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Cave Talk

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CaveTalk

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE NATIONAL CAVES ASSOCIATION

National Caves Association

Susan Berdeaux, Coordinator

P.O. Box 280

Park City, KY 42160

susan@cavern.com

866-552-2837 (toll free) 270-749-2428 (fax)

FEBRUARY 2002

UPDATES

Thanks to all for their timely responses to this year's request for up-to-date information. We are still working out some of the tweaks in the database and judging by some of your responses, we also need to tweak the form a little also. Again, apologies are offered for the incorrect fax number on the introductory letter. For those who may not have received the correction postcard, the fax number of the NCA office is 270-749-2428.

EVENTS

Nicole Randall, new marketing director for Kentucky Down Under/Kentucky Caverns®, reports the opening of the 2002 season will be March 23, two weeks earlier than in the past. New exhibits include a renovated Discovery Area. KDU/KY will be hosting a craft fair April 6-7, including a visit by nationally known storyteller and songwriter, David Clark. The annual Aussie Fest will be October 5-6.

Howe Caverns, NY, will celebrate the fourth annual Sweetheart Days on February 16-17. New this year is a special weekend getaway package. The "Sweetheart Package" includes overnight accommodations with flowers and candy in the room. Romantic Lantern Tours will be offered in the evening, with continental breakfast delivered to the room the next morning. Later that afternoon, married couples may renew their vows at a ceremony conducted at the Bridal Altar, 200 feet below the earth's surface.

ADVERTISING

Fantastic Caverns, MO, released a news story about their on-line reservation abilities with an E-mail press release through the Missouri Press Association. It was picked up by at least one area paper. Steve Thompson said it was pretty inexpensive and looks like it was effective. They are also working on a radio trade-out program where they trade cave admission for radio spots. Four radio stations expressed interest in just the first few days. Isn't bartering wonderful?!

NEW PROCEDURES

Blanchard Springs Caverns, AR, is now taking credit cards. Not only will this be easier on visitors but also it will benefit those people signing up for the Wild Cave tour.

CAVES FOR SALE

Mountain Village 1890-Bull Shoals Caverns is on the market. Currently owned by Millie and Harry Graham, the cave and village comprise 13.9 acres (m/l) with an additional 80+ acres (all zoned commercial) available. The gift shop is one of the most complete in the area. Bull Shoals, Arkansas is located in north-central Arkansas, about 75 miles from Branson, MO, approximately 150 miles north of Little Rock and situated between Mountain Home and Harrison, AR. The property is listed with Lake River Land Realty, agent Anne Roosa, toll-free at 888-445-5263.

Also for sale is **Cosmic Caverns, AR**. Located halfway between Eureka Springs and Branson, MO, the package includes approximately 4.72 acres + subsurface depth including the cave, a 2,764 +/- square-foot, two-story retail building and a 2,240 +/- square-foot single family residence. The listing realtor is Steve Fineberg, Vice-President, Lindsey & Associates, 800-658-4012.

The NCA office also has contact information on both of these properties.

SAD NEWS

We have received word that long-time cavern owner and honorary NCA member Edward S. Swartz passed away on Friday, February 15, 2002 at the age of 91. Mr. Swartz owned and operated Indian Echo Caverns, PA from 1972 till he turned it over to his son, Dr. Edward Swartz, in 1987. Dr. Swartz is still presently running the caverns. Mr. Swartz had done much to promote the cavern and put it on the map as a show cave during his 45-year management. Additionally, he participated in the formation of the National Caves Association in 1965. Our condolences to the Swartz family.

Beverly Langover, Cosmic Caverns, AR, is under hospice care after undergoing cancer treatment. Our thoughts and prayers are with both Beverly and Randy.

SURPRISE!

Ruby Falls must have some very good friends and neighbors. They have sent a nice amount back to the NCA for monies not used at our annual meeting. The overage will be sent to Crystal Cave, WI, our 2002 hosts, to help defray expenses at our meeting there in the fall.

APPOINTMENTS

Brad Wuest, Natural Bridge Caverns, TX, has been appointed to the board of directors of the National Council of Attractions (another NCA??). Established in 1976 within the Travel Industry Association of America, the NCA provides a forum through which America's attraction professionals can effectively address challenges and opportunities common to their industry. Congratulations, Brad!



Brad Wuest

WORKSHOPS

The National Council of Attractions committee Brad has been appointed to has sent their 2002 Learning Workshop Series schedule to our NCA office. Anyone looking for programs and speakers might want to contact the office for a copy.

SAFETY

Judy Turilli, Meramec Caverns, MO, would like to know if your cave has taken any precautionary measures to protect their guests. Recently, a customer, indicating some visitors are thinking about things like that, posed the question to Meramec. If anyone has suggestions or ideas, you can contact Judy directly or send them to the NCA office. The editor will compile the suggestions and include them in another Cave Talk.

INSURANCE

Since we're talking about safety, now would be a really good time for everyone to review their insurance coverage. No one wants to be in a situation where a claim could be denied because they forgot to declare a new activity, add additional coverage for expanded gift shop space, etc. If you are part of the NCA insurance program, please be sure to fill out the questionnaire sent out a few weeks ago. If you are not currently with the program and are due for renewal, this is your chance to check it out. Remember what power there is in numbers. The more of us that subscribe to the program, the better our bargaining position is.

REMINDERS

National Caves Association patches are available at the office – cost is \$3/each. If you need more decals and NCA identification cards then what was sent with your membership certificate, let us know. Caves and Caverns brochures are available any time.



2002 OFFICERS

Those of you who are relatively new to the National Caves Association might want to know a little more about the officers elected to serve you. This issue will introduce you to your new president, Dick Bell.

Owner of Seneca Caverns, Ohio, Dick is also a consulting geologist/geophysicist. He began his illustrious career in the family business at the tender age of 5 as a cave guide. He has been both directly and indirectly involved in the show cave industry for 68 years with time out for military service, college and a professional career. Upon his father's death in 1964, Dick became the owner of Seneca Caverns. He is a founding member of the NCA, a director of the American Cave Conservation Association, and a member of the NSS, IAAPA, BCI and several other professional associations. A past chairman for the Ohio Travel Association, Dick was



awarded the Paul Sherlock Award for Lifetime Achievement, the most prestigious travel industry award given in Ohio. He is married to Denise, an RN, and BSN, who also began her working career as a tour guide at the caverns. Affectionately known as “Whipper D”, she is instrumental in helping Dick be all he can be!

Though he claims to have a “senior moment” or two, we couldn’t be in better hands. Dick brings a wealth of experience to his office of president and we look forward to his leadership these next two years.

FINAL THOUGHTS

I am sorry but I just cannot resist these!

“Do not wait for leaders; do it alone, person to person.”

Mother Teresa

“We cannot become what we need to be by remaining what we are.”

Max Dupree

“The price of greatness is responsibility.”

Winston Churchill