom Griffin)*



*Taking a break in McClure Cave
(photo by Tom Griffin)*

Unfortunately, Penn Aqua was not accessible due to rain earlier in the week, but many cavers took the opportunity to visit and see how well the preserve has been managed by George Bange.

Vendors added to the event's vibrant atmosphere, with Outstanding Stitches showcasing their custom caving and outdoor gear, as well as offering general gear repairs. The Mid-Atlantic Karst Conservancy (MAKC) also participated. Cavers were encouraged to shop local to support the small community of McClure and its surrounding area.

Evenings were spent around the campfire, where cavers gathered to share stories, laughter, and a frosty beverage (or two). The warm fire and lively conversations fostered a strong sense of community and camaraderie.

The Saturday evening meal, provided by Airy Dale Farm Market, was served in a spacious covered pavilion and featured pit roasted BBQ chicken, baked potato, baked beans, garden salad, and fresh-made strawberry shortcake for dessert. A vegetarian option of Cabbage Steak was also available. Lyndsey and Kirk Cameron helped facilitate the meal, ensuring everyone was served in a timely and well-organized manner. The meal was well received by all in attendance, and no one left hungry.

The Saturday evening presentation by Bert Ashbrooke was more than just fascinating—it was a sneak peek of what cavers could expect at the NSS Convention in Tennessee this past June. This highlight had everyone buzzing with excitement about the upcoming convention, making it a memorable part of the weekend.



*Serving up some strawberry shortcake for dessert. Yum!
(photo by Rick Smith)*

A very successful silent auction, organized by Franklin County Grotto, took place throughout the day on Saturday. It featured caving gear from the late Gordy Ley, and the proceeds were donated to Gordy's wife, Diane Ley. The auction began at noon and ended 15 minutes after Bert's presentation, with enthusiastic participation from the cavers.



*Bert Ashbrooke gives the presentation Saturday evening
(photo by Karen Bange)*

Sunday morning's PCC Breakfast was a hit, with 75 participants enjoying pancakes topped with fresh cut strawberries from the previous night's shortcake, along with sausage links. It was a delicious and satisfying way to wrap up the weekend.

The 2024 Spring MAR Field Event was a resounding success, offering cavers a weekend filled with adventure, learning, and connection. With memorable cave trips, lively campfire gatherings, a delicious Saturday evening meal, and a highlight presentation by Bert Ashbrooke, the event underscored the joy of caving and the importance of community. Here's to many more unforgettable events like this one!



Pennsylvania Cave Conservancy, Inc.

P.O. Box 373, Neffs, PA 18065

Minutes of Regular Meeting – May 19, 2024

The meeting was called to order at 9:46 am by President Dave Briggs at the Bean Soup Festival and Fairgrounds, McClure, PA on Sunday, May 19, 2024.

The following officers were present: **President** Dave Briggs **Vice President** Amos Mincin
Secretary Gretchen Schock **Treasurer** Tom Griffin

Representation was as follows:

Bald Eagle Grotto	--	Huntingdon Co. Cave Hunters	--
Baltimore Grotto	Kim Fleischmann	Nittany Grotto	Gary Dunmire
Bucks County Grotto	--	Out of Bounds Grotto	--
Central New Jersey Grotto	Amos Mincin	Philadelphia Grotto	Amos Mincin
Commander Cody Caving Club	--	Seven Valleys Grotto	Joe Schock
Franklin County Grotto	Tom Griffin (proxy)	York Grotto	Randy Hurst
Greater Allentown Grotto	Bert Ashbrook (proxy)		

Secretary Report: Amos Mincin reviewed the minutes from the February 24, 2024 meeting. Randy Hurst moved and Kim Fleischmann seconded to approve the meeting minutes as published in the April 2024 MAR Breakdown. The motion passed.

Treasurer Report: Tom Griffin reviewed the PCC account activity since the last meeting (provided below). Tom noted that the PCC CD accounts were transferred to a Money Market account, providing a better interest rate.

Pennsylvania Cave Conservancy

Financial Summary

2-24-24 through 5-19-24

<u>Interest Checking Account</u>		<u>Date</u>	
Checking Balance 2/24/24	F&M Trust Bank checking	2/24/2024	\$6,253.24
Deposit	Interest Credit	2/29/2024	\$0.10
Deposit	Interest Credit	3/31/2024	\$0.11
Deposit	Donation from Central NJ Grotto	4/18/2024	\$50.00
Withdrawal	Purchase of Account Checks	4/23/2024	(\$50.17)
Deposit	Interest Credit	4/30/2024	\$0.10
Ending Balance :			\$6,253.38

<u>Savings Account (CDs):</u>		<u>Maturity Date</u>	
Certificate of Deposit *75	F&M Trust Bank CD	7/27/2021	\$1,170.54
Certificate of Deposit *29	F&M Trust Bank CD	7/27/2021	\$1,170.54
Certificate of Deposit *65	F&M Trust Bank CD	7/27/2021	\$1,170.54

* \$15.09 Prorated interest credit applied to each before closing CDs 4/11/24.

	* Maturity 7/25		
Withdrawal	Early Withdrawal penalty	4/11/2024	(\$26.22)
Closing Balance :	(transfer to Money Market)		(\$3,485.40)

Money Market Account:

		<u>Date</u>	
Beginning Balance 4/11/24	Transfer funds from CD Accounts	4/11/2024	\$3,485.40
Deposit	Interest Credit	4/30/2024	\$7.26
Ending Balance :			\$3,492.66

COMBINED TOTAL : **\$9,746.04**

Web Page: Prior to the February PCC meeting, Dave Fricke had provided information indicating the PCC website, which was under the old NSS hosted web service, is no longer available. Action must be taken by someone to establish a new PCC website. Dave Briggs stated he will reach out to Dave Fricke and work on re-establishing the PCC web page.

PCC Breakfast: Dave Briggs thanked the PCC board for the donation of supplies for the PCC Breakfast fund raiser at the 2024 Spring MAR field meet. Also, thanks to all the volunteers as many hands makes for light work! 90 breakfast tickets were sold, totaling \$360 raised for the PCC and \$90 raised for MAKC. A huge thank you to MAKC and Dave Field for providing the coffee service for the breakfast!

PCC Brochure: Dave Briggs has the supply of PCC brochures. Anyone interested in obtaining brochures should contact Dave Briggs. Kim Fleischmann offered to take some PCC brochures to set up at the upcoming 2024 NSS Convention.

Mail: no report

Christmas Cards: Kim Kehs assumed the task of sending the PCC Christmas Cards beginning in 2018. Please contact Kim if you know of a landowner you would like added to the PCC Christmas card list.

T-shirts: The PCC t-shirt price was reduced to \$5 during the May 2023 PCC meeting. Please contact Tom Griffin or Red Schock if you are interested in purchasing a shirt. Additionally, Tom and Red plan to make the t-shirts available for sale at upcoming caving events. 14 PCC t-shirts have been sold to date this year.

PA Cave Database: no report.

OLD BUSINESS:

Project and Caves of Interest List:

Cold Air Cave (Northampton County) – no report.

Tytoona Cave Preserve: some signs that were posted at the cave preserve have been stolen. Possible upcoming work to replace stolen signs as well as posting additional signage.

Thousand Steps of Lebanon County: Steve Warnek plans to set up a work date in the future. Anyone interested in lending a hand should contact Steve for more details/information.

NEW BUSINESS:

PCC Conservation Funds: Randy Hurst moved and Kim Fleischmann seconded to pre-authorize up to \$200 expenditure of PCC funds for conservation project efforts provided the PCC officers approve. This

expenditure will not require a vote of the PCC membership. Any expenditures will be reported to the membership during the next PCC meeting as well as recorded in the meeting minutes/treasurers report. The motion passed.

2024 Spring MAR: Thanks to Bald Eagle Grotto (BEG) for hosting the 2024 Spring MAR Field Meet. A great time was had by all!

2024 NSS Convention: From July 1-5, 2024, the NSS will host the society's annual convention in Sewanee, Tennessee. This week-long event includes extensive presentations across all disciplines related to cave science. Additional information can be found on the convention website <https://caves.org/convention/2024-nss-convention/>.

2024 Fall MAR: There is not currently a host for the 2024 fall field meet.

Next meeting: The next meeting of the PCC to be determined.

Kim Fleischmann moved and Randy Hurst seconded to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed and meeting was adjourned at 10:19 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Gretchen (Red) Schock, Recording Secretary

Host Needed for the 2024 Fall MAR

As of April 2024 there is no grotto, or individual, slated to host the 2024 Fall MAR Field Meet. If you are interested in hosting this event, a helpful guide to hosting a MAR field meet can be found on the MAR website (<https://mar.caves.org/hosting.htm>). Think about it - can you or your grotto host the event? If there are no volunteers there will be no field meet.

If you're interested in hosting one of the events, please contact a MAR officer.

A Remembrance through Caving Equipment The Gordy Ley Collection and Auction

by Chris Hacker

Gordon “Gordy” Ley was a South-Central Pennsylvania caver of some repute. Skilled in many aspects of caving, surveying, vertical and micro-blasting, he had a wide and rich legacy around the PA caving community, as well as farther afield. Gordy left the caving community too soon, but the stories of his explorations and exploits still allow him to live on around the campfires.

In the course of a caving career, one acquires a tremendous amount of equipment and gear. This takes many forms as caving disciplines can be diverse as in surveying, vertical work, rigging, entrance improvement and rescue. Gordy was no stranger to the many aspects in caving, and his equipment collection reflected his wide interests.

Many long time and veteran cavers will have an issue to deal with upon their own passing, especially if their spouse or significant other is not a caver. The Stuff. The Equipment. The ever increasing in size PILE OF GEAR. When Gordy left us, he left behind a vast amount of equipment and gear.

Two veteran Franklin County Grotto (FCG) cavers, Pat Minnick and Bill Geller, stepped up to assist Gordy’s wife in assisting with Gordy’s estate with the caving gear. So, what to do? First off, it needed an inventory. Pat and Bill were easily able to identify the obvious caving and outdoor gear that Gordy used on caving trips. When the inventory was done, they had amassed several totes, boxes and containers of gear, as well as a handwritten inventory list that ran several pages. Pat’s wife Anne did a spreadsheet of the gear list that made things much easier for the itemization of all the gear and eventual auction accounting.

Gordy’s gear pile was very happy in Pat’s basement, keeping company with all of Pat’s caving and rescue gear as well, and were having a grand old time of it. But it was decided that Gordy’s gear needed to be adopted by new owners and travel on to its new forever homes.

But how?

Caving gear is a fickle thing. It all supports life in some way, when being used in the underground. In some ways it’s very direct life support like with rope or carabiners, things that were in that pile of Gordy’s. In some way’s it’s passive, like with survey gear or gear boxes. Selling this type of gear is difficult because of that life support issue. Gear needs to ALWAYS be inspected and assessed, especially if it’s used, and placed into use accordingly.

The social media craze gave rise to gear swap pages and sales pages, but much of Gordy’s gear was vertical. It needed to be inspected in person by the buyer and determined by the buyer if it was right for them. After all, it was their life that was going to be at risk.

The sheer volume of stuff made social media sales impractical. No one had time to post the hundreds of items and answer follow up questions. An in-person event was needed. But what? And when?

Finally, it was settled upon the MAR Regional Event. It had the best chance of a wide range of cavers with varying interests being present, as well as being fairly soon.

But how to sell it?

Again, we needed a plan. Pat and Bill had an inventory, but there was A LOT of stuff. And the inventory was batched into entries like “Six locking carabiners” and “Rope, length and origin unknown.” A better inventory and inspection for description was needed.

Your humble author had decided to volunteer to assist in helping Gordy’s gear find it’s new forever homes. One spring morning, Bill and I met at Pat’s to begin the adventure.

The process centered more on how to sell the lot rather than conduct a detailed accounting. Another long-time regional caver, Tom Griffin, had proposed the idea of a silent auction, rather than a live auction. Which was brilliance on Tom's part, and rather relieved your humble author, who thought he was going to have to live auction several hundred bits of gear, and who wasn't happy at the thought of having to have ten to fifteen ways to describe individual locking carabiners, along with the hundreds of other items.

Now the real fun began, what was each thing worth? And each thing was used so that depreciated the value. And there was no Kelly Blue Book lookup for a 11mm rope of indeterminate length or age. A few key things, we set an opening bid at, but Tom's wife, Red as well as York Grotto member Jade Vogel, assisted in the valuation and "bundling" of items that seemed to go together. Seven Valleys Grotto's Ziggy Seager and FCG's Dave Scamardella also assisted in valuation of items and helping out with the auction. All in all, with a few exceptions, we let the caver market determine the value of the items by allowing opening bids to be set and then competing bids to be placed until the fair value seemed to be reached, and bidding stalled.

The auction proceeded throughout the day with cavers wandering in and out, checking gear, placing bids and re-placing bids higher on goodies they really wanted. The auction was set to end fifteen minutes after the end of the feature program. The last thirty minutes saw a lot of bidding action, with several items generating some bidding wars between cavers.

Finally, it was pencils/pens down and the next bit of fun began. The payment stampede. With a flurry of cash that made it seem like a cattle trading day at the stockyards, all the items were bundled up and paid for with Red, Jade, Tom, and myself all changing cash out with each other to make change for purchasers. A very appreciative shout out here to Rick Smith, Chair of Bald Eagle Grotto and the MAR Event Chair for allowing several purchasers to use the Bald Eagle Venmo account to pay for their items.

And so, the auction of the Gordy Ley Collection of caving gear was over. In the whole duration of the auction, one thing stood out to me after it was over. It wasn't over. Gordy's legacy through the cave gear will live on. It was great to hear cavers looking over a bit of gear reminisce about a Gordy trip, event or story that the item brought to their memory. And that, to me, was the caver value of the auction.



Attached is a photo of the presentation of an FCG check in the amount of \$1705.00 to Diane Ley on June 21, 2024. This represents the proceeds from the auction of some of Gordy's caving gear. The auction was held at the 2024 Spring MAR hosted by Bald Eagle Grotto, in McClure, PA. Thanks to all who assisted. Shown in the photo (Left to Right) are: Bill Geller, Pat Minnick, Diane Ley and Jessica Lee (Gordy and Diane's daughter.) *Photo taken by Anne Shepard.*

Upcoming Events

<p>Old Timers Reunion (OTR)</p> <p>OTR Site/Campgrounds Dailey, WV (Randolph County) URL: www.otr.org</p>	<p>Aug 29 - Sept 2, 2024</p>
<p>2024 Fall MAR Field Meet</p> <p>Location: TBD Hosted by TBD URL: https://mar.caves.org/fieldmeets.htm</p>	<p>Fall 2024</p>
<p>2024 Fall VAR Field Meet</p> <p>Location: Hungry Mother Lutheran Camp Marion, VA Hosted by Out of Bounds Grotto URL: https://var.caves.org/index.php/events/fall-var</p>	<p>Sept 27-29, 2024</p>
<p>2024 TAG Fall Cave-In</p> <p>Location: Tommy's Lazy G 3591 Greenbriar Cove Rd Union Grove, AL 35175 Hosted by Dogwood City Grotto URL: https://dogwoodcitygrotto.org/TAG-Fall-Cave-In</p>	<p>October 3-6, 2024</p>
<p>CaveFest.....</p> <p>The Caverns Pelham, TN (Grundy County) Hosted By: Sewanee Mountain Grotto 3rd Annual URL: https://www.thecaverns.com/</p>	<p>October 11-13, 2024</p>
<p>2023 Bridge Day</p> <p>New River Gorge Bridge Fayetteville, WV URL: www.officialbridgeday.com -or- https://www.nps.gov/neri/</p>	<p>October 19, 2024</p>
<p>2025 MAR Annual Business Meeting</p> <p>Mt. Laurel Church of God 1295 Piketown Road, Linglestown, PA URL: https://mar.caves.org/busnmtg.htm</p>	<p>February 22, 2025</p>
<p>2025 Spring MAR Field Meet</p> <p>Location: TBD Hosted TBD URL: https://mar.caves.org/fieldmeets.htm</p>	<p>Spring 2025</p>
<p>2025 Spring VAR Field Meet</p> <p>Location: TBD Hosted by TBD URL: https://var.caves.org/index.php/events/spring-var</p>	<p>Spring 2025</p>
<p>Speleofest</p> <p>Lone Star Preserve Bonnieville, KY Hosted by Louisville Grotto URL: www.louisvillegrotto.org/speleofest-registration/</p>	<p>May 23-26, 2025</p>
<p>2025 NSS Convention</p> <p>Cobleskill, NY URL: https://caves.org/convention/2025-nss-convention/</p>	<p>June 21-28, 2025</p>

NSS MEMBER PRICE LIST

Effective October 2018

MID-APPALACHIAN REGION BULLETINS (including reprinted Bulletins)

1-4	Bulletins Caves of Shippensburg Area #1-4	REPRINT		7.00 + postage A
5	Caves of Western PA:	REPRINT	29 caves, 19 maps	8.00 + postage A
6	Caves of S. Cumberland Valley	REPRINT	93 caves 69 maps+6 large maps	17.00 + postage B
7	Caves of Fulton Co., PA	<u>Revised/Corrected</u>	4 caves, 4 maps	5.00 + postage A
8	Caves of Blair Co., PA	REPRINT	89 caves, 40 maps	7.00 + postage A
9	Caves of Huntingdon Co., PA	REPRINT	94 caves, 36 maps	10.00 + postage B
10	Caves of Snyder Co., PA		20 caves, 14 maps	6.00 + postage A
11	Caves of Centre Co., PA		71 caves, 56 maps+1 large map	10.00 + postage B
12	Caves of Mifflin Co., PA		47 caves, 31 maps+5 large maps	10.00 + postage B
13	Caves of Perry Co., PA		13 caves, 6 maps	10.00 + postage A
14	Caves of Bucks Co., PA	REPRINT	24 caves, 6 maps	5.00 + postage A
15	Caves of Lehigh Co., PA	REPRINT	25 caves, 13 maps	6.00 + postage A
16	Caves of Northampton Co., PA		24 caves, 13 maps+1 large map	6.00 + postage A
17	Caves of Northumberland Co., PA		20 caves, 10 maps	5.00 + postage A
18	Caves of Berks Co., PA		64 caves, 32 maps	10.00 + postage B
19	Caves of Bedford Co., PA		54 caves, 33 maps	7.00 + postage A
20	Caves of Westmoreland Co., PA		337 caves, 187 maps/10 large maps	29.50 + postage C
21	Karst of Sinking Valley and Kookon Cave Huntingdon and Blair Counties		103 pages with color photos , 4 fold-out maps, 2 large maps	27.50 + postage B
22	Caves of Middle Susquehanna Valley		140 pages with color photos	16.00 + postage D

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A \$2.00 postage first copy; \$0.50 each additional to same address.

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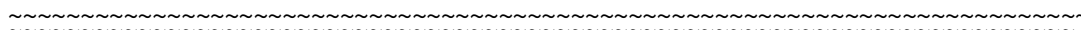
C \$3.00 postage for each bulletin #20.

D \$3.50 postage for each bulletin #22

MAR Bulletin Orders: Please make checks payable to MAR



NOTE: All checks must be payable in U.S. dollars on U.S. bank or U.S. money order



*** New MAR Bulletin Order Coordinator - **Olivia McAllister**, NSS 69461 ***

Info on ordering is available at <https://mar.caves.org/bulletins.htm>

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