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Cave Talk

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CaveTalk

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE NATIONAL CAVES ASSOCIATION

National Caves Association

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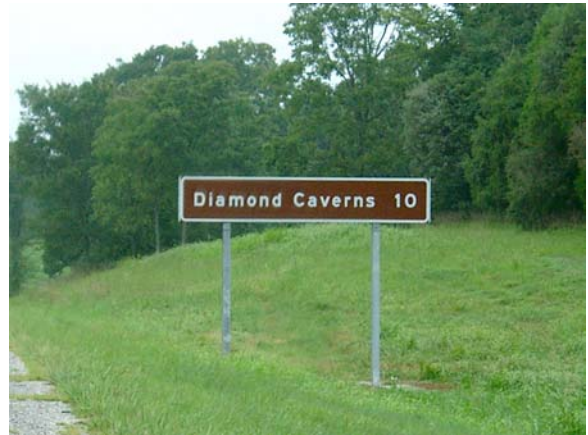
FEBRUARY 2003

RADON STUDY PROJECT

Plans for the NCA Radon Study project are progressing and will be finalized as quickly as possible. The Executive Committee thanks each of you for your support of this project.

KENTUCKY BROWN SIGN

The Kentucky Transportation Cabinet, with encouragement from the Kentucky Tourism Development Cabinet, implemented an experimental signage program that expands upon the familiar interstate Brown Signs. The Post Interchange Signage pilot project provides two additional Brown Signs for each of the participating Kentucky attractions. Signs for the participants are now located at 15 miles, 10 miles and 1 mile from the attraction exit from each direction of travel along the interstate.



The following NCA members participated in the pilot project:

American Cave Museum

Kentucky Down Under

Diamond Caverns

Lost River Cave and Valley

Here at Diamond Caverns we experienced about 35% growth in visitation due to the new interstate signage. Gary can't praise the new program enough. Let's hope the program takes hold nationwide. This is the most significant improvement in attraction signage since the Highway Beautification Act all but eliminated our access to outdoor advertising. Take time to nag your state tourism and highway officials to emulate Kentucky's exciting new program. It will be time well spent.

NCA INSURANCE COMMITTEE MEETS

The NCA Insurance Steering Committee held its winter meeting at Luray Caverns on January 15. The cold and snowy weather was more than balanced by the warm hospitality provided by Rod and John Graves.

The morning session included a presentation by Craig Mather of Markel Insurance Company (our new carrier) detailing company philosophies and their interest in the NCA Insurance Program. Craig stated that the company was interested in a long-term relationship with the program. He also submitted a detailed loss control checklist for review and comment by Committee members.

After an enjoyable lunch, Committee members met with Keith Dobrolinski and Miles Shepp of A.J. Gallagher & Co. for discussion of current insurance program issues and the finalization of our new Member Service Plan. Together with Keith & Miles, the Committee modified and approved the Policy Renewal Timetable for the coming year. We believe this will provide us with an orderly, on-time renewal of policies for the coming year. Following a lengthy discussion of program goals and member concerns, the Committee approved a resolution designating A. J. Gallagher & Co. as the Agency of Record for the NCA Insurance Program.



After finishing all business, attendees enjoyed dinner and social time with the delightful company of Ted and Rebecca Graves. The committee hopes all Insurance Program participants can participate in a timely manner as we go forward with the steps planned and implemented as a result of our meeting.

NCA INSURANCE PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS:

- Should have received your Policy Summary Book including the 2003 Service Plan.
- Take note of your designated representatives at A. J. Gallagher & Co. and within the NCA Insurance Committee as set forth in the 2003 Service Plan. Contact them if you have any issues or questions.
- Look for your Policy Renewal Packet for 2004 (coming in March) and complete the information requested in a timely manner.

NCA INSURANCE STEERING COMMITTEE

Jim Richards Chairman, Richard (Dick) Bell, Steve Fairchild, James (Rod) Graves, Roger Lefebvre, Ann Molosky, Steve Rawlings, John Sagendorf, Gordon Smith, Brad Wuest

COMMITTEE CHANGES

Jim Richards, Bluespring Caverns, IN, replaces Roger Lefebvre as the Insurance Committee chairperson. David Summers, The Crystal Caves of Bermuda, has resigned from the Nominations Committee and has been appointed to the International Liaison Committee.

IN PRINT

Seneca Caverns, OH, was in the Fall 2002 edition of “**Unlimited Action, Adventure and Good Times**”, a Marlboro publication. The article titled “Best Caving” also included member caves Marengo, Cave of the Mounds, Meramec and Zane Shawnee.

The December 2002 edition of the **Journal for the Australasian Cave and Karst Management Association** ran an article on Cave Management at Mammoth Cave, KY.

Beverly Rozewicz, Lost River Caverns, PA sent in an article from **Rock and Gem Magazine** that featured Inner Space Caverns, TX, in their December 2002 edition.

Northlandadventures.com featured a story about Crystal Cave, WI and the adventure tour taken by outdoor writer Dave Carlson. The TV version of the story aired during the weekend of Feb. 14-16.

AWARDS

David Cale, Laurel Caverns, PA received a doctorate in philosophy from Duquesne University in 2002. He is now teaching at West Virginia University.

DOCTOR'S ORDERS

President Dick Bell reports that Skip Dugan, Perry's Cave, OH is under his doctor's care and doing well, soaking up the sun in Florida at the moment.

2003 UPDATES

There is still time to get your information to the coordinator before she produces the 2003 admissions, adventure tour and contact lists. If you have not yet responded, please do so before March 31. If you have not received your update form or have any questions, please contact the NCA office.

NATIONAL CAVE MUSEUM

The National Cave Museum has recently achieved 501(c) 3 non-profit status. The museum's purpose is to accumulate, organize, preserve, make available for research and display to the public items relating to the show cave industry. This is YOUR (the National Caves Association) museum. If you have any historical items or collections that you would like to donate to this venture, please contact Gary Berdeaux at Diamond Caverns, 270-749-2233.



NATIONAL CAVE MUSEUM - Matt Bransford sculpture

EMAIL LEADS

Webmaster Tim Grissom, Ohio Caverns, OH wants the members to know that he gets well over one hundred requests for information each month! He responds to all, either personally or by forwarding on to the caves in the interested party's region. He keeps an address book specifically for forwarding purposes. If the members will email Tim with the email address they want these leads forwarded to, he will include them. Many caves send a copy of their brochure and some additionally will send a NCA cave directory. Tim can be reached at webmaster@cavern.com.

NCA CAVE DIRECTORY

How is everyone's supply of the new NCA Cave Directory? Are your local hotels, restaurants, CVB's, attractions, and AAA offices (and anyone else you think might be interested) supplied and ready for spring break? The office (and printer!) has received many compliments on the new design.

EVENTS

- The 15th Australasian Conference on Cave and Karst Management will be held in North Queensland, Australia on May 5-12, 2003. The office has registration information for those interested.
- A regional conference of the National Association of Interpreters will be held at Unicoi State Park in Georgia on March 10-13. For information, contact Mike Adams, Mammoth Cave NP, 270-758-2254.

EMPLOYEE MANAGEMENT

The February 2003 issue of Souvenir magazine had a great article on the characteristics and managing of different age groups of employees. This editor will refrain from any further comment on this article, as it will result in her getting on her soapbox for this particular topic, but she will be glad to send you a copy if you call the office.

SAD NEWS

Harry Thiltgen, owner of Onyx Mountain Caverns, MO passed away in late January of this year. Harry's wife, Agnes, is continuing the operation of the caverns, as Harry would have wanted. Condolences may be sent to: Onyx Mountain Caverns, 14705 Pvt. Dr. 8541, Newburg, MO 65550.

FINAL THOUGHTS

This month's final thoughts are on the lighter side, thanks to Steve Thompson, Fantastic Caverns, MO. Every month, Steve sends the office Fantastic Caverns' version of Cave Talk. He included lots of "Words of Wisdom" in this version. The editor can go back to being profound in the next issue.

"Not one shred of evidence supports the notion that life is serious".

"No man has ever been shot while doing the dishes".

"A balanced diet is a cookie in each hand".

Thanks, Steve!