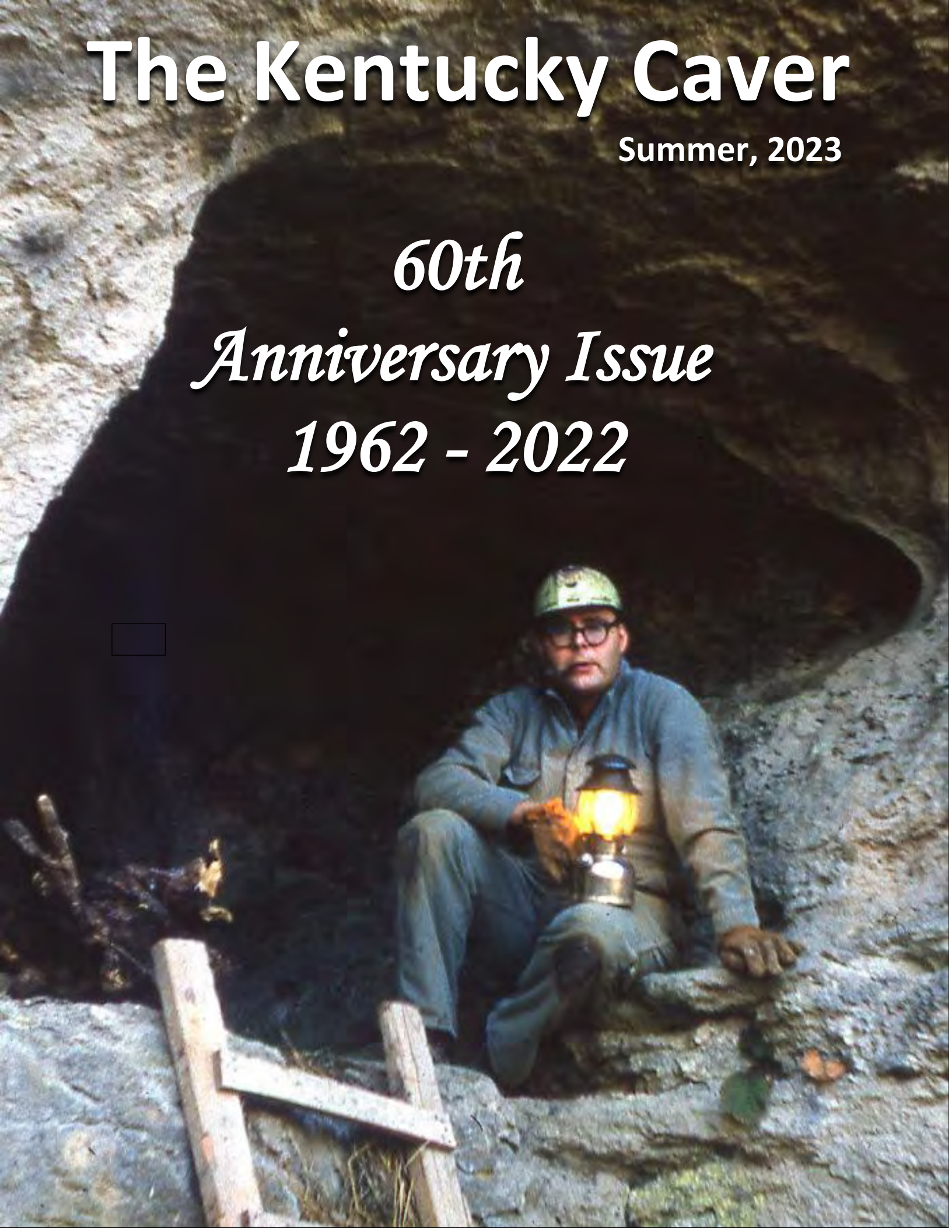
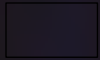


# The Kentucky Caver

Summer, 2023

*60th  
Anniversary Issue  
1962 - 2022*





# The Kentucky Caver

Summer 2023

Volume 58 Number 1

*The Kentucky Caver* is the publication of the Blue Grass Grotto, Lexington, Kentucky. The Blue Grass Grotto is part of the National Speleological Society and affiliated with the Great Salt Petre cave preserve, the Rockcastle Karst Conservancy (RKC), the Kentucky Speleological Society (KSS), and the Southeastern Regional Association (SERA).



The goals of the Blue Grass Grotto are to encourage responsible cave exploration as well as the conservation and study of caves. Our meetings are held on the third Thursday of each month in Lexington, Kentucky. Recent meetings have been held at 6:00 p.m. at the Emergency Services building, 115 Cisco Road.

## OFFICERS

- President:** Stephen Bishop (NSS 26178. [stephen-bishop@juno.com](mailto:stephen-bishop@juno.com))
- Vice-president:** Kevin Zachary (NSS 69653. [kyfossilman@gmail.com](mailto:kyfossilman@gmail.com))
- Secretary:** Elizabeth Copelin (NSS 67035. [echokilocharlie@gmail.com](mailto:echokilocharlie@gmail.com))
- Treasurer:** David Lindemuth (NSS 29270. [lindemud@lexingtonky.gov](mailto:lindemud@lexingtonky.gov))
- Librarian:** Bob Roth (NSS 66216. [bobroth88@yahoo.com](mailto:bobroth88@yahoo.com))
- Editor:** Phil O'dell (NSS 17000. [phillip\\_odell@yahoo.com](mailto:phillip_odell@yahoo.com))
- Guest Editor:** Gary A. O'Dell (NSS 10278. [godell@roadrunner.com](mailto:godell@roadrunner.com))

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

<b>From the Editor's Desk .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Honorary Life Members of the Blue Grass Grotto .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Blue Grass Grotto: The First Ten Years, Gary O'Dell.....</b>	<b>2</b>

*Front cover: Dr. Thomas Calhoun Barr, Jr., founder of the Institute of Speleology at the University of Kentucky and of the Blue Grass Grotto, at the entrance to Yarberrry Cave in Adair County Kentucky, November 21, 1965. Photo by Terry Marsh, one of his graduate students*

*Inside back cover: Jim Kelley reaches the top of the climb out of Surprise Pit, Fern Cave, Alabama, a 404-foot ascent. This grotto trip in December 1970 was one of the primary goals of vertical training practice by the participants.*

*Back cover: Ron Stokely in the Paradise section of Sloans Valley Cave, Pulaski County, Kentucky, ca. 1970.*



## From the Editor's Desk

### Gary A. O'Dell – Guest Editor

I was very pleased to be allowed the responsibility for editing this special issue of *The Kentucky Caver*. It has been more than thirty years since I last had the pleasure of putting together an issue for members of the Blue Grass Grotto, and I looked forward to the process and the final product. I joined the grotto in 1967, and took over editing the *Kentucky Caver* from 1969 through 1971, and came back to the position during the mid-to-late 1980s and occasionally in the early 90s.

I was somewhat disconnected from the grotto during this period, having moved from Lexington to eastern Kentucky and focusing on my teaching career at Morehead State University. I did not stop caving, although my trips were less frequent than in the old days, and I enjoyed introducing some of my students to cave exploration and research, and maintained contact with a few old friends from the grotto. During the last couple of years, however, I have been trying to become a more active participant in grotto affairs.

November of 2022 marked the sixtieth anniversary of the founding of the BGG. It is as hard to believe that our organization has passed the sixty-year point as it is for me to acknowledge the same. I have known a lot of outstanding cavers affiliated with the BGG – some, unfortunately, no longer with us – and it is clear to me that the present-day grotto also consists of some exceptional people.

The idea for this issue really began back in 2019 with Bill Rogers, who was looking for a place to post old BGG caving photos from the 1960s. It then began to solidify earlier this year when a group of us old-timers – me, Bill Rogers, Cat Bishop, and Phil O'dell, all of whom had been awarded Honorary Life Member status by BGG – began some email discussions as to who we might propose to the grotto for the same recognition. I had saved an old photocopy of the 1962 BGG constitution, which listed the founding members. I had been in contact with one of them, Ray McAdams, a few years ago with some questions about caves in Lexington. I began to wonder who else among the founders might still be around, somewhere, after all these years, and began an effort to locate their present whereabouts. Three of the original scientist-founders, Tom Barr, Robert Kuehne, and Wayne

Davis, had all passed away. Much to my surprise, however, in addition to McAdams, founders Stewart Peck and Thomas H. Hayden were still very much alive, although in their eighties, and further investigation located some additional very early BGG members, who although not in the founding group, were part of the grotto during its first years of existence. These included Gerald Tuggle, who put together the first issue of the *Kentucky Caver* in 1965, as well as Jerry Carpenter and Terry Marsh.

I recorded and transcribed lengthy telephone interviews with all of these persons. In my opinion, and that of the other Life Members, all of these folks should be honored with Honorary Life Member status, although not all in the same year. Accordingly, the names of Raymond McAdams, Stewart Peck, and Thomas H. Hayden were presented to the grotto, along with a brief description of their contributions, and the membership voted to grant them the award.

With their recollections now in hand, I thought it would be good to try writing a history of the BGG. I contacted Bill Torode, NSS librarian, and he sent me copies of all the BGG annual reports and other documents from the beginning of the organization through 1985. I began work, and the result appears in this issue. I hope to create a second installment for a special issue next year that brings grotto history up to the end of the twentieth century.

#### Honorary Life Members

Gary O'Dell (1989)  
Jim Currens (date not recorded)  
Jon Hagee (date not recorded)  
Hilary Lambert (date not recorded)  
Charlie Bishop (2021)  
Catherine Bishop (2021)  
Phil O'dell (2022)  
Bill Rogers (2022)  
Barbara Graham (2023)  
John Barnes (2023)  
Raymond McAdams (2023)  
Stewart Peck (2023)  
Thomas H. Hayden, Jr. (2023)

#### Honorary Fraternal Members

Bill Andrews, deceased (2023)

## Blue Grass Grotto: The First Ten Years

Gary A. O'Dell

### In the Beginning

In 2022, the Blue Grass Grotto marked a significant historical milestone: the sixtieth anniversary of the founding of the organization. For many years after establishment, the Grotto had a reputation as being less oriented to recreational caving and more toward cave science and system projects than many other grottos. There was good reason for this perception, because the BGG was founded by three prominent biospeleologists, who were faculty members of the Department of Zoology at the University of Kentucky, and their students. These three scientists were Thomas C. Barr, Jr. (1931-2011), who specialized in invertebrate cave dwellers, beetles in particular; Robert A. Kuehne (1927-1984), whose interest lay in fish; and Wayne H. Davis (1930-2017), who studied bats.

These men were not the first faculty members in the Department of Zoology to have a significant interest in caves. In 1918, William D. Funkhouser was appointed professor of zoology and head of the department, a position he held until his death in 1948. His research specialty was the *Membracidae* family of insects, treehoppers related to cicadas and leafhoppers and not cave-dwelling. Funkhouser typically published 15-20 entomological papers per year, and his life's work amounted to more than 300 publications. His great interest in the prehistoric peoples of Kentucky led him to invest a considerable effort investigating regional caves, rock shelters, and burial mounds with his friend and colleague William S. Webb, and in 1926 the two men established the Department of Anthropology at the University. Webb was head of the department and Funkhouser a member of the faculty. Funkhouser and Webb spent their vacations in the field, exploring and excavating, and their 1928 book, *Ancient Life in Kentucky*, included a chapter on "The Cave Dwellers," which summarized investigations in numerous Kentucky caves. The two men also co-authored several other publications featuring work undertaken in caves in various regions of the state. His cave expertise being well known, in February, 1925, Funkhouser was sent as the personal representative of Kentucky governor William Fields to the site of Sand Cave in

Edmonson County to advise in the rescue of trapped Floyd Collins. From its founding, the Blue Grass Grotto held its monthly meetings for many years in the Funkhouser Building, erected in 1942 to house the biological sciences.<sup>1</sup>

John M. Carpenter, a *Drosophila* (fruit fly) geneticist and formerly professor of zoology at the University of Tennessee, was appointed to head the UK Department of Zoology in 1953, a position he would hold until 1965. At the time of Carpenter's appointment, Roger W. Barbour was a member of the department, having joined the faculty in the fall of 1950. Barbour, who received his doctorate from Cornell in 1949, was a vertebrate zoologist with a wide-ranging interest that included reptiles, amphibians, and mammals, but had no more than a passing interest in cave life. The same could be said for Robert A. Kuehne ("kee-nee"), who published extensively but exclusively on various species of surface-dwelling fish prior to coming to the University of Kentucky in 1958. This all changed once Tom Barr came to Lexington in 1961, taking a position as assistant professor in the Department of Zoology.<sup>2</sup>



Leaders of the 1925 Collins rescue effort (L to R): Henry S. Carmichael; J. B. Henretta, rescue shaft superintendent; and William D. Funkhouser, sent by Kentucky governor William J. Fields for his expertise on caves. Courtesy Ernst Kastening.

Tom Barr was born in Nashville, Tennessee, on September 6, 1931, and spent much of his childhood roaming the woodlands in the vicinity of his home. When he was seven years old, the family took him on a visit to Mammoth Cave, and the experience changed his life forever. At this precocious age, Tom decided that he was going to spend his life studying the ecology of caves. As he grew older, he began to explore local caves, and in 1948, as a seventeen-year-old high school student, Tom's essay on "Ecological Aspects of the Cavern" won a \$400 Westinghouse Science Talent Search scholarship. The NSS took note of this achievement, reporting that his conclusions were based on studies in three of the forty Tennessee caves he had explored by this time, and in August, the *NSS News* reported on his discovery of a luminous cave worm in Goat Cave. Tom used his scholarship money to begin studies at Harvard in 1949, graduating in 1953 with a bachelor degree in biology. He joined the NSS in 1949 (NSS 892) and began corresponding with John S. Petrie, the first NSS secretary, and began cave explorations with Petrie and other prominent figures in the Society. After graduating from Harvard, in 1953 Tom was hired by the state geologist of Tennessee to make a survey of the major caves in the state, which was published in 1961 by the Tennessee Department of Geology as *Caves of Tennessee*. Tom oversaw geological and biological research during the 1954 NSS C-3 expedition to Crystal Cave in Kentucky (Flint Ridge system). He pursued graduate studies at Columbia, receiving an MA in zoology in 1954, and went on to obtain a Ph.D. in biology from Vanderbilt in 1958. Along the way, he developed his research niche as a specialist in the ecology of cave beetles. Tom was employed as an instructor at Texas Tech from 1957-1958 and as an assistant professor at Tennessee Tech from 1958-1961.<sup>3</sup>

In his book, *The Longest Cave*, Roger Brucker described the young scientist as "pretty much of a loner, with round beady eyes in round horned rimmed glasses, a pipe, and great caving strength and agility in a deceptively round body." Barr came to the University of Kentucky in September of 1961 as an assistant professor in the Department of Zoology, and during the following year established the Institute of Speleology at the university to "to promote research in all aspects of cave science." This provided an organizational home for speleological researchers, attracting not only faculty



*Tom Barr in Phelps Cave near Lexington in 1980, carrying his trademark Coleman lantern. He favored lanterns for specimen collection because of their bright light. Photo by Gary O'Dell.*

who were so inclined but also undergraduate and graduate students interested in biospeleology. Dr. Barr would become well-known to cavers nationally, not only as the author of *Caves of Tennessee* but more so for his many contributions to biospeleology and his active participation in the affairs of the NSS, including a stint as president of the Society from 1965-1967.<sup>4</sup>

Robert A. Kuehne, who came to Lexington in 1958, was a native of Austin, Texas, who obtained his bachelor's and master's degrees at Southern Methodist University and his Ph.D. in zoology from the University of Michigan. He specialized in the study of freshwater fishes and stream ecology, and it is evident that he had been corresponding with Tom Barr for some time before Barr was hired by UK, and had been infected by the younger man with

an interest in cave life. In October 1961, mere weeks after Barr joined the faculty of UK's Department of Zoology, Barr and Kuehne were jointly awarded a major grant from the National Science Foundation, amounting to \$30,000, to ascertain the sources of food for blind fish, crayfish, and shrimp in Mammoth and other local caves. Although his primary research interest was focused upon the life of surface streams, he developed a significant interest in the aquatic biology of caves and collaborated with Barr and other members of the Institute on several occasions as well as publishing on the subject under his name alone. He joined the NSS on February 19, 1962 (NSS 6124). In 1967, Kuehne and his wife observed and captured what proved to be a previously unknown species of Amblyopsid blind fish from an Alabama cave, which was subsequently named *Speoplatyrhinus poulsoni* after his friend and fellow biospeleologist,

Thomas R. Poulson. At Carter Caves State Park in 1970, Tom Barr, Robert Kuehne, Wayne Davis, and Roger Barbour led a cave-focused workshop for field naturalists, assisted by Park Naturalist John Tierney. Davis and Kuehne both led field trips to acquaint participants with the life forms to be found in caves.<sup>5</sup>

The 1970s was a time when the environmental movement was gaining considerable traction in the United States, and Robert Kuehne was an outspoken activist who championed causes wherever he believed waterways and aquatic life was being threatened. A member of the Sierra Club, Robert was one of the leaders in the decades-long fight against the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' plan to build a dam on the Red River that would threaten the scenic and geologically significant Red River Gorge. First proposed in 1962, the intended project was ultimately stopped in 1975 by a court injunction



*Robert Kuehne in Webber's Cave in Woodford County, circa 1965. Andrews photo, author's collection.*



and a decree by the governor of Kentucky. He spoke out in 1970 against construction of the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway (the “Tenn-Tom”), a 234-mile channel that links the Ohio River to the Gulf of Mexico. Despite opposition, construction began in 1972 and was completed in 1984 at a cost of two billion dollars. On many occasions, he urged stronger measures to control pollution of Kentucky streams, and in 1972 was appointed to a commission to address Lexington’s egregious pollution of local streams by partially treated sewage. Later in the decade, Robert was a strong advocate for establishment of a nature center at Raven Run in southern Fayette County.<sup>6</sup>

The third scientist-founder of the Blue Grass Grotto, Wayne H. Davis, joined the Department of Zoology at the University of Kentucky in the fall of 1962 as a vertebrate zoologist and the resident expert on bats. Davis obtained his Ph.D. in biology in 1957 from the University of Illinois, and, two years later, after post doctorate work at the University of Minnesota took a position as biology instructor at Middlebury College in Vermont. There can be no doubt that he was attracted to this institution by the presence there of Harold B. Hitchcock, chair of the Department of Biology and one of the leading bat experts in the United States. Hitchcock may, in fact, have invited Davis because the two men shared a long-standing interest in bats. Davis had been conducting research on *Chiroptera* for more than a decade before coming to Middlebury and had published articles in respected venues such as the *Journal of Mammalogy*. As he recalled, “My first experience with bats was December 14, 1947 when I was a junior in high school. I entered Cornwell Cave near my home in West Virginia and emerged with a pipistrel and an *Eptesicus* which I made into specimens. My next chiropteran adventure was April 3, 1949 when I entered the cave and came out with a couple of dozen *Myotis*.” Davis was curious to note a skewed sex ratio in favor of males, and decided to use banding to study possible differential survival of the sexes in pipistrel bats, in which the difference was most pronounced. “I applied for bands and in May of 1950 banded my first bat.” While a graduate at Illinois University, he continued to band bats in the caves of Illinois and nearby states, and his dissertation was based upon his earlier studies of sex ratios in pipistrels. He became a member of the NSS on June 5, 1951 (NSS 1855).<sup>7</sup>



Wayne Davis at Middlebury College, Vermont, shortly before coming to the University of Kentucky at Barr’s invitation. Photo: Special Collections, Middlebury College.

Harold Hitchcock, a Harvard graduate, first began to study bats in 1939 while an instructor at the University of Western Ontario, Canada. Hitchcock wanted to be able to answer the question, where do bats go when they are through hibernating for the winter? He quickly determined that banding was one of the most useful research tools for this purpose. He relocated to Middlebury in 1943, became chair of the biology department in 1947 and joined the NSS (NSS 765) on August 12 of the same year. He also received a significant grant from the American Academy of Sciences in 1947 and, in the following year, set off on a 3,000-mile tour through New York, Connecticut, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and to Mammoth Cave in Kentucky in pursuit of hibernating bats to band. Over a lifetime focused upon bat research, Hitchcock compiled an impressive record of publications on the subject. Thus it was that, when Wayne Davis arrived at Middlebury in 1959, Hitchcock had found the perfect colleague in this fellow NSS member and bat researcher. Davis only remained in Vermont for three years, however, very likely attracted to Kentucky by the opportunity to become part of the Institute of Speleology and to study the bats of the region.<sup>8</sup>

On November 14, 1962, Tom Barr sent an application for charter of the Blue Grass Grotto as

an internal organization of the National Speleological Society to John S. Petrie, Chair of the Grottoes Committee. This letter included a copy of the newly adopted BGG constitution and noted that the officers elected for the new grotto were Barr as chair, Wayne H. Davis as vice-chair, and Thomas H. Haydon as secretary-treasurer. For many years, the BGG was a student grotto affiliated with both the NSS and the University of Kentucky. Students under Barr, graduate and undergraduate, often joined the grotto until their degrees were completed, and then moved on.<sup>9</sup>

For the biospeleologists at the new Institute of Speleology, establishment of the Blue Grass Grotto was perhaps something of an afterthought. Stewart Peck, one of founders, came to the University of Kentucky specifically to study with Tom Barr, who offered him a position as a research assistant. As Stewart recalled for me, Barr “was the center of caving at the time. We found there were other students and other people in Lexington who had an interest in caves. So, there was enough critical mass to form a grotto.” Ray McAdams, another who was attracted to UK by the opportunity for graduate study under Barr, was an NSS member who had done some caving in Indiana before he came to Lexington. As he remembers, “I thought, well, Lexington should be the center of caving in the nation.” He started by asking the speleological faculty what they thought of setting up an NSS grotto, and Barr, Davis and Kuehne all thought that it was a very good idea. Ray undertook to make it a reality. “I got all the forms and filled them out and we became a branch of the NSS. One of the students that I'd had [Gerald Tuggle] was quite prolific in printing, and so we used the printing

CONSTITUTION OF THE BLUE GRASS CHAPTER OF THE N. S. S.

Lexington, Kentucky

- I. The name of this organization shall be the Blue Grass Chapter of the National Speleological Society.
- II. The purposes of this Chapter shall be the same as those of the National Speleological Society, with the additional purpose of organizing members of the N.S.S. in the Blue Grass region of Kentucky, better to promote the objectives of the N.S.S.
- III. The Chapter shall be governed by an Executive Committee composed of the following officers elected annually by Chapter members in good standing:
  - a. Chairman
  - b. Vice-chairman
  - c. Secretary-treasurer

Business of the Chapter shall be managed by the Executive Committee, but decisions or actions of the Committee may be overruled by a 2/3 majority vote of the entire Chapter membership.
- IV. Executive Committee and general meetings shall be held at such times and places as are determined by the Committee. A petition signed by 2/3 of the entire Chapter membership shall be binding upon the Executive Committee to call a special meeting for the purpose stated in the petition.
- V. Membership is limited to members in good standing of the N.S.S. Any member of the N.S.S. in the Blue Grass area of Kentucky shall be eligible for membership in this Chapter.
- VI. This Constitution may be amended only by a 2/3 vote of the entire membership in good standing at least 30 days after the proposed amendment has been read at a regular meeting of the Chapter and copies of the proposed amendment have been delivered or mailed to each member of the Chapter.

CHARTER MEMBERS

Stewart Peck 4073      James A. Watson 6282  
James K. Blake 981      Thomas C. Barr Jr 892  
Thomas H. Haydon Jr. 5273      Wayne H. Davis 1855  
Michael S. Watson 6223      Robert A. Kuehne 6124

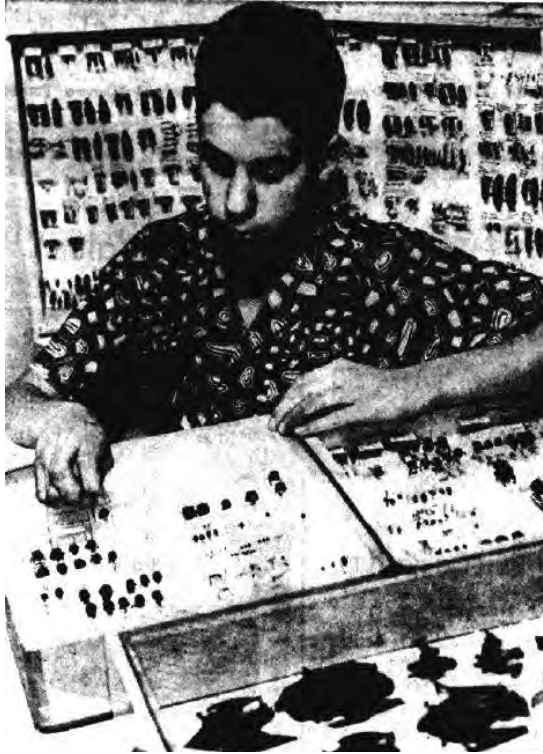
13 November 1962  
 Lexington, Kentucky

First constitution of the BGG, November 13, 1962, with the signatures of founding members: Stewart Peck, James K. Blake, Thomas H. Haydon, Jr., Michael S. Watson, James A. Watson, Wayne H. Davis, and Robert A. Kuehne. From O'Dell collection.

press at Transylvania University and came out with a *Kentucky Caver*.” Although Ray’s name does not appear on the first BGG constitution, there can be no doubt that he was a founder, perhaps THE founder, of the BGG. And so, the Blue Grass Grotto was born.<sup>10</sup>

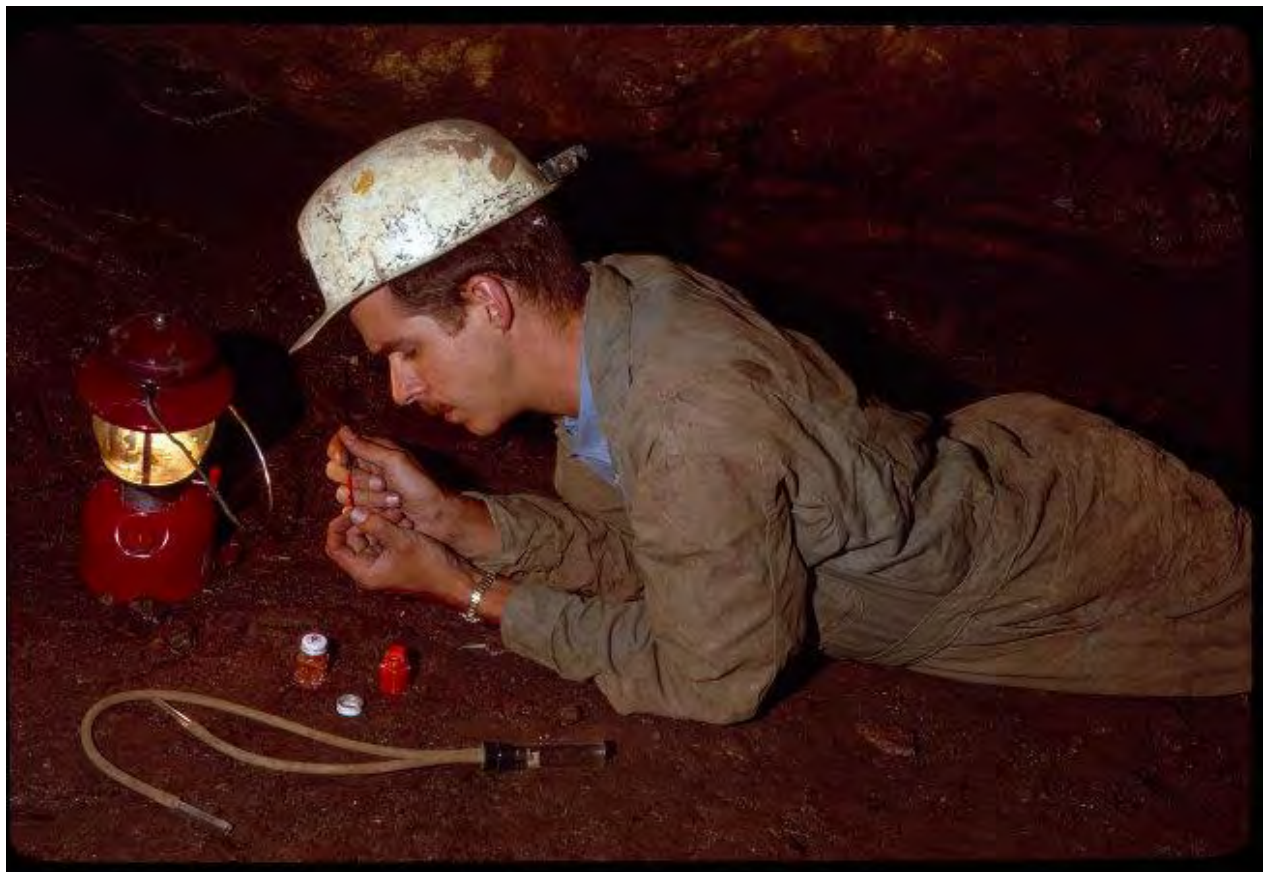
Three of the students who were involved in setting up the BGG still survive, all in their eighties now: Stewart Peck, Ray McAdams, and Thomas H. Haydon. There can be no doubt that Stewart Peck was born to be a scientist. He began caving very young; in 1957 at the age of fifteen he was a member of the Quad City Grotto in Davenport, Iowa, a member of the NSS, and was busy collecting and studying bat and beetle specimens, most of the latter being obtained by trips to caves near Maquoketa in





*LEFT: Fifteen year-old Stewart Peck shows off his collection of insect and bat specimens  
Quad City Times (Iowa) December 1, 1957*

the eastern part of the state. The next year, the high school student attended the 1958 NSS annual convention at Gatlinburg, Tennessee, and while visiting Tuckaleechee Caverns, spotted a pinhead-sized black beetle. He collected the beetle and sent it to Dr. Barr, who was then at the Tennessee Polytechnic Institute. Barr was unable to identify it and concluded it was a new species. In the same year, Stewart discovered a species of beetle, *Ptomaphagus cavernicola*, in an Iowa cave that was not previously known from the state but only in Missouri. In 1959, he was a member of the NSS Wind Cave Expedition (South Dakota), and during the following year, was the grand award winner of the regional high school science fair for a zoological study he had conducted at Wind Cave. In his expedition journal, Stewart wrote, "The research in Wind Cave has provided an important addition to the knowledge of cave life in western states. Many



*Stewart Peck marking beetles in White's Cave, Mammoth Cave National Park, circa 1963, to measure population size. Photo courtesy Stewart Peck.*

caves in the eastern half of the U.S. have been thoroughly researched, but this was the first attempt to compile a complete record of life from a western cave. The lack of moisture is the chief limiting factor of western cave life. But any careful searching in the future in any of the bigger western cave systems should uncover some more important finds in the field of cave biology."<sup>11</sup>

After high school, Stewart attended St. Ambrose College in his home town for two years, where he majored in biology and continued to correspond with Tom Barr. His fascination with cave life prompted him to apply to Barr for an undergraduate research position at the University of Kentucky, and so Peck came to Kentucky for his junior and senior years. During the summers he traveled with Barr on field trips to southern Kentucky, seeking new caves to investigate for beetle populations and to collect specimens of what they found. Barr had a long-term project in progress at Mammoth Cave, and they would go there for extended weekends several times each year. Stewart also helped Wayne Davis with bat banding at Carter Caves State Park.<sup>12</sup>

Consulting his journals for this account, Stewart recorded five cave visits to Kentucky caves in 1962, but only two in Bell County in 1963 because, during that summer, he was a Park Ranger Naturalist at Lava Beds National Monument in California, mapping lava tube caves. In 1964, however, he was extremely busy in the Kentucky underground, apparently caving almost full time during the summer months and recording 77 cave trips. Among the caves he investigated while a UK student, 1962-1964, were a half-dozen caves in Russell County; several in Todd County, including Glovers and Cool Spring; Thornhill in Breckinridge County; several caves in Carter County; about ten caves in Wayne County; numerous caves in Rockcastle, among them Climax, Great Saltpetre, Sinks of the Roundstone, Teamers, Pine Hill, Crooked Creek Ice, Devault, Green Hill School; Bowmans Saltpetre and John Rogers in Jackson; Sloans Valley in Pulaski; Slacks in Scott County; Jones in Clark County; Phelps, Joyland and Russell Caves in Fayette County; Clifton and Webbers in Woodford; as well as caves in other areas of the state. Stewart graduated from UK in 1964 and went on to pursue graduate studies elsewhere. He has continued his membership in the NSS to the present day.<sup>13</sup>

Raymond (Ray) L. McAdams grew up in Battle Creek, Michigan, and became fascinated by caves



*Ray McAdams with survey tape in Conduit Cave, Jessamine County, ca. 1964. Andrews photo, author's collection.*

while still very young. He graduated from Lakeview High School in 1955 and Western Michigan University in 1959. At Western, an astronomy paper Ray had written was submitted by a faculty member, without his knowledge, to the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, which won him a fellowship at the University of Michigan. While pursuing a graduate degree in biology at the University of Michigan, Ray took a course that stimulated this early interest and he traveled down to southern Indiana to visit some of the caves in that region, joining the NSS in 1960. With Master's in hand, Ray came to Lexington and the University of Kentucky to pursue a biology doctorate under the direction of Tom Barr. Although his dissertation topic focused on planaria, he was also very interested in bats. He was an active caver who was as interested in exploration as he was in the life of caves. Ray recalls exploring Climax Cave and Great Saltpetre in Rockcastle County and Sloans Valley in Pulaski, as well as numerous Bluegrass caves. After leaving Lexington, he kept a map of Sloans on the wall of his office in Cincinnati.<sup>14</sup>

Oddly, his name does not appear on the 1962 BGG constitution, but he very clearly remembers

the process of establishing the grotto. During the early years, the BGG was naturally focused on local caves, and discovered that there were, indeed, caves beneath the campus of the University. One such cave was accessible through a manhole cover in the parking lot of the Funkhouser building, where the grotto held its monthly meetings. Ray recalls, “We didn't go inside when we were checking it out. The entrance was covered by a manhole cover, so we took the manhole cover off. You could be lowered by a rope into it. I could see down maybe twenty feet or so, and I was going to go down, but then I said, hold it, let's wait a minute. I lit a carbide light and lowered it, it got down about ten feet and the light went out and I thought, gee, that's unusual. So, I brought it up and I lit it again. We lowered it again, in about ten feet the light went out again. I said, okay, we're not checking this out at the moment.” In August, 1963, Ray received an appointment as instructor in biology at Transylvania University. During the summer of the following year, he took students from his biology course to visit a cave north of Versailles, in Woodford County, assisted by Bill Andrews. The students were shown how caves were mapped, introduced to the variety of life found in caves, and ingested a strong conservation message. The newspaper account noted that McAdams and Andrews were conducting a survey of caves in the Bluegrass region.<sup>15</sup>

Ray described helping Wayne Davis with an experiment on bat navigation in one of the caves at Carter Caves State Park. The researchers collected a number of bats, brought them out of the cave, and drove them away for some distance in a Volkswagen minibus they name the Batwagon. After stopping, the scientists covered the eyes of their test subjects with a solution of parlodion (cellulose nitrate) to temporarily glue their eyes shut. “We knew it was something that would not harm their eyes. When they had time, they would stop and scratch it off.” The minibus had a pop-up roof section, and after the bats had been blinded, they threw the bats out of the top of the vehicle and immediately drove back to the cave. Here they found that some of the bats had beat them back to the cave, and in short order most of the rest had returned, as well. They observed several of the bats engaged in removing the parlodion covering their eyes. The experiment demonstrated that bats did not need to depend upon visual clues to successfully navigate outdoors. Ray had hoped to, someday, be

able to apply this research to aid blind people, but chose a different career path that did not allow him to pursue this objective. He was unable to complete his doctorate at UK due to financial considerations, but has continued to explore caves and remains an NSS member in the present day.<sup>16</sup>

Unlike Peck and McAdams, Tom Haydon had little interest in speleological science; he was, instead, an avid cave explorer with a particular interest in vertical techniques for pits and shafts. Tom first began to explore caves as a youngster in eastern Kentucky, but really developed a passion for the sport while attending high school in Lexington and later the University of Kentucky. During college, Tom and some friends were exploring caves in the Lexington area, obtaining topographic maps from the University and plotting out where sinkholes were located, looking for new caves to visit. After joining the Blue Grass Grotto, he did most of his cave exploration with Bill and Doug Andrews, both of whom shared his passion for vertical caving. The Andrews brothers had inherited a little money, and could afford to buy Goldline and Perlon climbing ropes. Most of their climbing equipment was homemade, simply because they could not afford to buy gear from outfitters. Tom used a diaper harness made with army surplus webbing and sewn for him by a local shoe store. “We used steel carabiners with aluminum bars for rappelling, and some ascenders that were made in Europe. We made some short rope ladders, like



*Tom Haydon at far left in coveralls. Photo courtesy Tom Haydon, taken in an unknown cave near Lexington, circa 1963.*



twenty-five feet. We could hook a couple of them together. What we used were made out of ski rope and some aluminum bars that we got at the hardware store and drilled them up and made our own ladders that we could roll up into a fairly small ball. We had a few pitons and hardware store expansion bolts for technical climbs.” They began to visit the Red River Gorge for rock climbing, making ascents of Chimney Rock, Tower Rock, Courthouse Rock, and Raven Rock.<sup>17</sup>

Tom was a carbide caver, as most were during his era, and he and his caving companions went through a lot of it. He had an uncle that worked in a hardware store in Hazard who was able to get hundred-pound drums for them. Although he does not, after so many years, remember the names of most of the caves he visited, some can be identified from context. They discovered a cave that they called Dead Sheep Cave, the entrance in a sinkhole into which a lot of sheep carcasses had been thrown. This was very likely Meece Cave on Catnip Hill Road in Jessamine County, which I visited only a couple of years after Tom and found in the same pungent condition. It would also appear that he visited Crisman’s Cave in Jessamine County, for the *NSS News* inducted Tom into the “Turtle Club” (life saved by a hard hat) in 1962, reporting that he had



*John Holsinger (left) and John Cooper at the entrance to Showalter’s Cave, Virginia, on a collecting trip in May 1961, the onset of the Biological Survey of Virginia Caves” project. Banesteria 51 (2018), 62.*

been struck on the head and briefly stunned by a rock dislodged from above while standing on a ledge in the Jessamine Creek gorge. Although he never got down to southern Kentucky, he did sometimes visit caves outside the state. His favorite was Jewel Box Cave in Harrison County, Indiana, “the first time I’d ever seen a whole wall of gypsum flowers, or a whole ceiling full of soda straws.” After graduating UK in 1966, Tom moved to Ohio.<sup>18</sup>

For the other three persons whose names appear on the first BGG constitution, I have had little success in learning much about them, other than that they were all NSS members. According to NSS records, James Keith Blake joined the Pittsburg Grotto in 1948, at the age of 25, and became a life member of the NSS in the same year. The University of Kentucky has no record of Blake as a student. After leaving Kentucky, presumably in 1964, he moved to McDonald, Pennsylvania, and after 1987 was not heard from again by the Society, and died in Arizona in 2004. The remaining two students also provided a research challenge, but I was able to learn a little more about them. James A. Watson and Michael (Micki) S. Watson were a married couple who joined the NSS at exactly the same time, their NSS member numbers separated by a single digit, NSS 6282 and 6283, respectively. Both James and Micki were NSS members for only two years, 1962-1964. NSS records show that at first the two shared a duplex at 154A, Delmont Drive in Cardinal Valley, Lexington, but later separated and lived in two different residences. Both graduated from UK in 1963, Micki with “high distinction,” and she was also a member of Phi Beta Kappa.<sup>19</sup>

### 1963: The First Full Year

In October, 1963, John R. Holsinger (1934-2018), a graduate student in UK’s Department of Zoology, was elected as the chair of the Blue Grass Grotto. John was Barr’s first Ph.D. student, specializing in subterranean amphipods. He had extensive caving experience in Virginia before coming to Kentucky, having become a member of the VPI Caving Club in 1954 at the age of twenty. His obituary described him as “a speleologist in the broadest sense of the term—exploring, mapping, and cataloging caves; documenting geologic settings and processes; investigating water flow paths using tracer dyes; describing new species and

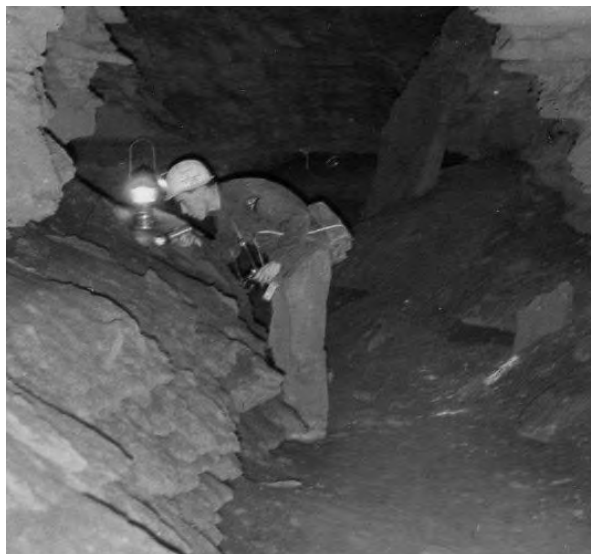


studying the biodiversity of cave life; and working to protect and conserve caves.” Stewart Peck was the vice-chair, and Micki Watson served as the secretary-treasurer of the grotto; annual dues were one dollar and the treasury contained a whopping sixteen dollars. The BGG had eighteen members, five of whom attended the 1963 NSS convention at Mountain Lake, Virginia. The annual report also made note of a field trip to Mammoth Cave, in association with the Institute of Speleology, and to the Carter Caves area.<sup>20</sup>

### 1964: Some New Blood

In the following year, 1964, the BGG annual report indicated a new body of officers, with Ray McAdams having been elected to the chair, Bill Andrews as his vice-chair, and Micki Watson filling the posts of secretary-treasurer. When Micki departed Lexington later that year, Russell (Rusty) M. Norton took over the position. Meetings were held in Room B-8 (in the basement) of the Funkhouser Biology Building on the UK campus; dues were still a bargain at one dollar per year. The grotto had sixteen members, all NSS members: Bill Andrews, Doug Andrews, Thomas C. Barr, Kenneth Batterson, Jake Boyer, Grady Campbell, Wayne H. Davis, Don Finley, John R. Holsinger, Mike Hornback, Robert A. Kuehne, Ray McAdams, Rusty Norton, Robert J. Reynolds, Marshall Smith, and Michael Yocum. In November, the grotto obtained a permanent address for receiving mail at PO Box 5001, University of Kentucky, Lexington.<sup>21</sup>

Bill Andrews, born in 1942, was a driving force who helped to shape the grotto during its formative years. As a youth, Bill was very involved in the Boy Scouts and became an avid outdoorsman. He participated in far more than local hiking and camping in Kentucky, typical of most Scouts, but went on National Park campouts in the Western states and elsewhere in the country. He later recalled for his son, Drew, an incident that occurred on one of these Scouting trips. When they arrived at their destination, the Scouts split up into teams, one group setting up the tents, one building a fire pit, another gathering wood. Bill was on the wood-gathering team, three or four boys, on this occasion. They heard a noise just off the trail, and then spotted two bear cubs. A moment later, they heard the mother bear on the other side of the trail, alarmed at finding themselves in the hazardous position of being between the mother and their cubs. The



*Bill Andrews collecting specimens in Clifton Cave, Woodford County, Kentucky, 1964. Andrews photo, author's collection.*

mother bear began chasing them down the trail. As they ran, the quick-witted Scouts unscrewed the bottoms of their flashlights and each took a fistful of the large D-cell batteries. Drew relates, “On a signal, they all stopped at once, turned and threw their D-cell batteries at this bear as hard as they could. And they nailed it, pop! Pop! Pop! She paused, like, what is that!” The boys ran off, and the bear did not follow.<sup>22</sup>

In his late teens, Bill and his identical twin brother Doug, became active in adventure sports such as scuba diving, rock climbing, and cave exploration. Bill and Doug graduated from Henry Clay High School in Lexington in June, 1960, and Bill enrolled at the University of Kentucky in September, studying biology under Tom Barr. He was in no hurry to complete his studies, and did not in fact graduate from the University until December 1968, with a BS in zoology. Bill Andrews and Tom Barr became good friends. Bill often accompanied the professor to assist in specimen collection, did quite a bit of collecting on his own for Barr over the years, and made biological collecting a priority for grotto members as they visited new caves.<sup>23</sup>

Bill led a grotto effort to explore regional caves, and made the first effort to put together a survey of Kentucky caves, creating a 3 by 5 index card for each cave he visited or heard about; this collection totaled about 800 caves by 1968, at which time he

entrusted the card file to me. Grotto caving trips during the early years focused mainly on the caves relatively near at hand in the Inner Bluegrass karst region. Bill purchased several sets of topographic maps for the region, circled every notable sinkhole and sinking stream shown, and attempted to visit as many as possible to determine if there was an associated cave. A fruitful line of investigation was provided by speaking to local residents. In those days there were still quite a few little mom-and-pop groceries scattered about in rural areas. These were places where the local “old-timers” would socialize, playing cards atop a flour barrel, in the winter gathered around a pot-bellied stove. They were generally friendly to cavers, and when asked if they knew of any caves in the vicinity, could often recall one or several. “Don’t you boys get lost in there, now,” they would say. The leads these old farmers provided were duly jotted down on one of the topo maps and, when investigated, often led to “discovery” of a new cave by the grotto.

Bill was also determined to map most of the significant caves in the Bluegrass, and many of these were first surveyed during 1963-1965. Among these were Jones Cave (2,700 feet) in 1963 in Clark County, which seems to be the first cave mapped by BGG; Russell Cave (5,200 feet), Crystal Cave (3,468 feet), and Phelps Cave (1,473 feet) in Fayette; Dry Cave (639 feet) and Conduit Cave (593 feet) in Jessamine; Slacks Cave (7,186 feet) in Scott; and Munday’s Landing Cave (14,256 feet), the longest cave of the Inner Bluegrass, Webber’s Cave (5,411 feet) and Clifton Cave (2,162 feet) in Woodford County. The first efforts at surveying were rather crude (such as Russell Cave), being compass and pace maps, but thereafter mapping was done more accurately by Brunton compass and steel tape.<sup>24</sup>

There was a minor scandal involving the departure of Micki Watson from the grotto and community. Micki and her husband apparently suffered marital troubles that resulted in their separation and her rather abrupt flight from Lexington. Rusty Norton recalled that, for the first few years, Micki was the only woman member of the BGG, and that several of the male members were “drooling” after her. According to Stewart Peck, she was last seen “riding behind someone on a motorcycle out of Lexington.” Both Norton and Peck believe that she took the entire grotto treasury with her, about \$80. It might be easy to visualize this



*Micki Watson. From Lexington Herald-Leader, December 19, 1962.*

as the Great Grotto Treasury Heist, but Stewart was of the opinion that, given the turmoil of her marital dissolution, Micki simply was unaware that she had the funds in her possession when she left.<sup>25</sup>

Rusty Norton went to high school in Oak Ridge Tennessee, where he started caving after his best friend’s brother took them to visit Norris Dam Cave and then joined the NSS. After graduating from high school in 1963, he was attracted to the University of Kentucky to study cave biology with Barr after seeing a notice for the Institute of Speleology in the *NSS News*. When he arrived at UK, Barr had just received a large research grant and threw a huge beer bash in celebration, where Rusty had his first brew ever. Although he joined the BGG and went to meetings, Rusty did not do much caving with grotto members. As he told me recently, “Mainly I was doing biology, not mapping or exploration.” Even so, he was a very active caver; as he recalls, he went caving with Tom Barr nearly every weekend. He estimates that he has visited more than 800 caves: “There would have been more but for the repeated work in the various rat holes in eastern and western Kentucky. I did attend the [grotto] meetings but most of my caving was with Holsinger, [Terry] Marsh, and Barr doing biospeleology.” After receiving his undergraduate degree from UK in



*Rusty Norton collecting in Blowing Cave, Wayne County, Kentucky, ca. 1965. Andrews photo, author's collection.*

1967, Rusty went to Yale in order to study cave biology with Thomas Poulson for his Masters.<sup>26</sup>

### **1965: The Kentucky Caver is Born**

The April elections in 1965 provided new officers for the grotto, headed by Gerald Tuggle as chair; at the time, Gerald was a sophomore at Transylvania majoring in biology. Bill Andrews was re-elected as vice-chair, and Mike Hornback as the secretary-treasurer. Ray McAdams was the trip coordinator. Dues remained the same, but membership had increased to twenty-five NSS members and one non-member. The annual report noted that "Field trips are taken to the caves in our area for the purposes of mapping, collecting [biological], and photographing. Usually at least one per weekend." The report also noted that several grotto members were beginning a compilation of the caves of the Inner Bluegrass region of the state, one of several efforts that took place over the next two decades to initiate a Kentucky Cave Survey. On May 12, grotto members who were experienced in vertical caving techniques (and this certainly would have included Bill Andrews, possibly Doug as well) took novices on an all-day excursion to Natural Bridge State Park, where they spent seven hours

instructing rappelling and prusiking. Also in May, Tuggle wrote an annoyed letter to John S. Petrie of the NSS to inform him that, in reading the NSS by-laws, he discovered that non-NSS members were not eligible for membership in local non-student grottoes. Gerald felt that this would limit the growth of grottos, and suggested that it might perhaps be better to reverse the policy so that grotto membership was, instead, a prerequisite for NSS membership. Petrie's response, if any, was not available.<sup>27</sup>

Gerald Lee Tuggle was a Lexington native, born in February 1946, and attended Lexington Junior



*Gerald Tuggle ascending from an unidentified cave. Andrews photo, author's collection.*

and Henry Clay High School. He was a gifted student, who consistently was listed on the honor roll at both schools and became a member of the National Honor Society. At Lexington Junior, he was president of the science club. While a senior at Henry Clay in 1963, he was selected by Transylvania University for a scholarship to that institution. In the fall of 1964, he was invited by his brother to come spend the season with him in Mexico, where he was doing archaeological research sponsored by the University of Arizona, and received permission from Transylvania to sit out the semester. During his four months in Mexico, Gerald not only visited archaeological sites but also took time to investigate some of the famous semi-commercial caves of the region, Garcia Caves and the Caverns of Cacahuamilpa. The first is located in the northern Mexico state of Nuevo León, the second far to the south, past Mexico City, in the state of Guerrero. Both caves featured large chambers and several miles of passage. He wrote about these excursions for the first issue of the *Kentucky Caver* in June 1965. These were nothing like commercial tours in the United States, he noted.

The guided tours offered, during weekdays for most of the year, generally have so few people that it was almost like a grotto trip at home. The guides were friendly and in no particular hurry to push tourists through the cave; in the case of Cacahuamilpa, at the end of the two-mile guided tour inviting their charges to continue exploring on their own. Back in Lexington early in 1965, Gerald joined the Blue Grass Grotto and was elected grotto chair in the April election.<sup>28</sup>

The year 1965 was memorable for inauguration of *The Kentucky Caver*, edited by Gerald Tuggle and printed at Transylvania University, who worked at the print shop there from 1963-1966 and received permission from his supervisor. "I got this idea that I would start this little publication so I could put some of the stuff in writing that we were doing," he recalled. "I wrote it, I printed it, I distributed it." The three issues of the *Kentucky Caver* produced by Tuggle were simply amazing for their quality. This was an era when photocopying was still in its infancy, and most grotto newsletters were reproduced by mimeograph stencils, which did not allow for complex graphics, let alone photographs.



*Slacks Cave, Scott County, photo used as the cover image for the second issue of The Kentucky Caver.*



Instead, the 1965 *Caver* was produced using offset printing, which allowed for high-quality photographs to appear on the front and back covers and to accompany articles within the issue. A variety of well-illustrated material appeared in these issues, cave reports and cave maps, articles on spelean history, conservation, archaeology, paleontology, vertical techniques and tips, and many cartoons. Even the faculty members contributed; Robert Kuehne provided an article on “Cave Fishes in Kentucky” for the second issue. The cave maps indicated that BGG cavers were focusing on the major caves of the Bluegrass region near Lexington. Although the composition of survey parties varied, Bill Andrews was the survey captain for all of these, and most active participants with Bill were Ray McAdams and Gerald Tuggle. All the featured caves had been mapped during the previous year. The first issue of the *Caver*, June 1965, contained a map and report on Webber’s Cave in Woodford County, with 5,411 feet surveyed. The next issue, September, showcased a survey of 7,040 feet in Bryant’s Cave, better known today as Slack’s Cave, in Scott County. Micki Watson participated in the mapping of this cave. The final issue of 1965, for December, featured Phelps Cave in Fayette County, 1,473 feet long. The quality of Tuggle’s *Kentucky Caver* would not be again equaled for more than thirty years.<sup>29</sup>

### 1966: A Geology Professor Joins the Grotto

As a result of some snafu, the 1966 BGG annual report was not received by the NSS office in that year. Jean Gurnee, Chair of the Internal Organization Committee, wrote separate letters to Bill Andrews and Elizabeth Binker Glock (1946-2016) in the autumn of 1967 to inform them of the omission. Binker wrote back, stating that “No one in the grotto will admit to being secretary, but all say that two separate sets of the 1966 information have been sent in at various times...I’ll have them to you by the first of the year, but don’t hold your breath. This grotto is even more slow-moving than most, and I’m too new to the bunch to be able to fill ‘em in myself.” The NSS office has two annual reports for 1966 on file, both signed by Bill Andrews, with one dated April 31, 1966 and the other dated December 10, 1967. The 1966 grotto elections were held in March, with Bill returning to the chair position with Gerald Tuggle as vice-chair and continuing as editor. Mike Hornback continued

to fill the role of secretary-treasurer. Dues remained a dollar per year, and the grotto treasury contained twenty dollars.<sup>30</sup>

The *Kentucky Caver* was noted as a quarterly publication, but no issues are known to exist from 1966, and the April version of the annual report stated there was “doubt as to continuation of this.” The Kentucky Cave Survey was the grotto project, with interested members “attempting to complete a survey of caves of the Inner Bluegrass this summer.” Conservation was another continuing grotto project. The December version of the report noted that “Several Bluegrass area caves now closed. Caving in Bluegrass area of Ky & over Ky as a whole is increasing rapidly. Bluegrass Grotto pledges to increase conservation efforts accordingly. More posters are now being put out to improve caver-cave owner relations.”<sup>31</sup>

The 1965 report had not provided a membership list, but the two report versions for 1966 showed a considerable turnover in grotto membership since 1964, with many departures and a lot of new faces. Long-term members still included Bill and Doug Andrews, Tom Barr, Don Finley, Mike Hornback, Ray McAdams, Rusty Norton, and Mike Yocum. Two of the founding members, Wayne H. Davis and Robert A. Kuehne, were absent from the roster in this year; Kuehne would be listed as a member again in 1968 but not afterward. Both scientists continued to teach at UK for many years until retirement; quite possibly each felt that their participation was no longer necessary since the BGG was apparently doing well. John R. Holsinger, who served as grotto president in 1963, earned his doctorate in 1967 and went on to teach first at East Tennessee State University and then Old Dominion, where he spent most of his professorial career. New members for the year included Charlie Bishop, John DeBoer, Ed Dodson, Bill Eidson, Frank Reid, Richard Griffith, John Goodloe, Carl McGee, and Bob Zeigenfuse, and the arrival of a new karst scientist, John Thrailkill (1930-2014), who taught in UK’s Department of Geology until his retirement in 1992.<sup>32</sup>

Thrailkill was born in California in 1930 and grew up in Yuma, Arizona, where, as a youth, he participated in Scouting and was ranked as a top marksman in the American Legion Junior Rifle Club. Like Barr (NSS 892), Thrailkill (NSS 876) was one of the old-time NSS members, who joined the Society in December, 1947, at the age of



*Caricature of Thrailkill by Stephen Greb, Kentucky Geological Survey. Courtesy of the artist.*

seventeen. He apparently became interested in caves and karst at this time, and was an active member of the Colorado Grotto in Denver while attending the University of Colorado. During his time in Colorado, he ascended thirteen of the state's mountain peaks over 14,000 feet. In 1953, he published a short article on Manhole Cave in the *Colorado Grotto News and Notes*. Manhole Cave is a relatively shallow pit cave located on public land in the Guadalupe Mountains of southeastern New Mexico, half a mile north of the boundary of Carlsbad Caverns National Park, and is thought by many regional cavers to potentially be a second entrance to Lechuguilla Cave. In 1952, John married Lavine K. Zauche of Dubuque, Iowa. Lavine came to share her husband's interest in caves and joined the NSS during the following year (NSS 2380), often accompanying him on cave visits. John graduated from UC with a B.S. in geology and

began graduate study at the same institution. His Master's thesis concerned Fulford Cave in Eagle County, Colorado. When he relocated to the East to continue graduate work at Princeton University, he focused upon the carbonate mineralogy of Carlsbad, and received his Ph.D. in 1965. The authority on cave minerals, Carol A. Hill, commented on his dissertation and subsequent work on the subject, stating "Thrailkill went beyond the mainly descriptive efforts of past workers. He identified a number of carbonate minerals by x-ray diffraction, discussed the stability of carbonate minerals in a cave environment where the effect of the magnesium ion is pronounced, and described in specific terms the mode of popcorn deposition. Thrailkill's dissertation remains the definitive work on the carbonate mineralogy of Carlsbad Cavern."<sup>33</sup>

After arriving at the University of Kentucky, he was a mentor to many students with an interest in karst geology and hydrology, and served as chair of the Department of Geology for several years. Numbered among his students were many who would become noted figures in the discipline, including Charles (Chuck) Taylor (today with the U.S. Geological Survey); Frank Ettensohn (today with the Kentucky Geological Survey); Douglas R. Gouzie (today Professor of Geology at Missouri State University); and Bridget Scanlon, who won numerous national and international awards for her groundwater research at the Texas Bureau of Geology. Although Thrailkill did not participate actively in grotto affairs, he paid his dues regularly and, as Chuck Taylor noted, "Thrailkill definitely put UK on the map in karst research. His paper, 'Chemical and Hydrologic Factors in the Excavation of Limestone Caves' is considered to be one of the seminal papers on karst hydrogeology, and is still frequently cited. John was very quantitatively oriented and established the first classes at UK devoted to hydrogeology, low-temperature geochemistry, and geostatistical methods." During the 1970s and early 1980s, karst research was beginning to really flourish in the United States and, as Chuck observed, "If you were a grad student who wanted to specialize in that area it was pretty much either Penn State (Will White), SUNY-Oneonta (Art Palmer), or [Thrailkill at] UK." Lavine Thrailkill also had an important role at the University, running the Computing Center for many years.<sup>34</sup>

In 1976, Thraikill initiated a grant-funded long-term research program to investigate the karst systems of the Inner Bluegrass, directing a number of graduate students who carried out dye-tracing projects to delineate the boundaries of karst basins in the region. Larry Spangler recalled, “I intentionally applied to UK because he was there and had received funding for a new program in Inner Bluegrass karst hydrology, which involved lots of dye tracing, a subject I was very interested in.” Royal Spring at Georgetown, the largest spring in the Inner Bluegrass, was the primary focus of his research and he was able to successfully delineate the basin boundaries. A resident of Utah today, Larry remains an active caver and member of the NSS. Another Thraikill student who studied Inner Bluegrass karst was William “Duke” Hopper, whose 1985 UK geological thesis project involved the karst hydrology of Mercer and Boyle counties and who has been a BGG member for many years. Jim Currens, one of the BGG old-timers, studied under Thraikill as an undergraduate but went to Eastern Kentucky University for graduate studies

after receiving his degree in Geology from UK in 1973.<sup>35</sup>

Although never a grad student in geology, I took a few undergraduate courses from Thraikill in the early 1970s, and in the summer of 1971, I took a specimen of an unusual speleothem to him for examination. While reconnoitering a previously unknown cave in Rockcastle County with Jim Currens, we observed cave pearls of various sizes in a low, broad passage occupied by shallow rimstone pools a short distance inside the cave. The largest of these pearls measured approximately 20 cm in diameter, extraordinarily large, and from my later research, the largest to be found in the US. I photographed several of these pearls, using a 25-cent piece for scale, and collected one specimen, 9 cm in diameter, which I delivered to John Thraikill. Unknown to me at the time, Thraikill had a particular interest in such speleothems. He conducted an analysis of the pearl, including thin sections, and his research was subsequently published in a 1976 paper. Chuck Taylor recalls that Thraikill “had a huge collection of cave pearls from



*Thraikill (far left) at the entrance to Russell Cave in Fayette County, 1980. To his left are his students Larry Spangler, Gary O'Dell (kneeling), Phil Byrd, and Lance Barron.*

all over the place that he kept locked in cabinets in his research lab in the Surge building.” I have been making inquiries of the UK geology faculty, but no one seems to know what happened to Thrailkill’s pearl collection.<sup>36</sup>

Charles S. “Charlie” Bishop soon became one of the leading members of the BGG, a very active caver and climber who remains involved with the grotto to the present day. He grew up on a farm in eastern Bourbon County, Kentucky, and when Charlie was in the ninth or tenth grade at Bourbon County High School, his parents took him to Mammoth Cave, where they took the all-day tour and were able to see a great deal of the cave. Charlie was impressed by the size of the cave and some of the history related by the guides. As a senior in high school, he was given the assignment to write a term paper on a subject of his choice, but could not, at first, think of anything to write about. As he flipped through an encyclopedia in search of inspiration, one volume opened to an entry on Mammoth Cave; remembering how much he had enjoyed his visit there, he decided to write about caves. During his research on the subject, Charlie came across a mention of the National Speleological Society and wrote to them for a membership application. The Society sent him an application along with a list of grottoes in Kentucky. Because the Blue Grass Grotto was the closest to his home, he started to attend meetings and joined the grotto during the fall of 1966.<sup>37</sup>

Charlie’s first caving trip with the grotto was, as he recalls, probably to Climax Cave in Rockcastle County. At that time, BGG cavers were beginning to investigate caves in Rockcastle and Pulaski counties as well as those in the Bluegrass region. Bill Andrews and John Goodloe took Charlie on his first caving trips, and he learned vertical techniques at training sessions provided by the BGG and those held jointly by the BGG and the Cumberland Climbers, the latter being a statewide organization of rock climbers that was active from about 1968-1975. Charlie became an avid caver in short order. Jerry Carpenter, a UK graduate student under Barr who joined the grotto in 1969, recalled, “In June of 1969 Charlie Bishop went with me to Illinois and Missouri to collect cave planarians; sometimes Charlie became frustrated when I wanted to leave remarkably impressive caves soon after collecting planarians, instead of taking more time to explore the large inviting cave passages.” In 1968, Charlie



*Charlie Bishop on ascent at Angel Falls, located in Jessamine County, Kentucky south of Nicholasville. Photo by Bill Rogers, ca. 1968 or 1969.*

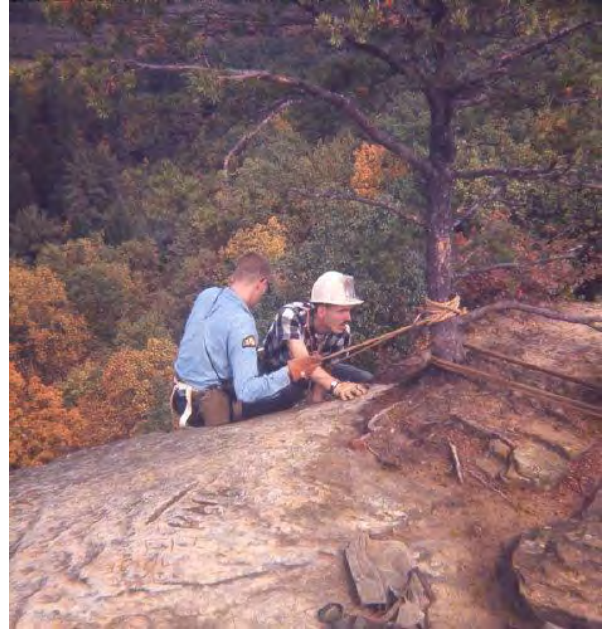
was invited by the legendary Sara Corrie to join the James Cave project in Edmonson County, Kentucky, and became increasingly involved in the exploration and survey of this system, soon partnered with new grotto member Cat Hayden.<sup>38</sup>

Charlie and Cat also began a survey of Teamers Cave in Rockcastle County in March, 1970. At about this time, they had made contact with others who had become interested in this region, members of the Greater Cincinnati Grotto and Tom Cottrell of Dayton Underground Grotto, and were exchanging information. Since Teamers had not yet been mapped, these contacts prompted them to undertake this cave as a project. He recalls, “This was our very first mapping effort, with the result being the map which is not as detailed or precise as today’s standards.” The final version of the map was drafted in 1972. In December of that year, Charlie



graduated from the University of Kentucky with a degree in civil engineering.<sup>39</sup>

Frank S. Reid (1946-1998) was an electrical genius and inventor who could repair almost anything electronic or cobble together a variety of gadgets from whatever parts he carried around in his car. He was one of the pioneers in the use of magnetic induction radio to locate subterranean voids, and whenever cavers hoped to determine the location of a cave passage beneath the surface, Frank gladly volunteered his services. He was born and raised in Louisville, Kentucky, and came to Lexington in 1963 to attend the University of Kentucky. He graduated in December 1968 with a degree in electrical engineering, of course. He joined the BGG in March, 1966, soon after arriving (NSS 9086). I have been unable to discover much about his early life or how he came to become interested in cave exploration. Hugh Blanchard stated that Frank began caving in Kentucky in 1961, at which time he would have been fifteen years old. Frank frequently led or participated in the monthly grotto field trips to various caves or for climbing practice. He was the leader on my very first trip to Sloans Valley Cave as a neophyte in 1968, entering through the Garbage Pit entrance (now the Crockett entrance, recently acquired by the Rockcastle Karst Conservancy). Just before entering the cave, I was mortified to discover that I had left my carbide lamp at home, and had no light to guide me through the cave. Frank kindly lent me a Coleman lantern so that I was able to participate, although navigating climbs and crawlways with a gas lantern proved to be quite a challenging experience.<sup>40</sup>



*Charlie Bishop (left) and Frank Reid, leaders of a vertical training session at Natural Bridge, Kentucky, September 1968. Photo by Gary O'Dell. The little tree clinging to the rock was the only tie-off place on top of the bridge.*

He was a very private person, Cat Bishop remembers, usually very quiet, but had a lot of friends scattered across the country: “He like to sit on the edge of a group and very much enjoyed just watching and listening.” Frank left Lexington in early 1969 and relocated in Bloomington, Indiana, nestled amidst the southern Indiana karst region, where he worked for Indiana University, designing and building specialized research equipment for the

faculty. He became very well-known among Indiana cavers while maintaining contacts with his Kentucky friends. He was actively involved in the exploration and survey trips of the James Cave project in Edmonson County, Kentucky, for many years, and always brought his guitar and sang caving songs at the evening campfires. Dick Blentz’s barn on his property near Bloomington was a popular caver hangout where many people first became acquainted with Frank Reid. One caver who first met Frank at the 1992 NSS



*Frank entertaining campfire companions in 1973. Photo: Cat Bishop.*

Convention in Indiana was “impressed with the wide range of a person who seemed equally at home with a beer in one hand and a guitar in another, or promoting some great scheme involving field telephones or artificial entrance enlargement (“Better Caving through Chemistry”). In 1985, he was one of the founding members of the NSS’s Communications and Electronics section, and the primary editor of the *Speleonics* publication.<sup>41</sup>

Humor was Frank’s trademark, definitely off-beat and first evident in the issues of the *Kentucky Caver* that he edited during 1967 and 1968. Joe Giddens, who shared Frank’s interests in things electronic, recalled that “His ability to think out-of-the-box was EXTREMELY WAY-out-the-box and even the most serious subject was game for some REID humor.” Starting in 1983, Frank began to publish a number of pamphlets that spoofed militarism, among them a parody of *Soldier of Fortune* (a magazine for mercenaries) that he called *Caver of Fortune*, and his famous *Tricks* series. The latter booklets started with *Tricks, Dirty*, and went on through *Awful, Nasty, Horrid, Rotten, Wicked, and Evil*, as people kept sending him more material, before ending in 1995. Cat Bishop still has a few of these issues, and notes that “A paragraph in the front of each book stresses that the contents are ideas only, and it is recommended that readers should NOT actually do the tricks that are described, though they are all meant to cause no harm, only confusion, to the mark.” Most people probably became acquainted with Frank’s humor through the many ballads he wrote and sang at various caver gatherings. These were parodies of popular songs, playing them on his guitar with new lyrics he had composed, usually, but not always, caver-themed. These included “The Cover of the NSS News (as opposed to the cover of the *Rolling Stone*); “Mama, Don’t Let Your Babies Grow Up to Be Cavers” (rather than cowboys!); and “On the Rope Again,” parodying Willie Nelson. The first verse of the latter runs like this:

On the rope again.

Just can't wait to get on the rope again.

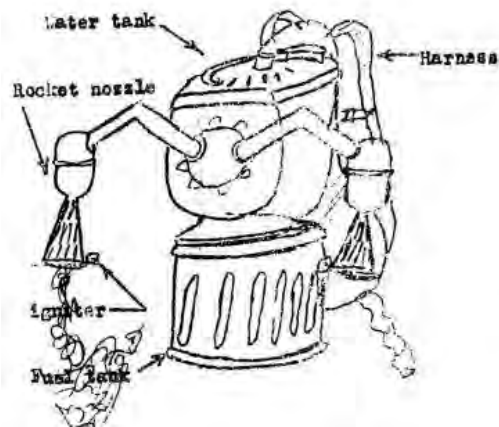
The life I love is going caving with my friends,  
And I can't wait to get on the rope again.<sup>42</sup>

### 1967: Dave Beiter Makes an Impression

The grotto’s annual report for 1967 was submitted in December of that year. In the September elections, Bill Andrews continued as

chair, seconded by John Goodloe in the vice-chair’s seat. Mike Hornback served as secretary-treasurer until September, when he was succeeded in that position by John DeBoer. The grotto was thriving at this time, with a body of “twenty-plus” NSS members and twenty or more non-member “accompaniers.” The report mentioned a long list of grotto projects, which included assistance to the Institute of Speleology when and wherever possible; assisting the Carnegie Institute with paleontological excavations at Welch Cave in Woodford County, which had yielded dire wolf and peccary skulls; biological collecting in all caves visited; continuing the Kentucky Cave Survey in the Bluegrass sector; gating one Bluegrass cave (unspecified); and distributing conservation posters to cave owners. In an apparently new policy, all members were now being required to learn ropework in climbing outings to the Red River Gorge area (except, the report noted, Drs. Barr, Cooper, and Thraillkill).<sup>43</sup>

The *Kentucky Caver* returned to publication in 1967 after a two-year hiatus, jointly edited by Frank Reid and Ed Dodson. Mimeographed in purple ink, the quality of the single issue was very poor in comparison to the 1965 *Caver*, but was heavy with Frank’s offbeat humor and was a welcome sight to BGG cavers. In this issue, for example, Frank offered cavers an alternative to traditional ropework with the backpack rocket, powered by carbide and water, that “makes rope obsolete!” This amazing invention could be used for lighting, cooking, and quick getaways from unfriendly cave owners. “Just think how cool it will look,” he observed, “when your whole grotto flies in formation at the convention!”



Frank's carbide-powered backpack rocket

The membership roster was similar to that of the previous year, with a few significant additions, notably Dave Beiter, John Cooper, Wini Mastin, Gary O'Dell, Bill Rogers, and Ron Stokely. Dave Beiter (1944-2003), originally a New York caver, was certainly one of the more eccentric cavers I have known, which is saying something since obviously any group of people that likes to spend a great deal of time crawling in mud underground is perhaps just a little off kilter. Eccentricity is often a mark of highly intelligent people, and all who have known Dave would readily acknowledge that he was a brilliant, if difficult, man. Dave graduated with honors in 1961 from Mechanicville High School, New York, where he had received the science prize on three occasions. In the fall of that year, Dave enrolled at Union College in Schenectady on a scholarship, majoring in chemistry. Dave was a legendary figure among New York cavers, not so much for his speleological contributions – although he was involved in exploring and surveying a number of caves, including McFails, Surprise, Skull, and the Garden of Eden – but for his often-bizarre behavior.<sup>44</sup>

About five years ago, planning to write a Beiter biography someday, I contacted some cavers in New York, Robert Addis and Chuck Porter, who knew Dave. We exchanged several communications by email, and I was given access to the archives of the *Northeastern Caver*, which had featured several articles reminiscing about Dave after his demise in 2003. I learned that, no surprise, the New York Beiter was pretty much the same as the Kentucky Beiter. Among the many things they agreed upon was that Dave was one of the “cheapest” persons they had ever encountered. Porter recalled, “Dave had only one set of clothes, which he wore both for caving and around town. They were spotted with hand-sewn patches of different-colored fabrics.” He spent a lot of time hanging around with the Rensselaer Outing Club, whose members did a lot of cave exploration, where he was welcomed for his wealth of caving stories. “They wanted to hear his stories and new discoveries, they wanted to be asked to go caving with Dave,” Addis remembered, “but on their limited food budget they couldn’t afford to keep Dave.” Dave was a great moocher. He would wander into the club’s kitchen and start eating whatever was handy, including, one time, an entire loaf of bread. Not wanting to offend Dave, the club members decided that pancakes made from water

were the cheapest food they could offer him, so whenever he came over, they fed him pancakes. He kept a huge file of index cards recording the lowest prices for items in regional grocery stores and plotted the locations on a map to determine the shortest possible route to visit the various stores for his purchases. When the weather warmed in spring each year, Dave would make rounds of several caves picking up discarded gear, lamps, ropes, vertical gear, even helmets. Skull was the most fruitful, and he would revisit caves as the ice slowly melted in different entrances, “much like a gardener watching his frozen plot, ready to plant an early garden.”<sup>45</sup>

Dave joined the NSS in October, 1966 (NSS 9523), and maintained his membership for the rest of his life. His largest project in New York was surveying Skull Cave in Albany County, part of the Knox-Skull Cave system. This cave has been closed for some time, but in New York is exceeded in length only by McFails Cave. Dave often tended to be a solo caver, in New York and here in Kentucky, perfectly content to be alone in the cave environment. His multi-day solo trips into Skull Cave were legendary among New York cavers, where he brought in food and a sleeping bag and made emergency stashes of food, water, carbide, and other supplies throughout the sections of the cave he was working. “How he got this stuff through 1,800 feet of low, wet crawl in Passage A is beyond me,” Chuck Porter marveled, “but there are consistent reports of cavers finding his stashes way back in remote places like the big room in Passage F.” Dave carried out solo surveys in the Sloans Valley system, Kentucky, on many occasions, and when he moved to Wayne County, he explored the caves of the region in the same manner.<sup>46</sup>

Dave’s whole life was about caving; there was little else that mattered much to him. “Dave had trouble getting cavers to continually go on hard-charging trips with him because he caved day or night, any day, most days,” Addis recalled. “Most people had studies, a job, or a life to go to and couldn’t keep up with him. Yet they wanted to keep in touch with The Legend.” Dave was also well-known in both states for a tendency to sort out novices with little fortitude or commitment from those with the potential to make good cavers. “Dave thought Skull was the perfect first cave for a strong beginner,” Bob Addis told me. “His legendary ten-to-sixteen-hour trips would kick their butts, and he



claimed only the real cavers came back!” This was also his attitude for novice Kentucky cavers, which I witnessed on several grotto trips. If a person did not appear to have the potential to be a good caver, Dave had no patience with them, and probably drove away a few who might, in time, have been valuable additions to the BGG. He often took pleasure in the discomfiture he produced in new cavers by plucking cave crickets off the wall and popping them into his mouth, crunching down on the juicy part and discarding the back legs. Sometimes, he could be a real jerk. And sometimes not. In 1970, my first wife, Kitty, accompanied Dave and me on her very first caving trip, down the Post Office Entrance to the Paradise section and back again, the same way. Being a complete novice, and not physically fit, she had a great deal of difficulty, and Dave was kind and considerate, helping her through the toughest climbs whenever I was not in a position to assist her.<sup>47</sup>

During his year or so in New York, and the entire time he lived in Kentucky, Dave never had to hold down a job. On the death of a relative (not one of his parents), Dave inherited about \$50,000, which he parlayed up to about \$150,000 by shrewd investing. Cliff Forman, another one of the New York cavers who knew Dave, told Bob Addis that Dave used the logic of Boolean algebra to make his investments: “if I say this to that potential purchaser of my stock, he will do this and that guy will offer this.” In any case, Dave used a scientific approach to nearly everything he did in life, from manipulating his stock portfolio to deciding where to purchase groceries. In 1967, he bought a new, tan-colored Land Rover which became his trademark when he came to Kentucky in that year.<sup>48</sup>

Dave was a regular at grotto meetings, and went on many caving trips with members. For some reason, although I was only sixteen years old at the time, he and I became good friends after participating in a number of grotto cave trips together. Possibly, he thought I had potential and had not yet disappointed him. He lived in a ground-floor apartment at 114 East Third Street in Lexington. The first time I dropped by to visit him there he was busy cooking a mixture of gasoline and paraffin in a double boiler while the Pink Floyd album *Ummagumma* played in the background. I was spellbound by the obvious insanity of heating gasoline on the stove, but Dave explained how this mixture could be used to coat and waterproof the



*Dave Beiter in the Paradise section of Sloans Valley in March, 1968. Photo by Gary O'Dell.*

five-by-eight index cards he used for recording cave survey data. “Uh-huh,” I said, noncommittally.

In March, 1971, Dave married another caver, Josephine (Jo) Yankauskas (1941-2014), of Pennsylvania. Jo had joined the Philadelphia Grotto in 1970, the NSS in October of that year (NSS 12579), and quickly became one of the most active members, participating in many grotto trips and visiting caves in Kentucky and Tennessee. She met some Michigan cavers at an NSS event, possibly during the winter of 1970-1971, and came with them to Kentucky to explore the Sloans Valley system. Lou Simpson (Central Ohio Grotto) recalls, “When the Michigan cavers left, Jo stayed. Dave had a heater in his tent, so she stayed with Dave. Dave and Jo must have had a good time in that tent because she stayed with him in Lexington, Kentucky, and they eventually got married.” I recall the circumstances very well, because in March, Dave and Jo came to the Lexington apartment where I lived with my former wife, Kitty, and Dave asked, “Just how do you go about getting married, anyway?” Both Dave and Jo were actively involved with me in the early surveys of Goochland Cave in Rockcastle County.<sup>49</sup>



Dave and I spent a great deal of time together underground until he departed to partake of rural living in Wayne County, Kentucky, and he was a very good caver to be with. I had observed that Dave seemed to be most obnoxious when caving with a large group, but quite pleasant when caving with one or a few expert cavers. In 1968 or '69, he invited me to assist him with his master's thesis research in Cave Hollow, Lee County, his advisor being John Thraillkill. Cave Hollow was home to multiple caves that constitute a hydrologically connected system, as well as significant bat populations. We did a little surveying, collected water samples, and measured physical parameters, such as conductivity, in the field. In 1968, the NSS presented Dave with the Ralph W. Stone Award for his work in Cave Hollow. He also invited me to do a little surveying in Sloans Valley cave system, which at that time was just beginning to be explored in detail. During 1970-1971, he returned the favor by helping me with surveys in Goochland Cave, the beginning of my long-term Rockcastle County project. Dave taught me to survey systematically and accurately, and I continued to use his method in my later projects. When he carried out his extensive surveys in Sloans Valley from the autumn of 1969 through spring 1971, Dave recruited Bill Walden and Lou Simpson of the Central Ohio Grotto into the project, and taught them his survey method. With his groundwater chemistry project in Cave Hollow completed, Dave began doctoral research under Thraillkill. He never completed his Ph.D., because Dave and Thraillkill fell into a heated disagreement over the methodology, and Beiter departed the University and Lexington, purchasing land in cave-rich, rugged and remote Wayne County and assuming the lifestyle of a primitive rural farmer while exploring the caves of the region.<sup>50</sup>

John E. Cooper (1929-2015) came from his native Maryland to Lexington in 1966, enrolling at the University of Kentucky as a graduate student in zoology. His choice of university was due not only to the presence of Tom Barr, but at least in part, to his friendship with John Holsinger, who had come to study with Barr in 1963. Holsinger recalled first meeting Cooper in the early 1960s at a Baltimore Grotto meeting, where the two men hit it off splendidly and began caving together: "Later, John followed me to the University of Kentucky." A 1957 graduate of Johns Hopkins with a BA in biology, John already had a lengthy publication

record before he came to Kentucky that began in 1949. Although his research interests to this point in time had focused primarily on vertebrates, reptiles and amphibians, his faculty mentor and advisor was Dr. Barr, an invertebrate zoologist. This was probably due to Cooper's increasing interest in the aquatic life of caves as a consequence of beginning research in the biologically diverse Shelta Cave in Alabama during 1963.<sup>51</sup>

Although many of the students who pursued graduate degrees at the Institute of Speleology became cave explorers of necessity in order to carry out their research, and joined the NSS and the BGG for much the same reason, some few managed to combine a scientific interest with a passion for adventure in the underground environment. John Cooper, "Coop" to his friends, was exactly that kind of scientist-caver. His interest in reptiles and amphibians began when he was a teenager, and in 1947 he was elected president of the Junior Division of the Maryland Natural History Society. During the following year, only eighteen years old, he was appointed curator of the newly opened reptile house at the Druid Park Zoo, now known as the Maryland Zoo. Most of the snakes in the collection were collected by Cooper on an expedition to Georgia in company with a member of the Natural History Society. Within another year, the zoo housed more than 2,000 snakes of all kinds. In 1956, he set out on another expedition, this time off to Cuba where he observed and collected boas in the Cueva de Maja. He remained herpetology curator at the zoo for more than a dozen years longer, and graduated from Johns Hopkins with a degree in Biological Sciences in 1957. From 1957 through 1966, Cooper taught biology in Baltimore secondary schools and was a member of the evening faculty at Baltimore Junior College for part of that time. He left Baltimore during the summer of 1966, bound for graduate study in biology at the University of Kentucky under the celebrated Tom Barr.<sup>52</sup>

By 1955, Cooper was exploring caves in Maryland, Virginia and West Virginia and was a very active member of the Baltimore Grotto. He served as the editor of the grotto newsletter for many years, and contributed many articles on biological and other subjects. He joined the NSS in 1959 (NSS 4803) and, very active in the affairs of the Society, soon became one of the organization's luminaries. Cooper and John Holsinger began a biological survey of Virginia caves in 1961, the

beginning of a close and lasting friendship. Chair of the Virginia Region for three years, John Cooper was elected to the NSS Board of Governors in 1967 and as Executive Vice-President of the Society from 1969 to 1972. Beginning in 1967, he was a frequent contributor of commentary and articles in the *NSS News* and *Bulletin*. In 1965, he married Martha L. Risner, who, mentored by Tom Poulson, received an M.S. in biology from Yale the previous year and who would become an eminent cave biologist in her own right. The mutual affection between them was fostered underground, as both John and Martha began to conduct research together in 1963 in Shelta Cave, Alabama. Shortly after the wedding, Martha received a significant grant from the NSS to study sensory specialization in the crayfish of Shelta. The cave was a long-term project for the Coopers, holding their interest for many years. John was instrumental in persuading the NSS to purchase the cave because of its great biological significance, and served as chair of the Society's Shelta Cave Project. The two Coopers would co-author numerous articles in their field.<sup>53</sup>

John Cooper was a good fit for UK's Institute of Speleology, and completed his M.S. in biology under Barr in 1968, continuing with doctoral studies to receive his PhD in 1975. His 365-page dissertation concerned the diverse cave life in Shelta, with a focus on crayfish, and represented the culmination of many years of effort by the husband-and-wife Cooper research team. In 1970, John left Kentucky, his doctoral coursework complete and dissertation research well under way, to join the faculty of the Community College of Baltimore. He resigned from the college in 1974, and later that same year became the director of Research and Collections at the North Carolina State Museum of Natural History. John and Martha joined the Blue Grass Grotto in 1967 and maintained that membership until leaving for Baltimore. I did not know the Coopers very well, as they seldom attended grotto meetings; I met John on only one occasion, when I had some reason to visit the Institute of Speleology, and left with the impression of professionalism combined with considerable personal charm. Feltzer called him "a consummate gentleman and a knowledgeable scholar." John collaborated with BGG member Dave Beiter to identify and describe an isolated population of the southern cavefish, *Typhlichthys subterraneus*, located in Sloans Valley Cave far from any other

known locations. The cavefish was first observed on October 13, 1969; at this time Dave was beginning his surveys in Sloans, and I suspect that he spotted the fish and went to Cooper with this information. In 1967, John and Martha observed and collected a single specimen of a troglobitic cavefish in Shelta Cave which struck them as differing considerably from any other known cavefish. In collaboration with UK ichthyologist Robert A. Kuehne, the specimen was identified as an entirely new species which was subsequently named *Speoplatyrhinus poulsoni* after the Yale biospeleologist, Thomas R. Poulson. The assistance of both Poulson and Tom Barr were noted by the authors.<sup>54</sup>

John was larger than life in many ways. He was an expert cave diver, so necessary given his research specialty on aquatic cave life, and appeared in newspaper feature articles on this subject both in Maryland and Kentucky. In 1965, when John was with the Baltimore Grotto, the *Sun* described him as "a short, muscular man with a mustache, a goatee, and the air of an explorer. When he is not teaching biology at City College, he frequently is probing a dark, mysterious underground realm largely unknown to man. He is a cave diver, or specialist in exploring underwater caves, an absorbing but dangerous pursuit practiced by perhaps only three



John Cooper ca. 1969. *NSS News* (March, 1970).

dozen men in the country.” The paper noted that 35-year-old Cooper had dived to depths of ninety feet in caves, and was usually accompanied by non-diving members of the Baltimore Grotto, who provided assistance. Four years later, after John had relocated to Kentucky, a Danville paper described Cooper as a member of UK’s zoology faculty who was a cave diver with a secondary hobby of skydiving, “just as comfortable on occasional unsupported flights through space as he is diving deep into the sunless mysteries of an explored cave.” The article reported on John and Martha’s work studying cave shrimp and fish in Shelta Cave, where the typical cave work-day was twelve to fourteen hours spent underground.<sup>55</sup>

Cooper was a skilled biological illustrator, and his cartoons frequently won top honors at NSS convention salons. In his long and productive scientific career, he authored or co-authored more than 130 publications. Dan Smith, who was a friend of Cooper for fifty years, recalls that John wrote “many other stories, not of science, but of people, the cavers and their follies and fancies. Some of the funniest and most poignant you might ever read. When you caved with him it was pure adventure, and out right fun.” At one of the NSS Conventions in Texas (probably New Braunfels), John put “a bag of snakes under Holsinger’s bed in Texas, [later] wandering in after a howdy party through a city frog

pond escorted by the police. ‘I am a biologist’ John pleaded, ‘take me to my motel and I can prove it.’ Holsinger, still miffed by the snakes under the bed incident, replied to the officers at the door [when asked] ‘Sir, do you know this man’ Holsinger smiled smugly and said ‘never saw him before in my life’ and slammed the door. He could hear Cooper scream “NO!” before Holsinger reopened the door smiling like a Cheshire cat in his moment of revenge.”<sup>56</sup>

Wini Mastin (1934-2022), a lifelong resident of Nicholasville, was a pretty amazing person who soon became very active in grotto affairs. Wini was the youngest of six sisters. One of her older sisters, Bettye Lee Mastin, would become well known to Lexington residents as a staff writer on the *Herald-Leader*, who specialized in stories about the region’s historical heritage and buildings. Wini graduated high school in Nicholasville in 1951 and was briefly married. Divorced in 1954, she moved to Washington, D.C. and worked for the magazine of the Army Corps of Engineers, *Military Engineer*. In 1961, she read an article in the *New York Times* highlighting President Kennedy’s establishment of the Peace Corps. Wini later recalled, “It just seemed so glamorous to me. I loved to travel. And I thought, you get to travel for free? My office was a block from the White House, and the Peace Corps office was in Lafayette Park. So, one day on my lunch

hour, just trotted over there, and I’m going to join up. And I didn’t tell anybody, I just thought I’m going to write home and say, “Well, I’m off for Central America tomorrow.” Her hopes were crushed when the young man who interviewed her asked if she had a college degree. She did not, and he said, “Well, we can’t use you.” Disappointed, Wini went back to work and did not tell anyone.<sup>57</sup>



*Bill Andrews and Wini Mastin, ca. 1968. Photo by Bill Rogers.*



She came back to Kentucky in late 1967, and soon found another outlet for her boundless energy. Wini had been a Girl Scout as a youth, and enjoyed outdoor activities. She joined the Blue Grass Grotto almost immediately on her return, and became a member of the NSS in February, 1968 (NSS 10642). Wini was a delightful addition to the membership roster. Bill Rogers recalls “all the happy times I had with Wini while caving, practicing rope work and just being with her traveling to and from a cave or a rock-climbing outing. I remember her big smile and positive attitude. She was a very good caver and she was always up to taking on a big challenge in her caving or vertical work.” Wini participated in nearly every outing by the grotto, and became very close friends with Bill Andrews.<sup>58</sup>

This was founder Ray McAdams’ last full year in the BGG, for some time between December 1967 and June 1968 (these being the dates when the membership lists were compiled), he departed from Lexington and the grotto. Terry Marsh (born 1941) and his wife Laura were also new members; Terry had come to Lexington and the University of Kentucky to study under Tom Barr. When Terry was about eight years old, his family emigrated from Ontario to Dayton, Ohio, and they became American citizens. There was a natural history museum in Dayton, and when he was in the third grade, the museum director started a junior curators club that included an entomology course in the summer program. “I just ate that all up,” Terry recalls, “and that’s what led to my ending up with Tom Barr.” He continued with the program at the museum through his high school years. Many of the teenagers who had worked at the Dayton Museum of Natural History later went to Earlham College in Richmond, Indiana, where there also was a natural history museum on campus and biology was one of the more important undergraduate majors. Terry came to Earlham, and here he was introduced to caving and the life of caves. Some of the faculty were studying bats and other cave life, and there was a connection between them and Wayne Davis at Middlebury. Terry went on bat banding trips with Earlham researchers, and did a little caving with friends in southern Indiana, in the Bloomington area.<sup>59</sup>

Terry graduated with a biology degree, and went on to Oregon State University to obtain a Master’s in entomology with a minor in botany. After graduating, he wanted to come back to the Midwest



*Terry Marsh (center) with some of his students, January 1971. Courtesy Terry Marsh.*

to pursue doctoral studies. He learned of Tom Barr, who had recently founded the Institute of Speleology at UK, through the cave biology researchers at Earlham. “He was kind of a young star that had been successful in recruiting for the faculty...I was interested in insects. He was studying beetles in caves, and that sounded neat.” Terry and Laura Marsh came to Lexington in the fall of 1965, where he started out as a TA in zoology, his doctoral studies directed by Tom Barr. They both joined the NSS almost immediately, Terry (NSS 8776) in October and Laura (NSS 9203) shortly thereafter. As Terry put it, “When your advisor is the president [of the NSS], it’s pretty clear what you have to do.” BGG annual reports do not show Terry as a member until 1967. He recalls grotto meetings down in the basement of the Funkhouser building, generally attended by ten to fifteen people. After sixty years, he can no longer remember names of specific caves visited on BGG outings, but did remember a field trip to a cave in Woodford County that, from context, was certainly Munday’s Landing Cave, the largest of the Bluegrass region. “It had a drop at the very beginning of about ten or fifteen feet,” Terry



recalled. “And then you did a little kind of push over to the wall where there was a tunnel that went off the side, and then you could get off the rope and go on and explore the cave. As a Bluegrass cave, this thing in my memory was much bigger [than the others].” Terry had little or no experience in vertical caving, and the others in the group provided the necessary assistance. “They were very kind to me...they helped me get in a harness and get down to the cave. There was a whole bunch of us and we all just had a great time.”<sup>60</sup>

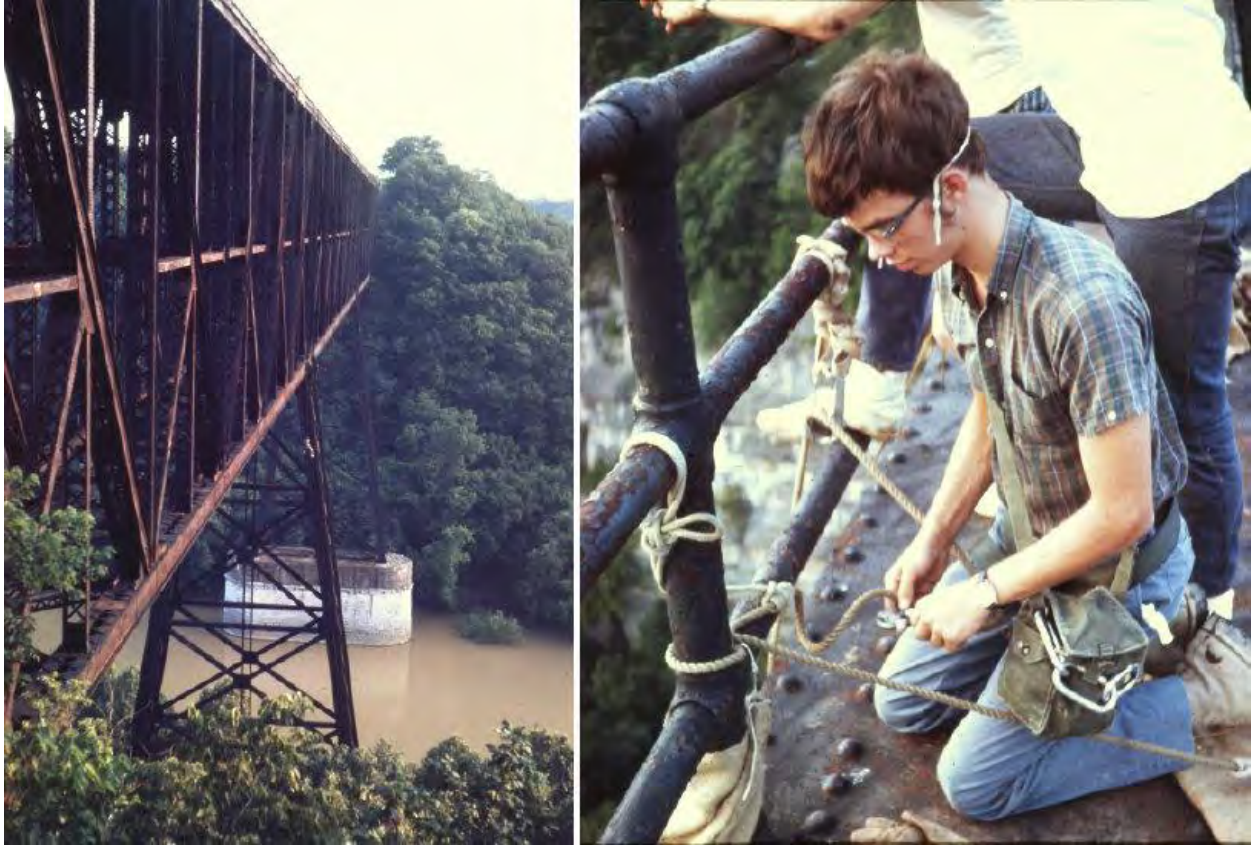
The behavior of *Darlingtonia kentuckensis*, the only species in this genus of cave beetle, was the subject of his doctoral research, and as it neared completion, one of his frequent companions of cave expeditions was Jerry Carpenter, who came to study with Barr in 1969. Jerry remembers that Terry “always drove us to the caves in his MGB, which contributed to the excitement of the trip.” Terry only remained in Lexington for four years, completing his dissertation on *Darlingtonia* and earning his PhD in the spring of 1969.<sup>61</sup>

This was the year - 1967 - that I joined the NSS and the Blue Grass Grotto. My interest in caves and caving was first sparked at that time, when I was fourteen years old, by Angelo George, a member of the Louisville Grotto. I was living in Lexington at the time. My parents and his were old friends, since they had lived next door to each other in Louisville in the late 1940s, before I was born. I had never met Angelo (to my recollection) before 1967, when my mother brought me with her to Louisville to visit the Georges. Although Angelo was nine years older, we hit it off immediately and I was fascinated by his stories about cave exploration. Noting my great interest, he suggested that I contact the Blue Grass Grotto when I got home, and gave me Tom Barr’s phone number. This first contact did not go particularly well. I called Dr. Barr shortly after returning home, and in my squeaky adolescent voice I inquired if he was the leader of the Blue Grass Grotto. “Never heard of them,” he grumped, and then I heard, <click>. Barr, as I learned, could be a bit curmudgeonly. Barr never went to grotto meetings and so I had little opportunity to make his acquaintance, but we got to know each other better later and worked on several projects together. In 1988, I accompanied Barr and Bill Andrews to central Tennessee to assist in an environmental impact investigation concerning the proposed building of a major government research project, a

superconducting supercollider, directly beneath the Snailshell Cave system. The supercollider ended up being built in Texas instead of Tennessee. Shortly before his death in 2011, Tom asked me to collect some beetles for him in Rockcastle County, but he passed away before I could do so.

Baffled by Barr’s reaction, I contacted Angelo once more, and this time he provided me with contact information for Bill Andrews, and from that time to the present I have been a member of the grotto. As I soon discovered, one of the best things about being a member of the grotto, and in general of associating with cavers, is that these people are willing to accept anyone who shares their interest in the underground. Here I was, only fourteen-going-on-fifteen and a complete novice, and even though the cavers of the Blue Grass Grotto were all of college age or older, they did not condescend but treated me as an equal. Although many grotto members had various projects they worked on, at least once a month the grotto hosted a trip that was ostensibly for novices but usually of interest to other members. I remember some of the first trips were to places like Clifton Cave in Woodford County, Sloans Valley in Pulaski County and to Cave Hollow in Lee County. I also participated in the required vertical training, which was totally fascinating to me. I first learned vertical techniques in training sessions at Natural Bridge and in Red River Gorge.

The equipment and methods of the day were rather crude compared to what was soon to be developed. Goldline was the rope of choice for many cavers in the grotto, a laid rope that was very stretchy (good for belaying, for that reason) but had a pronounced tendency to snarl when dropped into a shaft. Rappelling was done with a set of two aluminum carabiners with brake bars, connected by a single sturdy link of stout chain cut from a length at the local hardware store. This was attached to a diaper harness made from seat belt webbing with a locking “D” carabiner. For ascending, some few (like Dave Beiter) still used prusik knots, but nearly everyone used Jumars made of thin gray metal. I still have my original set, and when I compare the construction to those of more modern yellow Jumars (much thicker metal), I have to shudder as I think, I was on rope on these? Really? I was taught the “inchworm” or “frog” rigging method for ascending, and kept on using it this and Jumars for the rest of my caving career, even though it was



*Fifteen-year-old Gary O'Dell preparing for a 225-foot rappel off High Bridge in Jessamine County, Kentucky, in 1968. On this same trip, Wini Mastin became the first woman ever to drop the bridge. The practice is now prohibited by the railroad company. Photo by Cat Bishop.*

obvious that Gibbs were better. We dropped pits like Crisman's in Jessamine County (about 135 feet single drop) and in 1968 rappelled off High Bridge across the Kentucky River, about a 225-foot drop down to the roadway. I was young and thin, energetic enough to be able to inchworm my way back up in under fifteen minutes. On this same trip, Wini became the first woman ever to rappel from the bridge.

What an adventure my life had become! I never went out for any team sports once I reached high school, because I had come to believe that caving was the ultimate sport; the aim was not to score points and beat someone, but to put your life on the line to learn new things, to see things most people never would. It was highly satisfying to go underground knowing that you could depend upon the skills and common sense of the people around you to have the experiences of a lifetime.

Bill Rogers and Ron Stokley were good friends who joined the grotto at about the same time. Bill

recalls growing up in Mercer County, Kentucky, where as a youth he developed an interest in exploring local caves. After graduating from high school, Bill attended a drafting school in Lexington, where he met Ron, and afterward, both went to work for IBM. "Ron and I shared many interests," he recalled, "including caving, rock climbing and canoeing. Ron was a member of the Blue Grass Grotto...I started attending the Grotto meetings with Ron and became a member of the National Speleological Society." Bill joined the NSS in February, 1968 (NSS 10608), although Ron never did. Although there was about a ten-year gap between our ages, Bill and I became good friends and set out to explore many Bluegrass caves, following leads and consulting topographic maps, and inquiring of locals in an effort to discover new caves. I well remember tooling around the back roads of the Inner Bluegrass countryside in Bill's classic 1950, dark-maroon, Buick in search of caves. One of the best ways to generate new leads





*Bill Rogers (left) and Ron Stokely. Climbing practice at Tower Rock, Red River Gorge, ca. 1969  
Photos by Bill Rogers.*

was simply to drop in on one of the numerous – at the time – crossroads country stores, where the old-timers would gather near a potbellied stove and play cards on top of a cracker barrel. “Do you know of any caves, hereabouts?” we would ask, and after a bit of thought, one of the old gentlemen would say something like, “Well, do you know about the one in the sinkhole behind Bob Jones’ barn? You better pack a lunch if you go in there.”<sup>62</sup>

Ron Stokely (born 1943) developed an interest in cave exploration when, as a youth, he often accompanied his father to his job working in the Snowball Dining Room at Mammoth Cave. While his father laid tile, Ron had time to explore some of the nearby passages on his own. Later, as an Explorer Scout in Lexington, he was encouraged by his advisor to try out a variety of outdoor activities, including caving, rope work, and canoeing. Graduating from Henry Clay High School in Lexington, he became an Eagle Scout in 1963. His involvement in Scouting continued. He trained adults for the Bluegrass Council of the BSA to become better Scout leaders, and later became Post Advisor for an Explorer scout group. Since Ron lived close to the University of Kentucky campus,

he began attending BGG meetings regularly with his friend Bill, and became vice-chair of the grotto in 1969. Through his scouting experience, Ron had become an expert in many forms of rope work, and was instrumental in the early training of grotto members in vertical methods such as the use of slings, knots, rappelling devices, setting of bolts and pitons, and in belaying techniques. He organized many training sessions to the Red River Gorge and at Angel Falls in Jessamine County. One of his favorite locations for such outings was Tower Rock in the Gorge, where he taught safe climbing techniques and rappelling.<sup>63</sup>

In 1969, Ron was a co-founder of the Cumberland Climbers, and along with Deiter Britz and Bob Stokes, made many of the first ascents in the Gorge, including Chimney Rock. Many BGG members were also members of the Cumberland Climbers. During this period, Ron became concerned over the lack of qualified climbing leaders in the grotto and in Cumberland Climbers, and so developed a multi-session Climbing Leaders Course that many of the grotto members completed. Cat Bishop remembers a vertical techniques training session taught by Ron and Bill Andrews.

The session started out with the climbers offering to teach how to tie a bunch of knots. Having been to Girl Scout camp and learning to tie a variety of knots, I figured I would already know what these guys were teaching, but I was wrong. They explained the use of, and how to tie, a water knot, bowline on a bight, double bowline, and butterfly and double butterfly knots, none of which I had ever used before, and very good stuff to know. Ron was also giving instruction on the use of a newly designed gadget that would simulate belaying a falling lead climber. Each of us got a turn at being the belayer and stopping the fall of a bag of rocks or other heavy weights suspended on a pulley that was rigged up in a tree. The weight could be released by an assistant who pulled a cord attached somehow to an automobile seat-belt fastener, dropping the weight. This was a good simulation of a leader fall and it was good to practice stopping the fall and then holding or lowering the climber.<sup>64</sup>

Also in the late 1960s, Stokely founded a cycling club in Lexington called the Bluegrass Wheelmen, and was the first president. He was an avid cyclist until an accident on his bike forced him to give up cycling. Ron was a very active member of the Sierra Club and was on the board of directors of the local chapter. He designed the bumper sticker used by the Sierra Club to fight the building of the dam in the Red River Gorge. Bill Rogers recalls, "Ron and I caved, climbed, hiked, canoed and protested together many times. I never caved with anybody, other than Ron, that could come out of a wet, muddy cave and be cleaner than I was before we entered the cave." Ron left Lexington and the grotto in 1976 after being transferred by IBM to Longmont, Colorado.<sup>65</sup>

### 1968: Cave Capers

In July 1970, the NSS's Internal Organizations Committee head, Bill Mixon, sent a polite letter to the BGG informing them that no annual reports had been submitted for either 1968 or 1969, despite several reminders. Since the NSS bylaws required an annual report from every internal organization, he informed them, "I reluctantly conclude that your organization is no longer active. I am removing you from the list of active groups and instructing the office to discontinue the monthly mailings to you."

Although apparently delinquent with the paperwork, the BGG had been very active in both of the years in question. Although no report for 1968 was ever filed, on May 26 of that year Wini Mastin, newly elected secretary, wrote to Beverly Fredericks in the NSS office, enclosing a list of grotto members who were also members of the national organization. There were thirty names on the list, more than ever before, the majority being the same membership as the previous year.<sup>66</sup>

The *Kentucky Caver* was back, edited by Frank Reid, but again as a purple-inked mimeographed copy of a half-dozen pages. One rather interesting article claimed the first use of LED lights in caving, Frank having been able to borrow a single, match-head sized diode emitting red light from the UK Electrical Engineering Department. Prophetically, he concluded that although LEDs were, at the time, very expensive and the light output was low, these "in a few years are expected to be cheaper than incandescent bulbs and to replace them as indicators." Frank's humor was also in evidence throughout the publication. A pseudo-advertisement (in this era of the Vietnam War) boldly stated: "WANTED! CAVERS! Many cavers needed to explore VAST MAZE SYSTEMS OVERSEAS! No experience needed! All equipment supplied! All expenses paid! Men only. Short guys preferred. Contact local Army recruiter." The issue featured several cartoons, my personal favorite being the illustration of the "Grotto Cave File," which was simply a picture of a metal rasp.

One of the highlights for me in 1968 was going to the 15th annual Cave Capers at Bedford, Indiana, June 14-16, hosted, as always, by the Central Indiana Grotto and set at the Bedford 4-H campground. Charlie Bishop drove up in his 1950s-era yellow Chevy pickup truck with Reid riding shotgun. I sat in the back of the truck, leaning up against the cab, listening to Frank pick out Bluegrass tunes on his banjo; riding this way up the interstate was a lot chillier than I had expected, even in mid-June. Wini Mastin also made the trip up to Bedford. We set up at the campground and began visiting among the other cavers. A group from one of the southern states had brought a carbide cannon, and periodically the atmosphere in the campground was shattered by a loud <BANG> as they set off another charge. Amusing at first, but became annoying when they persisted in celebrating this way after dark.





*BGG campsite at 1968 Cave Capers, Charlie Bishop's old truck in the background. Photo: Gary O'Dell.*

On Saturday, I accompanied some other cavers who went to Blue Spring Cave. The entrance that we used was through a 100-pound barrel of calcium carbide that had been cemented in place. It was a pretty tight squeeze and several of the cavers had trouble getting through, and even more so when trying to get back out after the trip. At the time it was the longest cave in Indiana, with about 19 miles

surveyed, but today is in third place for the state with about 29 miles. I don't remember much about exploring the cave except for a lot of water and some impressive and very slippery mud banks. Overall, a pretty good experience, and I went back to Cave Capers in 1969 and 1970.<sup>67</sup>

**1969: Charlie and Cat; Shelta Cave**

Although the 1968 annual report was never received by the NSS, the 1969 report did eventually end up in the hands of the Internal Organizations office in 1970. It had been signed on January 27 of that year by the new BGG chair, Bill Rogers, but evidently took a while to get into the mail since Bill Mixon complained on July 15 of not having received the 1969 report. A letter from Wini to Bill Mixon, dated August 5, 1970, sheds some light on the problem. Wini expressed her shock at reading Mixon's letter and learning that the BGG had been dropped from the list of active grottoes. She explained the circumstances: "This is what happened. Up to November, 1969, the BGG had as Chairman a fellow who talked a great game, but



*Charlie Bishop in the carbide can entrance to Blue Springs Cave. Photo by Bill Rogers.*

who actually did very little. I have been treasurer of the B.G.G. for several years, but he even had me fooled.” Although there was no annual report or membership list for 1968, the *Kentucky Caver* for April 1969 provides a list of officers prior to the elections of that year. Bill Andrews was the chair, with Ron Stokely as vice-chair, Wini as secretary-treasurer and Bill Rogers as trip coordinator. There can be no doubt that Andrews was a fine chair in nearly every other respect, coordinating many grotto activities and leading almost every grotto trip each year, whether for caving or climbing practice, sometimes two or three each month, but obviously paperwork was his nemesis. “He collected all the mail and took care of everything,” Wini continued. “I remember last year in January/February (1969) he did tell me that he was going to send in the Annual Report, and asked me to give him a list of Grotto members. I did this, and assumed that he had sent it in.” This was, unfortunately, never done, or somehow went astray.<sup>68</sup>

After Bill Rogers was elected chair, during January of the new year he asked her for a list of active grotto members, wanting to make sure to get the annual report submitted on time. “He mailed it in,” she said, “and we thought everything was taken care of.” According to Mixon, however, this report also went missing. In her response, Wini sent a new copy of the 1969 report, and Mixon in response replied, “I have notified the NSS office to restore you to the mailing lists as an active group.” Given the multiple occasions upon which the BGG annual report was allegedly submitted and went missing, it is, I suppose possible, that there may instead have been some problems with the NSS office. We will of course never know, and at this date it matters not at all.

At the election on November, 1969, Charlie Bishop was elected as vice-chair to Bill Rogers, and Wini Mastin continued as secretary-treasurer. Dave Kelley became the trip coordinator. The grotto’s corresponding address was in care of Wini, at her



*Wini Mastin and Frank Reid in Munday’s Landing Cave, Woodford County, in 1968. This is the longest cave in the Inner Bluegrass. Photo by Cat Bishop.*

Nicholasville home. Dues were \$2.00 for “working members” and \$1.00 for students; the treasury contained \$17.35 remaining from an income of \$36.00. In the April, 1969, *Kentucky Caver*, Bill Andrews noted that “the latest Inner Blue Grass count of caves was right around 200 caves. Fayette County leads the pack with 46 known caves, while Jessamine and Woodford counties are next with 30 caves each. G.C.G.’s 1963 Franklin County survey turned up 26 caves there and that still is the Franklin County count. In addition, the Kentucky Cave Survey is still going on and Dr. Barr told me that he would like to get everyone together sometime in the near future.” The grotto’s annual report noted that the primary grotto project was “to complete the Kentucky Cave Survey. This is a complete survey of all caves in Kentucky.” An ambitious undertaking, for sure, and one that has not yet been achieved more than fifty years later!<sup>69</sup>

To my knowledge, the first effort to establish a Kentucky Cave Survey was undertaken by the Greater Cincinnati Grotto, beginning in 1961 or 1962 before there was a Blue Grass Grotto. Al Geiser, director of the GCG’s Kentucky Cave Survey, in 1963 recalled, “When work was first begun on the Kentucky Cave Survey it was decided to use Franklin County as a model county. A good deal was already known about the caves of this area and it seemed possible to complete the survey of this county within a short time. Since the completion of

the Franklin County survey, work has centered in areas of special interest to individual cavers” The Ohio-sponsored version of a statewide cave survey for Kentucky did not, however, persist for long. The January, 1964, issue of the *Electric Caver* contained a list of rough locations and short descriptions for about a dozen caves in Anderson, Madison, Pulaski, and Woodford counties in Kentucky, but progress of the organization is difficult to track thereafter due to missing issues of the newsletter. Certainly, within a few years, most of the Cincinnati group’s efforts were being devoted to exploration and survey of Sloans Valley Cave in Pulaski County.<sup>70</sup>

The BGG had also been involved in working to secure passage of a Wild Rivers bill in Kentucky by writing to their state senators and to the governor. This activity was stimulated by the hot controversy over a plan by the Army Corps of Engineers to dam the Red River in Kentucky. The scenic beauty of the Red River Gorge was well known to grotto members, who had long been using the area, not only for vertical training and rock climbing, but also for hiking and camping. It would, however, be another twenty years before the river was finally safe from impoundment.

The members’ list for 1969 listed sixteen NSS members and an equal number of non-NSS members. Many were the same old faces as before, but there were a few additions, notably Jerry Carpenter, Catherine Hayden, Don George, Ron Householder, and Roger Sperka. Three of the new members were high school friends of mine whom I had been taking caving in the Bluegrass, but they did not have sufficient passion for the activity to continue their membership into another year. Jerry Carpenter was another doctoral candidate who studied under Tom Barr at the Institute of Speleology. Jerry obtained his B.S. and M.S. degrees in zoology from Utah State University, and during his graduate studies there explored a cave in search of planarians (flatworms) which stimulated his interest in cave life. He came to the University of Kentucky in May 1968 with his wife Alice Ann and two-year-old daughter Jenny to continue his research interest in cave planarians.<sup>71</sup>

“The day after we arrived,” Jerry recalled, “I took the first of many cave trips with a fellow graduate student, Terry Marsh.” The two graduate students became good friends and assisted each other with their respective projects. “I joined the NSS in 1968 and attended only a few meetings of

the Blue Grass Grotto since most of my caving was with Terry Marsh and other graduate students in the Institute of Speleology.” The two men used Wheat lamps provided for them by the Institute. Barr’s *Caves of Tennessee* and preliminary notes for the proposed, but abandoned, *Caves of Kentucky*, were valuable resources for Jerry’s research, since both sources recorded locations where planarians had been observed. “John and Martha Cooper took me on a trip to Alabama to visit several caves, including Shelta Cave. Some of the Alabama caves were pit caves about 100 feet deep. Fortunately, I had learned vertical caving techniques during a Blue Grass Grotto field trip to the high cliffs a few miles south of Lexington.” He ended up collecting planarians from more than fifty caves in eleven states.<sup>72</sup>

Catherine M. Hayden (Bishop today), who goes by “Cat,” would soon prove to be a valuable addition to the grotto. Graduating from Henry Clay High School in 1966, Cat received a scholarship to Transylvania University and obtained her undergraduate degree in 1970. While at Transy, she did a very little bit of flashlight caving when she worked as a Girl Scout summer camp counselor at Camp Judy Layne on the Morgan/Menifee County line east of Frenchburg, Kentucky. In the fall of 1969, Cat received a call from one of her fellow camp counselors who was attending the University of Kentucky, who told her that there was a cave exploring club at the University. The two friends went to the next BGG meeting, where she found the company congenial and the prospect of organized cave exploration to be intriguing. She immediately joined both the grotto and the NSS (NSS 12100).<sup>73</sup>

At the grotto meetings she became acquainted with Charlie Bishop. As Cat recalls, “BGG was leading a beginner trip to Climax Cave that weekend and I rode to the cave in Charlie’s old yellow truck. I was very impressed with the cave which was much larger and more interesting than the very small cave near the Girl Scout camp. On the drive back to Lexington, Charlie asked me if I wanted to go bowling with him that evening. We went to several bowling alleys but they were all busy with league play and we couldn’t find an open lane, so we decided to go back to my house and clean up my caving gear. That was a foretaste of many future weekends!” Thus began a romance that began to flourish in the dark and muddy spaces underground. “Most of our ‘dates’ involved some sort of caving





*Catherine "Cat" Bishop (formerly Hayden), ca. 1970. Photo courtesy Cat Bishop.*

experience," Cat remembers, "including assisting in the all-night rescue of an injured caver in Pine Hill Cave. That was the first time I spent all night with my boyfriend, coming out of the cave with the rescue party just as the sun was coming up!" Cat and Charlie were married on October 21, 1972 and, ever since, have continued to spend a great deal of their time together below ground, much of involving the James Cave project in Edmonson County.<sup>74</sup>

Charlie's first trip to James Cave was in the fall of 1968, having been invited to join the project by Sara Corrie. Cat was, in turn, invited into the group by Charlie, and made her first visit to James in the spring of 1971, or possibly a little later. The project to explore and survey James and nearby Coach caves had been ongoing for more than a decade, and the James cavers were a very select group of experienced cave explorers. James and Coach caves were both complex and difficult caves to explore, unsuitable for neophyte cavers. Invitations to participate were something of a tribute to both the caving skills and dependability of the prospective

member. "No one could just walk up and say, 'Hey, I want to go caving in James Cave with you guys,'" Cat recalls. "New people had to be taken to the cave by someone who was already a member of the project and had done some caving with the prospective new member. The current James project member had to know the newbie well enough to vouch for their rock-solid capabilities in both vertical and horizontal caving, and also had to judge that the new person would fit well into the group and contribute skills and abilities to the project." Trips to James Cave were long and hard, and many persons who came into the group made a single trip and never came back again. The active membership in the James project varied from twenty to thirty persons, and they were always looking for new members who were willing to commit to the long haul.<sup>75</sup>

Soon after Don George joined the grotto, he and I became frequent caving companions. One of our favorite destinations was Crisman's Cave, located in the gorge of Jessamine Creek, and we made



numerous survey trips there. I have not been able to contact or even locate Don in the present day, although last I knew of him, he was practicing dentistry in Louisville a few years ago. Ron Householder was a close friend of Don George, both being graduates of Bryan Station High School, and Don's interest in caving and membership in the BGG led Ron to do the same. Neither Don George nor Ron Householder remained BGG members for long, but made important contributions. Don George dropped out after 1970, but he had been a good friend and a good caver. Ron's contributions to regional speleology, ironically, came many years after he left the BGG. He moved to Florida in 1971, but his exposure to cave surveying at Crisman's and other caves fostered a lifelong interest in mapping. When he returned to Kentucky in 1992, Ron founded In-House Solutions in Lexington, a mapping and consulting firm, and shortly thereafter became president of MapSync. He did not return to the grotto or cave exploration, but from 1992-1996 I was able to recruit him and Frank Reid into a project involving a resurvey of Russell Cave, near Lexington, involving the use of magnetic induction to correct survey errors. A little later, circa 2012, Ron assisted me in relocating the site of the former

entrance of Clifton Cave in Woodford County, destroyed by road construction in 1970.<sup>76</sup>

Roger Sperka was awarded a Master of Science in Geology and Hydrology at Purdue University, Indiana, in June, 1969. While at Purdue, he began caving and participated in the survey of King and Queen Blair Caves and Sullivan Cave. After graduating, Roger changed his field of study and came to the University of Kentucky to pursue a Ph.D. in Zoology under the direction of Tom Barr. He became interested in the *Darlingtonia* cave beetle and made extensive observations throughout the eastern interior states, but did not complete his doctorate. Most of his cave explorations were made in southeastern Kentucky, where some of his long-term projects included the Sloan's Valley survey, Triple-S, and Redmond Creek Caves. He became the leading authority on the caves of Wayne County. Don Pollock, Jeff Vansant, and Dave Beiter were some of his regular caving companions. Roger made some very important contributions to the Kentucky Cave Survey, but this will be detailed later.<sup>77</sup>

During 1967-69, the acquisition of the biologically significant Shelta Cave in Huntsville, Alabama, and subsequent purchase of a building located over the cave for a permanent office



*Above Russell Cave, 1992. Left to right: Ron Householder, Reda Smith (non-caver employee of MapSync), Gary O'Dell, and Frank Reid with his hand-built "cave radio" magnetic induction receiver. Low-frequency radio waves from a transmitter in the cave penetrate through rock and soil to the surface and allow accurate station location using GPS. Photo: Gary O'Dell.*

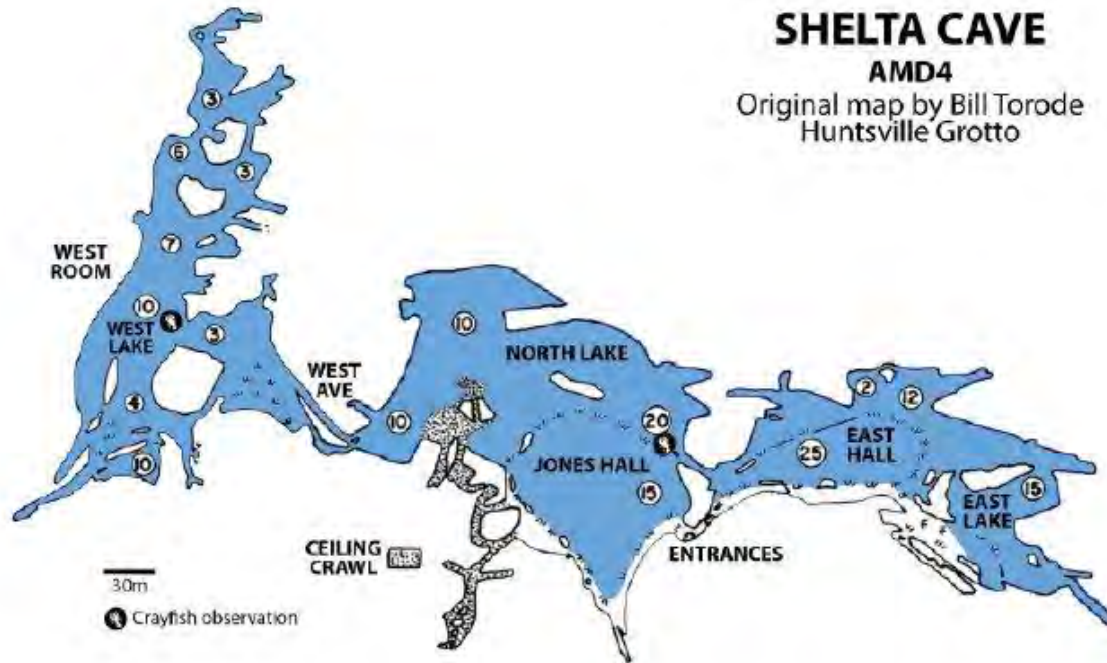
occupied a great deal of attention from the National Speleological Society and its member grottoes. The most amazing physical feature of the cave was an enormous room, as large as four football fields placed side by side, that contains a shallow lake. Shelta was special not just for the huge chamber, but for the aquatic life within the lake. Some well-known biospeleologists, current or former BGG members and staff of UK's Institute of Speleology who had been studying the cave, had much to say concerning its significance. At the time of its purchase by the NSS, John Cooper stated, "It may very well house more major aquatic troglobites, all living in the same community, than any other cave in the world. It is one of only two caves definitely known to house three distinct species of troglobitic crayfishes." John Holsinger observed, "In addition to containing blind, depigmented fish, crawfish and amphipods, the water in this cave contains the only known population of the troglobitic shrimp, *Palaemonias alabamiae*." Stewart Peck, then at the Museum of Comparative Zoology at Harvard University, informed readers of the *NSS News* that "There has been no thorough study of the cave. Presently, we know that twenty-one terrestrial invertebrates reside in the cave. Nine of these species are troglobites, or cave-limited species. Six of these species were originally named from specimens collected in Shelta Cave. Twelve scientists have written seventeen papers mentioning this fauna. Careful study will undoubtedly demonstrate a greater number of inhabitants."<sup>78</sup>

Since the recent death of the owner, Shelta was being threatened by real-estate development, and when it came up for sale, the NSS had to act quickly. In the fall of 1967, the Nature Conservancy loaned the full purchase price for the cave of \$10,000 to the NSS, interest-free for the first year. The purchase was approved by the Board of Governors through mail ballot in October, and the deal was closed. The Society established a fund-raising program to pay off the loan, which was accomplished by the summer of 1969; the Blue Grass Grotto donated \$61 toward this goal. Subsequently, having long recognized the need for permanent office facilities to improve member services, the Board of Governors voted on March 21, 1971, to purchase Kingdom Hall, the Jehovah's Witness Church that sat atop the cave, for the sum of \$24,000, using funds that had been accumulating for just this purpose. By July of the same year, the NSS had

moved into its new office location and was able to use the distinctively appropriate "1 Cave Avenue" as the official address of the Society.<sup>79</sup>

Wini had visited the cave in May 1968, making arrangements through the NSS and Bill Varnedoe for a key to the gated entrance. She spent about three hours in the cave, guided by Wesley Swift, "who seemed to be a very good caver;" this may have been Wesley R. Smith, a physics professor at the University of Alabama in Huntsville. Her subsequent description of the cave to BGG members probably stimulated others to see Shelta Cave for themselves in 1969. At 7:00 p.m. on Friday, April 25, Charlie Bishop, Dave Beiter, John DeBoer and Bill Rogers departed Lexington and arrived in Huntsville at about 2:00 in the morning, driving into the Monte Sano Park that overlooked the city from the east. Here they camped, spreading out sleeping bags atop a sheet of plastic, and in the morning set off to find Natural Well. This is an open-air shaft that drops about 185 feet, with about a thousand feet of cave at the bottom, featuring domes and waterfalls. The entrance was about 20 feet across, and surrounded by a chain-link fence. They rigged a 330-foot length of Goldline to a large tree and began to take turns descending the pit, having decided to leave two persons at the top at all times. Charlie rappelled down first, followed by Dave. After exploring for a while, Dave ascended out of the pit and Bill rappelled down once he had surfaced. Next, Charlie came back to the top and John descended. Once all had finished with Natural Well, they set about to locate nearby Hooper's Well, a 90-foot shaft, and were in the process of entering this pit when the second group from Lexington showed up. At 8:30 on Saturday morning, Bill Andrews, Mary Reed and I piled into Wini's station wagon in Lexington and headed for Huntsville to rendezvous with the first group.<sup>80</sup>

We left the park for supper, arranging to meet at the Shelta entrance at 7:30 p.m. We arrived at the cave after dark and went in through the gate onto a platform, from which a ladder led down to the main room of the cave, about 200 feet in diameter with a relatively low ceiling, never more than about 20 feet high. Soon we came to the lake, where we saw in the crystal-clear water a blind fish about three inches long and several white crayfish, one of which had the number "66" painted in red on its back.

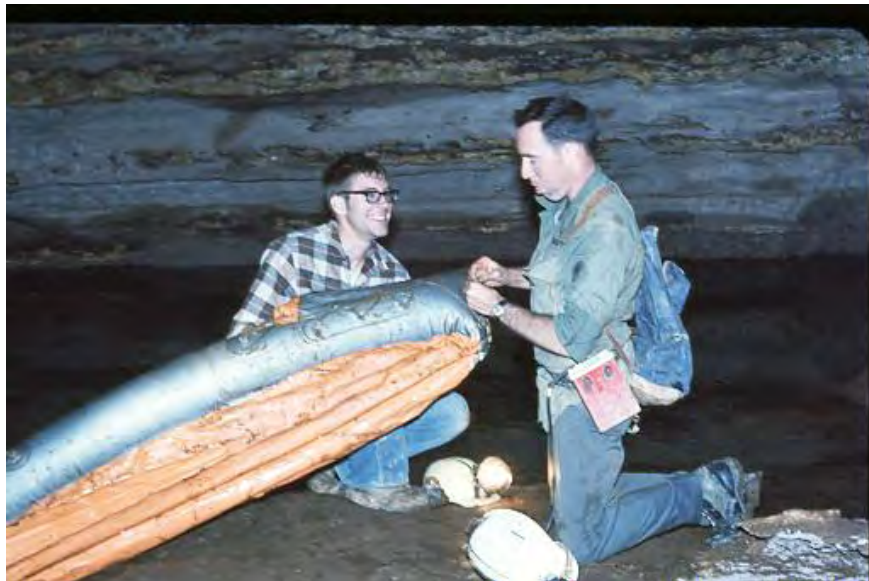


Later, John Cooper told Bill Rogers that he and his wife Martha had caught and identified about 800 crayfish in the Shelta water system. Bill Andrews had brought an inflatable rubber raft and launched it into the lake, but did not take it very far out. I also felt impelled to venture out in the raft, but Dave got the notion that I should be baptized in Shelta water. As Bill Rogers described this exploit, “He ran into the cold stream, lunged into deeper water and over to Gary who tried to drown him by hitting him over

the head with the paddle. With the nerve-shattering Beiter Battle Bellow he upended the flimsy craft.” Afterward, we headed out for the long drive home. Having seen the cave, and aware of its biological significance, we all felt that the money was well spent.<sup>81</sup>

Also in that year, I volunteered to take over editing the *Kentucky Caver* when Frank Reid moved to Bloomington, Indiana, and served in this position until 1972, when it was taken over by Cat Hayden

(soon to be Bishop) until 1975. Karen Hoskins assumed the editors’ position for 1976, and then John Barnes skillfully produced the newsletter until 1982. The publication was handled by others during 1983 and early 1984, and then I returned to edit the *Caver* from December 1984 through 1988, and again for 1991-1992. The first few issues under me were produced in the same way as by Frank Reid, being mimeographed, but sometimes in black rather than purple ink. Beginning in the spring of 1970, I began to



Charlie Bishop and Bill Andrews inflating the rubber raft used on the Shelta Cave trip. Photo by Bill Rogers.

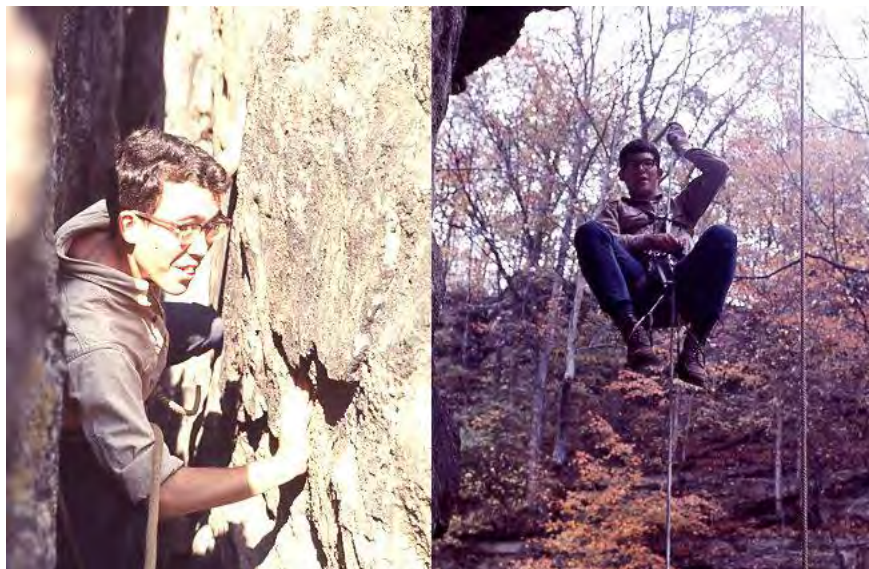


try to improve quality by using photocopies for covers and selected pages containing graphics, although text pages continued to be printed using mimeograph stencils for a while longer. Later, photocopying became standard for the entire issue. The *Caver* also came out with greater frequency; three issues in 1969, and quarterly for both 1970 and 1971 (as had been the goal since inception of the newsletter).

In August, a group of us headed up to southern Indiana to partake of the 16th Cave Capers in Harrison County. Don George drove his Econoline van, ferrying me and Bill McDaniels. Dave Beiter, and Charlie Bishop, and Bill Rogers came with Wini in her station wagon, and Frank Reid came down from Bloomington. On the next day several of us, myself among them, and four or five others from an Ohio grotto decided to visit Beech Tree Cave after reading the description in the guidebook. Oh, foolish cavers! Although the cave was only about 200 feet long, it took seven hours to navigate to the end – less than 30 feet per hour. The entry was straight down a narrow chimney for about 50 feet, to a wet crawlway which led to an extremely difficult free traverse around a 12-foot pit. More obstacles to follow. Upon our return to daylight, we agreed to rename it as “SonofaBeech! Tree Cave.” Challenging, but a true pain in the hindquarters.

### 1970: Caving in Rockcastle County

Timely submission of the annual report continued to be a problem for BGG. On March 15, 1971, newly elected secretary-treasurer Cat Hayden (replacing Wini Mastin) wrote to Bill Mixon about the requirements for such reports, noting in a masterful understatement, “since we’ve had some trouble with this in the past.” Mixon replied on the 17th: “It’s a good thing you asked, because in fact your 1970 report, due last month, hasn’t arrived. What became of the forms sent to Wini in December?” The necessary forms were completed and signed by Cat on March 25, and duly submitted to the NSS. The 1970 elections for BGG officers



*Dave (left) and Jim Kelley. Photos by Bill Rogers.*

took place in the first week of February, with Charlie Bishop voted in as chair and Roger Sperka as vice-chair. Jim Kelley, David’s brother and a new grotto member, became the trip coordinator. The Kelley brothers, especially Dave, were dedicated vertical cavers. The membership consisted of fourteen NSS members, and seventeen non-members. There were a number of significant omissions from the list. Tom Barr and John Cooper were no longer paid members, and would not return in the following year. Ron Householder was gone, departed for Florida. Dave Beiter dropped off the roster, but attended meetings for a while regardless, and soon moved to Pulaski County where he was deeply involved in surveying Sloans Valley Cave. At about this time, Bill Rogers recalls, Ron Stokley formed the Cumberland Climbers and became less involved with the grotto.<sup>82</sup>

Offsetting these were several new people who began to show up at meetings but had not yet joined the NSS; among these were Jim Currens and Jeff Vansant. I first met Jeff in 1969 near the mouth of the pit entrance to Glass Farm Cave in Franklin County, Kentucky, although he might not remember this meeting since we were surrounded by Kentucky State Police and other rescue personnel. Late that night, Bill Andrews had been called out to advise on a cave rescue that was being mounted, and several other grotto members including myself accompanied him. When we arrived, the troopers had the situation well in hand, the rescued cavers





*Jeff Vansant in side passage, Upper Level, Goochland Cave Left Side, in 1970. Photo by Gary O'Dell.*

safely at the surface and appearing highly embarrassed, so there was nothing for us to do. The situation, potentially tragic, was in fact rather comical since it had been so quickly resolved. As we learned, a group of about three would-be cavers, complete novices, had descended the 40-foot pit using a homemade ladder constructed of wooden rungs tied into two parallel lengths of rope.

The descent came off well enough, but when the young men finished exploring the passages at the bottom and made to return, the troubles began. Jeff and one of his friends were able to reach the surface without any problems, but the last in line was a rather chubby fellow, weighing in at about 250 pounds, and when he put his weight on the bottom rung, it broke in half. The same thing occurred when he attempted the next rung, and the next, until finally the lowermost unbroken rung was out of reach. The defeated ladder climber was left stranded at the bottom of the shaft. Becoming aware of his stranded companion's plight, Jeff went and summoned help. Jeff should not be embarrassed by this recounting, for when he subsequently joined the grotto, he quickly became an active and expert caver and an asset to the membership. We all have to start somewhere. This is a prime example illustrating the important role that NSS grottoes have in teaching

amateur "spelunkers" safe and sensible caving and thereby turning them into effective "cavers."<sup>83</sup>

Jim Currens often mentions that I took him on his very first caving trip. This was probably in 1970. He had learned of the Blue Grass Grotto with interest, and began to attend meetings, but had not yet gone caving. We met at one of the meetings and after conversing for a while, I invited him to come with me on a survey trip to Crisman's Cave. This was probably not the best cave to break in a new caver, for several reasons. First, the cave is located in a vertical outcrop about twenty feet above the level of Jessamine Creek, and can only be reached by a very difficult climb down 200 feet from the highland above the creek, nearly vertical and very slippery. Jessamine Creek is a very isolated watershed, with no road through it and accessible only by such a climb, by following the creek for two miles downstream from its headwaters, or by canoe from the Kentucky River. The gorge contains several caves, of which Crisman's is the longest at about 3,500 feet. Troublesome as the access was (and the return up the hill was exhausting), the cave was even more challenging. Once the entrance is gained, one must crawl about five hundred feet through a shallow stream, alternating between belly and hand-and-knee crawl, until a series of three cross-passage joints is reached, spaced about fifty

feet apart at right angles to the stream crawl. These joints are enlarged sufficiently so that one can chimney up to reach two higher levels in the cave. The first two joints allow access only to the second level, but the third one reaches beyond the second level to a third level that has about 1,500 feet of walking passage, ending in a room about thirty feet in diameter, twelve feet high, with a waterfall pouring out of the ceiling.

The third joint up to the second level is not very difficult to chimney, but as it goes higher it begins to widen out to become about five feet across and one can no longer perform chimneying movement to work up further. A rather peculiar and, in retrospect, rather scary movement is required to reach the edge of the third level. I was discussing this recently on the phone with Ron Householder, who had been taken to the cave by Don George on an occasion when I was not available. His memory of the last required movement was exactly the same as my recollection. On the side of the chimney opposite the third level entry, there was a little knob of rock about the size of half of a small apple protruding from the wall. At the lip of the third level, there is a rusty eyebolt set into the bedrock, intended for a rope or cable in the past. One has to balance with one heel on the rock knob and, in a leap of faith, literally LUNGE across the width of the chimney to grab the eyebolt and pull up and over the edge. I and my caving companions did just that every time we visited Crisman's Cave, back when I was a teenager, and this is what Jim Currens had to do on his first caving trip. I guess he probably thought it was a normal thing to do, and maybe it is when you are young and fearless as we were then. More recently, about fifteen or twenty years ago, my friend, the late Tab Farthing, asked me to help him do a resurvey of Crisman's Cave. He was an outstanding caver and seemed to have no problem with the ascent to the third level, but when it came my turn, I balked. I was then fifty-some years old, slower, and more cautious. I eyeballed that knob and the lip of the upper level, and I said, "Tab, I can't do this anymore." It literally scared the hell out of me, because if I slipped up, it was about fifty feet straight back down the chimney to the bottom. But at the time, Jim was game and did the traverse without complaint or difficulty. Shortly thereafter, I recruited him to join my group mapping caves in Rockcastle County.



*Jim Currens in Goochland Cave, Rockcastle County, Kentucky, 1970. Photo by Gary O'Dell.*

It was, I believe, in the summer of 1969 that I first saw Rockcastle County. Bill had heard of a large cave to be found in the headwaters of Crooked Creek, and led a BGG field trip to visit it. I rode in the back of Bill's battered blue Jeep, lounging on top of a pile of gear, followed by more cavers in a four-wheel drive truck. Off-road capability was essential, because to reach the cave we had to follow a road from the beginning of Crooked Creek (opposite to the direction cavers now use) that was more muddy trail than road, splashing through the creek at multiple crossings. It was a passage through a wilderness of greenery. We finally arrived at a wide spot, debarked our vehicles, geared up, and followed a rock stream bed up to a huge cave entrance, larger than anything I had ever seen. It was at least a hundred feet wide and fifty high. This was Goochland Cave. We only explored a little that day, but I was hooked. From that day to the present, I have remained focused on exploring and studying the caves of Crooked Creek in Rockcastle County. At the time, it was a nearly untapped cave region.

At a grotto meeting shortly afterward, I turned in my chair to Dave Beiter and asked, "Would you like to help me map a big cave in Rockcastle County?" Without hesitation, he replied, "Sure, why not." We started on the project almost immediately, and the first two surveys were run by Dave and me alone. Being more experienced in mapping, he took the instrument readings and made the notes, and I held the dummy end of the survey tape. Previously, I had been helping Dave map in Cave Hollow, but it was





*Dave Beiter eating “goosh,” probably in Sloans Valley ca. 1970.  
Photo by Lou Simpson.*

on these two trips that I really learned the art and science of cave surveying. I learned a lot of other things from Dave, as well. Cave food, for example, “gorp” and “goosh” – a little more appetizing than they sound. Both were easy to make. Gorp was simply a form of trail mix, blended from raisins and peanuts. Goosh could be created from a 14 ounce can of Eagle Brand sweetened condensed milk; drop the intact can into a pot of water, and boil for one hour. The result is a substance that resembles and tastes somewhat like caramel.

I took one or the other along on cave trips for a while, but goosh proved to be just too sweet for my taste, and fourteen ounces too much to consume at once. A California caver later discovered that you could pour some of the condensed milk into a short plastic baby bottle before cooking, for a smaller ration. For about six months, I tried out the Beiter “pig,” his version of a cave pack made from two bleach bottles with the bottoms cut out, slipped together, and fastened with a length of cord. In the end, I switched to a US Army surplus ammo box for cave gear, 35 caliber. One Beiter innovation I stuck with for two years was the use of television antenna wire for a survey tape. I took a 100-foot length, and with a paper clip heated sufficiently to melt into the plastic marked it off with a small hole every six inches and inscribed it with the number for every foot. A lot of work to produce, but it worked well.

It never kinked or broke, you could drag it through streams or through breakdown piles without hanging up, and either coil it or just wad it up and stuff it into a cave pack when not in use. In later years, I switched to a fiberglass tape for surveys, which proved almost as good and a little more accurate.

I soon recruited a small group of young cavers from the grotto to begin traversing the ridges in search of new caves and to map the ones we discovered. In addition to Dave Beiter, the core group included Jim Currens, Jeff Vansant, Erik Albreckson,

and Jeff Marquis. In the two years from 1970-1971, we discovered and mapped dozens of new caves as well as continuing to survey in Goochland, so that by the end of the period we had accumulated nearly 30,000 feet of cave survey. In 1972, the results of our efforts were combined with those of Jim Rebmann, who had worked independently of us, to produce the book, *Caves of Rockcastle County, Kentucky*. This was privately printed at Eastern Kentucky University in two runs of thirty copies each, and most copies went to participants or other cavers we knew; it was never available for sale to the general public. I was nineteen years old when it came out.

The year came to a close with a major outing to Fern Cave in Alabama on December 26 by grotto members Charlie Bishop, Cat Hayden, Jim and Dave Kelley, Sam McKinney, Sara Yingst, and Corky Crutcher, accompanied by legendary Sara Corrie of West Virginia. The group headed down to Huntsville, Alabama, to rendezvous with Bill Cuddington and another caver. Fern Cave is a complex multilevel system, 15 miles long, in which the various levels are connected by pits of varying depth. These include one of the deepest pits in eastern North America, Surprise Pit, a single-drop rappel of 404 feet. BGG participants had been training for months with vertical practice sessions in Kentucky in anticipation of this trip. Afterwards,





they visited Cumberland Caverns in Tennessee on their way back to Lexington.<sup>84</sup>

**1971: Letcher County Natural Color Angel Cave**

The 1971 BGG elections took place in the fall, and Jim Sharpe, a caver from Scott County, was elected as chair of the grotto. Jim was an 18-year-old freshman attending UK who had joined the BGG in November 1970 and became a member of the NSS in the following month. He had been caving for about three years in the Bluegrass region before this, and quickly became known as an energetic caver. I relinquished my position as editor to Cat Hayden, whose first issue came out in January, 1972, and was voted in as vice-president. Jim Currens was the trip coordinator. The official grotto address was now care of the Geology Department, University of Kentucky, and meetings continued to be held in Room B-8 in the Funkhouser Biology Building, at 7:30 p.m., on the first Tuesday of each month. Grotto dues were now up to \$3.00 per year, \$2.00 for students, and \$1.50 for additional family members. Many members were now sporting a whimsical jacket patch I had designed, yellow and black, showing three bats hanging in a cave with a voice balloon from one proclaiming “Blue Grass Grotto.”<sup>85</sup>

Membership was at an all-time high, twenty NSS members and twenty-three non-NSS members on the roster. The NSS people were essentially the same as those of the year before, with a few additions. Jim Currens had become a member of the Society, as had Jeff Vansant and Sam McKinney. Among the new non-NSS members were Jeff Marquis, Ron Gariepy, Martin Hackworth, and Ron Wilson. This would be Wini Mastin’s last year as a member of the BGG. The grotto constitution had

been revised in January, officially adding the position of trip coordinator to the officers. Section III had been modified to state that officers must be NSS members in good standing and to have been members of the BGG for at least six months prior to their election. An additional change opened up the membership a bit. Whereas the original constitution had stated flatly that full membership was limited to NSS members, this section was revised to allow non-NSS members to be members of the grotto for one year, after which NSS membership was expected.<sup>86</sup>

The big caving news for Kentucky in that year, at least as far as the general public was concerned, was the discovery of a cave in Letcher County’s Pine Mountain that allegedly would “make Mammoth Cave look like a baby.” (Seriously?) The discoverer, Ray Love, “owner of two Masters degrees and many years of study of geological formations all across the continent,” hailed it as the “wonder of the world.” (Now, where have we heard this sort of thing before?). Love reported that the cave had rooms 400 feet high and abounded with all sorts of colors, blues, greens and shades of brown and contained a 30-foot-high angel-like formation, and so bestowed the awkward name of Letcher County Natural Color Angel Cave upon it. There



*Angel Cave, redrafted by G. O’Dell from original published in The Kentucky Caver, April 1971.*

were big rooms 400 feet high, he said, and a hole with a sheer drop of 325 feet. "I'm sure the cave probably runs about 60 miles or so," Love stated, and that officials of the American Speleological Association had confirmed his belief that the cave was a true wonder of nature. Not a single word of any of this was true, of course, but Love's claims created quite a commotion, especially in Letcher County, where county judge Bob Collins virtually swooned over the report, saying that this "could make Letcher County the garden spot of the world. Gatlinburg could be just a drop in the bucket compared to what we have here."<sup>87</sup>

Skeptical, the Blue Grass Grotto immediately mounted an expedition to evaluate this fabulous discovery.

Dave Beiter and his new wife, Jo, the two Kelley brothers, Charlie Bishop, Roger Sperka, Jim Sharpe, Sam McKinney, and T. Vigour headed to Letcher County with compass and tape and some serious reservations. The exploration and survey revealed a single passage of walking height that led 387 feet to the drop-off for a rather impressive domepit, 67 feet to the floor and about 50 feet estimated to the dome above. That was all the cave that there was. The angel formation was around the corner from the entry balcony, but required traversing a small ledge to see it. Reports of those who made the effort to see it were less than effusive. Beiter, who wrote the report, noted that "No unusual colors were seen in the cave. The limestone was the standard gray of the rock of the area. What little flowstone was present was of the standard muddy tan color." In conclusion, he wrote, "it wasn't worth getting out of bed." Little was ever again heard of this "wonder of the world."<sup>88</sup>

The Kentucky Cave Survey was in full bloom, with a more concerted and better coordinated effort now being made than ever before. In July, 1970, the *Kentucky Caver* reported that there were 787 confirmed caves known in Kentucky; Rockcastle topped the list with 69, followed by Carter with 59, and Fayette with 53. The issue noted that Dave Beiter had developed a format for computerizing the survey and "we are in the process of converting all



*Mayor of Whitesburg (center) hearing the disappointing news about Angel Cave from Dave Kelley (in yellow T-shirt with arms crossed), May 1971. Photo by Charlie Bishop.*

our data to computer punch cards." For those of you who do not remember the early days of computing, in the days before desktop computers any sort of programming was truly a pain. The University of Kentucky had a mainframe computer, which had less capability than your average pocket calculator today. Programs had to first be typed onto punch cards. I recall an entire room at UK full of punch-card typewriters, occupied by students busy typing their programs. One mistake in typing, and you had to throw the card away. Wastebaskets accumulated huge amounts of card chips, and some enterprising cavers even used these for groundwater tracing! Once you had typed your program, you took your stack of cards and submitted them to the receptionist for the mainframe. These would be run in batches overnight, so that you would get your results the next day. If your program had an error in it, it would fail to run, so you had to do it over and submit a new batch of cards.<sup>89</sup>

At about this time, Dave also created a complex program for entering and processing cave survey data. The survey data also had to be typed onto punch cards, and when you submitted your data to the UK mainframe, there was a large stack of cards (about three-four inches thick) representing the program, plus a stack of cards for the cave data. Again, if you had made a mistake, you got nothing for your efforts. At least the printed report of the

computer run would tell you where the mistake(s) had occurred so you knew where to look to correct it. All of my Rockcastle County survey data was typed up on cards, and I used Dave's program to process it.

"It may seem like lunacy on my part," observed BGG chair Charlie Bishop in October, 1970, "but I would like to see a Kentucky Cave Survey group made up of all the groups caving in the state." Despite this admirable goal, he considered the prospects unlikely, given "the clannish nature of the groups that cave in the state." Nevertheless, important steps toward this goal were made in 1971, beginning with Roger Sperka's inventory of mapped caves in Kentucky. As Angelo George (Louisville Grotto) recalls from various conversations, Roger was taking a computer course at the University of Kentucky and was assigned the project of building a database, and he decided to do caves. This task was the initial step in setting up the database for Kentucky caves, and in this project he received quite a bit of assistance from Angelo, who had his own files on caves in the region that included Breckinridge, Meade, and Jefferson counties. Tom Barr had made his own files available to the BGG some years before, which were handwritten notes in a set of notebooks that did not include any maps. The Louisville Grotto, which had been founded in 1965, also provided input, as well as the Cincinnati cavers and other individuals. Sperka's published list focused solely on those caves for which a map or survey data was available. The length of each cave was determined by him from the survey notes or by using a map wheel on the map. His compilation listed 100 mapped caves totaling 189.3 miles. Fayette had the most mapped caves, sixteen, not surprising since Lexington was the home of the Blue Grass Grotto; Edmonson next with a dozen caves, followed by Jessamine and Woodford with ten mapped caves each. The Flint Ridge system in Edmonson was longest, with nearly 385,000 feet surveyed, followed by Mammoth Cave with 243,000; the two systems had not yet been linked at this time. Sloan's Valley was in third place with 79,000 feet, and Mundy's Landing system in the Inner Bluegrass at eighth place with 14,000 feet. Early days, indeed!<sup>90</sup>

A few months later, Angelo reported on a meeting of the Kentucky Cave Survey (KCS) held in Lexington on July 9. The cave file now consisted of 1,100 locations, which he expected after cross-

comparison with the Louisville Grotto files would yield about 2,000 caves known for the state. There was some discussion as to a suitable permanent repository for cave maps. The Filson Club (today Filson Historical Society) had offered their facilities, and participants were leaning in this direction, also the NSS cave file in Lawrence, Kansas, was also being considered.<sup>91</sup>

In January of the following year, 1972, Angelo George provided a status update for the Kentucky Cave Survey, noting that the information was the result of an exchange between the Lexington, Louisville, and Murray grottoes, the latter being the Southwest Kentucky Student Grotto at Murray University. The NSS office had recently sent a print-out of Kentucky caves known to the Society, which was found to be somewhat disappointing because the cave locations were descriptive rather than based on a coordinate system. A cave density map for the state was created, locating 1,959 caves, and the map would be published in the January 1972 issue of the Louisville Grotto's *Karst Window*. The latest compilation recorded 2,103 caves, of which 473 were in the Bluegrass region. The top five counties were Breckinridge with 268 caves, 176 in Hardin, 144 in Carter, 126 in Meade, and 94 in Rockcastle. In April, 1972, Sperka published an updated version of his mapped caves list, showing that the number of caves for which a map was available had grown from 100 to 157, and total mileage from 189.3 miles to 224.2 miles. A third Sperka compilation appeared in April 1973, with mapped caves increasing to 311, and by this time Flint-Mammoth had been connected into one system of more than 760,000 surveyed feet. This was the last such listing; after the 1973 report, the KCS lost momentum and it would be some years before any such organization became active again.<sup>92</sup>

### Fast Forward

**Thomas C. Barr, Jr.** continued to teach at the University of Kentucky and to mentor budding young zoologists until his retirement in 1993, but, in retirement, never gave up his studies of cave invertebrate fauna and continued to expand his extensive publication record. Shortly before his death in 2011, Barr asked me to collect beetle specimens from Teamer's Cave in Rockcastle County, a task which I put off just a little too long. According to Kipling Will, Professor of Biology at



the University of California, Berkeley, Barr's main publication interests in later years were in the *Cydrini* of eastern North America, the platynine genus *Rhadine*, the bembindiine subtribe *Anilla*, the Appalachia *Trechus*, and the remaining undescribed species of *Pseudanophthalmus*, "the most speciose genus of cave carabids in North America. Tom estimated he had [specimens] of 225 species of the latter, of which 138 had been described." He published over 100 papers and described more than 200 species. John Holsinger, his former student and colleague at UK, stated, "Tom's fieldwork in Kentucky and before that in Tennessee is virtually legendary." Kipling Will considered Barr to be "one of the great polymaths, especially in later life." Barr cultivated daylilies as a hobby, creating exotic varieties, played the mandolin, wrote short stories, and raised champion dachshunds with his wife, Judy. He was versatile in computer technology and computer imaging, and enjoyed photography and microscopy. He was actively involved in the protection of caves by sitting on boards, working with state and federal agencies, local and national cave organizations, and local citizens, such as his efforts to protect the Sloan's Valley cave system in Pulaski County. On December 10, 2008, Barr received the Biological Diversity Protection award from the Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission. One of speleology's leading scientists, Dr. Thomas Calhoun Barr, Jr., died from a heart attack on April 29, 2011.<sup>93</sup>

**Robert A. Kuehne** continued to teach zoology at the University until his death in 1984, becoming chair of the section on environmental and evolutionary biology in 1978. During his academic career, he authored or co-authored numerous papers on ecology, fish taxonomy, and the distribution patterns of aquatic animals. In 1983, he co-authored a book with Roger W. Barbour, *The American Darters*, published by the University Press of Kentucky. Darters are a group of small, colorful freshwater fish whose beauty rivals tropical reef fishes; few exceed six inches in length and some no more than an inch at maturity. They are native only to North America and occur widely in the United States, but are little known to the general public because of their small size. Kuehne's only book, *American Darters*, is considered the first comprehensive guide to these fishes, covering all named and several undescribed forms, 140 species in total. He was an active conservationist and fought

against water pollution. Kuehne died in Lexington from pancreatic cancer on December 18, 1984.<sup>94</sup>

**Wayne H. Davis** taught at the University of Kentucky from the early 1960s until he retired in December 1994. He contributed numerous papers on bat biology and natural history, including pioneering work on homing behavior and migration of bats. Early in his career, Davis conducted exhaustive banding studies of bats that have helped provide numerous longevity records for bats recaptured decades later. He co-authored several texts on bats, including *Bats of America* with Roger Barbour, published by the University Press of Kentucky in 1969. He also contributed to the establishment of the North American Symposium on Bat Research, which annually brings together hundreds of scientists and managers to discuss topics related to bats, and the publication *Bat Research News*, a quarterly periodical that he founded in 1960 as *Bat Banding News*. Davis and Barbour collaborated again on the book *Mammals of Kentucky*, released by the Press in 1974. Davis invented a unique bird box design that only bluebirds nested in and discouraged other birds. He placed over 3,000 of these boxes along Kentucky highways as well as in many surrounding states. These nesting boxes helped to repopulate bluebird populations that were nearly decimated. He wrote a guide on how to attract and care for these beautiful birds, *Bluebirds and Their Survival*, published in 1995. Davis was honored by Kentucky Heartwood, Southeastern Bat Diversity Network and was chosen as Naturalist of the Year by the Kentucky Society of Natural History. He passed away quietly in his sleep, March 16, 2017.<sup>95</sup>

**Stewart Peck** left Kentucky in 1964 after receiving a B.S. in Zoology, and went on to pursue graduate studies at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois. His thesis research was on cave beetles and at Northwestern he was able to work with a researcher who had carried out extensive investigations of cave beetles in Alabama. After obtaining his Master's, Stewart went on to Harvard for his Ph.D., again focusing on cave beetle research. With degree in hand, he received an offer for a teaching position at Carleton University in Ottawa, Canada. "It was a good offer," he recalls, "and I just jumped at it. I've been happy here ever since." His enthusiasm for research on cave fauna remained unabated, and took him across the United States and through the West Indies, and into South

America, New Guinea and Australia. “I pretty much got a good global introduction to caves. Caves are isolated environments, something like an island. I went to real islands, oceanic islands, looking at the ways that insects would occupy islands, how they got there, how they change through time, the evolutionary processes.” His globetrotting research resulted in an extensive publication record, with many articles appearing in the *NSS Bulletin* (later *Journal of Cave and Karst Studies*) and other significant journals and publications. Stewart retired in 2013, and remains in Canada.<sup>96</sup>

**Ray McAdams** taught at Transylvania for a year, and then briefly at the University of Kentucky as a graduate assistant. He left Lexington because “my wife kept looking at my paychecks and she saw how small they were. She said, do we want to be philanthropists all our life? So, I left and, and went into pharmaceutical sales.” Ray moved to Cincinnati about 1968, taking employment with a pharmaceutical company. In the early 1970s, he bought a beachfront place in Florida and some land in Kentucky near Lake Cumberland with a cabin, in Russell County on Cave Springs Ridge. Ray has continued to venture underground, from time to time. He found a cave near his cabin that contains a small population of big-eared bats, and about three years ago visited another cave on a tract of land he was interested in purchasing, but which proved too expensive. In his retirement, Ray divides his time, according to the season of the year, between his Florida and Kentucky properties. He has maintained his NSS membership for his entire life, and in 2021, the NSS recognized Ray for sixty years as a member of the Society.<sup>97</sup>

**Thomas H. Haydon** graduated from the University of Kentucky in 1966 with a degree in electrical engineering. He obtained employment in Akron, Ohio, and worked for several different chemical plants, and for a while in Brazil, and with B.F. Goodrich in Troy. He retired in 2001 and continues to live in Troy.<sup>98</sup>

**Bill Andrews** obtained a position with the state of Kentucky as an environmental chemist after graduating in 1968, and although thereafter less active in cave exploration and grotto affairs, his interest in caves and, in particular cave conservation, remained unabated. He ran the metals laboratory in Frankfort for the Kentucky Department for Environmental Protection's Division of Environmental Services, housed in the

State Central Laboratory Facility. When Dr. James Quinlan, chief scientist at Mammoth Cave from 1973 to 1989, was investigating the karst aquifers of the region, he used metals as groundwater tracers to link up sinkholes and springs. It was Bill who ran the analyses for him. He was co-author on two of Quinlan's many publications, and his work acknowledged in many others. He was an ardent conservationist and advocate for many environmental causes, and a member of the Boone Karst Conservation Task Force, Kentucky Heartwood, Bluegrass Trust, and the American Chestnut Foundation, among other conservation organizations. Bill did a lot of volunteer work inventorying caves in the Daniel Boone National Forest for the Boone Task Force, and was extremely engaged with the U.S. Forest Service. His son, Drew, assisted him on several occasions, and recalls, “Whenever he got wind of a potential timber sale, he would go swing through the area and document all the karst features and get them into the system, so that whatever activity that was being proposed to the Forest Service would not damage the caves. That's what he did from college until a few years before he died.” After about 2000, Bill had to rein in his activity because of problems with his knees.<sup>99</sup>

Bill fought alcoholism for much of his life, finally overcoming this disease in 1983. Not long afterward, he was able to reconnect with his son, William M. Andrews, Jr. (Drew), and about 1990 bought a tract of land on Boling Branch in Powell County, near the Slade interstate exchange and rest area and not far from Natural Bridge and Red River



*Bill Andrews in later life. Courtesy Drew Andrews.*



*Bill's getaway cabin near the Red River Gorge. Courtesy Drew Andrews.*

Gorge. I remember visiting Bill on several occasions and helping him investigate some of the small caves on or near his property. He wanted to build a cabin here as a retreat. According to Drew, Bill's first cabin was built in a hemlock grove, but the cabin was right over a spring and the site proved to be too damp. He erected a second cabin, with Drew's assistance, on a better site, completing it by late 1992. One of Drew's fondest memories is from a time at the cabin when, in the evening, Bill set up a tape player and played part of a cassette of bird calls, cued up to the barred owl. "He cranked it up and played it, and said, shhh, hold still. And we played it, and across the valley, a barred owl called back, kind of like, no, this is MY place! He plays it again, and then this barred owl comes crashing through the trees, looking for the intruder, and landed right above looking around trying to find the intruding owl. That was a neat memory, how he faked a conversation with a barred owl and brought it in." Bill died April 16, 2012 at St. Joseph Hospital from congestive heart failure.<sup>100</sup>

**Gerald Tuggle** graduated from Transylvania University in 1967 with a B.A. in liberal arts. He was drafted by the United States Army in 1969, but rather than being shipped to Vietnam, he was assigned to Fort Bragg, North Carolina, where he spent the two years of his military service. Afterward, he came back to Lexington and went to work for his father, who had been in charge of the physical plant department at Transylvania for many years, and rose to the position of vice-president of

that department before resigning in 1976 to begin a career in construction. He was soon qualified to become a home builder, and owned and operated Homes by Gerald for many years before moving to Tucson, Arizona, in 1991, where he continued in the building business. In April, 2022, Gerald moved to Mexico to work for a company involved in providing affordable housing on a global basis.<sup>101</sup>

**John Thrailkill** retired from the University of Kentucky in 1992 after 26

years as a dedicated teacher and pioneering karst research, and retired with Lavine to St. Augustine, Florida. The couple purchased a 36-foot cutter and sailed it from the east shore of Chesapeake Bay to Georgetown in the Bahamas and back to St Augustine. They were only able to enjoy a few years of sailing before Lavine's health issues left them confined to land. On July 23, 2006, Lavine passed away, at the age of 78, having been married to John for 53 years. Eight years later, as John's health began to fail, he moved to the Pavilion, an assisted living facility operated by Bayview Home Health in St. Augustine, and by arrangement with Bayview and the Community Hospice it was possible for him to pass, as he wished, comfortably and peacefully from his apartment there on February 14, 2014.<sup>102</sup>

**Charlie and Cat Bishop** have continued to be very active members of the Blue Grass Grotto and the larger caving community since the early days, as well as pursuing a variety of other interests. Although both explored other caves that prompted their interest, the primary focus of their efforts for more than fifty years has been James and Coach caves, into which they have made countless surveying trips with other members of the elite James Cave group. The National Speleological Society honored the Bishop couple in 2010 with the prestigious Lew Bicking Award for their work in James Cave. This award is presented each year to an individual or couple for their long-term dedication to a particular exploration or survey project. Cat was employed for nearly twenty years as a technical



writer for Kentucky Equine Research, and put her expertise to good use in the completion of an outstanding book on cave exploration, *The James Cave Project: Sixty Years Inside Bald Knob*, which was published by the NSS in 2020. Both Charlie and Cat Bishop have been designated Fellows of the NSS, Charlie in 1983 and Cat in 1986, an award given to members who exemplified by their actions their dedication to the goals of the Society or the Society itself. Both were instrumental in managing the society's annual convention that was held in Frankfort, Kentucky in 1985.<sup>103</sup>

In high school, Charlie was a competitive athlete who played tennis, bowled on the school league, and was on the track team where he ran the mile and competed in the pole vault, “way back when poles were made of wood and the landing pit was just a pile of sacks filled with something moderately soft.” In 1988, both Charlie and Cat began competing in a variety of Masters-level sports, both garnering many awards at local, state, and national competitions. The Bishops started track and field in 1994 and have competed in senior track meets in twenty-seven states. In 2011, after a hiatus of nearly half a century since high school, Charlie again took up pole vaulting, competing at the Blue Grass State Games and Kentucky Senior Games. In modern vaulting competition, poles are “made of fiberglass, and the landing pit is an immense set of huge foam blocks that are joined by Velcro strips and covered with a soft mat.” Charlie also competes in hurdles, high jump, long jump, 800-meter run, 1500-meter run, javelin, discus, and shot put at the state, regional, and national level. Cat competes in 50-meter dash, 100-meter dash, 200-meter run, 400-meter run, steeplechase, shot put, discus, javelin, hammer throw, high jump, long jump, and triple jump, not necessarily all at any one meet but she has competed in as many as 11 events at some meets. “Senior games sounds like a joke,” she says, “but there are some excellent athletes at these meets including a number of former Olympic competitors.”<sup>104</sup>

**Frank Reid** was a well-loved member of the caving community, and remained in touch with his many friends in Kentucky even after moving to Bloomington, Indiana. He was actively involved in cave rescue training as an instructor. On January 24, 1998, Frank was helping to lead a group of novice cavers through Saltpeter Cave for the Carter Caves Crawlathon when, at about 11:30 a.m., not far from

the entrance, he said he was not feeling well and collapsed from an apparent heart attack. The cave is shown commercially and there was no strenuous activity involved on the tour. EMT’s and a medical student were present on the trip and immediately began CPR; ambulances arrived quickly and transported Frank to a hospital in Morehead, where resuscitation efforts failed.<sup>105</sup>

**Dave Beiter**, bitterly disappointed and angry after his blowup with Thrailkill, his dissertation advisor, retreated almost completely from civilization. He purchased some Wayne County land in Dry Valley, near the South Fork of the Cumberland River about six miles southeast of the Sloans Valley cave system. There was a huge cave entrance on the property, but sumped a short distance inside. Here Dave and Jo wholeheartedly embraced the back-to-the-earth-movement that was gaining momentum during this era, striving to become self-sufficient on their piece of Mother Earth. Charlie Gibbs (inventor of the Gibbs ascender) recalled that Beiter convinced as many as a hundred people to buy mountain farmland and move to southern Kentucky to take up a back-to-nature, counterculture lifestyle. According to Bill Walden, Beiter started a hippie commune in Dry Valley that last for several years. “Better to die in a cave than live in a city,” Dave wrote in a letter to me.<sup>106</sup>

Dave wrote to me on August 12, 1972, the first of eight letters he would send my way over a twenty-five-year period. “Finally got some time to write,” he said. “The cucumbers have had us busy picking for a month.” He was raising produce for sale, including string beans, tomatoes, and corn, and had honey as well, and was considering getting into the feeder pig business. He noted that his neighbor Arnold Flynn had a farm for sale, asking \$5,000, that he was thinking of acquiring if I was not interested in purchasing it. Although the house was “nothing special, it could quickly be renovated. Get the morons out that are in there now and it would partly heal itself.” Dave also informed me that he was planning to go back to the University of Kentucky for the fall semester, and possibly in the spring as well. As far as I can tell, this never occurred.<sup>107</sup>

After the commune broke up, he purchased a small farm in one of the most remote locations in Kentucky, located inside a sinkhole-speckled loop of the Little South Fork of the Cumberland River in

eastern Wayne County about fifteen miles from the Tennessee border. The nearest community was Ritner, about mile to the north, having a population of 25, “counting all who live in the Lick Creek drainage.” Dave’s property could be reached by traveling from Ritner over about a mile of, as he put it, “half-assed” road, which led him to name his property “1/2-Fast Farm.” Dave did not care for casual visitors; if you arrived without an appointment, you would come to locked gates. He described the approach procedure to me in 1987: From Ritner, “Continue 100 yards to bottom of hill and TURN RIGHT down and across dry creek. If Ida knowed you wuz a commin, Ida graded the ford. This is the infamous Half-Assed Road. Continue a half mile to gate & ring gatebell. Continue a quarter mile to unlocked (if you have an appointment!) gate at bottom of a hill you can’t back up & no place to turn around. I can’t hear your honkin’ and hollerin’ here. Ring bell at first gate. Continue a quarter mile to my house.”<sup>108</sup>

Nearly every time he wrote, he encouraged me to come down to Wayne County for a visit. His interest in caves remained unabated. He had many leads to potentially large caves in this region of massively-bedded Mississippian limestone. “Gary, you’re just the fellow I need. Howd you like to help me find the deepest cave/pit in Kentucky?” I had visited 1/2-Fast Farm a few years before, a social call to an old friend that did not involve caving. For dinner, Dave shot a chicken out of his yard and we had buttered corn sprinkled with red salt scraped off



*Dave Beiter on the porch of his farmhouse near Ritner in Wayne County, Kentucky, in what I hope is a posed picture! Northeastern Caver, September 2004.*

of a cattle lick block. That was my only trip to Wayne County and I now greatly regret not having taken him up on his offer. He was corresponding with others as well, and some did come to Wayne County to go caving with Dave, though far fewer than he hoped for.<sup>109</sup>

Charlie Gibbs was one who came to visit Dave in Wayne County and go caving, lured in early 1972 by a phone call from Dave suggesting that he might want to buy the well-known Blowing Cave. Dave and Charlie had visited the cave before, but it had been flooded shut at the time. The owner closed the cave because he believed (correctly, as dye traces later showed) the water of his spring came from the cave. The two men went to meet with the owner, but “he wouldn’t discuss the price because he wouldn’t do any business on Sunday, we had to wait until Monday.” They went into the cave but could not explore much because the water was up. On Monday, Charlie made the deal, and in April got a loan from a local bank to purchase the 40-acre Blowing Cave property.<sup>110</sup>

Dave’s marriage to Jo did not long survive the rigors of living hardscrabble in such an isolated environment. After a few years, the two divorced and ended up living on separate mountaintops in Wayne County. Jo eventually moved to Illinois and remarried to Harrison Daniel Green. Dave was very bitter about the breakup. In his letter to me of April 12, 1985, he observed, “I count marriage among those things that no one with the brains God gave a goose, would do twice. Along with pissing on the electric fence and licking the flagpole at 22 below zero.” He became even less welcoming of visitors. Bill Walden noted that Dave was very friendly when they came to see him in Dry Valley, but “as time went on he began meeting us at his door with a weapon in hand. He never threatened us and I never felt threatened but we eventually stopped calling on him.” Lou Simpson made a similar observation: “Dave was a survivalist and told me once that “when all the little pieces of paper in the world become worthless to buy anything, don’t come to my place.” He usually answered the door with a gun, and his place was probably booby-trapped, so we stayed away, except Charlie Gibbs, who isn’t afraid of anybody.”<sup>111</sup>

My visit to 1/2-Fast Farm in the mid-1970s was the last time I saw or heard from Dave for more than a decade, until he wrote me again in April 1985. The NSS Convention was to be held in Frankfort,

Kentucky, that year, and members of the Blue Grass Grotto, including me, were working hard to make sure it would be a success. Dave's letter was followed up by some telephone exchanges, the end result being that I invited him stay with me for a week during the convention. I had just purchased a farm myself, not in the mountains of east or south Kentucky, but in the rolling plains of the Inner Bluegrass, in Scott County, only about a dozen miles from Frankfort, and was living alone at the time. We enjoyed each other's company during this reunion, although he drove separately to Frankfort and I did not see much of him during the convention.

I received several more letters from him during the next year, again encouraging me to come down and help him explore cave leads he had found. "Are there any cavers left?" he asked. "I've even got some leads that might turn out to be some super deep (for Kentucky anyways) pits, and no one to drop them." Much as I would have liked to have obliged, I could not get away, then being more focused on career and things-not-related-to-caving. "It is getting dangerous to be out in the woods here during the summer," he continued. "Marijuana growing has gotten to be big business here. It seems like every sinkhole is somebody's pot patch." Beiter could speak knowledgeably on the subject, for during 1979-1980, he briefly became a major pot farmer in Wayne County. He learned how to cultivate top-quality sinsemilla marijuana, which local users claimed was the best pot they had ever smoked. With the help of some friends, Beiter put in a crop expected to sell for \$25,000, but after harvesting in October could not find a buyer to take it off their hands. Acting on an anonymous tip (which Dave believed came from people who had been stealing part of his crop in the field), he was arrested, fined \$500, and served 30 days in the Wayne County jail. The Louisville *Courier-Journal* published a photo of his arrest, showing Dave rather wistfully clutching an enormous leafy stalk of marijuana next to a pickup truck loaded with more.<sup>112</sup>

The Internet opened up some new possibilities for Dave to generate income and to air his philosophy. The last communication I ever received from him was an email, not a letter, on May 6, 1997. I have my doubts as to whether Internet services were available at this time at his home or even anywhere in rural Wayne County, but he may have gone to Somerset periodically to use services

PROPERTY EVALUATION  
SURVEYING, GEOLOGY, HYDROLOGY

GUIDE SERVICES  
CAVING & CANOEING

## **CAVE, Inc.**

CONSULTING ALETHIOLOGIST & VENTURE ESCHATOLOGISTS

DAVID PERRY BEITER  
GEOCHEMIST  
(606) 376-3137

1/2 FAST ROAD  
RITNER, KENTUCKY 42639

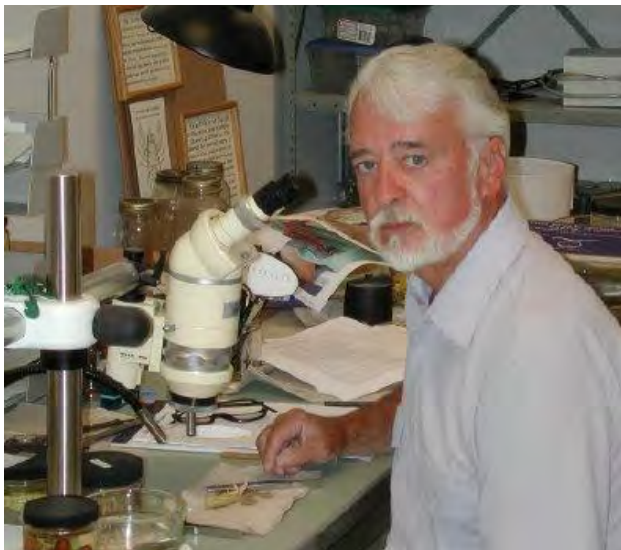
provided by the library. Dave ventured into online entrepreneurship, offering skills and services that had served him well during his caving career: surveying and computer programming, geological and hydrological consulting, and guide services for those who wanted adventures in caving and canoeing. His business card read, "Cave, Inc: Consulting Alethiologist & Venture Eschatologists." Most persons would have no idea what these credentials meant, but they sounded very impressive and were actually a tongue-in-cheek representation of his personal philosophies. Alethiology, a rarely used term, is an aspect of philosophy that is concerned with the nature of truth; eschatology is concerned with death, judgement, and the final destiny of humankind and the entire created order. Dave created an informational package called "Survey Land Yourself," which he advertised in various back-to-the-land and simple living chatrooms, which he offered during the 1990s on a floppy disk for \$5. The disk contained detailed instructions and deed plotting software based on his CAVEMAP program. He also offered to sell customers the necessary surveying gear.<sup>113</sup>

Dave was long aware that he had a heart condition, and over the years had mentioned this to several caving friends. Lou Simpson recalls that Dave had told him, some time prior to the 2001 NSS Convention in Mt. Vernon, Kentucky, that he needed a heart transplant. In later years, Charlie Gibbs noted, Dave spent less time caving and more time with his farm. Charlie saw him last during the spring of 2003, when Dave came to the Gibbs' cabin near Blowing Cave for a picnic: "He seemed in good health at that time and did not let on that his heart condition was worsening." On July 16 of that year, Dave died suddenly at his farm from a heart attack, and, appropriately, was buried on the farm that meant so much to him. Dave's life focused on



cave exploration, more so than anyone else I have known. He led or participated in the exploration and survey of many cave systems, including Skull Cave in New York, and Sloans Valley (25+ miles), Coral Cave System (23+ miles), Triple S Cave (7 miles), Blowing Cave, and Wind Cave in Kentucky. Dave was brilliant, eccentric, paranoid, and sometimes obnoxious, but could be a good friend. He was something of a mentor to me when I was a young caver, and this may help to explain some things about me my wife, Carol, sometimes finds rather odd.<sup>114</sup>

**John E. Cooper** was appointed Director of Research and Collections at the North Carolina State Museum of Natural History in 1974, a position he held until 1985. He returned to the Museum in 1997, which had been renamed as the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences, serving as the Curator of Crustaceans until illness forced his retirement in 2014. John remained an active researcher to nearly the end of his life; of the 135 publications produced during a long and productive scientific career, eleven were published after his 75<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2004. He died at his home in Knightdale, North Carolina, on August 28, 2015, at the age of 85, while recovering from a stroke that occurred earlier in the year. He is remembered fondly by his colleagues and students. One student, Richard Franz, a high school student in Baltimore in the



*John Cooper in his lab at the N.C. Museum of Natural Sciences. Source: James W. Fetzner Jr, "John Edward Cooper, 1929-2015," Freshwater Crayfish 21 (December, 2015), 10.*

1950s who took biology courses from John: "Cooper brought me and other Baltimore high school students to Florida in the late 1950s to hunt snakes. Coop was a field scientist who taught us students the value of keeping accurate notes." On these trips south, Franz "learned to pin and hand-grab my first water moccasins and canebrake rattlesnakes." Zac Loughman, a crayfish taxonomist at West Liberty University (WV), recalled,

Dr. Cooper's manuscript reviews were infamous – in a good way! They were insanely thorough. When I received the reviews back on the first species that I described, they were literally red. At first, a white-hot panic came over me and I thought, what am I doing, I'm not fit for this! I gathered myself, and then began to read his comments. John totally understood that this was my first attempt, and took the time with each comment to explain what I did wrong, and what I needed to do to fix it. I learned more about the taxonomic process completing that revision than I ever could sitting in a classroom. I am forever in his debt for taking me under his wing the way he did. He had a huge impact on my career, both as a professor and as a scientist."

As Fetzner observed, the discipline "will no doubt mourn his incredible loss for many many years to come, especially the loss of his extensive biological knowledge and taxonomic expertise of southeastern crayfish."<sup>115</sup>

**Wini Yunker (Mastin)** left the BGG after 1971 and did not renew her NSS membership after March, 1974, but she continued to lead a very active life that, from time to time, involved cave exploration and rappelling. Wini was certainly determined to make the most out of life. In October, 1977, she married Sylvester J. Yunker and the couple adopted a son, Joseph, who had been born on May 17, 1977. The marriage ended in 1982, shortly after Wini's unsuccessful run for mayor of Lexington in 1981. Wini garnered nearly a thousand votes (three percent) out of a field of six candidates, the victor being Lexington attorney Scotty Baesler. She was quite active both civically and politically, being, at various times in her life, chair of Jessamine County Historic Preservation commission; a member of the Daughters of the American Revolution; National Geological Society; Bluegrass Crafts; Jessamine County

Democrats; Business & Professional Women's Association; Jessamine County Library Board; Jessamine County Food Pantry; Jessamine County Democratic Election Commission since 2004; and Ombudsman for Nursing Home Residents Association since 2008.<sup>116</sup>

Wini came to national attention in 2000. Ever since she had been rejected as a Peace Corps volunteer in 1961 because of her lack of a college degree, she had continued to dream of a day when her long-cherished goal of Corps service could be realized. When her son, Joe, was still very young, Wini was hired by Sargent & Greenleaf of Nicholasville, which makes high-security locks for banks, vaults, and safes. The company offered an education reimbursement program, by which employees could take college courses and be reimbursed for the costs. Wini took advantage of this program and earned a degree in marketing from Spalding University in Louisville. Every third weekend for four years, she drove seventy miles to downtown Louisville, where she stayed in a dormitory and studied as part of Spalding's weekend program. She then contacted the Peace Corps and was advised to get a master's degree. She did just that at the University of Kentucky's Patterson School of Diplomacy and International Commerce, receiving a degree in international commerce. With an advanced degree in hand, in 1998 she applied again to the Peace Corps and this time she was accepted. On January 1, 2000, Wini was flown to Kiev, the capital of Ukraine, for a two-year stint, where she first lived with a family for several months to study the language and culture of the region, and afterward taught economics at a high school in Kirovograd. Thirty-nine years after being rejected by the Corps, at the age of sixty-five, her dream came true.<sup>117</sup>

Wini's amazing life's journey to the Peace Corps was profiled as a chapter in the 2005 book, *Defying Gravity: A Celebration of Late-Blooming Women*, by Prill Boyle, but Wini was not yet done with being an extraordinary woman. In 1968, I was present when Wini became the first woman ever to rappel off High Bridge in Jessamine County, Kentucky, the descent being about 225 feet to the roadway surface below. In 1977, Wini wanted to take her sister, Bettye Lee Mastin, the non-caver *Herald-Leader* staff writer, on a local caving adventure, so she contacted me and I took them to Crystal Cave in Fayette County for a memorably muddy excursion.



*Wini Mastin (left, seated) and her non-caver sister Bettye Lee Mastin near the entrance to Crystal Cave near Lexington, 1977. Photo by Gary O'Dell.*

In 1995, when her son Joe was a senior at Jessamine County High School, she took him to Red River Gorge to teach him rappelling. Her most remarkable vertical experience came in 2013, when Wini was 79 years old. In that year, the Boy Scouts of America hosted their second "Brave the Blue Challenge," a fundraising event which involved rappelling off the Lexington Financial Center, a 31-story tower in bright blue glass. Participants were expected to commit to raising \$1,000. Wini wanted to participate, but wasn't sure she could raise the necessary amount, but "I thought if I could get 13 friends to give \$79 each, because I'm 79 years old, that'll be \$1,000, so I decided to do it." She had no trouble finding sponsors who were able to double the required funds. On Wednesday, September 25, 2013, Wini was on the 31st-floor balcony of "Big Blue" having her harness adjusted by Nina Martin, co-proprietor of Inner Mountain Outfitters. Ready, she stepped over the edge and gracefully rappelled 410 feet to the ground. It was much easier than her High Bridge descent, she recalled: "High Bridge is





*Wini, then 79 years old, rappelled off the Lexington Financial Center in 2013, the oldest person ever to do so. Courtesy of Pablo Alcala.*

open, you don't have your feet against anything and you spin – that makes you dizzy.” I also recall that dizzying spin from 1968 – the fault of the Goldline rope we used which was laid rather than braided.

Wini's adventures finally came to an end on March 9, 2022, after 87 years of a life well lived.<sup>118</sup>

**Terry Marsh** only remained in Lexington for two years, completing his dissertation on *Darlingtonia* and earning his Ph.D. in the spring of 1969.

He secured a position as an assistant professor of biology at North Central College at Naperville, near Chicago, where he remained for more than thirty years until his retirement in 2002. Terry became a collector of antique gasoline lanterns, noting on his web page that “in college one of my professors showed us how useful Coleman lanterns were for finding small animals in caves. He teased us students because our newer Coleman lanterns weren't nickel plated as was his older lantern.” This was obviously a reference to Dr. Barr. “I had such sweet revenge,” Terry said. After he



*Terry Marsh with some specimens of his gas lantern and stove collection. From his website, “The Terry Marsh Lantern Gallery,” <https://terry-marsh.com/about-me/>*



retired, he began to collect antique Coleman lanterns and other antique appliances using liquid fuels to produce heat, including lamps, irons, and portable stoves. In time he had a collection numbering in the hundreds, and when he paid a visit to Tom Barr shortly before the latter's death, he felt a bit smug that he now knew a lot more about Coleman lanterns than his old mentor.<sup>119</sup>

**Gary O'Dell** took a long leave of absence from Rockcastle County and the Blue Grass Grotto following the 1972 publication of *Caves of Rockcastle County*. I did not, however, give up caving but returned to my roots, locating, exploring and surveying caves in the Inner Bluegrass, primarily in the vicinity of Lexington and assisted only by my young brother-in-law, Landrum Haddix. During this time, I managed to negotiate access to several major caves that had been closed for some time, including the historic Phelps Cave. I invited Tom Barr on a trip to Phelps, since that was a cave he had long wanted to visit in order to collect beetles. We were accompanied by his grad student Kay Harker, later manager of the Groundwater Branch in the Kentucky Division of Water; John Thraikill and his wife, Lavine; and one of Thraikill's students, my friend Larry Spangler, and his wife Cindi. Larry was a grad student under Thraikill, investigating the karst flow systems in northern Fayette and southern Scott County, and I often accompanied him in the field and learned dye-tracing methodology from him. At about the same time, I also obtained permission for a trip into Russell Cave. In 1984, I attended my first grotto meeting in twelve years, a very informal affair held at Brian Baker's house. At this meeting, I described Miller's Cave in Rockcastle, a significant cave which I had partially explored but never got around to mapping, and the members present were fired up to take this on as a grotto project. The Miller's project involved a great many BGG members over a two-year period who carried out a survey in this complex cave that totaled more than 13,000 feet. I also again took up editing the *Kentucky Caver* in that year.

My interest in Rockcastle reinvigorated, I continued studying caves in the northeastern section,

sometimes intensely for a while, sometimes letting a few years pass before returning. I obtained a position as an environmental technologist with the Groundwater Branch of the Kentucky Division of Water in 1990, and was able to carry out a certain amount of karst field work consistent with the overall mission of the agency. This included inventorying springs along Crooked Creek in Rockcastle, dye-tracing the source waters of Goochland, Smokehole, Mullins Spring and several other caves, and inventorying hundreds of springs in the Inner Bluegrass. I also helped to establish the Kentucky Groundwater Monitoring Network, traveling across the state to locate springs and wells that landowners would allow to be sampled routinely to assess regional water quality. In 2001, with my Ph.D. in Geography nearly complete (soon accomplished), I took a faculty position at Morehead State University. I developed a course on caves and karst which I taught for many years, and established a research program at Carter Caves State Park, where many of my students conducted research projects. In 2014, Kentucky Governor Stephen Beshear appointed me state geographer, and in 2020, the NSS selected me for the Peter Hauer Award in Spelean History. In the same year I



*Phelps Cave, near Lexington, 1980. From left: Dr. Thomas C. Barr, Jr.; Lavine Thraikill (top); Kay Harker (bottom); Larry Spangler (top); Cindi Spangler (seated); Dr. John Thraikill. Photo by Gary O'Dell.*



*Gary O'Dell (standing, second from right) at Carter Caves State Park with a mixed group of his students from Morehead State University and Blue Grass Grotto members, August 25, 2007. Photo: Gary O'Dell.*

In the same year I received the Distinguished Scholar award from MSU. This year, 2023, the University Press of Kentucky published my book, *Bluegrass Paradise: Royal Spring and the Birth of Georgetown, Kentucky*. Planning to retire at the end of this year, I have become more active with the BGG.

**Bill Rogers** resigned his position as president of the Blue Grass Grotto in 1970 when he moved back to Mercer County and had less time to devote to the Grotto because of increasing responsibilities at IBM and in raising three children, dropping his NSS membership in February 1974. During the 1970s, he took up sky diving for a while and made 17 jumps, and continued to do a little rock climbing with Ron Stokely and a friend from IBM. He lost contact with the BGG (but recently reestablished, however!) and never did a great deal of caving after he left Lexington, but did get to spend some time underground working with the Cave Research Foundation at Mammoth Cave. Bill retired from IBM in 1993, which allowed him more time for artistic pursuits. He became very involved with

working in stained glass and in wood carvings. His wood carvings have been sold at the Kentucky Artisan Center in Berea, Kentucky, and he created a large stained-glass window for the Rollins Fine Arts Building at the University of the Cumberlands (Williamsburg, Kentucky).<sup>120</sup>

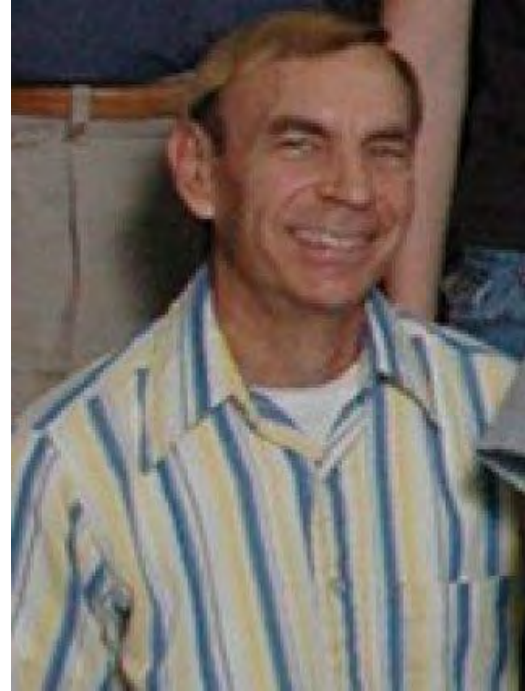
**Ron Stokely** moved to Colorado in 1976, where he continued his passion for outdoor activities. Having become enamored of whitewater canoeing as a Boy Scout, in Colorado he led or participated in more than forty trips to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. Recently, he founded the Boulder Lightpackers Group, which is a hiking group dedicated to ultralight hiking. He remains in touch with his old friend in Kentucky, Bill Rogers.<sup>121</sup>

**Jerry Carpenter**, who came to UK in 1968 to work on a Ph.D. under Barr, began interviewing for faculty positions in 1970, when he obtained his degree. He accepted an offer from Northern Kentucky State College (later University) to teach biology, and remained there for more than thirty years until his retirement in 2001. His research at NKU concentrated on several new species of



saltwater cave crustaceans in the Bahamas where he taught marine biology courses. He taught marine biology on San Salvador Island in the Bahamas nearly every summer for twenty years, plus twice in Australia and once in Ecuador; these courses provided the first international experience for over 200 students. Jerry also kept several large boas and pythons that he took to his NKU biology classes in suitcases. “I encouraged students to get over their fear of snakes by giving them extra points for holding them,” he recalls. “I shot photos of their snake encounters and gave them prints, which they proudly shared with their families.” One of the scariest events of his life occurred in 1979. “I was treating a 44” canebrake rattlesnake for an abscess on the top of its head when it twisted its upper jaw around and bit my right thumb with one fang.” Jerry received life-saving hospital treatment over a ten-day period, including antivenin, blood transfusions, and plastic surgery. “It took over a year for me to return to good health, and this near-death experience gave me an even greater appreciation for life.”<sup>122</sup>

In 1981, Jerry was appointed Chair of the Department of Biological Sciences, a position he held for nine years. In 1993, he found his soul mate, Rhonda, whom he married in 1995, and together they have traveled widely across the US and to many foreign countries. Jerry retired from NKU in 2001, but has continued his research on cave fauna. Numerous trips to San Salvador Island supported his long-term research on several new species of rare cave animals, including the world’s first cave brittle star (*Amphicutis stygobita*), collected and described in 2011. “Another exciting cave species was a new remipede crustacean (*Speleonectes epilimnius*) that we found at the surface of a cave near the San Salvador Island airport.” Because all other remipede species had been found deep in caves, he went to Mexico to learn cave SCUBA diving and to collect remipedes and other new cave crustaceans. During the COVID pandemic, he wrote a major paper on the marine cave isopod, *Bahalana geracei*, that he and his students had been investigating for more than 40 years. “My laboratory breeding of the cave isopods revealed a remarkably long lifespan of more than 20 years,” he reports, “longer than any other isopod ever reported, promoting world-wide interest.” Since his retirement, Jerry has volunteered at the Newport (Kentucky) Aquarium, “where I enjoy reconnecting with former students who work there, shooting



Recent photograph of Jerry Carpenter, retired Professor Emeritus from Northern Kentucky University.

photos of new exhibit animals, and analyzing samples in the Water Quality Lab. For 12 years I volunteered with an educational program that used injured owls and hawks to teach kids about these impressive birds. I continue my love of frogs, marine biology, table tennis, pool, and interacting with members of Tri-State Photographic Society and my loving family.”<sup>123</sup>

**Ron Householder**, formerly president of MapSync, a professional surveying and software company headquartered in Lexington, has been a Senior GIS Consultant and manager of the MapSync Solutions Service Team for over 30 years. Ron has considerable experience in land surveying, GIS and integrating geospatial management and engineering surveying operations. He holds licenses and certifications as a Professional Land Surveyor (PLS), GIS Professional (GISP) and Floodplain Manager (CFM). Ron is also active in several professional organizations, having served as President of both the Indiana-Kentucky-Ohio Geospatial Information Association (IKO/GITA) and the Kentucky Association of Mapping Professionals (KAMP).<sup>124</sup>

**Jim Currens** obtained a B.S. in Geology at the University of Kentucky in 1973, and continued on



to receive a Master's in Geology from Eastern Kentucky University in 1978, his thesis focused on coal stratigraphy. With degree in hand, he was able to obtain a position as a geologist in the Engineering Division of Ashland Coal, a job he detested. A year later, he found his true home with the Kentucky Geological Survey in Lexington, although still stuck working in coal for a time. With an eye to the future, Jim began taking a number of hydrogeology courses, and was able to move into the Water Resources Section in 1986 as a database manager. His real interest lay in karst field work (as might be expected), and his growing expertise in hydrogeology led to being assigned to study a karst flooding problem in Jessamine County. This was exactly the sort of work he wanted to do, and he continued to help Commonwealth citizens deal with problems resulting from living on karst. "I really enjoy helping people out that are in a bind," Currens says. "When somebody has a flooding problem or a house affected by a cover-collapse sinkhole, it's really gratifying to help them as much as I can." He has responded to reports of sinkholes around the state countless times, while conducting or managing



Jim Currens and his son Ben, after a caving trip.  
<http://www.uky.edu/KGS/news/currensretirement.p>

hundreds of groundwater dye traces, leading hydrogeologic projects to help communities understand karst flooding issues, and developing the *Karst Atlas of Kentucky*. The *Atlas* consists of a series of maps at a scale of 1:100,000 that depicts karst features and successful groundwater traces in each of the 30 x 60-minute topographic quadrangles that are underlain by significant areas of carbonate rocks. These maps are available online at <https://www.uky.edu/KGS/water/research/kaatlas.htm> or can be purchased as paper copies from the KGS. According to Jim, "Until I did these maps, we didn't know where we didn't have data. That's one of the most important functions of these maps."<sup>125</sup>

Jim Currens is a Certified Professional Geologist in the Commonwealth of Kentucky, and a Fellow and Life Member of the National Speleological Society, a member of the Geological Society of America and the National Ground Water Association. He received the 2014 Bill Barfield Award for outstanding contributions to water resources research and was recognized as the 2014 Geologist of the year by the Kentucky Chapter of the American Institute of Professional Geologists. Jim retired from the Survey in June, 2017, after 37 years of service.<sup>126</sup>

Jim has been a lifelong active caver who has made many important contributions to Kentucky speleology aside from his KGS work. He has explored caves in Mexico, Colorado, Texas, Missouri, Arkansas, Tennessee, Alabama, Georgia, Virginia, West Virginia, Indiana, and Kentucky. Jim was one of the principals who worked with me investigating the caves in northeastern Rockcastle County during the early 1970s, helping to survey Goochland, Smokehole and other significant caves. When that project came to an end, Jim was determined to develop a major project cave system of his own, and his interest turned to the Mammoth Cave area. He was one of the principal discoverers of Roppel Cave and the Toohey Ridge Cave System and helped found the Central Kentucky Karst Coalition as an organizational framework for exploration of the system. He made his first trip to Toohey Ridge in March, 1975, and discovered the Roppel entrance in April of the following year. Several years of intense survey work brought the Roppel system to a length of nearly fifty miles, and in 1983, a combined team of Cave Research Foundation (CRF) and CKKC cavers connected Roppel to the Flint/Mammoth system.<sup>127</sup>

**Roger Sperka** and his wife Lynn left the state sometime between the summer of 1975 and summer 1976 and relocated to El Paso, Texas, where he took employment as a hydrologist with the city water utility. Not long after arriving in El Paso, Roger and his wife were divorced. Thereafter, he concentrated on his job and did but little caving, although he faithfully maintained his NSS membership through the years. As he later told Jim Currens, he instead pursued a few hobbies, including rock collecting, visiting old mines, stargazing, and shooting. After moving to Texas, Roger had kept such a low profile that he had all but disappeared from caver radar for many years. Jim began a search for him in 2004, because Roger had been such a prominent figure in Kentucky caving during the early 1970s and had created the first data set for Kentucky caves, thus laying the foundation for the present-day Kentucky Speleological Survey (KSS). In December, 2000, the KSS was incorporated as a non-profit corporation in the Commonwealth of Kentucky. The KSS wanted to get in touch with Sperka to learn if he would like to become active in the group. His

contact information was listed in the NSS member's manual, and so Jim made the call. He quickly learned that Roger had suffered a stroke two years before and was then a resident at an assisted living facility, although otherwise in relatively good health.<sup>128</sup>

As they spoke, Roger readily gave permission to the KSS to use those materials of his already in their possession, including a print-out containing the location of hundreds of Kentucky caves. Roger also informed Jim that he had a great deal of additional cave-related documents that he had preserved for many years, and would like someone from the Survey to come to El Paso and pick them up. In 2005, Preston and Shari Forsythe, along with Steve Petruniak, drove a cargo van to El Paso to meet with Roger. Terri Donawell, who held power of attorney from Roger, had worked very hard to box and seal Roger's possessions, including the cave data. According to Preston, the cave boxes contained "a treasure chest of survey notes, cave maps, topos and important pamphlets and reports as well as many papers Roger had authored on cave beetles in KY,



*Roger Sperka (camouflage jacket) in El Paso, Texas, 2003, with Shari Forsythe (far left), Steve Petruniak, and Preston Forsythe (far right). Kentucky Speleological Survey 8 (January 2009), 2.*

especially Wayne County.” They brought back four boxes and six map tubes of cave information; the inventory ran to thirteen typed pages.<sup>129</sup>

Roger Sperka died on February 2, 2015, the result of complications from his 2002 stroke. He had always been a strong supporter of the NSS, making frequent donations to the Society over the years. He named the NSS as the primary beneficiary of his estate; the bequest from Roger was one of the largest ever received by the Society. In 2019, in recognition of Roger’s vital role in establishing the first cave data repository and his generosity to the KSS, the Kentucky Speleological Survey established the Roger Sperka Award, presented to the KSS member who has dedicated themselves to expanding our knowledge of caves and karst features in the state of Kentucky by improving historical data and new data collection techniques. In that year, the first recipient of the Sperka Award was Howard Kalnitz, who had spent many hours working with the donated Sperka data.<sup>130</sup>

As I have researched and written this early history of the Blue Grass Grotto, I have been saddened by all the lost opportunities. Time goes by so quickly! So many of my old friends from the grotto are gone, casualties of the inexorable passage of years: Tom Barr, Bill Andrews, Frank Reid, Mike Yocum, Tab Farthing, Landrum Haddix, John Thraikill, Wini Yunker, are lost to us, and many others who might have become friends, were gone before I thought to make contact. I very much regret that I did not start this project years ago, when more of the early BGG members were still around to share their recollections.

### Acknowledgements

Thanks to all the cavers and others who shared their memories, particularly Ray McAdams, Gerald Tuggle, Thomas H. Haydon, Stewart Peck, Rusty Norton, Jerry Carpenter, Terry Marsh, Drew Andrews, Bill Rogers, Cat Bishop, and Bob Addis. Bill Torode of the NSS Library provided copies of the BGG annual reports, letters and other documents, and was always quick to respond to my queries.



### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Alfred Brauer, “William Delbert Funkhouser, 1881-1948,” *Science* 108 (December 24, 1948), 726; “Departmental History: The Department of Anthropology,” Department of Anthropology, Univ. of Kentucky,

<https://anthropology.as.uky.edu/anthropology-history>, accessed April 14, 2023; William D. Funkhouser and William S. Webb, *Ancient Life in Kentucky* (Frankfort: Kentucky Geological Survey, 1928); Robert K. Murray and Roger W. Brucker, *Trapped! The Story of Floyd Collins* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1982).

<sup>2</sup> “Challenger to Replace Briggs at U.K. Next School Year,” *Lexington Leader*, July 17, 1953; “26 Are Added to Arts and Sciences Staff at University of Kentucky,” *Lexington Leader*, October 16, 1958;

<sup>3</sup> Lynn and Brian Roebuck, “In Memory of Dr. Thomas Calhoun Barr, Jr.,” *NSS News* 69 (September, 2011), 11-13; Westinghouse Science Talent Search Scholarship Won by Tom Barr, Jr.,” *NSS News* 7 (June, 1949), 1; Thomas C. Barr, Jr., “Luminous Worms Found in Tennessee Cave,” *NSS News* 7 (August, 1949), 6; “Barr Directs Research in Exploration,” *Nashville Banner*, February 15, 1954.

<sup>4</sup> Roger W. Brucker and Richard A. Watson, *The Longest Cave* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois Univ. Press, 1987), 156 (quotation); *Lexington Herald*, September 20, 1961; *Lexington Leader*, “Cave Research Unit Okayed by University,” April 3, 1962; “Announcements,” *Science* 138 (October 12, 1962), 124 (quotation).

<sup>5</sup> “Robert A. Kuehne, UK Professor, Dies,” *Herald-Leader* (Lexington), December 20, 1984; Robert A. Kuehne, Studies on the Schooling Behavior of the Minnows, *Semotilus* and *Rhinichthys*, PhD diss., 1958, University of Michigan; “Cave Fish Food Source Study Slated,” *Lexington Herald*, Oct 12, 1961; John E. Cooper and Robert A. Kuehne, *Speoplatyrhinus poulsoni*, A New Genus and Species of Subterranean Fish from Alabama,” *Copeia* 1974 (June 13, 1974) 486-493; Helen P. Stacy, “Naturalists Tour Reveals Life of Millions of Creatures Going On Within Vastness of Cave,” *Lexington Leader*, Feb 24, 1970. See also Thomas C. Barr, Jr., and Robert A. Kuehne, “The Cavefish, *Amblyopsis spelaea*, in Northern Kentucky,” *Copeia* 1962 (September 28, 1962), 662.



<sup>6</sup> “Robert A. Kuehne, UK Professor, Dies”; “Red River Opposition Voiced,” *Evansville Courier*, May 8, 1968; James S. Tunnell, “UK Zoologist Urges Study Before Starting Waterway,” *Courier-Journal* (Louisville), May 6, 1970; James Ennis, “Central State Residents Lead Fight Against Pollution,” *Herald-Leader* (Lexington), February 7, 1971; “Water Commission Named,” *Lexington Leader*, October 12, 1972; Andy Mead, “Gorge Becomes a Victim of Vandalism,” *Herald-Leader*, April 23, 1978.

<sup>7</sup> “18 Faculty Members Not to Return This Fall,” *Addison County Independent* (VT), July 6, 1962; Thomas A. Griffiths, “Harold Bradford Hitchcock, 1903-1995,” *Bat Research News* 36 (Summer/Fall, 1995,) 13-15; Wayne H. Davis, “The Early History of Bat Research News,” *Bat Research News* 25 (February 24, 1984), 2-3; Wayne H. Davis, Population Dynamics and Taxonomy of the Bat, *Pipistrellus Subflavus*, PhD diss., University of Illinois, 1957

<sup>8</sup> “Middlebury Professor Gets Grant to Study Habits of Brown Bats,” *Rutland Daily Herald* (VT), April 21, 1947; “Midd Professor Studies Problem of Where Bats After Hibernating in Winter,” *Rutland Daily Herald*, January 30, 1948; Griffiths, “Harold Bradford Hitchcock,” 13. The publication, *Bat Research News*, was originally established by Hitchcock in 1960 as *Bat Banding News*.

<sup>9</sup> Thomas C. Barr, Jr., to John S. Petrie, November 14, 1962.

<sup>10</sup> Stewart B. Peck, phone interview by Gary A. O’Dell, March 22, 2023; Raymond McAdams, phone interview by Gary A. O’Dell, March 22, 2023.

<sup>11</sup> Wayne De Moute, “Bats, Beetles, Books and Boy: Young Collector Speaks Language of Science,” *Quad City Times* (Davenport, IA) December 1, 1957; Anon., “Bugs Don’t Scare Him, They Intrigue Him,” *Daily Times* (Davenport, IA), April 22, 1959; Anon., “Reflections on a National Park,” *Rapid City Journal* (SD), June 24, 2016 (quotation); Stewart B. Peck, interviewed by Gary A. O’Dell, March 22, 2023.

<sup>12</sup> Peck interview, 2023.

<sup>13</sup> Stewart Peck to Gary A. O’Dell, personal communication, April 13, 2023. Stewart believes that some cave visits, particularly in 1962, may have been omitted from his journals.

<sup>14</sup> McAdams interview; “Sloan Fellowship Honors Teacher,” *Battle Creek Enquirer*, May 1, 1959; “WMU Lists 26 from Battle Creek,” *Battle Creek Enquirer*, June 13, 1959.

<sup>15</sup> McAdams interview, 2023; “Transylvania College Appoints New Faculty Members,” *Herald-Leader* (Lexington), August 11, 1963; Annette Mayer, “Transy Students Explore Cave in Woodford County,” *Herald-Leader*, August 9, 1964;

<sup>16</sup> McAdams interview, 2023. Contrary to Ray’s belief, the Material Safety Data Sheet for parlodion states that

the substance can cause eye irritation and reddening. A crueler experiment was conducted by Davis and Roger W. Barbour in 1967, in which they collected 160 female bats from Bat Cave, Carter Caves State Park, permanently blinded all but twenty by cauterizing their eyes with a needle, and taking them out of state to Ohio and North Carolina, where they were released. Most of the unblinded bats found their way home, but only one of those blinded, which was discovered to still be able to detect light. See Ralph W. Derickson, “2 UK Professors are Studying Bats,” *Herald-Leader* (Lexington), January 15, 1967.

<sup>17</sup> McAdams interview, 2023 (quotations).

<sup>18</sup> “Shell on Head, We’re Not Dead,” *NSS News* 23 (September, 1965), 125.

<sup>19</sup> Records of the NSS, Bill Torode, personal communications, March 30 and August 24, 2023, and Ed Strausser, personal communication, March 31, 2023; *Lexington Herald* December 19, 1962, June 6, 1963.

<sup>20</sup> Thomas C. Barr, Jr. to Gary A. O’Dell, personal communication, August 2, 2005; Dave Culver and Wil Orndorff, “John Holsinger Remembered: Biologist, Caver, Conservationist, Speleologist,” in *National Cave and Karst Management Symposium*, Bristol, Virginia, October 2019, W.D. Orndorff, J.J. Lewis, K. Kosič Ficco, M.H. Weberg, and Z.W. Orndorff, eds. (Huntsville, AL: National Speleological Society, 2020), 1-8 (quotation, 1). Information on BGG officers and activities is from photocopies of annual reports and other documents provided by Bill Torode in March 2023.

<sup>21</sup> Blue Grass Grotto annual report to NSS, 1964.

<sup>22</sup> William M. Andrews, Jr. (Drew), interviewed by Gary A. O’Dell, May 1, 2023 (quotation).

<sup>23</sup> Andrews interview; “Diplomas Presented to 209 Henry Clay High School Graduates,” *Lexington Herald*, June 3, 1960; Jennifer Disponette, Office of the Registrar, University of Kentucky, to Gary A. O’Dell, personal communication, April 28, 2023.

<sup>24</sup> Roger Sperka, “Preliminary List of Mapped Caves in Kentucky,” *Kentucky Caver* 5 (April 1971), 5-15.

<sup>25</sup> Russell Norton to Gary A. O’Dell, personal communication, April 12, 2023; Stewart Peck to Gary A. O’Dell, personal communication, April 6, 2023.

<sup>26</sup> Norton to O’Dell, personal communication, April 12, 2023.

<sup>27</sup> Blue Grass Grotto annual report to NSS, 1965; Gerald Tuggle to John S. Petrie, May 2, 1965.

<sup>28</sup> Gerald Tuggle, interviewed by Gary O’Dell, August 10, 2023; “Lexington Junior,” *Lexington Leader*, November 9, 1959; “Transylvania Gives Three Scholarships,” *Lexington Herald*, May 3, 1963; “227 are Awarded Diplomas at Henry Clay High School,” *Lexington Herald*, June 7, 1963; Gerald Tuggle, “Caves of Mexico,” *Kentucky Caver* 1 (June, 1965), 11-16.

<sup>29</sup> Gerald Tuggle, interviewed by Gary O’Dell, April 11, 2023 (quotation); Tuggle interview, August 10, 2023.

- <sup>30</sup> Blue Grass Grotto annual reports to NSS, 1966; Jeanne Gurnee to Elizabeth Binker Glock, September 14, 1967; Gurnee to Bill Andrews, September 15, 1967; Glock to Gurnee, November 29, 1967.
- <sup>31</sup> BGG annual report to NSS, 1966, April 31, 1966 (first and second quotations); BGG annual report to NSS, 1966, December 10, 1967 (third quotation).
- <sup>32</sup> BGG annual reports to NSS, 1965, 1966.
- <sup>33</sup> Bill Torode to Gary O'Dell, personal communication, April 7, 2023; John V. Thraikill, "Manhole Cave," *Colorado Grotto News and Notes* 2 (1), 13-16; Lewis Land and Alex Rinehart, "Geophysical Surveys of a Potentially Extensive Cave System, Guadalupe Mountains, New Mexico, USA," *Journal of Cave and Karst Studies* 80 (September, 2018), 109-120; Thraikill, "A Speleological Investigation of Fulford Cave, Eagle County, Colorado," University of Colorado, M.S. Thesis, 1955; Thraikill, "Studies in the excavation of limestone caves and the deposition of speleothems," Princeton University, Ph.D. dissertation, 1965; Carol A. Hill, *Geology of Carlsbad Cavern and Other Caves in the Guadalupe Mountains, New Mexico and Texas*, New Mexico Bureau of Mines and Mineral Resources Bulletin 117 (Socorro: New Mexico Bureau of Mines and Mineral Resources, 1987), 113.
- <sup>34</sup> Douglas R. Gouzie to Gary O'Dell, personal communication, August 13, 2023; Charles Taylor to David Moecher, personal communication, July 2, 2015; John V. Thraikill, "Chemical and Hydrologic Factors in the Excavation of Limestone Caves," *Geological Society of America Bulletin*, 79 (January, 1968), 19-46
- <sup>35</sup> Larry Spangler to David Moecher, personal communication, July 6, 2015; Lawrence E. Spangler, "Karst Hydrogeology of Northern Fayette and Southern Scott Counties, Kentucky," M.S. thesis, University of Kentucky, 1982; William M. Hopper, "Karst Hydrology of Southeastern Mercer County and Northeastern Boyle County, Kentucky," M.S. thesis, University of Kentucky, 1985;
- <sup>36</sup> John V. Thraikill, "Speleothems," in M.R. Walther (ed.), *Stromatolites: Developments in Sedimentology* 20. (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 1976), 73-86; Charles J. Taylor to David Moecher, personal communication, July 1, 2015.
- <sup>37</sup> Catherine "Cat" Bishop to Gary A. O'Dell, personal communication, April 11, 2023.
- <sup>38</sup> Cat Bishop to O'Dell, personal communications, April 11 and 17, 2023; Jerry Carpenter to Gary A. O'Dell, personal communication, April 15, 2023.
- <sup>39</sup> Charlie Bishop to Gary A. O'Dell, personal communications, July 3 and 12, 2019; Cat Bishop to O'Dell, May 28, 2019.
- <sup>40</sup> Jennifer Disponette, Office of the Registrar, University of Kentucky, to Gary A. O'Dell, personal communication, April 25, 2023; G. Thomas Rea, *Caving Basics: A Comprehensive Guide for Beginning Cavers*, 3d. ed. (Huntsville, AL: National Speleological Society, 1992), vii.
- <sup>41</sup> Catherine Bishop to O'Dell, personal communication, April 17, (quotation), April 24, 2023; Paul R. Jorgenson, comp., "Frank Reid Remembered," *Speleonics* 27 3 (June 2011), 2-3.
- <sup>42</sup> Jorgenson, "Frank Reid Remembered, 2-3, (3, quotation); Cat Bishop to O'Dell, personal communication, April 21, 2023 (second quotation). Lyrics to many of Frank's songs can be found at "Frank's Songs," [http://www.wingedseed.com/rstitt/franks\\_songs.htm](http://www.wingedseed.com/rstitt/franks_songs.htm). Recordings for cave ballads by Frank and other performers at NSS Conventions can be listened to at: <http://ftp.caves.org/committee/salons/ballads/Ballad%20Recordings.shtml>.
- <sup>43</sup> Blue Grass Grotto annual report to NSS, 1967.
- <sup>44</sup> Blue Grass Grotto annual report to NSS, 1967; "124 MHS Graduates Hear Plea for Higher Standards," *Times Record* (Troy, NY), June 27, 1961; "Personal," *Troy Record*, Sept 26, 1961;
- <sup>45</sup> Bob Addis to Gary A. O'Dell, personal communication, July 27 and 30, 2018; Bob Addis and Chuck Porter, "Memories of Dave Beiter," *Northeastern Caver* 34 (December 2003), 121 (first and second quotations); Bob Addis, "More Memories of Dave Beiter. Part One: An Epic Skull Trip or What I Did on My Winter Vacation," *Northeastern Caver* 35 (March 2004), 19 (third quotation).
- <sup>46</sup> Addis and Porter, "Memories of Dave Beiter," 120.
- <sup>47</sup> Addis and Porter, "Memories of Dave Beiter," 121 (first quotation); Addis to O'Dell, July 27, 2018 (second quotation).
- <sup>48</sup> Bob Addis to Gary A. O'Dell, personal communication, July 30, 2018.
- <sup>49</sup> "The History of the Philadelphia Grotto 1962-1971," Philadelphia Grotto website, <https://phillygrotto.org/ten-years-underground-1962-1971/>, accessed August 18, 2023; Bill Torode to Gary O'Dell, personal communication, August 18, 2023; Lou Simpson, "Dave Beiter," C.O.G. Squeaks (September, 2003), 4; "Marriage Applications," *Lexington Leader*, March 3, 1971.
- <sup>50</sup> Beiter, David, Calcite Saturation in an Eastern Kentucky Karst Stream, M.S. Thesis, University of Kentucky, 1970; Lee J. Florea, Harry Goepel, Lou Simson and Charles Gibbs, "Bill Walden, NSS 11573RE-FE-LB (1942-2018)," *Kentucky Speleological Survey* 18 (March, 2019), 17; "Ralph W. Stone Research Award," *NSS News* 26 (November, 1968), 178; Gary A. O'Dell, "Willard Rouse Jillson and the Crystal Cave of Sloans Valley, Kentucky," *NSS News* 77 (August, 2019), 12-24.
- <sup>51</sup> James W. Fetzner, Jr., "John Edward Cooper (1929-2015): Biographical Notes," *Freshwater Crayfish* 21 (December 2015), 7-15; John R. Holsinger, "A Tribute to

the Memory of John E. Cooper (NSS 4803RL)," *NSS News* 73 (November 2015), 31.

<sup>52</sup> Fetzner, "John Edward Cooper," 7; "Young Naturalists Plan Activities," *Evening Sun* (Baltimore), September 13, 1947; "New Reptile House Opened at Park," *The Sun* (Baltimore), August 6, 1948; "Small Game Hunters," *Sun*, August 28, 1949; "3 Marylanders Going to Cuba to Collect Reptiles, Insects," *Evening Sun*, August 24, 1956; "Barton Gives Diplomas to 500 Students," *Sun*, June 12, 1957; *Sun*, "Biologist John E. Cooper is One of the Few Divers Engaged in This Risky Activity," *Sun*, June 27, 1965.

<sup>53</sup> "NSS Outstanding Service Award," *NSS News* 31 (August 1973), 143; Bill Torode to Gary A. O'Dell, personal communication, April 23, 2023; John R. Holsinger, "Special Issue of Banisteria on the Cave Biology of Virginia," *NSS News* 72 (February 2014), 28; "Martha Riser to Wed Baltimore Man," *Monroe Morning World* (Louisiana), August 1, 1965; "Yale Grad," *Monroe News-Star* (Louisiana), June 12, 1964; "Annual Report of the Research Advisory Committee," *NSS News* 23 (September 1965), 134; Bill Torode, "Shelta Cave," *NSS News* 31 (March 1973), 35; "Shelta Cave Study Report," *NSS News* 33 (July 1975), 117;

<sup>54</sup> "NSS Outstanding Service Award," 143; John E. Cooper, *Ecological and Behavioral Studies in Shelta Cave, Alabama, With Emphasis on Decapod Crustaceans*, Ph.D. diss., Univ. of Kentucky, 1975; Fetzner, "John Edward Cooper," 7 (quotation); John E. Cooper and David P. Beiter, "The Southern Cavefish, *Typhlichthys subterraneus* (Pisces: Amblyopsidae), in the Eastern Mississippian Plateau of Kentucky," *Copeia* 1972 (December 29, 1972), 879-881; Cooper and Kuehne, "*Speoplatyrhinus poulsoni*," 486-493.

<sup>55</sup> "Biologist John E. Cooper is One of the Few Divers Engaged in This Risky Activity," *Sun* (Baltimore), June 27, 1965 (quotation); "Area has a Rare 'Cave Diver' Working With Wife in Field Never Exploited in Depth," *Messenger-Advocate* (Danville, KY), March 9, 1969.

<sup>56</sup> Dan I. Smith, "John Cooper Remembered," *NSS News* 73 (December 2015), 30 (quotations).

<sup>57</sup> "Peak to Speak to Graduates in Jessamine," *Lexington Leader*, May 31, 1951; Katya Cengel, "A Dream Fulfilled: Peace Corps Mission at 65 Inspires 'Late-Blooming' Book," *Courier-Journal* (Louisville), October 5, 2004; Angene Wilson, interview with Wini Yunker, March 3, 2005. Louie B. Nunn Center for Oral History, [https://nunncenter.net/ohms-spokedb/render.php?cachefile=2005oh032\\_pc049\\_ohm.xml](https://nunncenter.net/ohms-spokedb/render.php?cachefile=2005oh032_pc049_ohm.xml), Accessed August 9, 2023.

<sup>58</sup> Bill Torode to Gary O'Dell, personal communication, May 2, 2023; Bill Rogers to Gary O'Dell, personal communication, April 20, 2023.

<sup>59</sup> Blue Grass Grotto annual reports to NSS, 1967, 1968; Terry Marsh, phone interview by Gary A. O'Dell, April 19, 2023 (quotation).

<sup>60</sup> Marsh interview, April 19, 2023 (quotations).

<sup>61</sup> Terence G. Marsh, *Ecological and behavioral studies of the cave beetle *Darlingtonia kentuckensis* Valentine (Coleoptera: Carabidae)*, PhD diss., University of Kentucky, 1969; Terry Marsh, "About Me," <https://terry-marsh.com/about-me/>, accessed April 9, 2024; Jerry Carpenter to Gary O'Dell, personal communication, April 15, 2023; Marsh interview, April 19, 2023. The MGB was a two-door British sports car with a soft top and four-cylinder engine manufactured and marketed from 1962 until 1980. This reminds me of some of my cave trips in the late 1960s when I was driving my 1963 Triumph Spitfire over some rough and muddy roads in Lee County to go caving.

<sup>62</sup> Bill Rogers to Gary A. O'Dell, personal communications, April 6 and 19, 2023.

<sup>63</sup> Rogers to O'Dell, April 19, 2023.

<sup>64</sup> Rogers to O'Dell, April 19, 2023; Cat Bishop to O'Dell, April 17, 2023.

<sup>65</sup> Rogers to O'Dell, April 19, 2023.

<sup>66</sup> Bill Mixon to BGG, July 15, 1970; Wini Mastin to Beverly Fredericks, May 26, 1968.

<sup>67</sup> See the 1973 NSS Convention Guidebook for a description of Blue Spring Cave.

<sup>68</sup> Blue Grass Grotto annual report to NSS, 1969; Mixon to Mastin, July 15, 1970; Mastin to Mixon, August 5, 1970.

<sup>69</sup> Blue Grass Grotto annual report to NSS, 1969; Bill Andrews, "Chairman's Corner," *Kentucky Caver* 3 (April, 1969), 5.

<sup>70</sup> Albert Geiser, "The Ky. Cave Survey," *Electric Caver* 1 (January-February 1963), 5;

<sup>71</sup> Blue Grass Grotto annual report to NSS, 1969; Jerry Carpenter, *Systematics and Ecology of Cave Planarians of the United States*, PhD diss., University of Kentucky, 1970; "NKSC's Big Transition: A Big Job for President Steely," *Lexington Herald*, June 15, 1971; Jerry Carpenter to Gary A. O'Dell, personal communications, April 10, 2023.

<sup>72</sup> Jerry Carpenter to Gary A. O'Dell, personal communications, April 10 (quotations) and 15, 2023.

<sup>73</sup> Cat Bishop to Gary A. O'Dell, personal communications, April 11 and 17, 2023.

<sup>74</sup> Cat Bishop to O'Dell, April 11, 2023; "Receives Scholarship," *Herald-Leader* (Lexington), April 3, 1966; "Transylvania to Award Diplomas to 158 Today," *Herald-Leader*, June 14, 1970; "Hayden-Bishop," *Herald-Leader*, October 22, 1972.

<sup>75</sup> Cat Bishop to Gary A. O'Dell, personal communication, April 17, 2023.

<sup>76</sup> Ron Householder to Gary A. O'Dell, personal communication, April 7, 2023; Gary A. O'Dell, Ron Householder, and Frank Reid, "Subterranean Explorers: Mapping Russell Cave with GPS and Magnetic Induction Radio." *GPS World* 7 (November 1996), 20-33.



- <sup>77</sup> Preston Forsythe and Jim Currens, "In Memory of Roger James Sperka, 74, NSS 8463 RE," *NSS News* 74 (July 2016), 19
- <sup>78</sup> John A. French, "We are Preserving Shelta," *NSS News* 26 (February, 1968) 28-31 (quotations, 31); Anon., "More Shelta Fund Contributors" *NSS News* 27 (March 1969), 47
- <sup>79</sup> French, "We are Preserving Shelta," Larry D. Matthews, "New NSS Office Building: Society Takes a Major Step," *NSS News* 29 (June, 1971), 74-76.
- <sup>80</sup> Mastin to Fredericks, May 26, 1968; Bill Rogers, "The Alabama Trip," *Kentucky Caver* 3 (June 1969), 7-9.
- <sup>81</sup> Bill Rogers to Gary A. O'Dell, personal communication, April 7, 2023; Robers, "Alabama Trip," 9 (quotation).
- <sup>82</sup> Catherine Hayden to Bill Mixon, March 15, 1971; Mixon to Hayden, March 17, 1971; Blue Grass Grotto annual report to NSS, 1970; Bill Rogers to Gary A. O'Dell, personal communication, April 9, 2023.
- <sup>83</sup> Jeff Vansant to Gary O'Dell, personal communication, August 13, 2023.
- <sup>84</sup> Dave Kelley, "Fern Cave," *Kentucky Caver* 5 (January 1971), 13; Catherine Bishop to Gary O'Dell, information on photographs submitted, April 11, 2023.
- <sup>85</sup> Blue Grass Grotto annual report to NSS, 1971.
- <sup>86</sup> Blue Grass Grotto annual report to NSS, 1971; "Constitution of the Blue Grass Chapter of the N.S.S.," *Kentucky Caver* 5 (July 1971), 4.
- <sup>87</sup> Anon, "Fantastic Cave System Discovered in Letcher Area," *Hazard Herald*, April 30, 1971 (quotations)
- <sup>88</sup> David Beiter, Letcher County Natural Color Angel Cave," *Kentucky Caver* 5 (April 1971), 17-19.
- <sup>89</sup> Anon., "Kentucky Cave Survey Status Report," *Kentucky Caver* 4 (July 1970), 2.
- <sup>90</sup> Charlie Bishop, "Chairman's Corner," *Kentucky Caver* 4 (October 1970), 12 (quotation); Angelo I. George, phone interview by Gary O'Dell on April 10, 2023; Roger Sperka, "Preliminary List of Mapped Caves in Kentucky," *Kentucky Caver* 5 (April 1971), 5-15.
- <sup>91</sup> Angelo I. George, "Notes from the Recent Kentucky Cave Survey Meeting," *Kentucky Caver* 5 (July 1971), 12.
- <sup>92</sup> Angelo I. George, "Kentucky Cave Survey Status Report," *Kentucky Caver* 6 (January 1972), 3-5; Roger Sperka, "List of Mapped Caves in Kentucky," *Kentucky Caver* 6 (April 1972), 30-38; Sperka, "List of Mapped Caves in Kentucky," *Kentucky Caver* 7 (April 1973), 27-38.
- <sup>93</sup> Kipling Will, "Passing of Thomas Barr," Carabid mailing list archive, May 6, 2011, <https://www.mail-archive.com/carabid@lists.berkeley.edu/msg00024.html> accessed August 9, 2023; "Retired UK Zoology Professor Receives Top Honor," Press Release, Kentucky Energy and Environment Cabinet, December 12, 2008.
- <sup>94</sup> "Robert A. Kuehne, UK Professor, Dies," *Lexington Herald-Leader*, December 20, 1984
- <sup>95</sup> "Davis, Dr. Wayne H." (obituary), *Lexington Herald-Leader*, April 7, 2017; "Wayne H. Davis," Southeastern Bat Diversity Network, <https://sbdn.org/portfolio-item/wayne-davis-1996/>, accessed August 9, 2023; Andy Mead, "Wayne H. Davis: A Legacy in Flight," *Lexington Herald-Leader*, April 9, 2017.
- <sup>96</sup> Peck interview (quotations).
- <sup>97</sup> McAdams interview; "60 Years of Membership," *NSS News* 79 (November 2021), 8.
- <sup>98</sup> Haydon interview; *University of Kentucky Ninety-Ninth Annual Commencement Exercises* (Lexington: University of Kentucky, 1966), 51
- <sup>99</sup> "Andrews, William Morton" (obituary), *Lexington Herald-Leader*, April 19, 2012; Andrews interview (quotation).
- <sup>100</sup> Andrews interview (quotations).
- <sup>101</sup> Tuggle interview, August 10, 2023; Natasa Pajic Mongiardo, Director of Alumni Relations, Transylvania University, to Gary O'Dell, personal communication, April 10, 2023
- <sup>102</sup> Douglas R. Gouzie, "In Memoriam," *UK Geology Summer News Update 2015*; Gouzie to Gary O'Dell, personal communication, August 13, 2023; "Lavine K. Thraikill," *St. Augustine Record*, July 26, 2006; "John Thraikill," *St. Augustine Record*, February 14, 2014.
- <sup>103</sup> Cat Bishop to O'Dell, personal communication, April 11, 2023.
- <sup>104</sup> Cat Bishop to O'Dell, personal communication, April 17, 2023.
- <sup>105</sup> Jim Currens to Jim Olsen, personal communication, January 26, 1998, Caver's Digest Obituaries, CD 5519.
- <sup>106</sup> Bill Walden, "Dave Beiter," *C.O.G. Squeaks* (September 2003), 3; Charles Gibbs, "David P. Beiter, NSS #9523," *C.O.G. Squeaks* (September 2003), 3; Dave Beiter to Gary O'Dell, April 19, 1987, letter (quotation).
- <sup>107</sup> Dave Beiter to Gary O'Dell, August 12, 1972, letter (quotations).
- <sup>108</sup> David P. Beiter, WORMSCAN entry for October 16, 1990 (first quotation), <http://www.marijuanalibrary.org/ETC.html>, accessed August 18, 2023; Beiter to O'Dell, April 19, 1987 (second quotation). WORMSCAN was a blog created by Dave, now archived by MarijuanaLibrary.org
- <sup>109</sup> Dave Beiter to Gary O'Dell, August 12, 1972, letter, (quotation).
- <sup>110</sup> Gibbs, "David P. Beiter," *C.O.G. Squeaks* (September 2003), 3-4; Bill Foot and Tom Johnson, "An Interview with Charles Gibbs," *Nylon Highway* 13 (December 1980), 18.
- <sup>111</sup> Dave Beiter to Gary O'Dell, April 12, 1985, letter (first quotation); Gibbs, Walden, "Dave Beiter," 3 (second quotation); Lou Simpson, "David Beiter," *C.O.G. Squeaks* (September 2003), 4 (third quotation).

<sup>112</sup> Al Cross, "Price, Quality of Pot Led Man to Grow Own," *Courier-Journal* (Louisville), October 18, 1981.

<sup>113</sup> Dave Beiter, reply to "Early American Systems of Measurement," H-Rural, March 30, 1994, archived at <http://annex.retroarchive.org/cdrom/pc-sig-13/EDU/DISK1826/FILE1826.TXT>, accessed August 18, 2023.

<sup>114</sup> Simpson, "David Beiter," 4; Gibbs, "David P. Beiter," 4 (quotation); "David Perry Beiter," *Daily Gazette* (Schenectady, NY), August 12, 2003.

<sup>115</sup> Suzanne A. Cooper, recollections, posted to Legacy.com obituaries, September 18, 2022, <https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/newsobserver/name/john-cooper-obituary?id=36096380>, accessed August 20, 2023; Richard Franz, "Road Cruising for Dead Wildlife," *Journal of Florida Studies* 1, no. 10 (2022), 1-19 (first quotation 1-2; second quotation, 19); Fetzner, "John Edward Cooper," 9-15 (third and fourth quotations, 9).

<sup>116</sup> Bill Torode to Gary O'Dell, personal communication, May 2, 2023; "Winifred 'Wini' Yunker, July 10, 1934 – March 9, 2022" (obituary), *Lexington Herald-Leader*, March 13, 2022; "Mastin-Yunker," *Lexington Herald*, October 30, 1977;

<sup>117</sup> "At 65, She's Joining the Peace Corps," *Lexington Herald-Leader*, January 19, 2000; "Determined Volunteer Member of Peace Corps," *The Messenger* (Madisonville, KY), January 19, 2000; Francis X. Clines, "Nicholasville Journal; 39 Years Later, Her Idealism Remains and Her Dream Is Fulfilled," *New York Times*, January 31, 2000; Katya Cengel, "A Dream Fulfilled: Peace Corps Mission at 65 Inspires 'Late-Blooming' Book," *Courier-Journal* (Louisville), October 5, 2004; Angene Wilson interview with Wini Yunker, March 3, 2005, Louie B. Nunn Center for Oral History, University of Kentucky.

<sup>118</sup> Prill Boyle, *Defying Gravity: A Celebration of Late-Blooming Women* (Cincinnati: Clerisy Press, 2005); Tom Eblen, "Over-the-Top Experience," *Lexington Herald-Leader*, September 36, 2013; "79-Year-Old Goes Over the Edge and Into Record Book," *Kentucky Inquirer* (Owensboro), September 29, 2013.

<sup>119</sup> Terence G. Marsh, Ecological and behavioral studies of the cave beetle *Darlingtonia kentuckensis* Valentine (Coleoptera: Carabidae), PhD diss., University of Kentucky, 1969; Terry Marsh, "About Me," <https://terry-marsh.com/about-me/>, accessed April 9, 2024; Jerry Carpenter to Gary O'Dell, personal communication, April 15, 2023; Marsh interview, April 19, 2023. The MGB was a two-door British sports car with a soft top and four-cylinder engine manufactured and marketed from 1962 until 1980. This reminds me of some of my cave trips in the late 1960s when I was driving my 1963 Triumph Spitfire over some rough and muddy roads in Lee County to go caving.

<sup>120</sup> Bill Rogers to Gary O'Dell, personal communications, August 22, 2019, April 6, 2023; Torode to O'Dell, May 2, 2023.

<sup>121</sup> Rogers to O'Dell, April 6, 2023.

<sup>122</sup> Jerry Carpenter to Gary O'Dell, personal communication, April 10, 2023 (quotations).

<sup>123</sup> Carpenter to O'Dell, April 10, 2023 (quotations).

<sup>124</sup> "Ron Householder, Senior GIS Consultant," CDP-MapSync, Staff Directory, [https://www.mapsync.com/About\\_MapSync/Staff/Staff\\_RH.htm](https://www.mapsync.com/About_MapSync/Staff/Staff_RH.htm), accessed August 20, 2023.

<sup>125</sup> "Currens Retires June 1 from Water Resources Section After 37 Years at KGS," [http://www.uky.edu/KGS/news/currens\\_retirement.php](http://www.uky.edu/KGS/news/currens_retirement.php), accessed August 13, 2023 (quotations).

<sup>126</sup> "Currens Retires."

<sup>127</sup> "Currens Retires"; James D. Borden and Roger W. Brucker, *Beyond Mammoth Cave: A Tale of Obsession in the World's Longest Cave* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois Univ. Press, 2000).

<sup>128</sup> Preston Forsythe and Jim Currens, "In Memory of Roger James Sperka, 74, NSS 8463 RE," *NSS News* 74 (July 2016), 19; "Membership List 1975," *Kentucky Caver* 9 (March 1975), 25; "In the Courts," *El Paso Times*, October 23, 1976; Vic Kolenck "Desalting the Sea Beneath the City a Possibility," *El Paso Herald-Post*, October 24, 1990.

<sup>129</sup> Forsythe and Currens, "In Memory of Roger James Sperka," 19; Preston Forsythe, "Roger Sperka: A Friend of the KY Speleological Survey," *Kentucky Speleological Survey Annual Report* 8 (January 10, 2009), 2

<sup>130</sup> Josh Brewer, "Awards," *Kentucky Speleological Survey Annual Report* 18 (March 2019), 33; Howard Kalnitz, "Sperka Award," *Kentucky Speleological Survey Annual Report* 18 (March 2019), 25.







