

# Northeastern Cave Conservancy News



The Northeastern Cave Conservancy, Inc. (NCC) is a not-for-profit corporation committed to the conservation, study, management, and acquisition of caves and karst areas having significant geological, hydrological, biological, recreational, historical or aesthetic features. To these ends, the NCC combines the resources and expertise of affiliated cave explorers, educators, scientists, landowners, and conservation officials.

### Next Meeting

Saturday, March 15th, 2003, 1PM  
CT Male, Latham, NY

*Exit 7 off Northway (I87) - North on Rt 9 and at 2<sup>nd</sup> light (Century Hill Banquet house on right) take a left and last building on the right - park in the back parking lot - go up the ramp and the meeting room is at Door C.*

### Notes from the Last Meeting

- 1) The last NCC meeting was held at the Howe Caverns Restaurant.
- 2) In attendance were Bob Addis, Bill Folsom, Joe Levinson, Christa Hay, Jon Allison, Craig Cantello, Vince Kappler, Ed Lucas, Paul Murphy, Tom Rider, Mike Warner, and Al Lehmann.
- 3) The existing officers (Bob, Bill, Joe, and Christa) were reelected to their respective positions for another term.
- 4) Chuck Porter reported on the status of Westfalls Springs, Church and Wagon Wheel, and South Bethlehem Caves.
- 5) Emily Davis reported that Jim Kennedy of Bat Conservation International, Inc. toured the area's cave preserves. Jim indicated that we should have information booths at each site.
- 6) The NCC voted to put together a bid for the Fall 2005 National Cave and Karst Management Symposium.
- 7) Norm Berg was confirmed as Chairman of the Website Sub-Committee.
- 8) Alan Traino was confirmed as Chairman of the Fundraising Committee.
- 9) Emily Davis reported that the NCC currently has approximately 125 paid members.

- 10) The Board discussed plans for the upcoming NRO. See article later in this newsletter.
- 11) It was noted that Ella Armstrong Cave is up for sale.
- 12) The Board discussed the purchase of Clarksville Cave and a draft management plan prepared by Thom Engel. Stay tuned for further details.
- 13) Each year, Howe Caverns hosts a Haunted Cave around Halloween. Proceeds from the event go to local charities. The Fundraising Committee will look into making a bid for the NCC to be a donor recipient for this event in the future.

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<p>The Northeastern Cave Conservancy News is published quarterly by the Northeastern Cave Conservancy, Inc. The Northeastern Cave Conservancy promotes the study and preservation of speleologically significant properties in the Northeastern United States. Annual membership is \$15 (Regular), \$5 addtl. (Family), \$10 (student), \$50 (Benefactor), and \$100 (Institutional). All checks made payable and sent to:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The Northeastern Cave Conservancy, Inc. P.O. Box 254 Schoharie, N.Y. 12157</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><a href="http://www.caves.org/conservancy/ncc/">www.caves.org/conservancy/ncc/</a></p>		

**A Message from the President**  
*by Bob Addis*

As I run for my third elected term as President, I am pleased at the efforts of the NCC and all its volunteers. It is obvious that we are a viable entity in many communities – the caving community, the local community, the Land Trust Alliance. Reading the literature you see our name mentioned again and again as an organization that is doing things. Our newsletter, website, and discussion group document progress, and the NCC tent at activities such as NRO, Old Timers and the NSS Convention has certainly enhanced our reputation.

I am equally pleased to watch our acquisitions program unfold. I have heard that things are moving too slowly and that it takes forever to actually take ownership. The facts of life indicate that the NCC is moving in a deliberate and considered manner. Management plans take time to write, land surveying takes time and has weather restrictions, the Board must debate and the discussion group discuss, etc. We owe it to our members and we owe it to the caves to do it right.

We have before us information about the possible acquisition of Ella Armstrong and/or Clarksville Caves. For a first time in the history of the NCC, the Board will be faced with financial choices – choices that have long lasting effects if we acquire a mortgage. As well, there are longer-lasting commitments to cave management, particularly with Clarksville Cave, and there is the question of liability of ownership. This is precisely what a Board does, and it is easy to see why it takes so long.

Thank you for your continued support.

**Office News...**  
*by Emily Davis*

Over 1/3 of the members of the NCC donated more than the standard dues in 2002. We also received donations from Speleobooks, Karst Sports and several grottos outside of our region. We received individual donations from as far away as Hawaii. Keep up the great work. We will have a down payment on our next property before we even know which one it is!

## **Spring NRO Plans in Full Swing** *by Bill Folsom*

Every Fall and Spring, cavers in the Northeast gather together to celebrate their common love of the underground. This year's event will be held May 16<sup>th</sup> through 18<sup>th</sup> at the Cobleskill Fairgrounds in Cobleskill, NY. Updated information and registration forms can be downloaded from:  
<http://www.caves.org/conservancy/ncc/>

As a growing vital presence in the Northeast's caving community, it is now our turn to step up to the plate and host an NRO cavers will not soon forget. We are in good shape at this point, but there are some needs listed which I hope you will help with if you can.

Registration - Robin Strashun, Christa Hay, Clare Anderson. Email [c.hay@ctmale.com](mailto:c.hay@ctmale.com).

Wine tasting - Donated by Tonya Smothers. Need small cups and flat surface for bottles.

Photo salon - Nicole Biamonte. Email [nbiamont@skidmore.edu](mailto:nbiamont@skidmore.edu).

Mapping salon - Peter Haberland. Email [haberland@ulster.net](mailto:haberland@ulster.net).

2 Squeeze boxes - Chuck Porter and NFG.

Vertical demonstration\training including ropes for prizes - Steve Hazelton/Rick Pingree. Sponsored by Sterling Rope.

Guidebook - Jon Allison.

Breakfast - VCA (Sat.) and CCG (Sun.). Coffee urn provided by Peter Welles. Grill provided by Steve Janesky.

Dinner - HHG (Sat.). Grill provided by Steve Janesky.

Auction - Bob Addis/Emily Davis - Start combing through your cave paraphernalia for items to donate!

Cave ballads - Ed Lucas. All talent should email [edlucas@juno.com](mailto:edlucas@juno.com).

Beer - Donated by Alan Traino/Bill Folsom

Cave videos - Bob Cohen. Canvas tent from Emily. May need concrete blocks/rope to set up in building. Need an LCD projector, like the ones used to project laptop computers onto a screen. Bob can supply his DVD player, but we also need a home stereo for sound.

Hot tub - Mark Skove/NNJG - Privacy barriers needed, perhaps not if located behind a barn? Donation cans set up at registration and by Hotsy - signage needed for this too.

Geology field trip - Art Palmer

Trip coordinator - Jason Semion. Need volunteers to lead trips. Maybe a trip to a normally closed cave or a novelty cave trip? Email [jaysiemion@hotmail.com](mailto:jaysiemion@hotmail.com).

Kid-friendly cave trips - Allen Rush.

Howe's Quarry tour - Ben Geunther

Free Howe Caverns tours for all NRO attendees - Must show NRO registration badge for admission.

T-shirts/mugs - Christa Hay - logo being worked on by Howard Lathrop.

Yoga Sat/Sun. mornings - Neil Lieberman.

Still need help with the following...

Door prizes for registration and winners of photo and mapping salons.

50\50 hawkers - Lisa Bencebi heading up but need more volunteers. Email [NiobiTwo@hotmail.com](mailto:NiobiTwo@hotmail.com)

Vendors - Speleobooks, NCC, perhaps Bob & Bob.

Speleolympics.

Cave clean-up (we are the Northeastern Cave Conservancy after all!).

Safety\first aid tent.

Massages - Need massage chairs and volunteers to give neck/shoulder massages Sat. night as an NCC fundraiser.

Sauna - NNJG has tent/plastic, heating iffy, perhaps go to fired rocks? Need back up plan.

Spring rite of passage ceremony Sat. before dinner perhaps? Step up and create your own event!

All questions and offers to volunteer should be directed to Bill Folsom: [rockeater@mindspring.com](mailto:rockeater@mindspring.com) or 212-427-4256, or to those listed above responsible for a particular activity.

Come out of hibernation for Spring NRO!

**Cave Conservancy of Hawaii, Inc.**  
*by Emily Davis, Fund Raising Chair*

Dear Friends,

We are sending this letter because you are on a list of friends and associates who have been in, or expressed an interest in caves in Hawaii. Please forgive us if you receive this letter more than once but we have combined several address lists.

Hawaii is becoming more and more accessible as a retirement community. Property is being purchased and built on. Caves are being used as sewers. Laws are restricting cave use. All of this combined with a desire to protect open spaces above caves has caused the formation of the Cave Conservancy of Hawaii Inc.

The Cave Conservancy of Hawaii is a land trust, which will be joining the Land Trust Alliance and plans to buy land and hold scenic and conservation easements on land in Hawaii. We have our 501c3 status pending and we are excited about having you join us.

Many projects are already in the works. We are currently in negotiations to buy an impressive puka in the Ocean View Estates property. It is right next to a road and is ideal for a community information site. We have selected several other properties in the Kula Kai Estates that have significant pukas or caves beneath them for purchase in the near future. We also have several pending easement agreements lined up in the same system.

All of this costs money and requires significant volunteer time. The day-to-day expenses of a land trust include mailings, legal fees, filing fees and much more. You can help right now. Membership in the Cave Conservancy of Hawaii will help cover those day-to-day expenses. Additional donations can be put to use purchasing land or paying filing fees.

For those who itemize on federal tax returns, the entire dues paid to the CCH will be federally tax deductible along with any contribution you choose to make if the 501c3 is accepted during the calendar year 2003. Membership will be due for renewal on June 1 every year.

We plan to keep you informed via email to keep our overhead costs down. You will receive updates several times a year as projects are started or completed. Please pass this information on to other interested parties.

Membership categories include:

Student membership (currently enrolled in a high school or College) .....	\$15.00
Regular membership .....	\$25.00
Family membership (two adults living in the same household).....	\$35.00
Contributing membership.....	\$50.00
Sustaining membership .....	\$100.00
Institutional membership.....	\$100.00

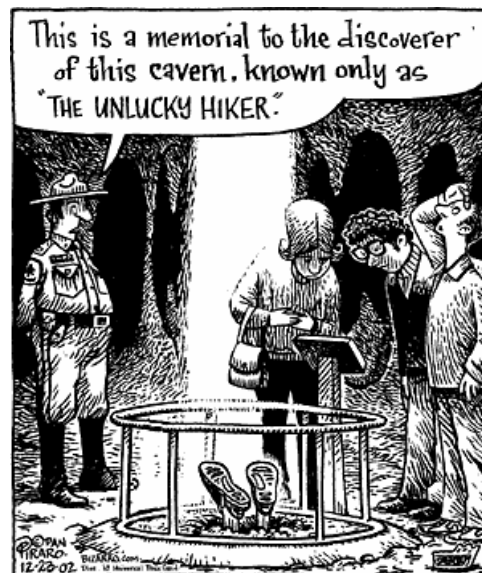
Additional donations are always welcome.

If you would like to join us please send a check and your name, address, current email address. Send this to Cave Conservancy of Hawaii Inc., PO Box 7032, Ocean View, HI, 96737.

Thank you.

**Time for a Break**  
*by Tom Rider*

Its time to give all of you budding editors or editor-wanna-bee's out there an opportunity of a lifetime! I'm now entering my fifth year as editor of the Northeastern Cave Conservancy News and after having published 15 newsletters, I could use a break. Not to mention, the newsletter could probably use some fresh input. If you're interested in taking on this challenging job, send your resumes to either myself or to one of the NCC officers (bribes are always welcome)!



**First Annual John Van Swearingen IV  
Stewardship Award**

*from Huntsville Grotto Newsletter,  
Dec. 2002, Vol. 44 No. 12*

This year, the [Southeastern Cave] conservancy began administering the JV Award. This award is in memory of John Van Swearingen IV who passed away last year. JV was an SCCi board member and active cave steward most of his adult life.

William Oldacre was the unanimous choice of the committee and the Board. The committee consisted of Jim Wilbanks, Roger Haley and Joe Douglas.

Mr. Oldacre began his stewardship of Warrens Cave in the early sixties. Warrens Cave was often visited in the 1950s and 1960s by locals and fraternity/sorority parties which resulted in significant vandalism to the cave in the form of spray paint, carved initials and virtual elimination of the bat colony. Additionally, erosion of the sinkhole entrance to the cave and to the dirt road leading to the cave, as well as vegetative damage to the upland forest habitat surrounding the cave entrance occurred. His desire to protect the cave and ensure continued access to cavers led him to befriend the landowner, resulting in several noteworthy results.

First, Bill was able to impress upon the landowner the great value of the cave and the importance of conserving it. Thus, when the local sheriff felt that there had been too many injuries to flashlight cavers and decided to dynamite the entrance shut, the landowner confronted the sheriff jaw-to-jaw at the cave's entrance on the fateful day and vowed that if the cave's entrance was destroyed there would be a massive lawsuit against the sheriff and the county. The sheriff backed off. This was a remarkable event considering the number of other Florida cave entrances that have been damaged by Florida sheriffs.

Second, Bill worked out an agreement with the landowner for the FSS [Florida Speleological Society] to continue to have access to the cave in return for the FSS maintaining a gate in the cave's entrance. Bill designed, built and installed this, the first cave gate in a Florida non-commercial cave, and over the next decade did the same for several replacement gates that were destroyed by vandals. There was even an instance in which Bill confronted vandals in the act of trying to tear down the gate in order to get into the cave. Bill's perseverance out-last-ed that of the vandals; they have not destroyed a Warrens Cave gate in the last two decades.

Third, the landowner was so impressed with the great value of the Warrens Cave resource and with the successfulness of working with Bill and the FSS that he decided to donate the cave to a caving organization and asked Bill to spearhead that effort. Bill contacted the NSS but learned that it was not at that time in a position to accept the liability. Bill then contacted The Nature Conservancy, which was indeed interested in acquiring Warrens Cave and the surrounding 4 acres of upland forest habitat that accompanied it. Bill and his wife Shirleen prepared the TNC application, with engineering, geological and ecological appendices from local cavers.

When TNC changed its focus to imperiled species, its management realized that Warrens Cave would be more properly owned and administered by a national caving organization. By that time the NSS had reversed its policy and already acquired several caves, so Bill prepared the application that resulted in the NSS acquiring Warrens Cave.

Bill has been the steward of Warrens Cave from Day One when cavers began controlling its access in the 1960s, and continues to do so to this day. Bill ensures that visitation to the cave is controlled to prevent or minimize vandalism and personal injury, and does so with friendliness and resourcefulness. Although not reluctant to ask others to assist when he cannot do something alone, he otherwise does the grunt work himself while the rest of us go caving. Bill is a self-starter who undertook the creation and management of Warrens Cave Preserve before such things were common, thus participating in the national evolution of cave preserves. In my opinion, no person has done more to ensure the conservation of a major cave system in Florida.

Bill was also instrumental in drafting the Florida Cave Protection Act and in convincing the Florida Legislature to enact it, and he has been a stalwart leader of the FSS since the mid-1960s.

His three-plus decades of stewardship of Warrens Cave have resulted in the Florida caving community acquiring and managing the longest and most recreationally popular dry cave in the state, and in protecting its significant historical and biological components. His leadership activities are inspirational to all who seek to bring significant cave resources under the management of cavers.