

ILLUMINATIONS

Publication of the NSS Arts & Letters Section

Issue No. 26

June, 2017



Illuminations



The Publication of the NSS Arts and Letters Section • Issue No. 26 • June 2017



Welcome

Charles Loving
Pen and Ink

Cartoon submitted by Bill Steele for the artist.

Front Cover:

Curtains

Mary Rose
Pastel

Drawing inspired by a Dave Bunnell photograph.

Back Cover:

Imaginary Cave Scene

Evelyn Townsend
Ceramic



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Stratigraphy 1

Emily Davis

Quilt

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FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Carolina Shrewsbury

A year of many changes for us, include the sad loss of two great artists, Glenn Mills and Andy Komensky.

The obituary for Glenn was in the last issue; Peter Jones is writing the obituary for Andy in this winters issue. **Some of Andy's best work is in this issue.** Joe Levinson has collected his work for many years, so the originals are in good hands! I am sure we will still be able to see his work loaned for our annual NSS Salon in the future.

We have not finished changes yet. It is most important for us to replace all of our officers, Treasurer, Vice Chair, Editor, Secretary and Chairman. We need new blood in the team....we have been in office for many years, this also includes the position of Salon Chair for Fine Arts, Crafts and Design. Please consider this in your renewal of membership and if you are new to Arts and Letters. The duties are minimal and simple to accomplish due to a fabulous new manual, printed and on 3 thumb drives. The only requirement is dedication to caving and speleological education through the arts.

The main duties are to get a magazine out twice a year, maintain membership and attend Convention or have a representative every year. As Chairman you must attend every Convention, maintain a team of volunteers, and communicate effectively with Convention Staff and Staff at HQ. There is some reimbursement for travel expenses, and there is a motion in the works for partial reimbursement for accommodation and registration. That motion can have a better chance of passing if the Chairman is active in creating revenue with their team of officers.

The benefits of this leadership is resume worthy and can only be successful with dedication to the cause within the NSS. Also, let me be frank – I've been the chair of the Fine Arts Salon with only a 2 year gap since our initial showing in 1998 – that's 20 years! It's time for me to step back a little and let other folks enjoy all the wonderful comments we get each year.

SpeleoArt

Want to become a member?

The Arts & Letters section welcomes new members. It doesn't matter if you create art, write, make music, make movies, teach, or just a fan of the speleoart process.

You can find a membership form, submission guidelines, and samples of our newsletter Illuminations on our web site at:

www.caves.org/section/arts_and_letters/

For information on the many different Speleoart salons, workshops, and speleo- news you can go to:
www.hawaiiiflow.com/SpeleoArt/.



arts & letters
section NSS

FOLLOW US ON



Speleoart

BLUE GRASS CAVE

Lance S. Barron

Ordovician waves pounded shells into sand.
Strophomenids, Rafinesquinas,
Some resupinated; others not.
Big holes run through it.

Individual holes all lined up
Forming tubes.
Not smooth; jagged; fractal.
Corroded by the Blue Grass rain.

Mapping – compass and clinometer.
Wet belly flop, muddy notes.
Flowstone, fish, fluorite.
Had it all: Blue Grass cave.

Knee deep. Knee deep on who?
That's whom?
Green leaves in the ceiling mud.
Roving Blue Grass death storms.

Thirty-foot cable ladder.
On belay! Goldline.
Beer up top in the car.
You wouldn't fool an old man?



Corona Cave

Marc Barker

Drawing



Convention Quilt
Gary Napper
Quilt



Bill and Diana fight off a giant cave bug

Joe Furman
Cartoon



Stratigraphy 2

Emily Davis

Quilt

Discovery on the Lowered Green River

Ergor Rubreck

NEWS NOTE: The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers removed Lock and Dam #6 On Green River in Kentucky in April, 2017 because it had deteriorated to the point of endangering downstream residents and structures.

Green River in central Kentucky was modified by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers by the construction of dams and locks for navigation in the early 20th Century. The pool level from Lock and Dam #6 in Brownsville, KY backed up the still water pool at Mammoth Cave to a Mean Sea Level (MSL) of 420 feet. Numerous cave entrances were flooded and disappeared and the water level inside Mammoth Cave's Echo River rose about one meter (39 inches). Echo River boat ride in the cave used to extend about a quarter mile until 1907, but the route was reduced by low ceilings to about 200 feet after that.

When 1908 visitors remarked, "This is a shorter boat ride than when I was here last."

Cave guides would remark, "Yes, ain't that sumpin?"

The dam was removed last month, lowering the water to its free flowing state!

A few weeks ago I packed my canoe with cave gear and set off downstream from the Mammoth Cave Ferry landing. In 30 minutes of paddling I came to an opening on the left at the bank of the river. It was not high enough to allow my canoe to enter, so I jumped out of the canoe wearing my cave gear, turned on my headlamp, and ducked under the low ceiling. I had to tilt my head up and sideways to breath in the one-inch airspace. After several hundred feet the ceiling began to rise and I was in a wide cave passage with wall-to-wall water.

I came to a muddy bank, climbed on the shore and saw an ancient inscription carved on the rock wall. It said 2927 BC. Wow, that's 4,944 years ago! Could this be the Lost Tribe of Israel? The missing members of the Roanoke Colony? Donner Party? Or the NSS number of an early Basic Caver? I applied my portable radiocarbon dater instrument to a water soaked charred log from

a drowned campfire. The orange digits flashed and changed and came to rest at 5,000 years plus or minus 50 years. Definitely old.

Farther along I came to a pile of rotted wood. Scraping the brown stuff aside I saw the glint and glitter of many gold and silver coins, the flash and glint of rubies and emeralds, crystals of dazzling reflectivity. Perhaps this was King Solomon's Mine alluded to in the Old Testament? Strange tiny round balls made of glass with swirling colors caught my eye. Could these be the famous Elgin Marbles? A flat rock, approximately 32" by 48" was carved with curvilinear characters. If only I had brought my iPod with its Rosetta Stone app for translating languages, I might have unlocked the deepening mystery.

Something moving, fluttering as it were, waved at me from a crack in the wall. Could it be Tyrannosaurus rex feathers? All I remembers from my university Saurian Paleontology class was what I memorized for a blue book exam: "T. rex lived in the Lancia faunal stage at the end of the Cretaceous." Whether it had scales or feathers was a raging controversy at the time I took the course, but these feathers settled the issue as far as I was concerned.

I realized that I had been cave exploring alone, nor had I told anyone where I was going nor when I expected to return. If I didn't come back, the only evidence would be my yellow canoe floating in Green River tethered to a tree branch. As the world's most famous and gifted cave explorer, I was setting a terrible example for others. I have never shirked from taking unconscionable risks myself, but to set a bad example, that disturbed me!

Reversing my course, I emerged into the sunshine of the late afternoon. I was covered in mud. When I reached the former site of Lock and Dam #6 near Brownsville, I was hailed by a National Park Service Ranger on the shore. He wanted to see my fishing license. I pointed out to him that a Kentucky fishing license is not necessary to fish in federal waters. I was not fishing.

He looked at my muddy body and the mud in the bottom of my canoe. "I suppose you will tell me you're a lawyer and you were mud wrestling," said the Ranger, pointing to his Glock.

"No," I said, "Just out for a paddle on a beautiful day." He demanded to see what was in my cave pack. Thankfully I had not brought along any souvenirs of King Solomon's jewels or T. rex feathers. Not one Elgin Marble rolled out of my pack . . . just the remains of a Snickers bar. I had learned my lesson well – finders must leave archaeological relics and paleontological specimens *in situ* because their value remains in their context. I got that right in another blue book exam at the university.

"When I saw all the mud I was sure you'd been collecting endangered mussels, now that the river is down. We've made a lot of arrests of pot hunters and mussel rustlers." he explained. I thought of bringing back my expensive camera and writing a story for National Geographic. Maybe they'd make a film of my sensational find. A little more publicity couldn't help but burnish my already brilliant reputation as a first rate speleologist.

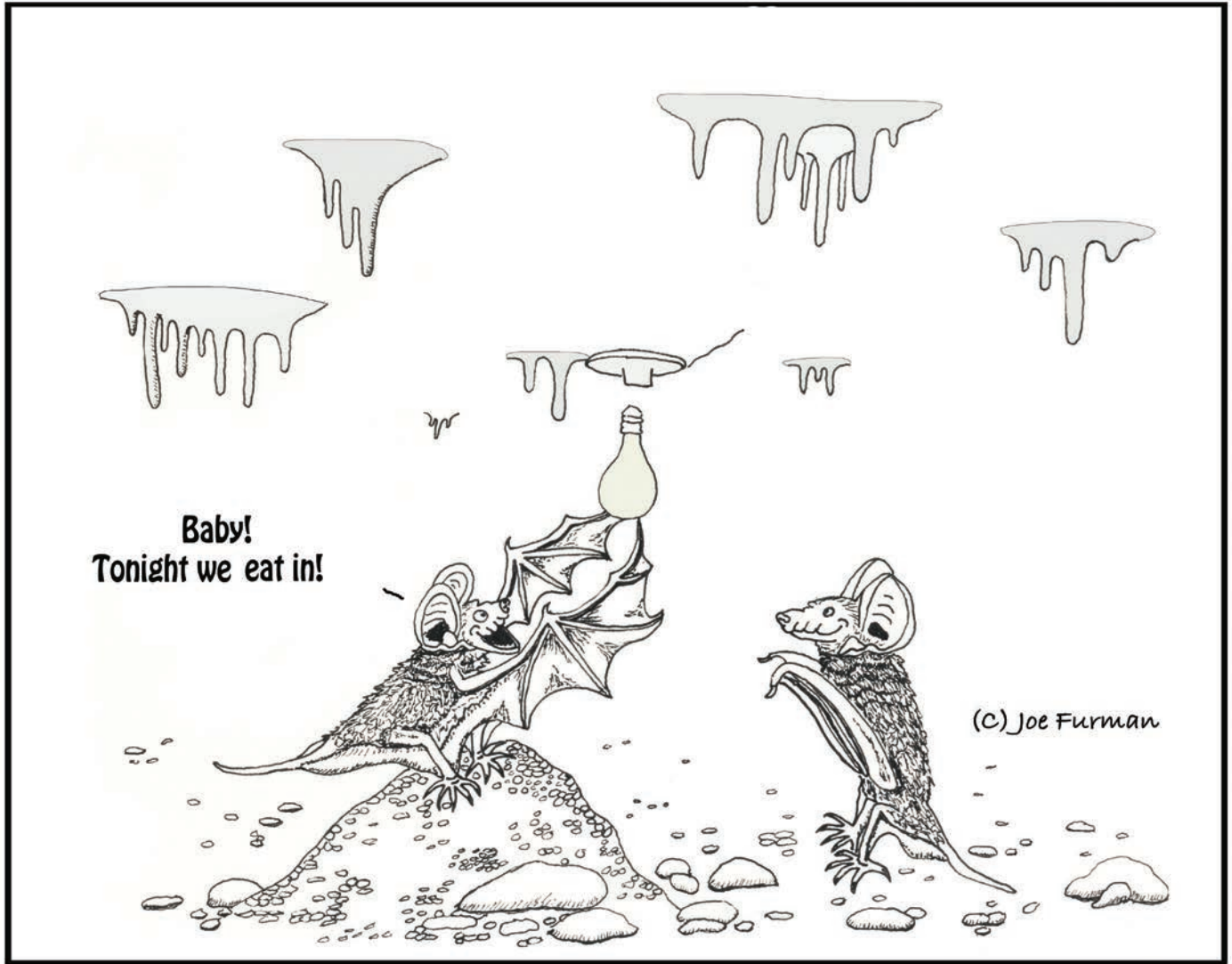
I thought better of it. The NG people would demand to know the location of my secret cave, and then every looter on earth would converge. To safeguard its location I thought I'd better go back and erase the cave's GPS coordinates.

Early the next Saturday I launched my canoe at the Mammoth Cave ferry ramp. The river was up an inch or so. I paddled back and forth five times over a two-mile stretch of the river and could not find a trace of the cave or the tree branch I had tied to. The setting sun was leaving me in Green River's gloomy canyon as I saw the ferry light on rounding the last bend. Cave conservation is probably more noble in the long run than fame or fortune. Or so I told myself.



SpeleoArt Postcards
Make a collectable postcard!
Mail to Convention
Display in Salon and compete with other cards for a Blue Pin!
Then Swap!
Collect and Auction!

SpeleoArt Postcards



Baby! Tonight We Eat In!

Joe Furman
Cartoon



Desert Treasure

Tom Cottrell

Painting



Bat Flight

Carol Jackson

Carved and wood burned on natural gourd, with gold leaf rim

Gypsum Caving Bagatelle 23

Steve Beleu

Moderato Quarter note = 110

Piano *mf*

Pno. *mf*

Pno. *p* *mp*

Pno. *mf* *p* *pp*

2

Gypsum Caving Bagatelle 23

Piano score for Gypsum Caving Bagatelle 23, measures 22-42. The score is written for piano (Pno.) and includes dynamic markings such as *mp*, *mf*, *f*, *p*, *rit.*, and *a tempo*. The key signature is one sharp (F#).

22 *mp* *mf* *f*

27 *mf* *p* *f*

32 *f* *mf*

37 *p* *mp*

42 *f* *rit.* *p* *mp* *a tempo* *mf*

Ped. *

Gypsum Caving Bagatelle 23

3

Pno.

47

mf *mp* *f*

Pno.

51

mf *f* *f* *ff*

Pno.

56

rit. *mf* *p*

Ad.

*

Cave Grunder Reveals All

(The Making of an Underground Feminist)

Peg Fowler (NSS #4459)

I entered Penn State University in the fall of 1956 as an innocent 17 year old freshman. Penn State was known as a fine engineering school, and the ratio of men to women was 15 to 1. I was terrified. It felt as though I had inadvertently walked into the men's restroom.

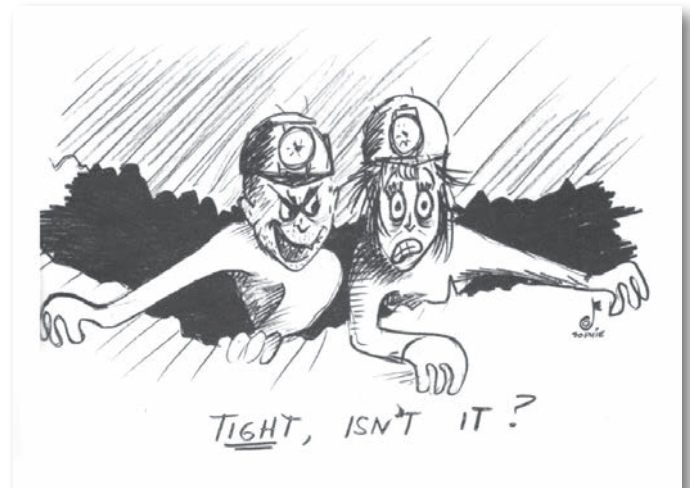
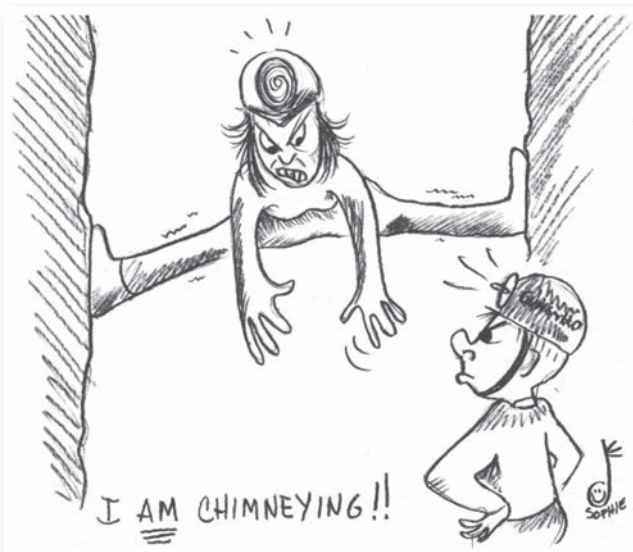
Scared, but determined, I started with a heavy load of classes but also signed up for "Outing Club" to meet hikers and campers and rock-climbers and white-water canoeists—anybody outside the School of Education. They were all terrific folks, mostly men, of course, but lots of fun. Then a prospective boyfriend convinced me to join a group going to Deerbone Cave. He was trying to impress me. He did.

I was SO impressed that by the following year I had dumped the boyfriend, changed majors, joined both the NSS and Nittany Grotto, and started to draw cartoons for the Grotto Newsletter. Those drawings gave me a way to twit the oh-so-serious geology types.

A few people were bothered by the admission of an entire "gaggle" of females into the intensely male mindset of the Grotto. After all, this was the 50's. Nobody used terms like Sexual Tension, or Feminism, or Women's Lib, but everybody knew that Girls didn't do stuff like that. Everybody but some sweet young things who decided to ignore the social norms and head into the dark. They called us Cave Grunders. We were determined to keep up with the boys.

But, Oh, the caves! Pennsylvania caves were wet, so they were dank, they were amazing, and wonderful, and muddy. Above all else, they were muddy. Every weekend, my Roomie Annie and I would come slogging into the dorm, trying hard to avoid human contact. We tried to stand in the showers, but the mud clogged the drains. Finally we waddled up our disgusting cave clothes and piled them out on the window ledge... until we were busted by a horrified housekeeping staff. (Seems the crud was drooling down the side of the building from the second floor. It's a wonder we weren't thrown out of school.)

I gotta tell you that it's really hard to explain a genteel sport like caving to one's mother, who sent her daughter to school so she could get engaged to a dentist or something. Mom thought that anybody who went into a cave voluntarily was a perverted knuckle-dragger.



Ok, so I admit, Cavers do have their share of characters. Maybe more than a share. And maybe some of their motives were just a tad suspect. I well remember the guy who wanted to make out with me on a pile of guano. I mean, with kisses and everything. I thought he was insane. Cute, but insane. Or the Drama Major who was so determined to date me that he exaggerated his cave experience but neglected to tell anybody about his claustrophobia and hysterical tendencies. That trip did not end well. Lots of cartoon material, though.

In all fairness, Cavers in general, and Nittany Grotto Members in particular, were a pretty enlightened group in that late 50's era. Women were active, competent, and well respected in the hard sciences at universities, if not so much in the world at large. And as a woman caver, I was not particularly pampered, nor was I discriminated against. I explored wild passages, mapped through the mud, rappelled into pits, and never batted an eye at the duck-underers.

Caving gave me some amazing gifts. I still look at every landscape mindful of the underlying geology. I can spot sinkholes and cracks with uncanny accuracy. And I still think fondly of that velvet-still darkness, the quietness of mind and soul that can be known only when the lights go out in a cave.

Most of all, my female friends and I had been given something special. We were strong. We were tough. We were accepted. We were amazing. We were unstoppable!! I guess we were Feminists.



Flying Bat
 Evelyn Townsend
Wood Cut

Is This the Everest of Caves? The Old Faithful of Caves? The Amazon of Caves?

Ergor Rubreck

The *National Geographic* publishes cave articles a few times a year. By now each story has become predictable. It is usually written by a non-caver who just happens to be a submarine parachutist, a base drum jumper, or a skyscraper diver between assignments. Generally the cave described is equi-distant from everywhere on earth, has never been entered or exited, and everything that ought to be known about that cave is unknown! Could it be the world's longest, biggest, deepest, voluminous? Will it contain diamonds, nobotanium, or unknown species of giant arachnids devouring homo sapiens? Huh? Huh? There will be cavers with unpronounceable names from unpronounceable places.

One such story showed photos of formations in Mammoth Cave. They printed the stalactites growing out of the floor. I wrote a letter to the editor pointing out that goof, and got an answer back saying, "Everybody knows that."

The March 2017 issue covers an international expedition to Uzbekistan a cave called Dark Star. The cave is 11 miles long and 3,000 feet from top to bottom. "IS THIS THE EVEREST OF CAVES?" the caption screams. In a 3D diagram a note observes that the cave is only 1.1 miles from connecting to another cave! "WILL THAT BE THE NEXT STUPENDOUS DISCOVERY?" If it weren't for the fact that only National Geographic photographers have cameras with wide angle 7mm lenses, their photos could not hold a carbide light to many that appear in the N.S.S. News every month.

Outside Magazine runs breathless cave stories in their adventure magazine. Their stories highlight the dangers inherent in caving and often have one or



Ergor Explains his Story

Clariano Sewursbrhy

more cavers die, as happens often on Grotto cave trips. In movies supernatural creatures devour screaming cave ladies who more often than not become lost in the stygian depths. Of course, those movies claim to be fiction with no resemblance to people living or dead. (Real cavers know that happens all the time on Grotto cave trips.)

Instead of bitching, I am crowdfunding a magazine that will have well-known cavers authoring stories about subjects they know nothing about (but everybody has access to Wickpedia, right?) Sure, it's a turnabout approach, but writing demands novelty above accuracy. I have chosen National Geo Logic for my magazine's title. You can believe it if Ergor Rubreck edits it.

I have already lined up five prominent cavers to write for my slick coffee table magazine. Here are the story assignments in the works for upcoming issues:

Wm Shrewsbury: "Fancy Dancers in Gaudy Casinos in Southern France and Northern Siberia"

Dave Bunnell: "Deep Thermal Vents Under Iceland and Ventis of Italy"

Bill Steele: "Bobsled Parachuting Beyond Mali's Farthest Zip Lines"

Derek Bristol: "Gobi Desert Silk Route Adventures and Double Yellow Line Roads"

Bonny Armstrong: "Great Male Explorers of the Sargasso Sea"

My choices are based on the fact that no mistakes need to be acknowledged or claims retracted if sourpuss expert readers pick at any trivial mistakes. I can just reply, "Everybody knows that."

Of course, how can I, the most honest and wonderful cave explorer the world has ever known, countenance publishing articles that may have one or two mistakes? "True if Interesting." is my credo. Presidents and editors no longer need apologize for occasional misspeaks; Belief trumps truth. Here are some of the wild, fantastic, exclusive stories I've lined up for future issues:

Huautla No Longer Deepest Cave in Mexico

Treaty of Hidalgo Ceded District to Guatemala in 1907

Ohio Caverns Could be World's Longest

Farmer in Next County says, "Nobody Knows how Big it is."

Grand Canyon Cave Sees Daylight

Ice Sheet Grinds Roof Away Two Millennia Ago

I Survived Sand Cave

By Floyd Collins, Haddam, KS

I'm accepting advanced subscriptions for ***National Geo Logic***, at a special price. You can become a charter reader, for \$535.00 (4 issues). Those wishing to experience a bargain may receive the electronic magazine at the reduced price of \$435.00. We pass on the production savings to you. If I get 1,000 subscribers I may just skip publishing and disappear into the caves of Patagonia. Send cash, check, or credit card number and signature.

In the event we do not publish four issues, we may allow you to choose to complete your subscription with your choice of *Child Life* magazine, *House Nifty*, or *Better Homes and Gardenias*.



Slide Rock Cave

Linda Neely

Charcoal on Arches Paper

Junction Cave – El Malpais National Monument

Fine Arts Workshop Field trip

Linda Starr with assistance from Eric Weaver and Jerry Atkinson

Junction Cave is the easiest and most accessible of the Monument's caves, located right off of Highway 53 near El Calderon Parking area. The cave is gated during the winter to protect hibernating bats. The first half of the cave is largely breakdown and no longer contains the primary features; the second half of the cave is more representative of an intact lava tube and has a good example of a lava bench. The main passage terminates in about 980 feet from the opening into a room containing a mud floor. To avoid disturbing this area and possibly harming any of the endemic invertebrates, a trail of reflective markers has been built that avoids the mud floor at the cave junction and leads to a long effluent crawl tube. This side passage has many excellent examples of shark-tooth lavacicles and lava dribbles, and a raised lava floor can be seen along the way before it terminates in a lava seal. Gypsum snow, hair, and needles have been noted in this section of the cave.

The elevation of this large lava tube cave is 7270 feet. Junction Cave is one of El Malpais' most frequently visited caves due to its easy accessibility, but also contains the largest known Townsend's big-eared bat hibernaculum in the park. The cave is located about 100 m from the El Calderon parking lot. It is a 581-m (1,907-ft) long lava tube that averages 8 m feet wide and 5 m high (see map). Like many other caves at El Malpais, Junction Cave contains a cold air trap and the temperature of the cave is in the low 40s (F). The cave entrance requires a brief scramble down into a trench. A small moss garden is present in the twilight area of the cave.

A waterline beginning almost halfway through the cave suggests that standing water of about 11-m depth once filled the area. Invertebrates have been found in the room containing the mud floor, including a troglobitic bristletail known only to exist in this area of this cave.

Junction Cave was gated in 2015 due to its significance as a bat hibernacula and concerns that its close proximity to the El Calderon parking area posed a threat to the bats during the winter hibernation period. The cave has the largest diversity of bats, as well as the largest Townsend's big-eared bat population at El Malpais National Monument, during the winter. A map and short guide to the cave can be downloaded at: <https://www.nps.gov/elma/learn/nature/upload/Junction-Cave.pdf>.

Everyone going on this field trip will be required to decon all caving gear prior to this trip and no caving gear will be allowed from WNS states. There is plenty of loaner gear but a set of cheap used boots would be advisable as we may not have all sizes.



Kenneth Ingham



Kenneth Ingham



Looking Up
Linda Neely
Charcoal on Arches Paper

SpeleoArt Workshop 2017 at NSS Convention, Rio Rancho, NM
Carolina Shrewsbury

The mission for the SpeleoArt Workshop is to provide a starting point for continuing inspiration to enter artwork into the annual Salons. The workshops are run by volunteers, and equipment with materials are paid for by the class fees which is how we keep them so low!

Fees can either be paid at time of your registration or you can pay on site. If you pay through Registration, please bring a receipt to class, or you may find yourself paying twice!

- **MONDAY** Collaborative painting canvas prep session-\$10 (tutorial 3:00-4:00pm)

\$30 Complete Course

Includes one year membership to Arts and Letters Section (\$10)

Materials provided.

- **TUESDAY** 20th JUNE 2017

Field Trip - 9:30am-4:30pm- **\$15**

Hummingbird Cave

Sketching kit will be provided.

- **WEDNESDAY** 21st JUNE 2017

Morning class- 9:30-11:30am- **\$10**

LIFE DRAWING

The class will focus on using materials provided for individual artworks. Techniques with various tools and mediums will be taught along the way.

Materials will be provided.

(LUNCH MEETING FOR ARTS AND LETTERS SECTION - 12-1:30pm)

Afternoon class- 2:00-4:30- **\$10**

STILL LIFE

This class will be about how to arrange interesting rock shapes and look at mineral shapes and colors to create your own artwork to take home.

Whether painted, modelled from clay or in sketch form, presentation can create a huge impact for others to see and enjoy. Bring your own rocks and great ideas. Other materials provided.

- **THURSDAY** 22nd June 2017

Collaborative painting - 9:30am- 4:30pm-**\$10** (if not paid on Monday)

The last day is Collaborative Day. The focus will be for cavers to come together to work on one piece that celebrates this year's Convention experience. A long prepared canvas will be placed in the Salon area on a large table at the beginning of the week. It can be worked on by anyone who wishes to join in!

You do not have to be an artist! The subject will be your most significant memories from your caving trips and an exploitation of the skills you learn in the morning tutorial. The expectation is that the day will provide enough time for everyone to finish the artwork. Materials provided.



Dreaming of a Cave

Marc Barker

Drawing

