

# TAG Tour Tales

## 2024 NSS Convention, Wednesday 7/3 Sewanee, TN

### Volunteer Opportunities

We have multiple other volunteer opportunities available, including driving golf carts to shuttle people from parking areas to sessions. Please sign up for these roles at the volunteer desk.

### Registration Information and Hours

Don't forget to bring your ID to registration. Arm bands for beverages at functions will be issued during registration, and volunteers will need to verify your birth date.

#### Registration Hours:

- Monday through Thursday: 8 AM – 5 PM
- Friday: 8 AM – Noon

### Salon Information

#### Salon Award Program

- **Date:** Thursday Night
- **Location:** The Caverns
- **Short Show:** 5:30 PM CT
- **Long Show:** 7:30 PM CT

## Shuttle Buses

- **Departure:** From SAS at 4 PM CT, big white tents (Banquet site)
- **Shuttles:** Three shuttles will run to the venue (20-minute one-way drive), starting at 4 PM CT with multiple cycles.
- **Return:** Long Show ends at 10 PM CT. Shuttles will start runs back to SAS immediately after the show. Please be prompt.

## Driving and Parking

- **Option:** Drive your own car and park at The Caverns for more flexibility.

## Big Room Cave

- **Availability:** Open all day on Thursday for event attendees
- **Details:** A fun, horizontal, commercial cave that is wild and free to explore! Enjoy The Caverns property before the event.

## Salons Award Program THURSDAY 7/4

Alcohol will be sold at The Caverns!

If you would like to purchase containers of beer and other alcoholic beverages during the Salon Awards, they will be available for sale at the venue during the show. Bring ID.

## Schedule changes

Tuesday and Wednesday:

Overflow Viewing for Auditorium- Langford Hall, Spencer room

Wednesday:

NSF, 9am - noon -Simmonds, room 15  
Congress of Grottos, 2pm-5pm- Simmonds, room 12

Friday:

BOG, 9am -noon- Simmonds, room 11

## **2024 LUMINARY TALK SCHEDULE**

This year, we are proud to showcase three outstanding women cavers as part of our Luminary Talks! Due to some conflicting scheduling information in the Program Guide, we are reiterating the official schedule below for your reference. All talks will take place from 12:30 PM to 1:30 PM CT in McCrory Hall Auditorium!

- WEDNESDAY: Dr. Hazel Barton
- THURSDAY: Emily Davis (Classic)
- FRIDAY: Dr. Louise Hose

Don't miss these inspiring presentations!

## **2024 Cave Photography Session**

**Date:** Wednesday, July 3

**Time:** 2:00 PM - 5:00 PM

### **Schedule:**

- **2:00 PM** - Eugene Vale & Ed Schultz: Introduction to Section & Session
- **2:10 PM** - Eugene Vale: Introduction to Digital Photography
- **2:45 PM** - Kenneth Ingham: Notes from a Photo Salon Judge

- **3:20 PM** - Hope Brooks: Cave Photography From A Model's Perspective: Thoughts for Models and Photographers Alike

**Business Meeting:** Cave Photography Section Business Meeting immediately following the last presentation.

**Contact:** For more information, contact Eugene Vale at 636-766-7416.

## **Book Signings Schedule**

### **Wednesday, July 3**

- 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM: Rick Stanton signing "Aquanaut." at Speleobooks

## **NSS Auction**

Previous information on the NSS auction gave INCORRECT LOCATION.

- **Date:** Tonight
- **Time:** 7 PM
- **Location:** McCrory Hall Auditorium

Proceeds will benefit the Vertical Bill Tower.

## **2025 CONVENTION REGISTRATION NOW LIVE!**

Want to experience the charm of rural New York karst, the hospitality of the cavers of the northeast, be able to visit 3 NSS Nature Preserves, attend a caving event in a cooler climate, and

hear the stories from A LIFETIME OF CAVING? Then REGISTER NOW for next year's convention. Registrants (adults and minors) who register during this year's convention will not only receive the pre-registration discount but also an additional \$10 off (ONLY during convention). Take advantage of this LOW, LOW price today!

<https://caves.org/convention/2025-nss-convention/>

## **Overflow Seating for Auditorium & Helm's Deep Sessions**

Space is limited for some of our larger sessions, but overflow seating is available in the Spencer Room of Langford Hall for the following sessions. If seating is full, head over to Langford Hall for ample seating and air conditioning.

- **US Exploration (7/2)**
  - **Primary Room:** McCrory Hall
  - **Overflow:** Spencer Room
  
- **International Exploration (7/3)**
  - **Primary Room:** McCrory Hall
  - **Overflow:** Spencer Room
  
- **Helm's Deep (7/5)**
  - **Primary Room:** 5/6/7 Simmonds Hall
  - **Overflow:** Spencer Room

## **Arts and Letters Section**

If you plan to attend the Arts and Letters Salon Lunch, email [joschaper@socket.net](mailto:joschaper@socket.net) or text 636 667 4162 BY 5 p.m. on WEDNESDAY to be included with group food. There will be an

afternoon session of the Writer's Workshop in Simmonds 10 on Thursday. Thanks!

## **Annual Horizontal Section Meeting**

Join us for the Annual Horizontal Section meeting to discuss the highlights from the best caves of the past year.

### **Agenda:**

- Annual review of progress on our book "On Crawl"
- Vote for new officers (typically chosen from people not attending)
- Presentation by Brooke Fehlenberg on horizontal medical treatments
- Horizontal Mitten Challenge judged by Paul Walko and Eric Pelkey

### **Details:**

- **Date:** 07/03/2024
- **Time:** 4:00 PM - 6:00 PM
- **Location:** VPI Camp Ground

[More Information](#)

## **19th International Congress of Speleology - Brazil 2025 - Second Circular**

We are pleased to share the Second Circular of the 19th International Congress of Speleology, which will be held in Brazil in 2025. Please distribute this information to the entire speleological community in your country.

The PDF file can be downloaded by clicking on the link below:

[19th ICS - 2nd Circular](#)

## **CONSERVANCY ROUNDTABLE - WED 7/3 (Simmonds Hall - Rm 9)**

Come join a spectacular group of cave managers and conservancy supporters for this year's Summer c Roundtable! We will hear activity updates from all the Conservancies present and have two special guest speakers as well this year: Speakers are Joey Fagan from Cave Conservancy of the Virginias and the Cave Conservancy Foundation. Come join us!

### **Longtime Member Recognition**

At the Awards Banquet on Friday evening, we will honor NSS members who have been with us for 50, 60, and 70 years. Longtime members, please visit the NSS store to pick up your veteran's pin, free of charge.

### **TERMINAL SYPHONS UPDATE**

The Terminal Syphons show will start at 8;30pm on Wednesday, not 9pm. If you pre-ordered a 40th Anniversary Terminal Syphons t-shirt or want one before Wednesday contact Albert Ogden. The show will start with the regular Syphons and will end with the caver band, The Cave Rats with the help of the Syphons. The Rats will perform songs by The Clash, The Pretenders, B-52-s, Blondie, the Ramones and other favorites with their great female vocalist. So, stick around for the whole performance. And make sure to dance

with our musician brethren in the Muchas Gracious band on Friday night.

## **Cafeteria Dining Information**

Breakfast:

Days: Monday - Friday

- Time: 7:00 AM - 9:00 AM
- Cost: \$8.00 plus tax
- Payment: Cash or credit

Lunch:

Days: Monday - Friday

- Time: 11:30 AM - 1:30 PM
- Cost: \$12.50 plus tax
- Payment: Cash or credit

## **Ice Availability**

Ice is available at the on-campus campground. We deliver in the mornings and early evenings for \$5 per bag. If you have an ice emergency, talk to a staff member, and we'll assist between deliveries.

## **Showers in the GYM**

The showers have been fixed.

## **Decon and Gear Cleaning Station Information**

The decon and gear cleaning station will be operational starting Sunday night.

Decon Hours:

- 8:00 AM - 12:00 PM

- 4:00 PM - 8:00 PM

#### Additional Facilities:

- Water hoses, brushes, and tubs available after hours.
- After hours hot water bath drop-off is also available.

Ensure your gear is clean and ready with our convenient cleaning options!

### **Come and see the NEW Cave Sim**

CaveSim is open for everyone to explore for free just outside Registration. Come join us to see the brand new system, with three levels, over 50 formations, helmet tracking, highly-realistic passage, and a padded floor. We are open from 9am-5pm Monday-Thursday, and 9am-noon on Friday.

## **NSS Writing Workshop Schedule - Thursday, July 4, 2024**

**Co-Chairs:** Jo Schaper and Michael Ray Taylor

**Location:** Simmonds Hall, Room 10 (Map location 25)

### **10:00 - 10:30 AM**

- Greetings, Introductions, and Cave Writers Sign-Up Sheet

### **10:30 - 10:55 AM**

- **"SPELEOTHEMS, a Great Little Guide That Took a While"**  
by Will White
  - Description: Will White, a member of the Karst Waters Board, will describe the road to publication of the new KWI

field book "Speleothems: A Guide to the Speleothem Form and Identification." (Signing at Speleobooks)

### **11:00 - 11:25 AM**

- **"Ergor Rubreck's Story Funhouse"** by Roger Brucker
  - Description: Celebrated explorer and cave writer Roger Brucker, under his humorist alter ego Ergor Rubreck, will discuss writing cave humor and his new book "Mamma Says DON'T CAVE." (Signing at Speleobooks)

### **11:30 AM - 12:00 PM**

- Open Readings—please sign up with Jo Schaper

### **12:00 - 1:15 PM**

- Arts and Letters Salon Members' Lunch and Business Meeting (New members welcome! A new issue of "Illuminations" will be available)

### **1:15 - 1:55 PM**

- **"Flash Critique Sessions"** by Schaper and Taylor
  - Alternate: **"Artificial Intelligence and the Future of Writing and Art"** — discussion moderated by Schaper

### **2:00 - 2:25 PM**

- **"Ellison's Revisited"** by Bill Steele and Ryan Mauer
  - Description: Steele, an explorer of Ellison's Cave, and cave photographer Ryan Mauer discuss the new republication and expansion of Marion O. Smith's classic 1977 book, "The Exploration and Survey of Ellison's Cave." (Available at Speleobooks)

### **2:30 - 2:55 PM**

- **"iPhone to ISBN and Beyond: A Journey to Publication"** by John LaMar Cole
  - Description: Poet, musician, and caver John LaMar Cole describes the path to print for his new collection, "the ephemeral everything." (Signing at Speleobooks)

### **3:00 - 3:55 PM**

- **"Cavers Are Characters"** by Michael Ray Taylor
  - Description: In this hands-on workshop, seasoned cave author Michael Ray Taylor will help participants observe, record, and write artful and engaging character descriptions of their caver friends and colleagues.

### **4:00 PM - ?**

- Open Readings and Closing Thoughts

## **Cuban Caver - New Talk in Cultures of Caving Session - Wed 4pm**

After trying for 4 years, we are lucky that Dr. Jean Robaina's visa to come to his first NSS convention, all the way from his native Cuba, came through. Thank you, NSS, for supporting this effort every time we've reached out. Jean's been an active caver in Cuba for 20 years and is currently president of the Artemisa Province Speleological Committee (part of the famous Sociedad Espeleologica de Cuba), as well as a Geography Professor at Cuba's Universidad de Ciencias Pedagógicas Enrique José Varona. He will give a talk around 4pm in the Cultures of Caving Session, this Wednesday, July 3rd, in Simmonds Hall Rm 567 (the whole session, which has a great line-up, runs 1-5pm). His talk is titled "Sharing Speleological Knowledge: Experiences of Cuba's "Origen" Grotto". Come meet Jean, who will be available for questions right after his talk.

Note that his talk is taking the slot I was originally going to use for my own talk, but Jean's contribution is such a better use of that time.

Hope to see you there, and please help me welcome Jean to convention and the to US.

Maria Alejandra Perez

## **Vertical Training Commission Table**

Visit the Vertical Training Commission (VTC) at the Wood-Alligood Gymnasium on the following dates:

- **Tuesday, 7/2:** 9 am - 5 pm
- **Wednesday, 7/3:** 9 am - 5 pm

We will have copies of the new book "Basic Vertical Techniques" available for sale. Additionally, supplies will be provided for making a set of cowstails for your vertical kit, while supplies last. Cowstails are free, with a suggested \$10 donation. See you there!

## **Stay Connected**

The NSS Vertical Section is active on Facebook! Look for events and information on our FB Page and help us determine new directions for the Section.

## **Entering the Vertical Contest?**

Planning to participate but short on time? Sign up ahead of time for a time slot, and we'll bump you to the head of the line once you're geared up and signed in!

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20F0944AFAA2FA0FD0-vertical>

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## **First Aid**

First Aid General first aid services are available at the Registration desk or by calling SPELEOWEB1 (773-536-9321)

Emergencies: For emergencies, call 911 first. Then, you can request on-site medical assistance from Registration or SPELEOWEB1 (773-536-9321).

SPELEOWEB1 is staffed 24/7.

AED Locations:

- Outside the bathrooms near Registration
- In the Gymnasium lobby
- In the Chapel • At The Gauntlet
- In a BLS pack carried by on-site medical

## **Local business discount**

Mountain Outfitters is offering a discount. Mention you are with the caver convention (wear your name badge!) and you can receive 15% off any item in the store that are not already on sale this week!! They are doing an awesome shoe sale too and have a 50% OFF section upstairs full of gear!!!

Mountain Outfitters  
[903 West Main Street](#)  
[Monteagle, TN 37356](#)

931-924-4100 Phone

[www.themountainoutfitters.com](http://www.themountainoutfitters.com)  
[facebook.com/themountainoutfitters](https://facebook.com/themountainoutfitters)  
[plus.google.com/+themountainoutfitters](https://plus.google.com/+themountainoutfitters)

## Vendor Ads

### **Pigeon Mountain Industries (PMI)**

PMI has sold all static rope and inventory is low for the newly designed chest roller.

2 spools of dynamic rope still left.

### **NSS Bookstore**

NSS Bookstore sold out of some popular items today. Jarvis took a road trip to Huntsville to restock these items. If you couldn't find what you wanted yesterday, please stop back by today. The new clothing items and hats are awesome.

### **Landjoff**

Looking for some cool cave art? Stop by Landjoff USA for a free print of a photo of an Alabama Cave. Photo by Kelly Smallwood. Supplies limited. Don't miss out on this opportunity.

### **Pot Dealer**

#### **Guadalupe Mountain Lampworks**

Come see our latest pottery inventory by Peter Jones. We have stunning new pots this year. Visit us on vendors row to explore these creations.

## **SCCi**

### Historical Collection Available

You don't want to miss your chance to go home with an impressive historical collection of NSS News. 8 boxes full of first hand trip accounts from some of the most eminent cavers through time. Documenting decades of caving history, issues dating back to 1944 are included! Imagine tracing back through time some of the first discoveries, emerging technologies, and advancing field of cave exploration. This goes beyond a trip down memory lane.

This rare collection is available at the silent auction, benefitting Southeastern Cave Conservancy's mission to protect caves and karst landscapes through conservation, education and recreation.

Stop by Southeastern Cave Conservancy's booth with questions about the historical NSS Newsletter collection.

### **Special request from Dean Wiseman**

I would like to request that you print an announcement in the Daily Rag about an informal meeting between the Vietnamese delegation and the NSS regarding the newly-signed MOU between the NSS and the leadership of Phong Nha - Ke Bang National Park. Here is the copy for you:

At 1pm Wednesday afternoon, in the Tucker Dining Room at Langford Hall--next door to the Cafeteria--there will be a meeting to discuss the newly-signed MOU between the NSS and Phong Nha - Ke Bang National Park, in Central Vietnam. The discussion will be headed by outgoing NSS President, Kristine Ebrey and the Director of Phong Nha - Ke Bang National Park, Mr. Pham Hong Thai. The

Vietnamese delegation is keenly interested in furthering cave exploration, research, and education in Phong Nha - Ke Bang National Park, the largest national park in Vietnam, and roughly equivalent to the size of Rocky Mountain National Park, only it is almost *entirely* wild karst.

Topics to discuss include the following:

- a) Surveying and exploring caves in the National Park.
- b) Training human resources, rescue, and emergency response in caves.
- c) Sharing experiences in management, exploitation, and tourism, and service connections.
- d) Regarding the plan to develop Phong Nha – Ke Bang national park in order to be the Adventure Tourism Capital of Asia.
- e) Sharing experiences in management, exploration, and scientific research to promote the values of the cave system.
- f) Development of a database/digitization for the caves in the National Park.

We would like to invite anyone to attend who is interested in learning more about the MOU, meeting our Vietnamese guests, and learning about caving in Vietnam!

Thank you,

**-Dean**