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Cave Talk

Cave Association National

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CaveTalk

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE NATIONAL CAVES ASSOCIATION

National Caves Association - Susan Berdeaux, Coordinating Director

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Well I must say that winter is past us and spring has arrived. At least that's the case for us here in Texas. I am sure that some of you further north may still be dealing with snow and not so spring-time conditions. None the less I do hope Spring Break was a busy time for those of you who were open. And my best wishes to those who are working hard to open for the spring and summer season now.

It has been an active year thus far for the NCA. We just recently held our Board of Directors and Insurance Committee mid year meetings earlier this month here in New Braunfels, Texas. Some of you may not realize what an adventuresome leadership team we have, as a few photos in this issue of Cave Talk will confirm! A good time was had by all, but most importantly we conducted two very long and productive days of meetings. There is certainly a lot going on and exciting times ahead for our NCA and I certainly appreciate the engagement, enthusiasm, energy and work put forth by our board and committees. It is truly a team effort.

Let me just touch on a few things in the works. We have contracted with Brandon Mathis not only as our web master for web site maintenance but also for the development of a new web site which is taking place right now. Gary Berdeaux and his Committee have been working with Brandon and I think everyone will be impressed with the incredible benefit our new web site will be! Steve Rawlings and his Bylaws Committee are taking input and working hard on some much needed updating and revisions to our Bylaws. Steve and his Committee would still very much welcome your input! And soon we'll all be off to Bermuda. I am getting very excited about our NCA Convention '06! David Summers and Joye Wuest's Convention Committee are putting together what will be one of the best NCA Conventions ever. Not only will this convention be a blast, it is also packed full of incredible professional development sessions. I can assure each and everyone that if you come to Bermuda with an open mind and be a sponge for ideas and information, you will take home numerous ideas that will positively impact your bottom line. Come benefit from ideas that can many times over pay for your trip! You just have to do your part.

Enjoy this issue of Cave Talk. Thanks to all of you who make this organization so special. I wish each of you a prosperous and wonderful Spring. If there is anything the NCA or I can do to help you, just let me know.

God bless,

President

National Caves Association

INSURANCE UPDATE

Through the years the NCA's group insurance program has proven to be one of the most significant benefits that many of our members have taken advantage of. I am happy to report that your NCA Insurance program is alive and well and that our committee is working hard to make it better than ever. The program has had its challenges; everyone knows about the stresses placed on the insurance industry in recent past. We have also weathered some changing of the guard, so to speak, within our broker organization Arthur J. Gallagher & Co. What we now have is an excellent blend of enthusiasm and industry experience with our Gallagher team of Mike Woytowicz and Mike McHugh new to our group program, and of course we can't leave out Beth Kawell, who has been with our program for quite some time. We are very excited about the team we have in place.

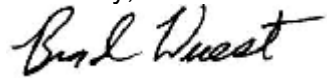
Currently we are in the renewal process for all the caves that participate in the NCA group insurance program. Insurance committee members & the Gallagher team are here to help however we can. Be sure and get those renewal applications filled out and sent back in!

We are also focusing on helping ensure that our participating caves have the proper insurance and limits. The future for the NCA's group program includes better than ever service and growth. With growth we spread the risk and continually open up opportunities for expanded coverage of exposures, better insurance and better rates for all. It's truly a win-win scenario because participants help themselves and everyone else in the group by participating. If you have a local broker that you are comfortable working with, no problem. The Gallagher team will be happy to discuss co-broker relationships. If you're interested in hearing more about our NCA group insurance program and possibly getting a quote, talk to one of our committee members.

On the service side of things check out this example of a spreadsheet created by the committee for members to help keep track of equipment for the type of insurance called EDP (Electronic Data Processing). Does anyone have a computer or copy machine? (Sample data page 8) Members will also be seeing other helpful information about insurance from the committee and Gallagher team from time to time in Cave Talk, e-mail and mail.

Your NCA Insurance committee is here to help and be a resource for all NCA members. Look below (page 7) for a list of Insurance Committee Members and our contact info. Let us know if we can help with your insurance questions.

Sincerely,



Brad Wuest
President & Insurance Committee Chair

RADON UPDATE

As we enter our fourth and final year with the monitoring and finalization of the OSHA Alliance Agreement regarding alpha radiation, we are pleased to report that the standards and practices under the Alliance Agreement are being perfected; and all private NCA member show caves are expected to have been monitored by the end of summer 2006.

To date, 72 member show caves have been monitored with 19 remaining to be done this year. Caves in Tennessee, Virginia, Arizona, Kentucky and Alabama that have not yet been monitored by Tom Aley should anticipate that work soon.

Employee information and training outlines are under development and should be ready before your summer season. You will be notified as soon as they are available.

Lastly, watch your mailbox. Soon you will receive an invoice from NCA Headquarters for your fourth and final installment payment toward the project's funding. And, you will receive a letter from President Brad Wuest to update you on both the history and status of this project.

If you have any questions about the NCA Alpha Radiation Project, contact Brad Wuest, Steve Thompson or John Sagendorf. Their e-mails and other contact information are listed on the front page of Cave Talk.

CONVENTION 06

By now, everyone should have received the first mailing for this year's annual meeting, to be held in Bermuda October 17 – 21. David Summers, Chair, and his staff are working hard to ensure a productive, yet fun meeting with the opportunity to participate in a world wide meeting, ISCA. The "new and improved" Grotto Bay Beach Resort will be our headquarters again. You may make your reservations at Grotto Bay but David has requested that no one make airline reservations till he gives the word. Another carrier may start flying to Bermuda, which hopefully, will mean lower airfares for all. As soon as that has been confirmed, he will give us a go-ahead. If you have any questions, feel free to email him at nca06@caves.bm.

WELCOME

.....to Pat Reed, the new superintendent at Mammoth Cave National Park. Pat came to Mammoth from Chickamauga & Chattanooga National Military Park, where he has been for the last 14 years. He's career with the park service spans 36 years.

"I look forward to working with a very fine staff, our partners and neighboring communities. Mammoth Cave National Park is an important part of our natural history and shared American heritage," said Reed, who is excited about moving to Kentucky and honored to have the opportunity to serve as superintendent of Mammoth Cave National Park.

We're glad to have Pat here in the neighborhood.

SPECIALTY LICENSE PLATES

The Missouri Legislature has approved the new Missouri "The Cave State" license plate. Plates will be available in July 2006. For more information, go to the Missouri Cave Association website at www.missouricaves.com.



BYLAWS

Steve Rawlings, Bylaws Committee chair, has been working on the bylaws revision and is still accepting suggestions and comments from the membership. Any and all input is welcome and will be considered. Email Steve at steve@mercercaverns.com.

RECOVERING

Former NCA coordinator Barbara Munson had a short stay in the hospital last month but is now home and feeling much better. She asked the editor to relay her thanks and appreciation to all who have called and sent cards, wishing her a speedy recovery. Hard to keep a good woman down!

LOSSES

We are sorry to have to tell you of the death of a few of our members. "Big Bob" Gilman, Lost River Caverns, PA, died this past February. When calling Lost River to offer condolences, the office also learned of the death of Bob's wife Naomi (Chickie) last April. Our deepest sympathies go to their son and daughter, "Little Bob" and Beverly, who continue to operate the caverns.

Additionally, the longtime friend, associate and supporter of Skyline Caverns, Charlie Busser, died December 8 in Virginia.

CONGRATULATIONS

Jack and Peter Herschend (Jack, founding member of NCA and father of Bruce) have received the Ernst and Young International Lifetime Achievement Award for Activism, Entrepreneurship and Leadership. This award recognizes the brothers' values-based leadership and lifetime of success in Branson, MO, according to the Travel Industry Association newsletter of December 5. The CEO of Ernst and Young stated that Jack and

Peter helped define and redefine the theme park business, helping to provide wholesome family entertainment for generations.

CAVES AND CAVERNS DIRECTORIES

Because the office has enough back-stock of our current directory, the Board of Directors has decided not to reprint another edition till this fall. Please let Susan know if you need directories. She will be putting out a request for correct information later on in the spring.

WEBSITE UPDATE – GARY BERDEAUX

Since our convention in KY, the Electronic Media/Technology Committee has been hard at work on a new web site for the NCA. The committee has been working with Brandon Mathis (our new NCA Webmaster) to develop the concept for our new site. We developed a plan that includes two major sections to the new site Visitors Side and Member Side.

VISITOR SITE	MEMBERS SITE (password protected)
Member Cave Directory	Directory of Officers & Directors” - Radon Program Info - Insurance Program
Geology	Standing Committee Pages - Cave Talk Archive - Monthly Summaries
History	Member & Affiliate Member Director
Biology	**contact info that you only want to provide to other NCA members. This will be
Photo Gallery	password protected to ensure that only NCA members have access to your
Helpful Links	personal contact info.**

During the mid-winter NCA Board meeting Brandon’s contracts for site development and maintenance were accepted unanimously. Much hard work lies ahead. Brandon is hard at work to have the Visitor Site up and running as soon as possible. The Members Site will soon follow. The committee will keep you all informed as progress is made. There are many other exciting features that can be implemented in the new site as association funds become available for further development.

GIFT SHOP GOODIES – JUDY TURILLI

As we’re eagerly waiting for spring and new products to arrive (and more customers), it’s a good time to examine our gift shops. What does a customer see first when they enter? Is the shop clean, attractive, and inviting? Are the displays interesting and appealing? How is the lighting or does it look like you’re in a cave? Is the layout of the shop too crowded or does it encourage customers to browse and optimize their purchasing?

We just finished putting a fresh coat of pain on an old display. It worked wonders. We’ve been rearranging and cross merchandising. Change is GOOD.

Recently, I read an article about Feng Shui (the Chinese Art of positioning objects). I began thinking about my shop and realized I had a dead-end traffic pattern. I moved two display cases together letting customers enter into another merchandise area. It was an improvement that didn’t cost any money, but is paying dividends already.

Whatever plans you may have for your gift shop, be creative and have fun! It’s an exciting time of the year. Happy Spring and Happy Easter!

A few new gift shop items for your consideration:

Philippine CAVE Snail	Contact: Mike Hahn (973) 625-1764 mhahn64368@aol.com
Cave Man Magnets	Swibco 630-968-8900 www.swibco.com
3-D CAVE SCENE inside a block of solid glass. Comes with your pewter cave label.	Meyers’ Creation 253-847-2761 don@meyersgifts.com

SHOW DATES:

- *March 2-4: Smoky Mountain Gift Show, Gatlinburg, Tennessee
- *March 12-14: Spring Chicago Gift and Home Market
- *March 17-21: Columbus Market Place Show, Columbus, Ohio

- *March 19-21: Atlanta Spring Gift, Home, and Holiday Market, www.AmericasMart.com
- *March 25-28: Boston Gift Show, www.bostongiftshow.com
- *April 2-4: Atlanta, Georgia ASD/AMD's Variety Merchandise Show (800) 432-4511
- *April 8-11: Seattle, Washington Gift and Home Accessories (800) 433-1014
- *April 11-15: Minnetonka, MN Gift Show (800) 626-1298
- *April 23-25: Harbor Springs, Northern Michigan Gift Show (231) 526-3049
- *April 26, Gettysburg, PA – The Heritage Cash and Carry Wholesales Market (717) 249-9404
- *April 30-May 2: Columbus, Ohio April Market (800) 686-6278

DENVER MERCHANDISE MART

Gift, Jewelry & Resort Show February 2006 – DENISE BELL

I decided to travel to Denver for the gift show not only to find merchandise not available at other gift stores in my area but also to attend the complimentary buyers' seminars.

Debi Ward Kennedy, a Visual Design consultant, presented two seminars on displays and merchandising.

She offered and illustrated concepts on use of color, props, signs, light fixtures, etc. Her seminar handouts included display, fixtures and prop suppliers.

Fish! by Stephen C. Lundin, Ph.D., Harry Paul, and John Christensen, a parable about the world famous Pike Place Fish market in Seattle was highly recommended by Barbara Wold, speaker and business author. The book is a story "...about finding the deep source of energy, creativity, and passion that exists inside each of us by learning to love what we do, even if at the moment we may not be doing exactly what we love."

"Have a passion for running your business, not a passion for what you are selling." This statement along with "Buy what will sell, not what you like," was the theme of Tom Shay's presentation on Creating Positive Cashflow with an "Open to Buy". He spoke in terms of a financial approach to your gift shop and attitudes and feelings about being in business. The "Open to Buy" approach to gift shop buying is based on sales and inventory by product department of category. Mr. Shay offers a free "Open to Buy" template on his website at <http://www.profitsplus.org/>.

Interesting merchandise seen in Denver:

◆ New from Thirstystone Resources, Inc.: Purse Coaster Sets, Adirondack Chair Coasters, Shoe Coaster Sets, High Heel Coasters. See their line at: <http://www.thirstystone.com/> Telephone number: (800) 829-6888

◆ The "Zipper Bag" a crazy new fun purse that unzips-and unzips - and - unzips until it is just a zipper cord, available from El Paso Saddleblanket. Cost is \$3.25 each with suggested retail \$7.50 and up. Contact information: Telephone: (800) 351-7847 or <http://www.elpasosaddleblanket.com/>



◆ Handcrafted home decorative and garden accessories from VIP International. Telephone number: 916-638-5802 or at <http://www.vipssc.com/>.

Any questions for me? You can contact me -Denise Bell, Seneca Caverns, Ohio: senecacaverns@hmcltd.net

FINAL THOUGHTS

"Never discourage anyone who continually makes progress, no matter how slow." - Plato

"Education is the ability to listen to almost anything without losing your temper or your self-confidence. - Robert Frost

"We are all pilgrims on the same journey – but some pilgrims have better road maps." - Nelson DeMille



Mid Winter NCA Board Meeting & Insurance Committee team building fun in Texas

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(24 hours / 7 days a week)

ELECTRONIC DATA PROCESSING SAMPLE SPREADSHEET

NCA	INS	EDP	LIST						
	EDP			CAVE: ABC CAVERNS			POLICY#	235TY67	DATE: 3/3/2006
LOC #	BLDG #	PUR DATE	# ITEMS	MANUFACTURER	MODEL	SERIAL #	LEASED OWN	CURRENT 100%VALUE	AMT OF INS (COINSUR %)
1	2	3-05	2	SONY - PRINTER	UPD-R150	45432W	OWN	6,800	80
1	2	2-99	2	OLYMPUS - CAMERA	O987	766YT5T	OWN	3,000	80
1	2	2-98	6	SAMSUNG - REG	F4534	9887YT5	OWN	2,400	80
1	2	4-04	2	SANYO - CASH REG	Y765	66544R4R	OWN	1,100	80
2	3	4-03	5	VERTEX - RADIO	YTG5	765T5T	OWN	1,500	80
2	3	2-02	1	BROTHER - COPIER	B850	54R4R4	OWN	600	80
2	3	2-05	1	BROTHER - COPIER	B700	18UY9	OWN	750	80
2	3	3-01	1	HP - FAX	770	U8U8776	OWN	300	80
2	3	1-04	1	HP - PRINTER	5350	O918U7	OWN	250	80
2	3	1-05	1	HP - PRINTER	5040	0P918UU	OWN	300	80
								17,000	