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November 2004

### Cave Talk

Cave Association National

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# CaveTalk

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE NATIONAL CAVES ASSOCIATION

## National Caves Association

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615-264-0019 [jgurnee@aol.com](mailto:jgurnee@aol.com)

## CONVENTION 2004

Well!!! We didn't just have a meeting this year, we had an experience!!! The Perry's Cave family, staff and community rolled out the red carpet for us and could not have done a better job. After a devastating end of the season, Put-in-Bay rallied and welcomed us with open arms. Fully half of our member caves were in attendance, which is a great turnout. Our heartfelt thanks and appreciation go to the entire Duggan family – Skip, Sharon, Chip, DeeDee, and Mike, to Pinky Batt and his crew at Perry's, to Louis Heineman and his family and staff at Heineman Winery – Crystal Cave, to Mike's dad, Bob (for his help AND entertainment!) and to the entire town! Our accommodations were comfortable, the food divine (is anyone else craving lobster bisque or walleye chowder?? And who will forget that chocolate fountain?!?) and the fellowship superb. It was one of those conventions we'll be talking about for years.



Skip & Sharon Duggan

Thanks also to our pre-and post-convention hosts – Dick and Denise Bell at Seneca Caverns, Max, Vivian and Eric Evans at Ohio Caverns, and Olentangy Indian Caverns. Many members made the effort to visit the neighboring caves.

## FROM DICK BELL

"For the benefit of those who visited Seneca prior to the NCA meeting, please note: my plumber, the one with a brain, restored the water system to its normal configuration, thus removing the 280 feet of temporary wiring strung all through the cave. The original wiring was fine so there was no need to do what the mental-midget did! Such is life! All's well, that ends well".

## CONVENTION 2005

Plans are already underway for next year's meeting, to be held in Bowling Green, Kentucky, October 17<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup>, 2005. Mark your calendars now! Your hosts will be Lost River Cave and Valley, Mammoth Cave National Park and Diamond Caverns. The convention will be structured a little differently. **Executive committee, regional directors and committees, please plan to arrive on Sunday, October 16 – we will be meeting during the day on Monday, the 17<sup>th</sup> during registration.** This will allow better participation during the rest of the convention and still leave some

time for brief meetings if necessary. We will also be holding our business meeting in two parts. The first portion will include any new business that may need a vote at the second portion. This will allow time for discussion among members and for any questions to be asked of the board before calling for a vote.

We will be headquartered at the Holiday Inn University Plaza, 1021 Wilkinson Trace, in Bowling Green. Phone number is 270-745-0088. Rates are \$85.00 per night and reservations can be made starting immediately. Tentative agendas will be available after the first of the year. With Mammoth Cave serving as one of the hosts, we are hoping for more participation from our other state and federal members. Early agendas will give everyone time to plan, both for time and budget purposes. Stay tuned for further updates!

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

The executive committee plans to meet in early February 2005. If any member has questions or concerns they would like the committee to address, please notify any member of the board.

## GIFT SHOP ITEMS

Allen Mathis says if we don't stock up on the following items, we'll be sorry!!

Five-color flashing mouthpiece            cost - \$.92 - .70 each, depending on quantity

Flashing pacifier                                cost - \$.60 each

Vendor – Gloworks

15715 Martin Rd

Roseville, MI 48066

800-809-4569

## EVENTS

On September 11, the world's first underground Duck Race was held at Howe Caverns. Starting on the underground Lake of Venus, and led by the official "pace duck", sponsored by Howe Caverns, the race will follow a half-mile course through the cave before emptying into the finish line. Race organizers estimate the ducks will take six weeks to complete the course. The winner will be announced in the next edition of Cave Talk – we'll see if the race was all it was "quacked" up to be (yes, the editor DID hear that collective groan!).

## NEW PARTNERSHIP

On August 18, 2004, the new Mammoth Cave International Center for Science and Learning, a new far-reaching partnership between Mammoth Cave National Park and Western Kentucky University was dedicated at the site. This unique facility – laboratory, classrooms and housing – will bring together top-notch scientific talent with unparalleled natural resources. Mammoth Cave is the longest known cave system in the world at 365 miles. Students of all ages will work hands-on with world-class scientists to explore mysteries of cave and karst life through scientific research. The program, located in the park's Maple Springs complex, was established with funding provided through a \$225,000 federal appropriation secured by U.S. Senator Mitch McConnell. Senator McConnell was present at the dedication along with Gary Ransdell, president of Western Kentucky University, LaJuana Wilcher, Kentucky Secretary of Environmental Protection and Ron Switzer, Superintendent, Mammoth Cave National Park.



## OVERHEARD

On Saturday, October 30, game winners on Michael Feldman's Public Radio International radio program, "What Do You Know?" were rewarded with trips to Cave of the Mounds and gemstones to mine. What a fantastic way to receive nationwide publicity for your cave! Ann and Joe, we'll be anxious to hear how many visitors tell you they heard the cave mentioned. (Thanks to Stan Sides, Diamond Caverns KY for this submission).



host  
MICHAEL  
FELDMAN

## IN PRINT

Bluespring Caverns was listed as one of “Fifty-nine jaw-dropping roadside attractions” in a pullout section of the October 2004 issue of Budget Travel Magazine. The caverns also became a wayside stop for some of the 200 riders in the September TRIRI Bicycle Tour, sponsored by Indiana State Parks.



The Missouri Caves Association sent out a press release on the new “Explore Missouri”, the cave state’s cooperative billboard program. Two newspapers picked up the release. The News Leader in Springfield did a two-page spread in their Sunday edition and the Lake Sun Leader in Camdenton also printed a feature in the weekend section. Steve Thompson said, “the more about caves in the press, the better it is for all the caves”. The Standard Democrat, Sikeston, MO also printed the release on September 15.

Colorado Country Life, the publication of the Colorado Rural Electric Association, had a cover photo of Glenwood Caverns and a feature article on exploring caves. It was written by Rick Rhinehart, longtime friend and caver of both Cave of the Winds and Glenwood Caverns, and accompanied by photos of both caves.

The September edition of Kentucky Living featured an article on Lost River Cave & Valley, with a photo by Gary Berdeaux. The article also listed hours and admission information for Crystal Onyx, Diamond Caverns, Hidden River, Kentucky Caverns and Mammoth Cave National Park.

Geico Direct, Geico Insurance Co magazine for customers, featured caves in their fall issue. The headline article, “Captivating Caves”, features Howe Caverns on the cover and five pages of copy. Featured in the article are Blanchard Springs Caverns, Oregon Caves National Monument, Natural Bridge Caverns, Howe Caverns, Carlsbad Caverns, Timpanogos Cave, Jewel Cave and Luray Caverns, accompanied by fifteen photos of the different caves. This wonderful feature on caves is presented to all Geico’s hundred of thousands pf customer households nationwide. As an industry, we are indeed fortunate to enjoy the focus provided by this respected company. *Credit for this submission goes to NCA President John Sagendorf – thanks, John!*



## AWARDS

On September 28, National Parks Director Fran Mainella came to Mammoth Cave National Park to present the “Superintendent’s Friends of the Park” award to Gary Berdeaux of Diamond Caverns. Superintendent Ron Switzer said the awards are given to those “kinds of folks who go out of their way to help us everyday”. He referred to Gary as a “tremendous partner and an extraordinary neighbor” to MCNP. Gary was extremely pleased and proud to receive the award and marks the occasion as one of the only times anyone has EVER seen him speechless!!



## ALPHA RADIATION PROJECT

At the convention Tom Aley of Ozark Underground Laboratory reported that progress with the Alliance Agreement between OSHA and OUL to benefit NCA member caves was remarkable, stating that OSHA is very pleased with the direction of the work and the total support of NCA members. President John Sagendorf will travel to OUL for a November 29 meeting with Tom Aley and OSHA representatives. John will personally carry the message of the NCA’s support of the Alliance Agreement and commitment to reducing employee and guest alpha radiation exposures levels to As Low As Reasonably Attainable (ALARA) through individual Cave Radiation Management Plans.

Tom Aley is most pleased with the cooperation and enthusiasm shown by OSHA for the attention this issue us receiving. We are hopeful for OSHA’s acceptance of the concept of individual Cave Radiation Management Plans in the near term. There will be a more full report after the November 29 meeting. In the same vein, because each cave will need to develop their own individual Management Plan, it will be necessary for Tom to

visit and test each cave for radon in order to provide base line levels upon which caves will base their Management Plans. By vote, the members present at the NCA annual meeting approved an extension of the study agreement with Ozark Underground Laboratories and the necessary funding to complete the expanded project. To accomplish the funding, one additional year of payments, in the current amount, will be required from each cave.

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## INSURANCE MESSAGE FROM NCA PRESIDENT AND ARTHUR J. GALLAGHER INSURANCE BROKERS IN THE SPOTLIGHT

This information pertains to all NCA members whether or not you participate in the NCA insurance program. Over the past several weeks you have undoubtedly become aware of the allegations levied at insurance brokers by Elliott Spitzer, Attorney General of the State of New York. Attorney General Spitzer alleges that certain brokers follow business practices, which allow the broker to profit by steering clients to higher premium carriers (and therefore higher commissions for the broker).

Most of the focus has been on Marsh & McLennan, and others. At this point, Arthur Gallagher and Company has not been included in the investigation.

With Arthur J. Gallagher and Company as the broker for the NCA Insurance Program, it is important that you are aware of the facts in this investigation and aware of Gallagher's position and statements regarding this situation. In the information, which follows, you will see two separate messages from Pat Gallagher, Chief Executive Officer of Arthur J. Gallagher and Company. Pat's messages speak for themselves.

We at the NCA appear to be fortunate to have a relationship with a most responsible broker who has stated solid business practices and is willing to make public their position.

If you have or receive any questions or concerns, please contact John Sagendorf as NCA President and chair of the NCA Insurance Committee, any of the NCA officers, members of the Insurance Committee or your NCA insurance committee representative, or members of the Gallagher NCA Insurance Team. Important contacts are listed below.

John Sagendorf, NCA President & Insurance Committee: [johns@howecaverns.com](mailto:johns@howecaverns.com)

Brad Wuest, NCA VP: [bwuest@naturalbridgecaverns.com](mailto:bwuest@naturalbridgecaverns.com)

Dick Bell, NCA Past President: [senecacaverns@hmccltd.net](mailto:senecacaverns@hmccltd.net)

Susan Berdeaux, Secretary/Treasurer: [susan@cavern.com](mailto:susan@cavern.com)

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Blake Rutkowski [blake\\_rutkowski@ajg.com](mailto:blake_rutkowski@ajg.com)

This information is provided to assist NCA members. We hope you find it useful.

John D. Sagendorf  
NCA President and Insurance Committee Chair

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### **Following are two messages from Pat Gallagher sent to members of his company and clients.**

**(1)** "Earlier this year, the Office of the Attorney General of the State of New York began an investigation into the business activities of the insurance industry and served subpoenas to a number of insurance brokers and companies. Last week, the New York Attorney General filed a lawsuit against Marsh & McLennan, the world's largest insurance broker, generally alleging that Marsh operated under a business model that did not put the interests of its clients first. This lawsuit has received considerable press coverage and the Attorney General has made statements that other insurance brokers and companies may be named in similar suits. As of today, Gallagher has not received a subpoena from, nor been named in a lawsuit by, the Office of the Attorney General of the State of New York.

Gallagher's business model is structured to enable our producers and account managers to put the interests of our clients first. This is reinforced in the following ways:

- Our Mission Statement states that Gallagher succeeds by placing the needs of our clients first.
- We have professional standards in place that govern how we interact with our clients and the insurance companies. These standards are reviewed and updated often and we audit our compliance with those standards frequently.
- The Gallagher Code of Conduct requires that we conduct ourselves professionally and ethically.
- And, the Gallagher Way spreads the word about our Shared Values -- it is our culture to operate under the highest moral and ethical behavior.

We spend considerable time and energy conveying to our employees that we must do the right thing for our clients, even if it means less profits for Gallagher. When we conducted our employee survey a year ago, 92% of our employee respondents said they understood that our clients come first. Whenever an employee does not act in a manner that is consistent with our tenets, we deal with the situation immediately. If you are aware of any incident or behavior that does not fall within these standards, please call our confidential Ethics Hotline at 888-878-6236.

As part of questioning Marsh's business model, the lawsuit generally alleges that Marsh profited through excess contingent commission revenues it received as a result of alleged inappropriate business practices. The lawsuit alleges, and subsequent public information clarifies, that in 2003 Marsh reported contingent commissions that totaled \$845 million, or 7% of gross revenue. Gallagher receives contingent commissions under contracts that are consistent with long-standing and common industry practice. Gallagher's contingent commissions in 2003 were approximately \$33 million, which represents 2% of gross revenues.

Only time will tell what impact this investigation will have on our industry. It is important for us to stay the course and continue to conduct our business with professionalism as we serve our clients needs. Please feel free to visit with your direct report if you have any questions."

**(2)** "Since my communication to you last week regarding the Attorney General of New York allegations, many of you have asked what our position would be regarding contingency commission agreements. Earlier today, we put out our 3rd quarter earnings release. Please note the following comments that were in our release:

"J. Patrick Gallagher, Jr., President and Chief Executive Officer, stated that Gallagher will not participate as a retail broker in volume-based or profit-based contingent commission agreements effective January 1, 2005. In addition, when allegations of bid rigging and price fixing recently came to light at Marsh, management retained independent counsel to perform an internal review. While the review is at an early stage, management has no knowledge that Gallagher has engaged in any improper practices."

Please feel free to share my e-mail of October 19th, as well as today's press release, with any clients or prospects who want to know our stated position.

With respect to our compensation, we have always believed in 100% transparency, openness and honesty. In the event that any client should ask any questions regarding our compensation, please make sure that you answer them in light of this stated position."

Pat Gallagher

Chief Executive Officer  
Arthur J. Gallagher & Co.

# 2004 NATIONAL CAVES ASSOCIATION ANNUAL CONVENTION

PUT-IN-BAY OHIO

THE JET EXPRESS.



## FINAL THOUGHTS

This edition's final thoughts are, once again, courtesy of Steve Thompson and are on the lighter side.

You know you are living in 2004 when.....

1. You enter your password on the microwave.
2. You haven't played solitaire with real cards in years.
3. You have a list of 15 phone numbers to reach your family of 3.
4. You email the person who sits at the desk next to you.
5. Your reason for not staying in touch with friends and family is that they don't have email addresses.
6. You pull up in your own driveway and use your cell phone to see if anyone is home.
7. Leaving the house without your cell phone, which you did not have the first 20 or 30 (or 60!) years of your life, is now an excuse for panic and your turn around to go and get it.
8. You get up in the morning and go online before getting your coffee.
9. You start tilting your head to smile :)).

Thanks, Steve!