
The Carbide Courier



The Dayton Underground Grotto
of the National Speleological Society



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GROTTO MEETINGS

Grotto meetings are held the 2nd Sunday of each month (except for September, December, and the month of Wormfest) at 7:00pm at Roger and Lynn Brucker's house, 1635 Grange Hall Rd., Beavercreek, OH. For directions, see the map on the back cover, or go to the DUG webpage:

www.dugcaves.com

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Cover Photo: Barbara Hughes in Great Saltpetre Cave.
Photo (c) by Tama Cassidy.

MEMBERSHIP INFO

Annual membership is \$15 per individual, or \$20 per family (\$5 additional for those wanting a paper copy of the newsletter). Membership includes the monthly publication of *The Carbide Courier* in paper or electronic format. Memberships are renewable on October 1st. Dues can be mailed to:

Alan Leach
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Please make check payable to:
Dayton Underground Grotto

You can also pay online using PayPal at:

www.dugcaves.com/joindug.htm

From the Editor:

As I sit here writing my last “From the Editor” column, it seems like only yesterday that I was trying to figure out how I was going to put my very first *Carbide Courier* together. Through trial and error, and lots of modifications, I came up with a format that worked for me (and hopefully you too). Then, I got my iMac and had to learn how to format it all over again. What a fiasco that first attempt on Pages instead of Publisher. However, with a little perseverance (and lots of four-letter words) I figured it out.

(Continued on page 4)

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Calendar of Upcoming Event

- October 10th** 7pm - Grotto General Membership Meeting (Election Results)
 Roger & Lynn Brucker's House (See back of Courier for Map)
- October 24th** Kentucky Speleological Survey meeting and presentation at KGS Core
 Library (at the Kentucky Horse Park exit north of Lexington)
<http://ksscaves.org>
- November 11th-14th** 19th Annual Wormfest in Las Vegas. See page 7 for information
- December 4th** 20th Annual Christmas Party at the America's Best Value Inn, 75 Corporate
 Center Drive, Vandalia, OH (same location as last year).
- January 9th** 7pm - Grotto General Membership Meeting
 Roger & Lynn Brucker's House (See back of Courier for Map)
- January 28th-30th** Winter Adventure Weekend (formerly Crawlathon) at Carter Caves State
 Resort Park, Olive Hill, Kentucky

October Birthdays

- Bob Dobbs - 1st
- Kenny Hedges - 1st
- Wendy Ferris - 1st
- Roger June - 2nd
- Norma Seehawer - 9th
- Bonnie Guess - 11th
- Hank Parton - 11th
- Mary Beth Pierce - 17th
- Tracy Hood - 31st



NEWS FROM THE SURVEY SECTION

By Pam Carpenter

This summer, the survey gear was used in the re-survey of Triple S Cave in Wayne County, Kentucky. This beautiful cave has more passages than previously known. The known part of the cave was surveyed along with newly discovered virgin passage. The project continues.

In July, Harry Goepel took the compass/clinometer to Mexico. It was used in Xcoch Cave, pronounced *Skosh*.

Our survey gear has been in a lot of caves, including Lechuguilla. If a survey project is in your future, contact the Survey Section for gear.

FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Well... I've sat down to write my final "from the highchair" rant and I'm trying to figure out where the last two years have gone. It seems like only a few weeks ago a hand full of DUG members were prodding me to run for chair.

Like all my projects, they begin with many grand ideas. Then about 3/4's of the through I get side tracked by something shiny. Being the chairman for DUG was no different. I can't thank the Executive Committee members enough for keeping momentum when I became distracted, or busy with life. I hate naming people because I always forget someone. But here are some of the people off the top of my head who made it happen.

Tama, thank you for being my last minute, in a pinch "Hey, can you take care of this." person.

Debbie, the keeper of the money. You kept us in check on our spending, and kept us under budget.

Mike, great Carbide Couriers! Thank you for being creative enough to fill the pages.

Jim, my "go to guy" for programs.

Alan, seriously... great job keeping the member info!

Roger & Lynn, for opening your home to us. Thank you..

I have said this countless times. DUG is your grotto, step up and take part. WNS has challenged all cavers nationwide. None of use know where caving will be in five years. The growth, and future of caving, rest on all our shoulders.

Dana Sutherland
Chairman

(From the Editor - Continued from page 2)

Now it's time for someone else to step up and take over the duties of Secretary-Communications (the official title of *Carbide Courier* Editor). At the time this newsletter went to press, there were no candidates running for this position. The *Carbide Courier* is the official voice of the grotto and needs someone to take it and run with it. It really doesn't take as much time to do as it used to--especially since most members get the newsletter electronically. We only mail 14 copies now! Hopefully,

someone will volunteer to take on this job at the October grotto meeting.

Well, that's it for this month. I've enjoyed putting your newsletter together these past two years, but now it's time to move on to other duties in the grotto. Get active in the grotto. I look forward to seeing you around!

Mike Hood
Secretary-Communications (Editor)

Ergor's Supercavers and Supercaves

By Ergor Rubreck

The editor of *Outhouse Magazine*, foremost outdoor adventure monthly, asked me to pack my bag and fly to Oaxaca, Mexico and interview Bob Rock, famous supercaver. He was preparing to break the world cave depth record of 7,432.6m set in Gruta Phreefall, that unbelievably deep hole -- twice the size of the Petronas Towers in Moldavia -- that was bottomed by a Kurdistan caver team just last year. The fact that none of them survived made it impossible to interview them.

As I stepped off the Aer Mex 747 onto the tarmac I was met by a smiling Bob Rock, tanned, chiseled face and with an imposing 7'-2" frame. He thrust his hand down and forward and squeezed mine like the Boston Strangler. "Ola, Ergor, mas tiempo no si!" We reminisced about our caving together in Cenote del Muerto several years before. We were waved out of the way because the afternoon plane was circling to land.

As we jounced and hacked our way through the rainforest in his eight-wheel drive truck, Bob told me how the expedition was going. "We have thirty-two ropes in place, sixteen camps staked out, and

300 kilos of beans staged," he said. I asked about the golf bags in the bed of the truck. He said they are not golf bags, but descending rack bags. "We use twenty-five-bar racks on these deep boogers," he said, "and the bars are sodium-cooled titanium to withstand the heat when we whiz down to the bottom of each pitch.

At the expedition's camp, which hung from hammocks in jungle trees "to keep the tapirs away," I met a striking statuesque redhead named Consenta. An expedition member told me she was the champion pit rigger of Kazakhstan in 2008, and the current "esmeralda" of Bob Rock. The 27-pound gas powered bolting hammer that swung from her waist caused her to list to port about 15-degrees. She gave me a wink and a 48-karat smile, a little nudge, and a palm-scratching handshake. I did not want to get too close as she inched perceptibly toward me for fear her bolting hammer muffler had not cooled down sufficiently.

"Stash your gear, get some grub and some shut eye," Bob said, "because tomorrow we are going 6,272.6m down to Camp 16." I learned later from Consenta that Camp 16

was suspended by parachute cord from a soda straw, and was constantly pelted by plantain leaves showering down upon it. Consenta said the crunchiness of the leaves made lovemaking a noisy affair at Camp 16.

After washing down a rasher of huevos ranchero, beans, and plantain seeds with two gallons of free trade coffee, we entered the yawning maw of the cave. It was so large you could park three 747 tires in the "Sala Grande." Gaucho birds swooped and dive bombed us with a curious paste-like substance, that did not taste good, either. We descended a 500m fixed rope. I was a little concerned because where they fixed it the electrical tape was coming unwound. At each stainless steel bolt and rebelay I dangled and thrashed, hooking my cows tail over each bolt, and traversing sideways, sometimes upside down. At the bottom, near Camp 15, I asked about the numerous windows we passed on the perilous descent. Bob said, "We don't screw with them. They are horizontal cave and who cares about horizontal cave? Depth is where it's at -- depth!"

Camp 15 was laid out on blue tarps over six inches of quicksand. The coffee was getting to me about then, and Bob motioned for me to use the pee bottle. These deep supercavers are fastidious and take out of the cave everything they take in. Last year in the dreaded Santa Anita d'Eques, Manuel Labour lost his right leg when it was shredded in a Jumar, and dutifully carried it 5,326m back out of the cave. Asked whether it hurt, he replied, "Only when I laugh." I could not hear any of the preparation briefing at Camp 15 as the blue tarp crinkled and crackled so loudly as to drown out conversation. I imagined the noise would make amorous activity less private.

Lunch at Camp 15 consisted of tubes of Guacharo butter, double refried beans, and Ho Hos. Bob started to lecture me on carbohydrate loading but I told him to stop as my Ph.D. is in Nutritional Science & Arts. The lunch was not very good.

A couple more 600+m drops and we were at Camp 16, the jump-off for the two km sump through twisty little passages that looked all alike. The super-cold water was at 0°C and I was handed an ice pick in case the liquid turned solid on my transit. I was fitted with a self-contained breathing device and told that so long as the green LEDs were glowing I had nothing to worry about. I sank into the depths and picked up a clothesline that wound through and around boulders, drowned speleothems and speleogens, and one VW.

Emerging in a gigantic hall I pulled myself up on a shale beach and awaited the other divers. Bob Rock was next. He said the others had decided not to dive when their refried beans took to outgassing and floated them to the ceiling of the sump in a "bad air bell." We scrambled along the beach in a tube 432m in diameter, slanting downward at 8-degrees. We passed the bloated dead bodies of the Kurdistan dive team arranged in

a circle, heads to a butane stove, long since out of gas.

Bob said, "Poor devils, they had just set a brass elevation marker at their world record depth when their butane tank leaked. Without mercaptan, they could not smell the deadly CO gas concentration when their stove blew out. We stood still a moment in their memory, then proceeded to the brass cap:

**Gruta Phreefall
World Depth Record
7,432.6m
Kurdistan Deep
Speleology Team**

Bob whipped out a trowel and a length of measuring tape. He dug a hole in the floor at that point 1.4m deep. "Now, I have set the deep record 7,434m!" I said that he could have dug a deeper hole. He said, "That's three years from now. I already have \$7M lined up for my expedition to Brazil next year. And I'm taking Amazonia. She's the best caver in Brazil."

Andy South is stepping down as the Equipment Committee Chairman and the grotto needs someone to take over this committee. It involves storing and maintaining the grotto equipment. Contact Andy at bethandy26 at yahoo.com if you want to find out more about the duties involved. Contact the grotto chairman if interested in the position.

The Carbide Courier
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