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In this issue read the concern our friends in Missouri are having regarding the possibility of traffic generator signs being removed. Your help is very much needed.

And... Just a reminder that the NCA Office has a new phone number which is listed below. Please make sure you have changed it in your contact list.

Here’s to a very successful New Year!

Bob Holt
Executive Director

1965 - Celebrating Our 50th Year - 2015

Robert A. Holt
Executive Director
Email: bob@cavern.com

PO Box 625, Cobleskill, NY 12043
Phone: 518-231-5420
www.cavern.com

January 2015

Message From The Executive Director

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NEW NCA OFFICE PHONE NUMBER
We now have a New York Number!
518-231-5420
Son Doong Cave In Vietnam Is World's Largest Cave - Discovered in 2009

Son Doong cave (Vietnamese: Hang Son Doong) is world's largest cave, located in Quang Binh province, Vietnam. It was found by a local man named Ho Khanh in 1991 and was recently discovered in 2009 by British cavers, led by Howard Limbert. The name "Son Doong" cave means "mountain river cave", It was created 2-5 million years ago by river water eroding away the limestone underneath the mountain. Where the limestone was weak, the ceiling collapsed creating huge skylights.

It's so big you could fit a 40-story skyscraper inside, but Son Doong cave remained undiscovered until Ho Khanh found it. Even then, no one explored beyond its vast entrance until British cavers visited in 2009.

Inside the cave is a huge river – but the source of it remains unknown. A team from the British Cave Research Association, who first explored Son Doong, returned to try and shed more light on the cave's many mysteries.

Thousands of "cave pearls" sit untouched in Son Doong. These natural phenomenon are formed over hundreds of years when dripping water creates layers of calcite that build up around grains of sand.
The roof of the cave collapsed centuries ago, allowing a lush jungle to take root. Monkeys and flying foxes live in what explorers named the Garden of Edam.

Can't shell out $3,000 for a tour? Take this virtual journey into Son Doong's forests! Click on https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=SKAXw4mzglo to view this magnificent cave.

Photos by John Spies and Carsten Peters/Getty Images.

Read The Latest ISCA Newsletter:
http://members.cavern.com/Content/Cttes/ISCA%20Newsletter%2036(1).pdf
Christmas Celebrated Above & Below Ground

Some of the sights of the Holiday Season found on Facebook

Cumberland Caverns, TN

Natural Bridge Caverns, TX

Shenandoah Caverns, VA

Lost River Cave & Valley, KY

Glenwood Caverns and Adventure Park, CO
Defibrillator Use in the Workplace & How It Affects Insurance

This month’s article was based on a posting from the NCA Facebook page by Lake Shasta Caverns. Thanks Matt! :)

Automated External Defibrillators, or AEDs, deliver an electronic charge to restart the heart. The American Heart Association recommends installing AEDs wherever people are likely to congregate, such as shopping malls and schools. This could also include workplaces. But some companies worry about their liability should a defibrillator fail to save a heart attack victim. They worry that installing a defibrillator could actually increase their insurance rates. Federal regulations do not require the installation or use of defibrillators in the workplace, but an OSHA best-practices guide lists AEDs as one component of a workplace first-aid program.

Defibrillator Use
Defibrillators are considered automatic because you need no special training to use one. When you open the defibrillator, an electronic voice instructs you in the equipment’s use. You follow the instructions for placing the pads on the victim's chest, and press a button when told to do so; the machine does the rest.

AED’s cannot save every person, but the Occupational Safety and Health Administration reports that using a defibrillator within three to five minutes of a heart attack can increase the person's chance of survival by 60 percent.

Liability
All 50 states have good Samaritan laws which protect individuals, emergency first responders and sometimes medical personnel from being sued for a good-faith effort to render assistance to another person. Some of these laws, such as that in Massachusetts, specifically address the use of defibrillators and protect anyone using such a device from liability. A May 2003 article in "The Fabricator" noted that at that time, no lawsuits had been filed against anyone for the use of a defibrillator, though several cases have gone to court alleging liability because a company did not provide a defibrillator. As AEDs become less expensive and more widely available, not having them may hold more potential for a lawsuit than having one.

Insurance
Your general liability insurance policy should protect you and your employees from any lawsuits arising from the use of defibrillators. CardioReady, one supplier of AEDs, reports that it does not know of any insurance companies that offer discounts specifically for AEDs, but that this might be a negotiating point. An insurance company shouldn't increase your premiums because you make an AED available for your employees and customers.

Precautions
Though AEDs are supposed to be “automatic,” the American Heart Association recommends that you train your employees in their use. Training includes information on how to recognize a heart attack, the importance of summoning help before you begin using the AED, and training on CPR and rescue breathing, in case the AED doesn't work. Employees should know the location of AEDs and get to practice open the machine and turning it on. You should notify your local emergency services that you have an AED, and you should maintain the equipment following the manufacturer's recommendations.

Mark Your Calendars!
Webinars - All at 11:00 A.M. Central Time
January 20th - What To Do When There’s a Boo Boo
March 11th - Not My Claim - Techniques in Risk Transfer
I got it from the Internet, so it must be true...
A woman sued a bowling alley claiming she slipped and fell on an icy pothole which resulted in a disc herniation. She claimed no previous back problems, but her medical records showed numerous lower back problems over the past 10 years, and she was diagnosed with lumbar radiculitis the previous year. Bowling alley league records proved that she completed the remaining 14 WEEKS of the season after the alleged fall. In addition, a meteorologist testified that weather conditions for that day could not have formed ice. A jury determined that the bowling alley was not at fault.

Contact Us:
If you have any comments, questions or suggestions for the NCA Insurance Column, please contact me at haginn@caverntours.com

Heather Ginn
Insurance Committee

23rd International Karstological School "Classical Karst"
Caves – Exploration and Studies combined with the
50th Anniversary of the International Union of Speleology – UIS

Postojna, Slovenia - June 15th to 20th 2015

Next year the International Union of Speleology (UIS) celebrates its 50th Anniversary and you are invited to the celebration! The celebration will held with the 23rd International Karstological School, a series of state-of-the-art lectures and field trips conducted annually by the Karst Research Institute in Postojna, Slovenia. Next year’s school will focus on the importance of exploration on cave and karst research. To register for the celebration and/or the school, and for more information, see the attached file.

Both events will be held in the Kras, the region that gave "karst" its name. If you’ve never been there, this is a great reason to go visit a spectacular area. Contact the people listed in the attached file for more details, and please share this message with anyone who may be interested.

George Veni
Vice President of Administration
International Union of Speleology
Executive Director
National Cave and Karst Research Institute
MoDot Proposed Rule Change Threatens The Future Of Signage For Missouri Caves

Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDot) has proposed to eliminate all major traffic generator signs in the state (see picture). Removing these signs has the potential to impact attendance to the point Bridal Cave would no longer be a viable attraction at Lake of the Ozarks.

The Highway Beautification Act of 1968 placed limits on signs along the nation’s highways. These traffic generator signs were permitted by the federal government’s Highway Beautification Act to replace the loss of directional signs for natural wonders and historic sites. When the expressway was proposed to go around Camdenton, Bridal Cave spent four years completing the MoDot application process paying all required fees associated with the installation and maintenance of these traffic generator signs… Several points support our concern with this proposed rule change:

- Being a natural attraction puts Bridal Cave at a distinct disadvantage as this business is unable to relocate closer to the traffic as with almost any other business.
- Giving directions to the turn off is the number one question asked by visitors
- The traveling public is conditioned to look for these signs for natural wonders as there are thousands of these signs in Missouri and surrounding states.
- On the new Camdenton expressway there are no locations where a turn off sign could be located as the highway was designed with a 25 foot barrier of trees eliminating any possibility of new signs
- When the new Camdenton expressway was opened, MoDot was 90 days late installing these traffic generator signs. During that time, attendance was down by 50%.
- Over 50 caves have been opened to the public as tourist attractions in Missouri’s history. Today only 16 are still operating. The majority of these closed caves failed due to highway relocation and inadequate signage.
- MoDot has stated that the blue logo signs are available. These blue logo signs are for national companies with a well recognized logo. Regional or local logos are not as easily identifiable. You have to look no further than the west end of Osage Beach Parkway to see the devastating effects. Local businesses are failing or moving while the national chains continue to survive. Furthermore the size of the logo signs compared to the traffic generator signs is a reduction of over 75% in size and the cost is more than double.
- MoDot has repeatedly complained of lack of funding. Yet they are proposing to cancel this sign program losing this current and future funding source.
- State Parks, State owned caves and even prisons will be allowed to keep their signs creating a distinct disadvantage to privately owned natural attractions.
- **Public input is being requested. You may send your comments to: Pam Harlan, Secretary to the Commission, P.O. Box 270, Jefferson City, MO 65102, from December 15, 2014 through January 15, 2015.**
- If Missouri is successful in the removal of these signs, you know it will only be a matter of time and YOUR state may be next. Your help is needed NOW please!

Thanks For Your Help.... It Is Very Much Appreciated!

_Steve Thompson_
Bridal Cave
**WNS Report**

**New Regulations in Wisconsin**

Property owners in Wisconsin who want bats removed from their homes have new regulations to follow. They must install one-way exits and maintain them for a week, allowing bats to leave but not re-enter. Homeowners are prohibited from doing anything from June to mid-August, when mothers are taking care of their young.

**Research**

Researchers at Bucknell University conducted a captive study of 147 little brown myotis to investigate variables influencing WNS mortality. Among their findings in this study:

- Prehibernation body condition significantly influences mortality. There is a negative linear effect between mortality and initial body condition.
- Mortality for males was greater than females
- Mortality was greater for bats hibernating at 10 degrees C than at 4 degrees C
- Torpor duration is a factor – there is longer torpor at 4 degrees C
- The level of Pd exposure is a factor – bats inoculated with the lowest dose of Pd had the highest mortality rates and the shortest torpor, possibly because spread is more rapid with less density (Density dependent growth has been documented in many fungal species with germination inversely related to the density).

**Patty Perlaky**  
WNS Committee Chair

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**MARK YOUR CALENDARS!**

- **NCA Webinar - "What To Do When There's A Boo Boo,"** January 20, 2015, 1PM Central
- **NCA Mid-Winter Board of Directors Meeting**, Renaissance Airport Hotel, St. Louis, Missouri, March 2 - 4, 2015
- **NCA Webinar - "Not My Claim-Techniques In Risk Transfer,"** March 11, 2015, 1PM Central
- **NSS Convention 2015**, Waynesville, Missouri, July 13 - 17, 2015
- **NCA Convention 2015, (50th Anniversary)** Host: Cave of the Mounds, Blue Mounds, Wisconsin, September 21 - 25, 2015
- **NCKRI -The Sinkhole Conference**, Rochester, Minnesota, October 5 - 9, 2015
- **NCA Mid-Winter Board of Directors Meeting**, Renaissance Airport Hotel, St. Louis, Missouri, February 22 - 24, 2016
- **NCA Convention 2017**, Host: Mark Twain Cave, Hannibal, Missouri (Dates TBD)
- **IAAPA 2017**, Orlando, Florida, November 14 - 17, 2017

**Got News?**

Please make sure you let Bob Holt know when you have news to share with the membership regarding you and your cave. It is the goal of the NCA office to produce more issues of Cave Talk and this can only happen when you help with the sharing of your news. Please send your articles, photographs to **bob@cavern.com**.

**February 2015 Cave Talk Deadline**

Please have all articles to Bob Holt no later than January 15. Thank you.