

The Carbide Courier

The Dayton Underground Grotto

of the National Speleological Society
Internal Organization 366, chartered March 16, 1992



GROTTO OFFICERS**Chairman**

Ana Scherschcel

stoplookingatmefreak@msn.com**Vice Chairman**

Kelly Johnston

kcassidy156@gmail.com**Secretary**

Ben Schantz

abschant@udel.edu**Treasurer**

Tama Cassidy

TCassidy@miamicountyparks.com**Directors**

Fred Ball

ballassociates@yahoo.com

Don Conover

don@cbe-circus.com

Joshua Heinbuch

joshheinbuch@gmail.com

Mike Lucas

mspooked@gmail.com**COMMITTEE CHAIRS****Carbide Courier Editor**

Mike Hood

MikeHood24166@gmail.com**Membership**

John Cassidy

jcassidy17@yahoo.com**Conservation**

Joshua Heinbuch

joshheinbuch@gmail.com**Safety and Rescue**

Vacant

Equipment

Tama Cassidy

tamac@woh.rr.com**Vertical**

Tama Cassidy

tamac@woh.rr.com**Landowner Relations**

Joshua Heinbuch

joshheinbuch@gmail.com**Youth Groups**

Kelly Johnston

kcassidy156@gmail.com**Library**

Rebekah Sweet

bekahsweet@gmail.com**Webmaster**

Mike Hood

DaytonUndergroundGrotto@gmail.com**REPRESENTATIVES****Great Saltpetre Preserve**

Fred Ball

ballassociates@yahoo.com

Tama Cassidy

tamac@woh.rr.com**Indiana Karst
Conservancy**

Mike Hood

MikeHood24166@gmail.com**Kentucky Speleological
Survey**

Don Conover

don@cbe-circus.com**GROTTO MEETINGS**

Grotto meetings are held at least once every six months "in the field." Executive Committee meetings are the 2nd Sunday of each month and are open to all members. Check our web page for information on times and locations:

www.dugcaves.com<https://www.facebook.com/groups/DUG.NSS>

Find Us On the Web:

www.dugcaves.com
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/DUG.NSS>
www.twitter.com/DUGCaves

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Cover Photo: Photo from the grotto's first time at Fern Cave and bouncing Surprise Pit. From left to right, Sheila Gallogly, Lester Purvis, Craig Ham, and Colin Gatland. Photographer unknown.

MEMBERSHIP INFO

Annual membership is \$5 per individual, \$10 per family (three or more in household). Memberships renewable on January 1st. Dues can be mailed to the membership committee chairman (see page 13 for an application):

John Cassidy
 414 Michigan Ave.
 Troy, OH 45373

Please make check payable to:
 Dayton Underground Grotto

You can also pay with PayPal.



<http://www.dugcaves.com/membership-and-renewals.html>

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The Carbide Courier is e-mailed to all DUG members and is available for download from the Dayton Underground Grotto website. The newsletter is published quarterly. Submissions must be sent to the editor by Friday preceding the last week of the month prior to publication. Send submissions to:

MikeHood24166@gmail.com

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www.caves.org

Calendar of Events

- April 12 Executive Committee meeting - Time and location to be determined
- May 10 Executive Committee meeting - Time and location to be determined
- June 14 Executive Committee meeting - Time and location to be determined
- July 12 Executive Committee meeting - Time and location to be determined
- July 27-31 NSS Convention at Elkins, West Virginia, <https://caves.regfox.com/nss-convention-2020>

Be sure to check the grotto web page for updates!

From the Chairman:

Hi DUGsters. My name is Ana Scherschel and I am the grotto chair for 2020. I live in Troy, and work third shift at Kroger. I'm a crazy cat lady. I have four kitties, Mycroft, Maeve, Taryn, and Magnus. I have been caving since 2016. My first wild cave trip was during Winter Adventure Weekend that year at Carter Caves State Park in Kentucky. I caved in Kentucky and Indiana for the most part. About three times a year, I go down to TAG. I went to my first Convention last year.

I'd like to have some grotto trips this year. Aside from the limitations of our current situation, I work retail so I don't have every weekend free and no holidays off except Christmas Day. I'd welcome any help from fellow grotto members with planning and organizing trips. You can reach out to me through email or the Facebook group. There has been discussion about doing a "stupid whatever weekend" later this year. It was what Wormfest started out as. We did one last fall and those who attended enjoyed it. It was just a low key get together at GSP with dinner on Saturday. Stay tuned for any announcements about future grotto meetings.

Ana Scherschel
Chairman



Grotto Committees in Need of Chairs

The following committee chairman openings are being advertised in accordance with Grotto Act 06-02.

- Safety and Rescue Committee
- Wormfest Committee



Members interested in chairing any of these committees should contact the grotto chairman.

Has Any of your Information Changed??

- Address?
- Telephone?
- E-Mail?
- Joined the NSS?
- Other?

If so, please make sure you update your information on the DUG web page. Just go to www.dugcaves.com and click on the “Update Your Information” button, or contact our Membership Chairman, John Cassidy, with your update.

GROTTO E-MAIL GROUP!

A new DUG e-mail group has been established and has replaced the old Yahoo Groups account. The new group is DUGCaves@googlegroups.com. To subscribe, send an e-mail to:

DUGCaves+subscribe@googlegroups.com

Put “Subscribe” as the subject.

The password to the Members-Only section of the web page has changed for 2020. You must be a current member of the grotto to receive the new password. E-mail daytonundergroundgrotto@gmail.com to request it.

Hodag Myth Exploded

By Ergor Rubreck

There is great risk in exploding myths. American institutions are filled with victims of Easter Rabbit and Santa Claus myth explosions.

But it is also true that a few myths are based on facts. There are caves with slanting floors. But cavers tell children and non-cavers about Hodags. According to the myth, the hodag is an elusive mammal that lives in caves. It is peculiar because it is alleged to have shorter legs on one side than the legs on the other side. The feature enables the hodag to run along on slanted cave floors in an upright position, rather than tilt-running, to be expected in equal-leg-length-quadrupeds. The gullible new caver enters the cave's depths equipped with a gunny sack, and told to switch off his or her headlamp and wait until the sound of little feet is heard.

When the pitter-pat-sound is detected, the new cavers must switch on the light, pop the hodag into the sack, and then deliver it for scientific investigation. Brace yourself: This is a myth. There are **no** hodags in American caves.

warned all readers that myth busting could be dangerous. However, I have good news.

My investigation of the hodag myth led me to Rhineland, WI where the original hodag was discovered in 1893. Its description was grotesque, to be sure, but there was no mention of short legs on one side. The legs were said to be thick and short with razor-sharp claws, however.

A beast with short legs on one side was then fabricated by inhabitants of the Ozarks. Short legs on one side enabled it to run level on the side of steep mountains. Adaption of this variant to caves is attributed to Clay Perry, an early NSS member and cave expert. But alas, I repeat, there are **no** hodags in American caves.

Indeed, my diligent search led to Finland, the northernmost Scandinavian country. There I discovered the existence of a Whodak (the H is silent, as in *who* or *whore*.) A handful of caves exist in Finland. One of them (apparently 1/3 of the total) is shaped like an onion and is 2m high by 1m wide. A second cave is the controversial farthest north cave penetration of the Neanderthal people. (Some claim that the chipped rocks are natural, not aboriginal.)

The third cave, Högberget's Cave, is partially filled with silt. But it is the domain of the whodak. Unlike either of the mythical hodags, the whodak has only one leg. Its means of locomotion has been studied by the famous Finish physiologist Looknat Yernoodle, PhD. He published a paper describing how the whodak brain contains a natural gyroscope-organ that enables it to move like a spinning top along sloping and slanted cave floors. It has tiny orifices that when spinning produce a distinctive middle C sound. Dr. Yernoodle is uncertain about the behavior of the whodak because it appears to be unisex (only one has been found.)

I told Dr. Yernoodle I was the world's most famous and wonderful caver, and I was tracing the origin of the hodag myth in North America. (He hadn't got the memo.) His demeanor was nevertheless friendly and courteous, as he sipped an unknown amber liquid. "I investigated the whodak's physiology. A natural gyroscope is part of the brain. I guess you might say my investigation started as a craniotomy and ended as an autopsy." In short, his first investigation of the whodak

was the last investigation.

"I froze the remains," he said, pointing to the freezer chest in the corner of his lab, "so we haven't lost everything." He invited me to look. I opened the freezer lid and instantly a spinning creature leaped out and scooted across the floor. The C-note emanated from the creature spinning in the corner convinced me that the whodak had somehow healed itself and was ready to resume its role in cave lore. I had to shout to Dr. Yernoodle to be heard over the loud humming sound.

"How can it be, doctor? You removed its brain, yet it seems still alive?" Dr. Yernoodle shrugged. He said that it must have uni-healing properties in addition to being uni-sex. He removed two sets of ear stopples from his desk drawer

and motioned for me to put a set in my ears. With plugs in place, he began to talk but I could not hear him because of the ear plugs. I drew my finger across my throat indicating we should shut off the noise. The good doctor went to the corner, bent down, and picked up the little fellow (fellowess?).

"Since the whodak appears to be recovered, I can continue my study of its behavior. In the meantime, perhaps you would like to take one back to America?" Dr. Yernoodle seemed generous, but when I looked closer, the whodak had instantaneously reproduced itself, and now there were **two**. "Take it or leave it," added Yernoodle.

I accepted, not knowing the social customs of Finland about receiving gifts. He lifted

the creatures and placed them in a small suitcase with a handle and a mesh-covered breathing port. I thanked him profusely. On the taxi ride to the airport I realized I had no idea about the care and feeding of whodaks. Since the creature(s) came from a cave, a suitable environment for a domesticated whodaks would be a cave in America. There was a little trouble with airport security, but I convinced the security lady that the container held official companion animals.

At Mammoth Cave the following week, a Ranger informed me that I could **not** take my whodak container on a cave trip. I waited outside the Historic Entrance.

Connecting Caves Easy

By Ergor Rubreck

Anybody who has read the book *The Longest Cave* by Roger Brucker and Richard Watson, knows that connecting caves is a goal of many cavers. Not all cavers give a fig about connections, but the zeal of those that do makes up to 100% or more of caving motivation.

I have connected sufficient caves to be an expert about the

subject. Have you heard of Carlsbad Caverns? Most people don't know that my team and I first explored Carlsbad Cave, an obscure hole in the Guadalupe Escarpment in New Mexico. I don't brag about that because it wouldn't be fair to Jim White, the supposed discoverer of that cave. That "discovery" set him up for life, including a life size

bronze statue in the city of Carlsbad, NM.

You may imagine that cave connections are a lot of work. Not necessarily so. Here's a tip you can use to connect two close-together caves you have your eye on. Go to the nearest place in either cave where the distance between the caves is the shortest. Let's say you are in Cave A and Cave B is close

by. The distance between them is 300 feet. At the end of Cave A you erect a slab of rock. With your carbide light write in soot the following message:

WE REACHED THIS
FARTHEST POINT IN CAVE
B ON JAN. 14, 20XX. I. M.
PROUD, LEADER, J.
SMITH, R. BROWN.

Bury the base of the slab FACING Cave B about 20 feet from the terminal breakdown or sump. Back up carefully leaving footprints toward the end of Cave A. Be sure to use a carbide lamp to write the message; electric lamp messages don't last and look fake. Notice the XX in the date? Smear these numbers so nobody can quite make them out.

Months or years later a trip report will appear in the nearby grotto newsletter in which the rock message has been discovered. This will trigger a BREAKING NEWS story about this "connection discovery". It will also trigger a major non-stop effort to re-find the connection. When, and if, that connection is found, you -- Ike Proud -- can claim all credit. What about Smith and Brown? "They moved away. Lost track of them after 2020."

A second efficient method of "connecting caves" is this. You publish a story headlined, "Luray Caverns Connected to Skyline Caverns." (N.B. Caves many miles apart make the best story.) After the trip report story leaks out and the World News gets the story, you receive a phone call. Supply enough detail to convince the reporter you know what you are talking about, but not enough to reveal where the connection took place. You explain this little detail as follows: "Where is the connection? I'm glad you asked. We promised the landowner to never reveal where the connection took place. And our bond is until death plus ten days. So, much as I'd like to share with you the exact connection point, it would not be fair to the landowner and all other cave explorers who depend on friendly landowners. Sorry."

Are there other ways to "connect caves" without exerting the effort that real cave connections require? Yes. For example, take the account of how our team of three discovered the connection between Mammoth Cave and Fisher Ridge Cave System.

You hadn't heard about that connection?

"As you know, Fisher Ridge Cave System -- all 130 miles of it -- was thought to be outside Mammoth Cave National Park. At least, it sure used to be. Several months ago the three of us were in East Salts Cave checking out an underground river that seemed to run parallel to the Fisher Ridge Cave System. Rivers at that deep level tend to be narrow, extremely wet, and not promising at all. We always check the weather when we probe the lowest level. An unforeseen rain can trap cavers for days -- ask the Fisher Ridge cavers. We saw the weather predictions OK, and had packed four meals for a 32-hour trip. Our objective was to map the river found back in '97 by John Wilcox. It'd never been revisited.

"Anyway, we started our survey at S-164, the last station in the Stalactite Room. With our wet suites we were comfortable. The trend of the underground river was 272° for 1,310 feet. There it made a 180° bend, sort of like the Horseshoe Bend on the old Pennsylvania Railroad. Pretty soon we were headed 342°. We ate lunch, then resumed our survey.

"Eight hours later we were 3384 feet into the survey (2074 feet from our lunch spot) and we came to a side lead to the right. Ordinarily we'd survey a little way in, then continue on the main survey, marking the lead as promising. Only in this case, the wind blowing in from the lead was strong, and more water was coming in from the side passage than the volume of the river we were surveying. So we did a little lead checking. After 275 feet (more or less) we climbed onto a ledge. The ledge was the bottom of a vertical shaft. Alice wondered what was up the shaft, but the rest of us ate dinner.

Alice is a terrific climber. She yelled down from about 30 feet up that she was at an abandoned drain. There seemed to be scuff marks in the mud. Could that be a passage in the Fisher Ridge Cave System? I told her to crawl down the drain and see if she saw any footprints. She was gone about 20 minutes when we heard her scraping her way back. We were putting away our empty cans and candy wrappers when she yelled down to us.

"It goes to a cluster of vertical shafts...footprints all over...leads out in several directions. The air is coming

out of one of the smaller leads," Alice was excited.

"Better get down here and eat," I responded. "We're heading back soon." I watched her layback descent, marveling at her skill set. Alice is one of the best cavers I know, beside myself of course. She landed with a bright expression on her face. Her eyes flashed. "What did you find?" I said as I poised my pencil to write in the survey notebook.

"Gotta pee first," said Alice. She retreated out of sight.
TO BE CONTINUED ###

Mammoth Cave Crocodile and Sharks

By Ergor Rubreck

Big news!!! Stop Press!!! An ancient crocodile skull has been found in Mammoth Cave, KY. Fossil shark teeth were also found in the vicinity. The National Park Service is not telling where these are located in that 415-mile long cave for fear every Crocodile Dundee and pot hunter will converge and loot the cave before the paleontologists have plundered and looted the cave. I believe I know more about Mammoth Cave than any two men alive, so I will give you the inside scoop. But just because you are about to learn the

authoritative inside stuff, I ask you not to blab or make others feel inferior and uninformed.

Bear skulls and bones have been found in Central European caves, Poland and Rumania, but their age is comparatively young. *Ursa spelea* became extinct during the Pliocene 24,000 years ago.

The crocodile skull and shark teeth are in a Mississippian calcareous formation called the Girkin limestone, about 330 million years old (give or take a few million.) Three ages of Mississippian limestone have

been identified. The Visean (or Chesterian) Age is the middle (346.7 to 330.9 million years old), and is sandwiched between the older below it, and the Serpukhosian Age (330.9 to 323.2 million years old) above it. Keep in mind these marine seas were laid down LONG before the sediments above Mammoth Cave were exposed to erosion ten million years ago. That means the dead shark did not just swim in while the main cave gate was open, nor did the crocodile slither down the elevator shaft.

Currently there are 13 species of crocodiles known, and with this new cave find, there may be 14. I am naming the Mammoth Cave croc *C. Kentuckyus* (you heard it here first). While I thought about naming it *C. Rubreckus*, I was afraid that just because I did not find it or identify it, I'd be accused of unethical play.

How did the croc and sharks get there, you may ask? During the Cretaceous Period of geologic history current land masses and sea areas could not have been recognized from space. North of North America was the Labrador Seaway, then a little bit of dry land. A vast strip of water, the Western Inland Seaway extended from Canada down south to South America. It was joined by the Hudson Seaway about 185 miles north of Minneapolis, MN. A tiny hook of the Western Interior Seaway extends into western Kentucky. Little dry land was available in those days, except the rising Appalachian Mountains in eastern U.S. and the Rocky Mountains in the west.

The sharks came first. Sharks shed teeth at the drop of a hat. The sharks were in the Western Interior Seaway, along with the Mosasaur and many other Cretaceous animals. A 43-foot-long Mousasaur skeleton

is on display at the Morden, Manitoba Museum in Canada, along with many shark teeth and fossil bones. My theory is the sea hook extended as far east as Glasgow, KY which is when the curious shark cruised his way (they swim day and night) to Mammoth Cave area and spit out a mouthful of teeth. Their large size = big shark.

Many years later, toward the close of the Viséan Age, the crocodile crawled up on the beach of the receding Western Interior Seaway, ate a sea urchin, and died. What came next was a couple of hundred feet of Pennsylvanian formations from mountains eroding and deteriorating swamps that buried the Mississippian formations under sandstone, conglomerate, and coal. My advice to the National Park Service is to keep a lookout for Masasaur bones in Mammoth Cave. I think it is **not fair** that Canada has the largest example of Masasaur bones when the weather is so much nicer here in the USA, especially Kentucky.

Since I am able to relate so much about sharks (the ten ancient species go back 455 million years ago (120 million before the crocs,) what other animal bones have been found in Mammoth Cave?

Chicken bones predominate. Not ancient chickens, but modern varieties such as leghorn, that were fried for lunches for visitors to Mammoth Cave. The earliest visitors -- from about 1820 onward--ate fried-in-lard chicken from baskets carried by several generations of cave guides. Starting in 1954 when the NSS C-3 expedition was held, no more recent chicken bones have been found because many of the subsequent explorers ate canned boned chicken. Only a few old round chicken cans from those days survive.

Have crocodile tears been found in Mammoth Cave? Perhaps they linger there if the Mammoth Cave Croc's mother happened to be living there 330 million years ago when Junior died. Crocodile tears are insincere tears, an expression of fake sadness. The historical first instance of crocodile tears at Mammoth Cave was in 1842 when Stephen Bishop said to Franklin Gorin, "I weep that you did not find Echo River before I did." The only known historical mention of teeth was not sharks teeth, but an attribution of Stephen Bishop, "Stalactites in Broadway (the main trunk passage in Mammoth Cave) are as scarce as hens' teeth."

I am happy to be the world's leading authority on paleontological and historical information on Mammoth Cave. It is the least I can do. And I am happy to pass on this wonderful information to future generations, who, without it, will be in the dark, so to speak. A commitment I have made to 100% accuracy is that if updates are made to my wisdom and knowledge, I knew about them but omitted them for brevity. It is a heavy obligation that I gladly maintain as a public service to unborn and unconceived millions of Americans and other cave enthusiasts everywhere.



<http://karstorama.com/>



<https://nsscon2020.org/>

Information Concerning the 2020 NSS Convention

Hello NSS members,

No doubt you have been following the news regarding Coronavirus – also known as COVID-19. I want to assure you that the National Speleological Society (NSS) and the 2020 NSS Convention Staff continue to closely monitor the situation and the potential effects to our members and events. We are committed to keeping you safe as the health and well-being of all our members are top priorities.

As of now the 2020 NSS Convention remains as scheduled: July 27–31, 2020. Based on the uncertainties regarding COVID-19, the NSS Convention Staff has decided to **change the Pre-Registration deadline to May 31, 2020**. We hope this doesn't inconvenience our membership.

One thing we should all do is educate ourselves from a reliable scientific source:

- **Centers for Disease Control:**
• <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
- **Johns Hopkins University:**
• <https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/>
- **World Health Organization:**
• <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>

As always, feel free to send any questions or concerns our way. If scheduling changes need to be made, we will reach out again. It is in challenging times like these that we see our core values in action. Thank you for your commitment to each other and the NSS.

Keep Calm & Carry On

Katherine “Kat” Crispin, Ph.D.
NSS Administrative Vice President

Mammoth Cave Suspends Cave Tours

Mammoth Cave National Park will temporarily suspend all cave tours and close the Mammoth Cave Visitor Center until further notice beginning Wednesday, March 18 per guidance from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The closures will be in place to lessen the public health risk associated with the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). Surface activities within the park, such as the park campgrounds and hiking, equestrian, and biking trails, as well as restrooms adjacent to the visitor center will remain open and accessible to the public.

Cave tour sizes at the park average almost 100 people per tour during the Spring Break season and do not fall within the recent guidance to limit group gatherings to 10 people or less. The park is coordinating with the National Park Service's (NPS) Washington and regional offices as well as the NPS Public Health Service for further guidance.

Today the park will offer an Extended Mammoth Passage tour, rather than the ranger guided tours as a transition to the temporary cave closure. The Extended Mammoth Passage takes place in vast canyon passageways that allow for good ventilation and airflow exchange, but visitors will be encouraged to practice appropriate social distancing while on the tour. Visitors on the tour are required to walk down and up a steep path to the Historic Entrance and navigate 160 steps.

For questions about refunds for cave tours, please contact the park's Fee Office: 270-758-2417.

WEED

CAVES OF FIRE AND ICE
NSS
2021 CONVENTION
Weed, California

National Speleological Society
2021 Annual Convention!
June 28 ~ July 2, 2021

Nestled in a pine forest in extreme northern California, 14-thousand foot Mount Shasta Volcano stands guard over the rugged City of Weed. Named after her founder, Abner Weed, this historic lumber town rests at the intersection of California's mountainous limestone ridges and mysterious lava tubes. Hundreds of caves in the nearby hills will provide challenges for a lifetime of explorers.

In the summer of 2021, over one thousand cavers from across the country and around the world will gather in Weed for the annual convention of the National Speleological Society. We hope you can join us!

SISKIYOU
CALIFORNIA'S NORTH

NATIONAL SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

For more information, please visit us
online at nss2021.caves.org



The Dayton Underground Grotto
 Of the National Speleological Society
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM
 www.dugcaves.com

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

NAME:		NSS NUMBER: <i>(if member)</i>	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP CODE:
E-MAIL ADDRESS:			
HOME PHONE NUMBER:	CELL PHONE NUMBER:	WORK PHONE NUMBER:	
I AM 18 YEARS OF AGE, OR OLDER: ____ YES ____ NO			
DUES PAID: \$5 (or \$10 family) ANNUAL FOR ____ YEARS = \$ ____ TOTAL			

Dues are \$5 per person (\$2.50 if after July 1st). Make checks payable to the Dayton Underground Grotto and mail application and payment to: John Casady, 414 Michigan Ave., Troy, OH 45373

Family dues are \$10 per year (\$5.00 if after July 1st). To qualify for family membership, at least three members must reside in the same household of which at least one is a regular or associate member age 18 or older. Family members residing in the same household under the age of 18 are exempt from annual dues. Family members residing in the same household who are age 18 or older will pay the annual \$5 dues. Please list family member names on the back of this application.

NOTE: Members who join and are not NSS members are associate members and may not vote or hold grotto office. NSS members are regular members and have full grotto privileges.

WILL THE DAYTON UNDERGROUND GROTTTO BE YOUR PRIMARY NSS AFFILIATION? ____ YES ____ NO

Signature

Date

Signature of Parent/Guardian if under age 18

Date

SUBSCRIBE TO THE DUG E-MAIL LIST: DUGCaves+subscribe@googlegroups.com