Karst Window

A Louisville Grotto Newsletter
Volume 43 Issue 2
December 2011

Don Swart and Ray Rough, Speleofest 2011
Photo by Tim Stoops
The first ever burning cave man kicked off Friday night at Speleofest 2011. We had an excellent Speleofest this year with a great turnout of cavers from near and far. Jim Bobbit did an excellent job as Speleofest chairman and brought some great ideas to the table, including the burning man statue. Don and Ray did a great job building the fire and everybody really seemed to enjoy watching it light up. We hope to have an even better display next year. More on Speleofest later in this issue.
The Louisville Grotto is an internal organization of the National Speleological Society (NSS). The Grotto is one of nearly 200 local chapters located around the country, which represent the bulk of the internal organizations of the NSS. The Grotto conducts regular meetings serving to bring cavers together within the general area and to coordinate activities. A Yahoo mailing group also serves as a means of communication between members. Membership is $20 per year for individuals or $25 for the whole family.

Meetings are held at the Bon Aire Public Library on Goldsmith Lane in Louisville, beginning at 7 p.m. The meetings are open to the general public and guests are encouraged to attend. Directions can be found on the grotto website as well.

Our annual fundraiser is a 4-day caving event called Speleofest. The event takes place on Memorial day weekend. More information can be found on the grotto website.

Caving trips. The Louisville Grotto has regular trips to various caves in Indiana and Kentucky. Our goal is to have at least one beginner-level trip per month in which all members are invited to attend.

**Website**

louisville.caves.org

**Lone Star Preserve**

Lone Star Preserve is a 67-acre caving preserve, which has been purchased and developed by the Louisville Grotto for the purpose of having Speleofest at a permanent central location in cave country. The preserve is located in Bonnieville, Kentucky - just north of Cave City on I-65.

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Update to the Karst Window (KW) newsletter. The KW has been recently changed to a biannual publication that will be released on grotto meeting dates during the months of December and June. The 2011 issues that were supposed to come out in June and September were not created.

If you wish to submit content, please have any news items, articles, trip reports, upcoming events, etc. submitted no later than May or November 15th. If you forward articles authored by someone other than yourself, please forward their name for proper credit in the newsletter. We are looking for original articles above anything else (i.e. trip reports, survey reports, gear reviews, etc.), but any caving related articles are fine, especially anything that is related to or effects caving locally. If you would like to submit content or to be added to the mailing list, send your request to tim.stoops@gmail.com.
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Artist rendition of a climb in Rendezvous Cave. Report on page 15
Drawing by Tim Stoops
The success of Speleofest is not measured in profit, it can be measured best from the reactions of our members and guests. What’s most important is that everybody has a great time. Here are some of the reactions of our members and guests just after a very successful Speleofest in 2011.

From Jim Bobbit, Speleofest Chairman

I can’t say it enough, you guys are all team players and were easy to work with. We couldn’t have done this without everyone’s help. I am honored to be part of the Speleofest family.

Thank you for all your dedication to making Speleofest ’11 a success and for the friendships and memories you have given me. Looking forward to next year.

I am already thinking about next year. I know, look out I may have some interesting ideas. Those that would like to play a bigger role, you don’t need an invitation, just let me know where you would like to serve and we will start the planning.

From Jim Carter

Thanks to all of you that made the 40th. one a great success. I have not heard the final count but know it was way more than expected. You all that worked week after week before hand are the best. Thankyou for a job well done. I wish I could say more but thanks is about all there is. I am proud to say you are my friends.

From Ken Alwin

As the last cavers were leaving, they thanked us for keeping LSP looking and functioning well. It was good to hear they noticed all the hard work of the past year and weeks.

From Jeff Haaman

it was a great time thank u all !! don and Jeff wow . it was great to be able to help a little . see u next year. from the complainer.

From Sue Milburn

Yeah, everyone loves LSP. The workers went all out to do their part in making it a great year and it showed. All the cavers had a great time and the turnout was the best in recent years.

Judy Woosley

I agree Sue, thanks everyone for the hard work you put in this year. Speleofest was a great success and we had a lot of awesome compliments from our guest. All said they would definitely be back next year.....Bring on # 41 in 2012.....Woo Hoo

From Susan Wilkinson

Below is an excerpt of an email I received from Bill Greenwald. Bill’s adult grand kids came down from Chicago for their first Speleofest, and they will be back next year. Just wanted to share some of the positive feed back. You all did such a great job and worked so hard to put on another great Speleofest. Thank you.

Just wanted to thank you for helping the kids pick a cave trip on Sunday. They enjoyed very much. (Big Bat, Corey Collins)

I will send you a copy my trip report when its done this week. I have a bunch of pics. Since I decided hang around the camp Sunday I could see the work involved with getting the Sunday evening activity ready. The cavers probably don’t realize what goes on in the background to make things happen. I enjoyed seeing and talking to old friends, and peeking into and photographing the caves on the property.

Again thanks to everyone for all of your hard work and help. I will share the pics and write ups when I get them. I think it’s fun to see Speleofest from the perspective of cavers not from the LG.
This was the group picture after a trip to Lutes Spring Cave. I had made a few trips to this cave prior to this year’s Speleofest, however I had left a few leads unexplored. We made it our goal to see every bit of the cave this time around and we actually did. We even climbed through the waterfall on the upper level and explored the fluted dome area. We had a great group of cavers on this Speleofest trip.

Photo by Tim Stoops

A group meets before their Caving trip. The weather was perfect that morning and the cavers were ready to go.

Photo by Tim Stoops
Below is a couple of the best shots taken in Piercy Cave. The group was nice enough to allow me an hour or so of time to experiment with some light painting photography. We had a great trip exploring the creek and the very back of the cave after this. We got very muddy. One interesting thing we found was animal scratches and hair on the ceiling of a low passageway. He must have fallen victim to the flooding we had weeks prior. It was a great trip had by all, minus getting lost on the way there.

Photo by Tim Stoops
Below are some select Speleofest photos from Matt McClintock. The first is a great shot of the Friday night Bonfire. The bottom image is a colorful capture of the Saltpeter Cave wine & cheese social.
Louisville Grotto October Elections
New officers are as follows

Jim Bobbitt - Chairman
Tim Stoops - Vice Chair
Stephanie Coffey - Secretary
J Pat Stephens - Treasurer
Judy Woosley - Director
Ken Bailey - Director
Bill Napper - Director

New Caves Explored Near Millerstown

On November 12th, Chili Cook-off weekend, Jon Durall with the Twin Lakes Cave Conservation & Survey Task-Force and several Louisville Grotto members visited a property near Millerstown and explored a new cave. A survey has been started. It is reported that several other sinks and entrances are likely to exist on the property and the land owner is very nice. It is an exciting find in the area.

Raymond Cave

The cave register in Raymond Cave has been replaced by Tim Stoops. The old register will be copied and published in the next issue of the Karst Window for historical purposes.

A Discovery In Bland Cave
Submitted by Jon Durall

On October 15th, Members of the Twin Lakes Cave Conservation & Survey Task-Force on a trip to Bland Cave in Central Kentucky, discovered a room approximately 9 meters (30 feet) by 21 meters (70 feet) covered with different kinds of formations.

A chimney found leading off the room goes to an upper room at an upper level that is about 6 meters (20 feet) by 6 meters (20 feet). A future trip is planned in conjunction with members of the Louisville Grotto to do survey work, take photos and do further exploration.
THE FALLS OF THE OHIO CAVES, INDIANA

By
Angelo I. George

Along the north shore of the Ohio River, numerous caves and anastomoses are visible among The Islands and the cliff line of the North Flats valley wall in the vicinity of the Falls of the Ohio State Park, Clark County, Indiana. The cave zone is locally developed perpendicular to the channel of the Ohio River, and is not present on distant road cuts within the same geologic unit away from the river. All of the karst features occur in a cherty limestone interval in the Jeffersonville Limestone (Middle Devonian). Most are small in cross-section, less than one foot in diameter, but at least a dozen are big enough to crawl into for a short distance. They are visible during the late summer when the river is at its lowest level.

The floor of the caves are covered with a protective armor of gravels and cobbles, have irregular walls and ceiling. Bedding plane partings occur at floor level in entrance passages, and connect with neighboring caves. The larger caves are developed along vertical fractures. The entrance passage may bifurcate into additional passage segments that tend to get smaller deeper into the hillside away from the river, until they pinch down into a bedding plane parting. Looking into the bedding plane partings reveals anastomoses features. These caves have multiple entrances; and most are less than 30 feet long. None of them have been mapped.

Conkin and Conkin (1980) were the first to point out the occurrence of caves at the Falls. They incorporated the vertical location of the caves into their stratigraphic rock section. The caves occur 2 feet above the base of the Upper Amphipora ramosa Zone, where there is a lithologic transition from thin bedded limestone to a massive chert interval in medium bedded limestone.

Greb et al. (1993) thought the caves were formed by rushing water; and apparently not too unlike the formation of potholes – through the swirling action of water suspended eroding gravels. Actually, the caves are a specialized karst feature formed by floodwater injection under a hydraulic head. Karst features of this nature have solution pockets, irregular passage cross-section, with their base concordant with a bedding plane (Palmer, 2007). They are analogous to anastomoses, and tend to be larger, some big enough for a person to squeeze into, and in this case, not far enough underground to be out of day light penetration.

The Falls of the Ohio caves are a near surface karst feature formed when the river water level is above the entrance during flood events. Downward hydraulic pressure during a flood forces fresh undersaturated water into bedding plane partings where solution occurs on the limestone. The resulting passage grows upward overtime, and is similar to paragenesis development in some canyon passages in caves. The armor of gravels and cobbles consists of glacial outwash, local plucked bedrock of different solubility and lithology helps to insulate the floor to solution activity. Conkin and Conkin’s (1980) stratigraphic section indicates the high water level is located about 3.5 feet above the level cave floor. The caves at the Falls of the Ohio River are subject to enlargement only seasonally during flood stage events of the Ohio River. Once the level of the river declines to the top of the conduit, upward solution enlargement stops.
The chert interval in the Upper *Amphipora ramosa* Zone may have been instrumental in localizing cave development within this lithologic interval. Insoluble cherts juxtaposed against highly soluble carbonates present an ideal environment for cave development.

In north central Kentucky water caves, similar features occur adjacent to active streams in caves with a history for flooding. High level paleo-stream cave passages have fossil examples along with anastomoses. Most are too small to explore. Those that do have limited horizontal extent and pinch inward, preventing further exploration.

**ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

Sincere thanks are extended to geologist Dr. James E. Conkin for suggesting this research project to help explain the origin of the caves at the Falls of the Ohio State Park. Geologist Dr. Barbara Conkin took me to the caves along the cliff line. Diana Emerson George photo documented the site.

**REFERENCES**

Conkin, James E., and Barbara Conkin 1980. Handbook of Strata and Fossils at the Falls of the Ohio: *University of Louisville Studies in Paleontology and Stratigraphy*.


Kentucky’s underground is filled with caves and karsts features that provide clues to the earth’s early
development. Today, the visual reports that cavers report about these formations provide information that may
help protect aquifers, increase the safety of road, housing and industrial construction, and discover chemical
and waste pollution or other types of water contaminates.

Twin Lakes Cave Conservation and Survey Task Force was formed to provide Grayson and Breckenridge
Counties these resources. Cave survey and mapping, educational outreach programs for civic, religious,
community and educational facilities plus cave expeditions are available in both counties. There is much more
to caving than a cool, underground walk with a flashlight.

WM Shrewbury, President of the National Speleological Society, (NSS,) stated that local cavers visit these
underground structures regularly, notice and report the subtle changes that occur naturally through erosion,
excavation and water flow. The NSS supports local cave groups, called grottos, in identifying unstable formations,
ground and water contamination which is sometimes caused by improperly discarded pollutants. The eyes and
ears of local grottos are the “boots on the ground” for the NSS which was formed in 1941 and now has over 12,000
members nationally. The men and women of local grottos perform valuable services for land owners, county and state
agencies as well at their communities. Educational materials are developed nationally for local use by grottos
and communities across the country.

Finding a cave in Kentucky is easy however safely exploring one requires training. Informational materials
on a variety of cave topics provided by the NSS are distributed by local grottos and are available online as
free PDF download files. The NSS has one of the largest speleological libraries in the world. First
responders, search and rescue teams and emergency response teams often train with local grottos to gain
knowledge and experience.

Investigating new caves and re-visiting known caves is important. “A local grotto will notice changes that
may otherwise go unseen,” Shrewbury said. “A local grotto may be asked to check monitoring equipment
installed by public agencies that track water volume, flow rate or purity.” The NSS’s library and map
collection also provides assistance to grottos in tracking underground water flow using safe, non-
carcinogenic dyes. Knowing the route that an underground water flow takes and where it stops is
vital for many local, state and county water management agencies.

The Lone Star Nature Preserve, located in
Bonnieville, owned by the Louisville Grotto is a 67
acre educational facility providing on site basic,
intermediate and advance training classes. Safety
protocols, rope climbing basics including ascending,
descending and rappelling techniques plus specialty
training for experienced cavers, recreational rock
climbers and wildlife enthusiasts. Preserving pristine
caves and restoring vandalized caves are important
grotto projects.
Speleofest, a three day caving event that began in Kentucky almost 40 years ago, draws cavers of all experience levels both in and out of state. Primitive campsites located inside the Reserve provide a place to relax between expeditions and the opportunity to attend workshops and training exercises above ground. "Caving adventures past to present," the 2011 theme for Speleofest will workshops include knot tying, beginning cave techniques, cave flora and fauna and many cave guided cave expeditions.

Brochures from the NSS distributed by local grottos are the first step in protecting underground resources and people. "Local grottos provide a valuable services not only to land owners but to other agencies including the Bureau of Land Management, Fish and Wildlife Services, local and state officials including engineers and land developers." First hand observations have helped the NSS develop laws protecting caves from vandalism, safeguard wildlife, designate wildlife preserves and protect wetland areas.

The Twin Lakes Cave Conservation and Survey Task Force, the Louisville Grotto and other Kentucky cavers with assistance from the NSS hope to update existing maps of known caves while creating maps of the yet to be surveyed caves in western Kentucky. Information on Twin Lakes Cave Conservation and Survey Task Force, the Louisville Grotto, the NSS and other Kentucky grottos can be found online including “About the NSS,” an on site place for groups to post pictures, videos, etc. The main site has lots of information, including links to nsscavers.ning.com and CaveChat, a forum dedicated to caving specialty areas.
LOST WALLET IN LONE STAR SALTPETER CAVE PARTLY RESOLVED

By
Angelo I. George

Read with delight the *Karst Window* picture article on the finding of a long lost wallet in Lone Star Saltpeter Cave. There could be some truth, after all, pictures don’t lie.

Years ago while doing history research in the Huntington Library, San Marino, California, I ran across an uncataloged reference to Chester A. Copperpot. He was a resident of Astoria, Oregon, and by many accounts something of an obsessive individual for lost causes.

According to this one account written in 1935, he went into one of the many sea caves along the rugged Oregon coast. These caves are extensive and there are reports of people getting lost for days. Some of the caves are said to have buried treasure – pirate treasure!

Realizing he needed help in the exploration, he ran a want ad in the Sunday edition of the *New York Times*. Melvin T. Moleman and Russell Troll Neville expressed an interest. They were part of an organization called the Cave Men of America, of which they were charter members.

The old document crumbled in my hands as I read the account. I had seen the signature before, it was Moleman’s. Apparently while in the cave, the party got separated. Moleman and Neville were trapped in one part of the cave during an earthquake induced rock fall. Their only exit was a crawlway too small to enter, but it did look like it opened up not too far in. Moleman fashioned an explosive device from candles in his cave pack and Neville’s 16mm motion picture nitrate film of their adventure. After the explosion and clearing away the rocks, they made it to safety. They went back into the main cave several times looking for Copperpot but could not find him. He was never seen again.

One day someone recovered Copperpot’s wallet from Lone Star. This opens the door to a lot of questions. No doubt he escaped the confines of the Oregon sea coast caves, and made his way underground, all the way into this Kentucky cave – a modern day Arne Saknussem.
November 13th was the day we set out to check a high lead in Rendezvous Cave. I consider it worth the effort to check any lead in a cave that is within walking distance of Lone Star Preserve, no matter how difficult it may seem. I noticed the lead on a previous caving trip years earlier and I've long been anxious to check it out. In the Big room, almost at the very back of the cave, there is a smaller room to the right that is decorated nicely with flowstone. One flowstone wall here is clean and flows water most of the year. It is above this flowstone, the source of the flowing water, where there is a large lead that cuts back into darkness. Below the lead is a ledge that runs along the wall to the right. The lead is only 20 or 25 feet high. It was only recently that I had acquired the bolting gear to make it possible to do the climb safely.

On the trip was Harrison Hyden, Justin Tanselle, Ken Bailey, and myself. We set out the day after chili cook-off. We missed a last minute opportunity that morning to go on a Ropple Cave trip because we had left most of our gear in Rendezvous the previous night. Ken was ticked off and never shut up about it, but I didn't mind so much; we had important plans of our own anyway. We got in the cave before 11am. At the third rigged drop I stopped to add a 1-inch self drilling bolt as a backup to the rig. The current bolt above the drop was spinning and could not be tightened. We noted that the rope also needs to be replaced because it is very muddy and the knots couldn't be untied for proper rigging of a load sharing knot. It will require 40 feet of PMI pit rope.

After getting to our project area we realized it would not be as complicated as I originally thought. There would be no need for aid climbing with bolts and etriers, no trad gear protection or backup belayers. We simply looped a rope over a bomber stalagmite at the top of the ledge and I climbed up with a frog system. The top of the ledge is slanted, very muddy, and very exposed. I immediately bolted the wall for protection and tied into a belay line that Justin was controlling. I negotiated the 15 foot ledge to the opening of the lead. It was not a simple walk-in opening; it required a sketchy rock climbing move to get over an exposed wall. To add another point of protection, I looped a sling over a protrusion above me and clipped it to the belay line. For the climbing move I used a crimper handhold on the back side of the wall to pull myself over to safety. It was incredibly nerve wrecking.

Unfortunately after a short exploration of the lead I discovered it was blocked by flowstone. One thing we learned is that the lead is actually a large canyon passage that once connected with the big room, but has since been blocked entirely by a flowstone plug. Perhaps the passage is accessible beyond the flowstone. A second discovery we noticed from this new vantage point is yet another high lead, about 15 feet higher from the top of the flowstone. It is a sketchy climb that could be protected with trad gear or grappling hooks. The lead appears to connect to another visible lead in the Big room, but upon further observance through a window in the Big Room it appears it could also be blocked by flowstone. I rigged a rope for the others to climb up and see the newly discovered passage. Unfortunately we did not have a camera to take pictures of the highly decorative passage. For the drop down Ken showed us how to rappel on a munter hitch. We left the rope rigged to provide easier access to the new lead in the ceiling for a future project. It should be noted that the rigged rope is not what I would consider “bomber” and anybody climbing on it should assume the risk, as you should with any pre-rigged rope you find in a cave. Hopefully in the future we will make the trip back to climb the new lead and see if we can make it past the massive flowstone blockage.
On July 3rd, the day after our 4th of July celebration at Lone Star Preserve, a few grotto members made a trip to Shiloh School Cave. With us was Chris, Rebecca, Harrison, Sam, Stephanie, and myself. The day prior I had received permission from the owner to come back with a group. The owner is a very nice Amish man and was great to talk to. He was happy to allow us into the cave and he shared stories of exploring it himself. It was very hot that day and we were anxious to get underground in the cool water.

The trip starts as a pleasant walk through a shallow stream passage. Soon we encountered the first of many natural bridges that span the width of the cave passage. Some of them are easier to climb than others. I am a big fan of natural arches both above and below ground, so I enjoyed this feature of the cave very much. Further on we encountered a couple of leads to explore. One of the leads was a low, sandy crawl that I checked for a short distance before turning around. I forgot to bring the map so we weren't sure where it went. Another lead goes to a second entrance and it was a tough crawl to reach the surface. We took some time to warm up outside the cave and then headed back underground to face the water again. On the way in we noticed that the entrance here is not stable so we had to be very careful; I would not suggest anybody attempt to go through this entrance in the future.

After carrying on a short distance the cave passage turns to deep, chest-high water passage. Our goal was to reach the sump at the end of the cave. Even in the flooded passage there are natural bridges to climb over, or if you're feeling froggy you can dive under. The water was very cold and we were all feeling that burning sensation on our skin. For my brother Chris it was just too much and he was the first to actually go numb. He explained that he gets cold easily because he only has 1% body fat. Just when I thought I knew my brother really well, it turns out that he's actually a starving Ethiopian. We turned around and headed out of the water ASAP. We made it out of the cave fairly quickly, only stopping a couple times for pictures. Overall I really liked the cave and plan to go back to explore all the way to the sump.
Ladies 25 hour in Roppel Cave
October 22-23, 2011 Stephanie Coffey

Attending: Shelly Wolf, Holly McClintock, Stephanie Coffey, Judy Woosley, Sue Milburn, Susan Wilkinson, Lynn Buffkin, Amy Hinkle, Linda Pook, Shari Lydy

We began our weekend of fun on Friday afternoon. One by one we arrived at LSP and got to know one another, many of us meeting for the first time, while hanging out around the campfire until well past dark. The 10 women on the trip were a diverse group gathering from five different states across the eastern half of the US - Kentucky, Michigan, Indiana, Ohio, and Tennessee - and of various numbers of years of caving experience. We finally all went to bed excited for the adventure that awaited us the next day, a 24 hour (planned time) caving trip into Roppel Cave. This would be the first trip into Roppel for some of us and a first overnighter in a cave for most.

After a chilly night we got up the next day, gathered our gear and set off for Roppel. After suiting up and a quick picture in front of the entrance we began our descent at 12:10pm going one by one down 4 long ladders, through a canyon, and down a couple small ladders. At times it was a bit precarious due to the amount of gear we were carrying, each woman had either one large bag with all their gear or one medium bag and a small cave pack. This was going to be a learning trip for some to figure out how much camping gear they actually need to have/wanted to carry! We continued through a crawl while pushing or pulling our bags along and came out into a dome room with a small pool of water at the bottom. After a quick rest we began ascending a slope with the aid of hand lines then continued down a walking passage. In this passage we came to the trail. Here we had to make sure we stayed in the middle of the path in order to preserve as much of the cave as possible.

After a short walk we came to some breakdown, traversing a canyon by walking across wooden planks in the process, then arrived at Roppel Junction where we would be camping. Since Holly had previously claimed the dirt by the three rocks the rest of us were left to find spots in the dirt by all the other rocks 😊. After lightening our loads to just our cave packs and taking a short break we began our loop trip that Shelly had planned out. She predicted it would take us about eight hours or so to complete since we had a bigger group.
The trail began as walking/stoop walking passage. All over the walls and ceiling were snow like formations and the dirt in either side of the trail was beautifully pristine and sparkled. Farther along we came to more gypsum formations of all different shapes. In one section we were able to just lay on our backs as though we were star gazing, only it was gypsum not stars a few feet from our faces. We continued on our loop and saw several domes, one of which we spent some time looking at a layer of rock packed with fossils. We also did a lot of crawling and climbing throughout our journey.

After about seven and a half hours we were faced with a dilemma…we had planned on going to Yahoo which is filled with beautiful formations. However, many people were getting tired. Going to Yahoo meant two to three more hours of caving or we could just head back to camp, as we were only half an hour away. We decided it was best to go to camp, eat, sleep and go to Yahoo the next day.

Upon arriving back in Roppel Junction we began to set up camp and make dinner. Linda spoiled us and treated everyone to hot lasagna, thanks to her dehydrating skills. We rehydrated and heated it and basically had fresh lasagna. This trip was also Shelly’s birthday trip therefore Amy had brought a small sheet cake with a bat on it to celebrate Shelly’s birthday and everyone had signed a card. As this was taking place we also discovered that cave monsters do exist! Shelly’s being a Halloween birthday, Sue put on a mask and gloves and snuck up behind Shelly to surprise her. Eventually we all lay down and most went to sleep while listening to soft music playing from an MP3 player and speaker which Holly brought along. During the night it Holly discovered that not only are there monsters in the cave but fireflies! After watching it all night Holly came to realize that it was actually a battery light indicator on Susan’s helmet.

Sunday morning Shelly called out asking if anyone was up. If we weren’t awake already we were now! After some breakfast (not as elaborate as out dinner but did include brownies 😊) and some coffee or tea we headed out on the next loop. We did a climb up then after traversing along a small ledge over a drop we dove into a hole about waist height and went through an awkward upward bend, through some belly crawling passage the up another L bend into a crack and climb up. After crawling for a bit and canyon jumping we came to a room with many helictites hanging on one side across a canyon. We all posed for a neat picture. We then came to another dilemma. It was 10:30am. We had planned on being out of the cave by 12 and would have people coming to look for us if we weren’t back to LSP by 3. We still wanted to see Yahoo Avenue, which we had skipped on the previous day. However the trip would be one and a half hours and another hour to an hour and a half to get out of the cave. Those of us who had never been to Roppel really wanted to see Yahoo so we decided to finish our loop back to Roppel Junction, pack up camp, then kick butt to get to Yahoo. So off we went.
After packing up camp we booked it to get to Yahoo. After a short crawl/walk over breakdown we made a turn and went up a short hill then crawled our hearts out with a little bit of stoop walking to break it up when possible until finally we could stand. Shortly after we arrived at Yahoo. Through Yahoo we had to be careful and pay attention to where we walked. It was really important to stay on the narrow trail because there are literally formations everywhere. Here I saw my first cave pearls. After some photo taking and admiring we had to turn back (sooner than we would have liked due to time constraint) and head out as fast as we came in. We stopped by camp, picked up the rest of our gear and headed out. It was a bit slower going out, of course.

We emerged from the cave at 1:10pm on Sunday afternoon, exactly 25 hours after entering. After we made it out we took some after pictures. Later as one by one everyone departed LSP and we each left knowing we made some good friends and did some awesome caving.

Photo by Stephanie Coffee

Group shot after exiting the cave. Left to right: Lynn Buffkin, Shari Lydy, Stephanie Coffey, Linda Pook, Sue Milburn, Amy Hinkle, Shelly Wolf, Judy Woosley, Holly McClintock, Susan Wilkinson

Photo by Amy Hinkle
Chili Cook-off

Chili Cook-off On November 12th.

The turnout for the chili cook-off was great, with about 40 people in attendance. During the day some grotto members worked on opening up the sinkhole next to the shelter house. Ken took the opportunity to show off an excellent rope rig designed to raise and lower a bucket that was used to move rocks and dirt out of the sink hole. Cold air can be felt drifting out of the rocks around the bottom of the sink.

The chili judges at work, Photo by Tim Stoops

Tim Stoops took home the trophy

Digging out the sinkhole, Photo by Tim Stoops
Survey Class

Ken Bailey setup a survey class for grotto members to learn surveying and advanced sketching. This class prompted the start of new survey projects for the grotto. Thanks Ken.

Photo by Tim Stoops
Jon Durall lines up a survey shot in Saltpeter Cave.

Photo by Tim Stoops
Stephanie Coffee and Jim Carter are learning to sketch cave passage.

Photo by Tim Stoops
Stephanie Coffee holds the tape for a practice survey shot.
Survey Project

Speaking of new survey projects, Judy Woosley and Jim Bobbit test survey gear outside of a newly discovered cave near Millerstown, Kentucky.

Judy takes a survey shot inside the new cave. Meanwhile, Jim’s face looks like he is fighting some severe constipation.
Blissit Cave Grotto Trip

Over the summer Jim Bobbit led a grotto trip to Blissit Cave. It is a big cave with some very large rooms, long passages, and some great formations. Pictured right is Ray Long admiring a dripping formation. Below is Tim Stoops posing behind some colorful formations. At bottom, Jim Bobbit is standing over rimstone dams. Photos by Tim Stoops.
Mishap At Neversink Pit

Harrison Hyden learns why it is a good idea to check your chin strap before dropping a pit. We'll go ahead and add that to the safety checklist for future reference. Photos by Tim Stoops.
Mammoth Cave Restoration Camp

Matt McClintock took photos at the Mammoth Cave Restoration Camp in November. Several Louisville Grotto members were in attendance. Below is a photo of the group outside of the historic entrance to Mammoth Cave.

Sue Mil Burn climbs out of a hole in Mammoth Cave. Why is she so clean?

A tourist trail in Mammoth Cave.
Carter Caves State Park

Tim stoops and Stephanie Coffee visited Carter Caves State Resort Park. The caves are closed due to White Nose Syndrome but there are several huge natural bridges still open to the public. They are basically caves except that they are very short passages. Below is Stephanie just inside of a cave entrance and natural bridge. The cave is gated just a little further inside. Photos by Tim Stoops.

Stephanie is standing in the middle of the “Natural Bridge”, located just a short walk from the visitors center.
Tag Fall Cave In, Neversink Pit

Tim stoops, Stephanie Coffee and Harrison Hyden visited Neversink Pit on Saturday morning. Despite all of the hype about the location being so popular during TAG, we were the only ones there. Below is Tim Stoops and Harrison Hyden at the bottom of the pit. Bottom Left is Stephanie Coffee dropping Neversink pit. Bottom Right is Harrison ascending up the rope. Photo by Tim Stoops
Tag Fall Cave In, Tumbling Rock Cave

Top photo is Tim Stoops using an HID flashlight to illuminate a beautiful passage. Bottom photo is Stephanie Coffee posing in a decorated corner of the room. Photos by Tim Stoops.
Raymond Cave

Tim Stoops, Stephanie Coffee, and Adam Sampson had a successful trip in Raymond Cave to experiment with flash photography. The top photo is in the crystal room with Adam Sampson in the Background. The bottom photo features Stephanie posing in a decorated passage above Pipeline Junction. Photos by Tim Stoops.
Memories

In memory of Thomas Earl (Tommie) Vowels
NSS#10342

You explored in the caves
And swam a few streams
Hiked in the Gorges
While searching for dreams

You loved the full moon in Autumn
And the Red Buds in Spring
Beer and Brats in the Summer
And the crisp days winter would bring

Morning at Mt. Shasta
You saw the eagle soar
A sight to remember
Forevermore

A tall man from LaRue
Could sure split a rail
But would have lagged behind you
On that savage gulf trail

You walked among giants
Beyond horse pound falls
You exceeded your bounds
Or so the ranger recalls

You lit up a “Stogie”
And inhaled England Cove
A long way from your family
And homesick for vine grove

We’ll beam up to your place
’cause you can’t come back
In life we’ll pay homage
Near the railroad track

We mingled with Nature
And sometimes we sinned
But loved every creature
And painted all the colors of the wind

J Pat Stephens
NSS#8320