

# Central Connecticut Grotto

## Underground Movement April 2004

*"Some content in this issue was removed, so it differs slightly from the original publication"*



Kuratahi, New Zealand (April 2004) Photo By Jansen Cardy

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION

The Underground Movement is published monthly by the Central Connecticut Grotto (CCG) of the National Speleological Society (NSS). Reprint permission is granted to the NSS and to other grottos, with Author or Editor permission.

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All cavers are welcomed and encouraged to submit articles, photographs, and other items for publication in the CCG. Your contribution would be very much appreciated.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

Chair: **Bob Simmons** 860-738-1176  
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(Program and activities) [vicechair@ctcavers.org](mailto:vicechair@ctcavers.org)  
Treasurer/Membership: **Norm Berg** 860-621-2080  
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Vertical Chair **Tom Oakes** 203-888-7355  
[vertical@ctcavers.org](mailto:vertical@ctcavers.org)

## CCG Meetings:

Meetings are the 3rd Tuesday of each month at 7PM. In Plainville CT., just off route 84 near the junction of route 72 at HRP Associates, 167 New Britain Ave. (rt. 372) Plainville, CT. For info call 860-793-6899 x134. Non Members welcome.

## Meeting Directions to HRP Associates:

From Waterbury direction on I-84 traveling East:  
Take Exit 34 (Crooked Street). Turn left at the end of the ramp.  
At the next light, take a left onto Rte 372 (New Britain Ave).  
Proceed straight through the first light. Immediately after the second light, turn right into the first driveway by the HRP sign.  
The front door is on your left, ring the doorbell and when you hear the door buzz - go upstairs.  
- From Hartford direction on I-84 traveling West (or Rte 72 traveling West):  
Exit 33 puts you on Rte 72 West. Move to the right lane and take the first exit - Exit 2 (New Britain Ave Plainville).  
As you approach the lights, move into the second lane from the left (labeled Cooke Street).

Turn left at the lights, then immediately turns right into the first driveway by the HRP sign.  
The front door is on your left, ring the doorbell and when you hear the door buzz - go upstairs.

## Dues:

Regular Membership Dues: \$5 per year  
NSS members can also pay \$20 for 5 year membership

## CCG Website:

The Grotto website is: [www.ctcavers.org/](http://www.ctcavers.org/)

This is an excellent way to find out what other caving things are going on that come up on short notice as well as review some of the history.

## NSS Information:

The National Speleological Society (NSS) is the national organization of which CCG is a part. The NSS can be contacted about other caving or national caving information at [www.caves.org/](http://www.caves.org/)

National Speleological Society  
2813 Cave Avenue  
Huntsville, AL 35810-4431

Voice: 256-852-1300  
Fax: 256-851-9241  
E-Mail: [nss@caves.org](mailto:nss@caves.org)

NSS News submission guidelines may be found at <http://www.caves.org/pub/nssnews/style.html>

## Calendar of Events:

Trips are not limited to what is on the calendar! Contact fellow grotto members to create your own trips. Let the CCG Editor know in advance to post your trip on the calendar.

## April 2004

**April 15-17** - Thursday-Saturday 2004 National Cave Conservancies Forum is a national meeting scheduled to promote education and interaction among cave and karst based conservancies in the United States. Any board member, committee member or involved general member of these organizations should be able to benefit from and contribute to this forum. Online registration and full description available at [WVCC](http://www.wvcc.org/).

**April 20** - Tuesday: Monthly Grotto Meeting 7:00 p.m. at HRP Associates, Inc., 167 New Britain Ave. (Rt 372) Plainville, CT. For info call 860-793-6899 x134. Ask for Bob Simmons. Non Members are welcome at all our meetings. See [Directions](#).

**April 24** - Saturday Vertical Practice Cathole Mountain. Rain Date: Sunday April 25. Details to be Announced.

**April 24<sup>th</sup>** : SATMT – Morris Cave – Leader: Doug Truit.

**April 29 – May 3:** Old Fat Man Caving II West Virginia, Greenbrier and Monroe Counties. You need not be old, fat or male to be welcome. Contact [Bob Simmons](#) for details.

## May 2004

**May 8<sup>th</sup>**, Saturday: Vertical Practice at Cathole Mountain. Rain date Sunday May 9<sup>th</sup>. Contact Tom Oakes at [toakes@snet.net](mailto:toakes@snet.net) or at 203-386-7770 (days) or 203-888-7355 (evenings) for details and directions.

**May 9<sup>th</sup> -12<sup>th</sup>** – Lechuguilla Human Impact Survey  
Trip Leader: Ray Keeler. Jansen Cardy, Christopher Beauchamp, Gary Burns and Tom Oakes won the raffle to attend. Tom Oakes has a scheduling conflict and can not attend; therefore, Bob Jacobs will fill in his slot instead.



The next CCG MEETING will be held Tuesday, April 20, 2004 at HRP Associates at 7:00pm. Directions [link](#).

### NEWSLETTER CORRECTIONS and RELATED ITEMS:

OFMC II has been postponed to April 29<sup>th</sup> to May 3<sup>rd</sup>. Please make a note of it.

The Ridge Walking/Lava tubes trip has been cancelled.

### Future trips:

**April 24<sup>th</sup>**- Vertical Practice at Cathole Mountain. Rain date Sunday April 23<sup>rd</sup>. Contact Tom Oakes at [toakes@snet.net](mailto:toakes@snet.net) or at 203-386-7770 (days) or 203-888-7355 (evenings) for details and directions.

**April 24<sup>th</sup>**: Ridge walking/lava tube walking – **CANCELLED**.

**May 8<sup>th</sup>** - Saturday: Vertical Practice at Cathole Mountain. Rain date Sunday May 9<sup>th</sup>. Contact Tom Oakes at [toakes@snet.net](mailto:toakes@snet.net) or at 203-386-7770 (days) or 203-888-7355 (evenings) for details and directions.

**May 9<sup>th</sup> -12<sup>th</sup>** – Lechuguilla Human Impact Survey  
Trip Leader: Ray Keeler.

**June 31<sup>st</sup> – Aug 22<sup>nd</sup>** – Ukraine Caving Expedition For additional details contact Chris Nicola; Phone (718) 204-8373, [chris@uaycef.org](mailto:chris@uaycef.org)

March 23, 2004 Meeting Minutes

1. Meeting begins – 7:50pm
2. Introductions

3. Minutes of the last meeting read.
4. Officer Reports
  - a. Chair - no report
  - b. Vertical: Absent
  - c. Treasury: Norm: \$1,200 in the treasury.
  - d. Membership: (norm)Updated list distribution
  - e. Communications: absent
  - f. Safety: no report
  - g. Conservation: no report
  - h. Vice Chair: absent
  - i. Editor: Ralph's request
    - i. Ask him to present his ideas to the grotto personally at a meeting.
5. Past Trips
  - a. Morris Trip Cancelled
    - i. Moved to April 24<sup>th</sup>
  - b. Clarksville: Amy + Aaron 3/20/04
  - c. Hawaii trip: Amy + Aaron
    - i. Hulakai system – 17.95 miles
    - ii. 2 survey teams
  - d. Craig: Gage Cavern Beginners trips,
    - i. Clarksville,
    - ii. Schoharie,
    - iii. Onesquethaw
6. old Business
  - a. Steve J.– Cherry Valley Mapping project
    - i. ~80 caves to survey
  - b. theJeff - Led climbing school in Manchester
    - i. Garth gives great thanks.
7. New Business:
  - a. Ray's Gear:
    - i. Giving Ray his measuring tape back via mail
    - ii. Discussion on where the lost gear is.
      1. Indian Oven
      2. Glory Hole
  - b. NGS Documentary on NGS Channel
    - i. Chris Nicola to present a discussion on it
  - c. Behind the scenes presentation
    1. Fund raising for Clarksville
8. Upcoming trips
  - a. NCC Board meeting – mar 27
    - i. Bob Simmons: Caving 28<sup>th</sup> (morning of, only) – TBD
  - b. April – OFMC II – Bill Balfore
    - i. WVCC – overrun with cavers during the second weekend of April.
    - ii. Considering moving OFMC II to May or June.
  - c. Cathole mountain training
    - i. Passage Rights
  - d. NRO in Vermont
    - i. Dates: May 14<sup>th</sup> through the 16<sup>th</sup>.
    - ii. \$9.00 camping fee
  - e. NSS Convention in Marquette, Michigan
    - i. July 12<sup>th</sup> through 16<sup>th</sup>.
  - f. Meetings at Norm's place.
    - i. 3<sup>rd</sup> weekend in June
9. Meeting Adjourned – 8:47pm 

# Caving in Wintry Vermont

Written and Photographed by: Christopher Beauchamp

DEC. 20<sup>TH</sup> 2003

I found myself spending my birthday (for those of you that missed it, its not to late for belated gifts) with my girlfriend (Michelle Chappel) in Smugglers notch Vermont. Fifty some odd inches of fresh snow and me without my snowboard.



Instead I have plans to go snowshoeing, which may sound okay, but really it's as boring as hiking but with the added bonus of being dirt cold. We were discussing where exactly we should go when her sister suggested "why don't you bring Chris up to the caves." Well now, things were starting to look promising.

The "Caves" are in a talus pile sitting in the cradle of the "notch". There is a road that winds up through the notch but it is closed during the winter, in the summer though I imagine you would essentially be able to drive right to the "Caves". We parked at the gate blocking the road quickly donned are snowshoes as it was getting late and began our trek upward. Judging from the tracks this is a popular starting point for a variety of backcountry adventures.

The temperature was hovering around the zero mark (Fahrenheit) but any thoughts of grumbling about the cold were dismissed after we passed a tent pitched in the snow belonging to a couple of ice climbers. The walk up was fairly mild and it took less than a half hour to reach the "caves". As soon as we were within sight of the rock piles I began fervently darting about looking for any entrance



that looked inviting. I quickly located a good candidate except that the entrance had a large triangular boulder right in the middle that would need to be scaled in order to gain admittance. Ordinarily this wouldn't even register as a concern, but I was wearing large

snowshoes and it quickly became apparent that this would in fact be

a problem. I was about to remove them, but I noticed that there was a good deal of snow inside and it didn't look like nor could I imagine that I'd be going too far once inside. So laziness prevailed, I surely didn't want to take them off just to have to put them back on again, so I decided to climb the rock with my knees instead of my feet, this was not an easy task but after a series of grunts and groans I was up, over and in.



Caving in snowshoes is NOT something I would recommend. I found myself in a small room, I quickly explored it's limits walking where there was sufficient snow coverage and crawling where the rock was exposed. Upon returning to the entrance I found Michelle

struggling to get over the rock in her snowshoes. Some verbal prodding, a little assistance and she was in. I shot some photos and then noticed a high lead that would have definitely required the removal of my snowshoes so I passed it up in favor of heading out and seeing what else we could find.

Trudging uphill from the entrance it quickly became apparent that the snow was incredibly deep – in some places well over my head. We located a large entrance sloping in to the hill a short distance above the first. I slid down and found a small crawl



that I believe led back to the first cave, justifying my reluctance to remove my snowshoes. Walking back on the surface I suddenly plunged through a hole under the snow but managed to grab a tree branch before I plummeted to the bottom. Next we found a large walk-in entrance leading to a large chamber with several skylights and a large boulder pile in the middle. On the other side of this we found a tight vertical crack filled with snow, forcing our way through we turned it into a thru trip.

In all it was an interesting experience – not the most substantial caves but a worthwhile endeavor nonetheless. I imagine that in the warmer months there would be more caves whose entrances were obscured by the snow although it wouldn't rate quite as high on the adventure scale. 🦋

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## A letter to a friend of Peter Febbrioriello

Submitted by Peter Febbrioriello

Dear Bunky,

Bob Willis and I used to take turns driving his VW bus from Albuquerque to Carlsbad, me sneaking off the Air Force base at Kirtland and risking AWOL charges if found out...but what else is there to do on weekends in the desert? We would pull up to a stone cottage at the National Park service HQ in the wee hours and camp out in relative style, waking up to a herd of deer warming up in the morning sun just outside the window...the one that overlooks Walnut Canyon and the yawning mouth of the cavern. The bunks all had CACAUSNPS stenciled on the ironworks. I can still hear Bob scraping out his carbide lamp with a rusty nail, the fartly smell of calcium hydroxide wafting thru the kitchen while I try to fry a couple of eggs for breakfast. "Caca ooh snips" Bob was a tall dude, way over 6 feet and me..well, let's just say I'm an inch short of one Bunky. He liked to show me sections of the cave that I'd never been to, and if you have ever been in Carlsbad Caverns, you know that many weekends would pass before I saw all of it. This one weekend in particular, he planned a special treat for me. One area of the cave never seen by tourists is the area known as Mavel's room. From this one area one could overlook the Mystery room, a deep pit that led back into the lower cave area, another passage known as the Talcum passage with a dusty floor and funnel holes where the sand drained mysteriously down into ??? like an hourglass. Have to watch where you put your feet in this place! Of course, the Park Service didn't allow tourists in these areas, so there were no ladders or stairs or anything that you would normally expect. So wasn't I surprised and humbled when Bob reached up to the ceiling, grabbed a nubbin of smooth limestone shaped somewhat like a female breast, and with one hand raised his body straight up, sort of like an Indian Fakir doing a rope trick...up up and away he levitated smoothly into a hole in the ceiling and continued up without pausing. Not only did he expect me to follow him, but now there were crumbs of cave coming down on my helmet like sleet. After a bit of windshield

wiping, I reached up to grab the nubbin only to discover that I had about a foot to go and I was already on my toes. You say jump? Of course! Ever watch a toad going after a swarm of flies? Notice how they jump straight up and flop down on any convenient body part? It took more tries than I want to remember, but when I finally got some fingers on the breast..er..nubbin, and didn't fall...well..well! So I just hung there for a few seconds and wondered if that was an aureola or just my imagination, but time was a-wastin' and I was a-slippin', so I whacked my other hand up a little higher, as far as I could stretch, and now I was home free, eh? Well, maybe. I was only a foot off the ground, but far enough from any footholds. My only hope was to get my body to levitate. I discovered a trick. If I used my legs to bounce some body mass upward, the load on my arms would lighten by a few pounds just long enough to pull up some body length. Taking advantage of every inch gained, I got myself up into a straight arm position...and from that point on, it was easy. Raising my legs as high as I wanted, I could get good footholds using friction against the walls, now I was in a vertical tube in the ceiling, one foot plus one Bunky minus one inch off the floor of the cave. A bad fall from this height, indeed. So I played Santa and proceeded upwards for what seemed an eternity. The handholds were pretty good, and the footholds were the handholds of two feet ago, and when there were none, I just put my butt against the side of the tube and hands and feet on the opposite side, and did a caver style chimney climb..sort of like an inchworm cheating. It was a good fifty foot climb, but not scary, my body blocked the view down the tube! This chimney climbing stuff was fun, and I still love to do it whenever I get a chance. At the top, we popped out into the side of a funnel with a steep slope down to a dark hole at the bottom. This was the pit that we bypassed by coming up the tube. Hmmmm..lets see now, fifty foot pit, plus one foot plus one Bunky minus one inch.

The stakes are getting higher eh? One slip here and goombye! Well, it wasn't all that scary, since the footing was better than the climb, and there was room for all of us to sit safely...somewhere. After a bit of rest and an explanation of my tardiness we continued up to a ridge. Seems like flat is not spoken here. Following the ridge we come to another hole in the wall/floor that looks like it goes all the way back down to somewhere else (checking the map later..it was the Mystery room..and still a mystery to me, cause that's the one room i've never been to) till we get to a slot in the wall behind which is a passage paralleling the wall and heading away from the ridge. This led quickly into the Talcum passage, where the floor

looked like a flat porous colander or cheese grater or something, with hundreds of holes, each like a funnel full of trickling sand. At the far end of this flat sandy floor was a sudden drop of over one hundred feet to the floor of the cave below. The next level of the cave is where the tourist route comes close to dropping off to still another level. It's a big three decker sandwich of passages. Needless to say we turned back and headed for the tube, now a well, and an interesting full body length dangle at the bottom, and a foot to free fall to boot!! Well, the neat thing was, everybody got to the bottom ok, cause cavers just love to slither...but when they got to the bottom and saw the one foot plus Bunky minus one..they all stopped short of a mild panic! You see, cavers have always followed a rule that you never ..ever..jump. Caving is dangerous when you do things that push the envelope, and the envelope shrinks to minimal proportions when you go deeper farther and longer into a cave...distancing yourself from any kind of rescue makes you think about every little move you make. So, I watched from above while each one figured out a way to deal with a dilemma that quite honestly has never come up again in my caving career. My turn...heh..heh...I had some practice, remember?

I slithered down until my knees were level with the ceiling below me, rotated to get my hands in alignment with..er..Mavel's breast...and with the friction of two hands on opposite sides of the tube..slid gracefully down, until finally one hand lands on the breast, the other comes freely out to wave to all, and after a brief pause to contemplate the wonders of mother nature, released the aureola with my last finger and landed gracefully, like a ballerina...but they had all turned and moved on...

g'nite Bunky 

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## Conservation Corner

This month's issue of the NSS News is devoted almost entirely to a subject that touches on a subject near and dear to every cavers heart – the continued conservation of karsts so that we may enjoy inner Earth's aged gifts. There are some people in the world who don't find this love of our natural surrounding as endearing as we and think nothing of purposefully destroying stalagmites, stalactites and the myriad of other formations that make caving so interesting and beautiful.

The NSS has set up a fund to deter such activity and to reward 'anyone providing information leading to the legal

conviction of vandalism directly related to caves anywhere in the United States.'

You can read more about this fund at the NSS Website by following the following URL:

[http://www.caves.org/committee/conservation/www/a\\_threats/articles\\_threats/cavevandalism.htm](http://www.caves.org/committee/conservation/www/a_threats/articles_threats/cavevandalism.htm)

In other conservation news, "Northeastern Cave Conservancy, Inc. (NCC) has signed an agreement to purchase Clarksville Cave, a popular horizontal cave in Albany County, NY. With about 4800 feet of passage and three entrances, Clarksville is surely the best-known and most-visited wild cave in the Northeast. Schools, church and social groups, summer camps, college outing clubs, geology classes, families, novice and experienced cavers all have enjoyed caving here for at least two centuries. Local grottos conduct occasional cleanups, and the annual flooding also helps wash away the effects of the thousands of visitors."

Read more about the purchase in this month's issue of the NSS News or catch it online at:

<http://www.caves.org/conservancy/ncc/Clarksville/clarksville.htm>

The following link was submitted by Ray Keeler and it discusses some cave conservation issues graphically and presents procedures/techniques we can use to protect caves.

<http://users.skynet.be/avalon2/downloads/Cave Protection English.pdf> 

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## UKRAINE CAVING EXPEDITION

(July 31 to August 22, 2004)

The Ukrainian American Youth Caver Exchange Foundation (UAYCEF), an NSS Project, is currently compiling a list of names of those persons interested in participating in its eleventh annual three week expedition to Ukraine.

The first half of the trip will be spent exploring the horizontal "Giant Gypsums" of Western Ukraine, some of the World's longest caves (7/31-8/11/04). The remaining time will be spent visiting the deep vertical limestone caves and shafts of the Crimea. Time will also be set aside for some sightseeing in Kiev, Yalta, and/or Sevastopol, as well as a visit to the Black Sea (8/11-8/22/04).

Instruction provided in Eastern European Reblay Techniques during Crimea portion of trip. Ten-day trips also available.

Note, as usual a portion of all fees will go towards covering the cost of sending a youngster along as part of UAYCEF's Student Exchange Program.

For additional details contact Chris Nicola; Phone (718) 204-8373, [chris@uaycef.org](mailto:chris@uaycef.org) (alt. email: [UAYCEF@ICQmail.com](mailto:UAYCEF@ICQmail.com)), or visit <http://www.uaycef.org>

Chris Nicola,  
UAYCEF Project Director



## Cherry Valley Cave Project

Submitted by Ken Nichols and  
Steve Janesky

April 4, 2004

Mission; to find entrances of caves listed on my list of

'Caves Slightly West of Cherry Valley'.

We took a hike onto a hill near Vanhornesville, New York. We asked permission from a nice old lady who owns the land, and she had no problem with cavers as long as they checked in with her first. She told us that she'd used to play in Split Rocks caves when she was younger, and knew of the pits we were going to check out. The first pit or depression we visited was about a half mile walk following the high tension power lines above. The depression is about 2200 x 1200 x 60 feet deep, and is a swamp. We found it draining into a single hole, taking about 12-14 cubic feet per second (about that of Hall's hole at McFail's Cave). We had removed alot of debris from the hole to allow more water to wash thru and clean the hole for our next visit in warmer weather.

As we made our way around we found the depression was spring fed by another hole at the opposite end of the depression. It was seemingly thought to both of us that this depression was once a giant room or labyrinth of rooms in a larger system that had

collapsed forming this depression. I believe this drain was once called Couchman's Cave.

It now requires some digging. Likely large passage is to be found by the amount of water present, and the number of other sinkholes in the area in and out of the depression.

The second depression we visited was only a mile away, and also a half mile from the road. It was a little smaller, about 400 x 1000 x 70 feet deep, with a somewhat less swampy floor, though this one had two stream like beds at the bottom, which forked into one that disappears into a large hole. A Dam had been built just before the hole, with rock that were extracted from the hole where the water was going. This made a cave about 12 feet long and 16 feet deep. A water fall is heard beneath your feet, which was 50-80 pond rocks that sounded hollow as you walked upon them. Fearing i may loosen one and fall through, i exited. I did bring up a bucket that was at the bottom of the hole.

Some one had been digging this one out, and for good reason, since there aren't any resurgences to this area for more than two miles, and the hole inside appears to be the top of a large dome. There is also 5 other sinkholes in this depression.

Steve Janesky

### Announcements:

No one has yet seen Ray Keeler's missing equipment. If anyone gets a chance to go to Indian Oven or Glory Hole and actually finds the missing equipment, drop us or Ray Keeler a line. He writes, "I am missing a set of Suunto/Systeco compass and clinometer. I've been through everything. We had two sets at the Glory Hole Survey and I had my wife send out the other two sets for the Indian Oven Survey. The set missing is one of those on the Glory Hole trip so I'm not sure which cave trip is the "Point Last Seen".

Could you ask around and have folks check their cave packs? If they don't show up there's booty in the hills. Six-pack reward (his choice of flavor) to the locator of the compasses."

You can contact Ray at: [rkeeler@pcslink.com](mailto:rkeeler@pcslink.com).