

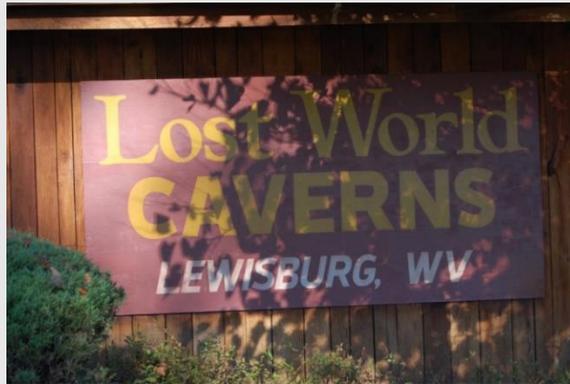
OCT. – DEC. 2017 JOURNALS & BLOGS

Oct 3rd. Our trip to West Virginia

took a total of four days; the first being over 300 miles and the other three were shorter. We arrived today after traveling only 75 miles from Virginia and were all set up by noon. Today at the rally is a meet and greet day with nothing planned. Wednesday has a few more activities not to mention an ice cream social in early evening. today we enjoyed two or three walks around the fairgrounds finding several folks to talk to, even our next-door neighbor. We are experiencing cooler temperatures. Sunday morning came in at 37 degrees and yesterday and this morning around 46 degrees. Daytime temperatures have been delightful, mid-seventies.

Oct 4th. Wed.

Everybody slept well last night. Our traveling days have ended, at least until Sunday. Nothing on schedule for today until 3 PM, a "First-Time Attendees" meeting. This would be our first FMCA Rally. It was extremely worthwhile. FMCA is totally a Non-Profit. From the volunteers all the way up to the top, President, are non-paid positions...Awesome! Our Non-Profit status is also based on education all of its members, more on this tomorrow. At 6:30 this evening we will enjoy an Ice-cream social to be followed by a 20-minute video on the history of the EAMA, the Eastern Area Motorhome Association. This is the FMCA local affiliate for this area. The movie was so educational and really sealed the deal for me to join at least one local association.

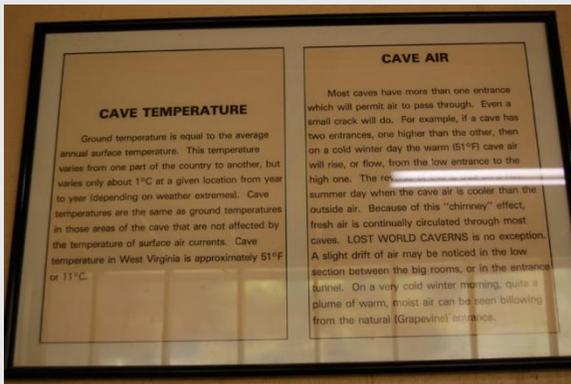


Oct. 4th.

I know, the date above says one thing but this post is being written on Dec. 30th. A great deal has happened in the last three months, with both me and Carla. When your life and future is full of unknowns it's difficult to fall back into the comfort chairs of the past and write about happy days. I've now finished my first full month of chemo and begin radiation in mid-January, I believe. With that information now stated let me tell you about the Lost World Caverns. The Caverns are located in Lewisburg, W. Virginia. It is here that we attended the FMCA Rally. We were told about the Caverns our first day here and decided to act on the information while the weather was good and I was feeling well also. The off-road that took us to the facility that housed was right out of the 1800's.



Dirt road all the way with cow pastures on either side of the road. Not to mention some of the most expensive looking mansions I'd ever seen. Each one of these expensive homes, I have no doubt, were linked to the hundreds of acres of pasture lands surrounding these buildings; but let's get back to the Caverns.



For the sake of readability, I will be leaving information placards in bigger viewing size. I would like to paraphrase the placards and try to pass myself off as "all-knowing" but those that know me would say all-knowing is a real stretch. Upon entering this building you'll be exposed to so much information and artifacts. Items that have been discovered in this cavern such as skeletons, remnants from earlier explorers and most of all the variety of stones and crystals from below.

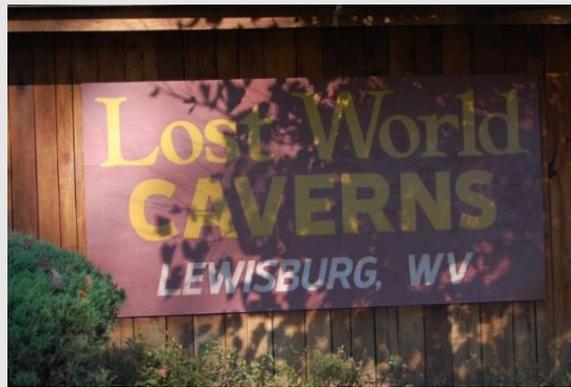


We've seen many caverns and caves but this was the first one that was lighted sufficiently to take good pictures.

I have no idea if this will happen again so this blog will be more of a picture-blog, and I'll provide a little text from time to time. The way in, for just two people was very dramatic, but by the end of our experience we had a group of more than forty students and guardians of high-school age closing in the ranks behind us.

Oct. 4th. Lost World Caverns:

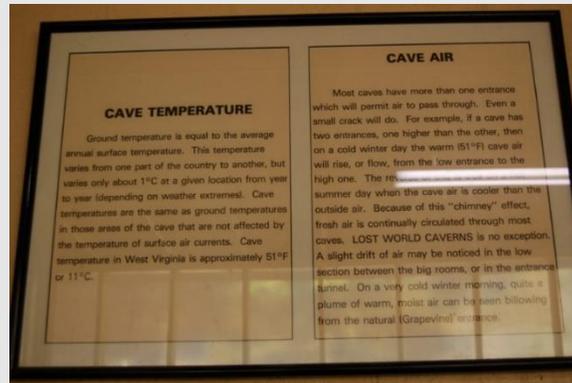
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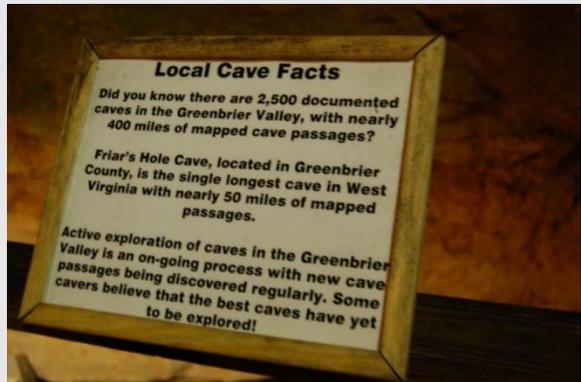
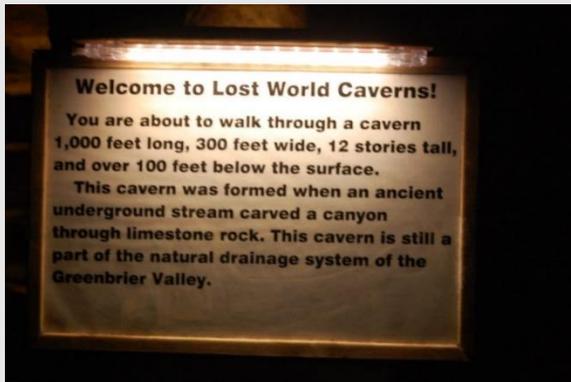
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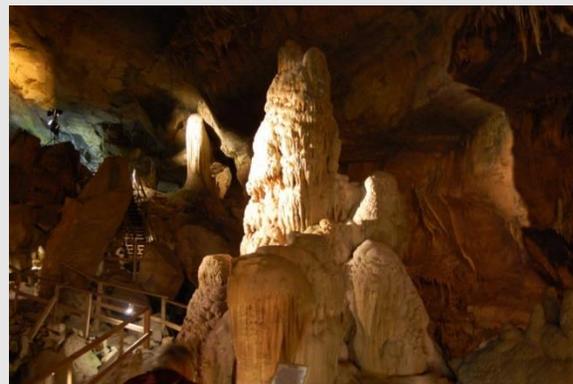
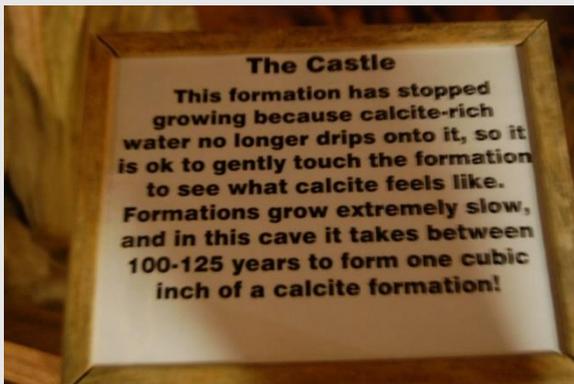
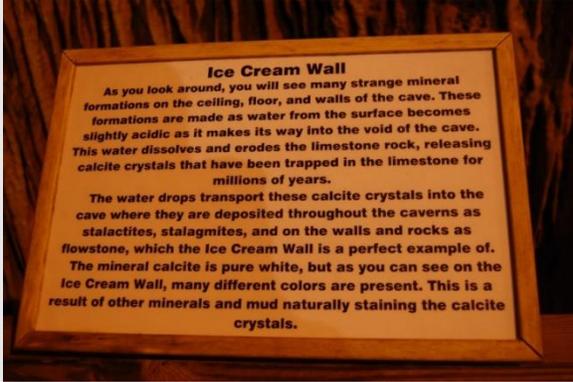
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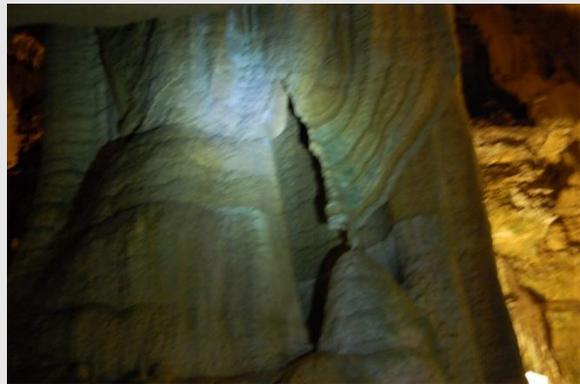


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It may seem strange that Carla, most times, is in the lead. It's just the way it is, I follow her in Walmart as well.

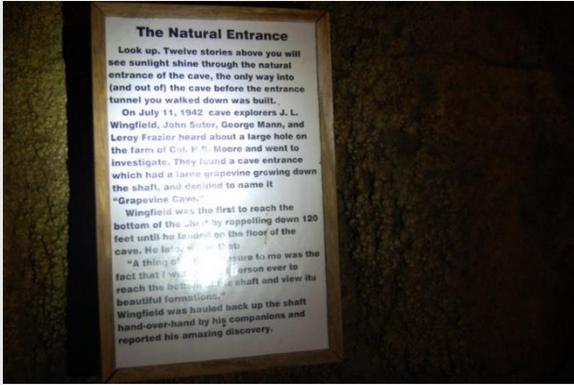


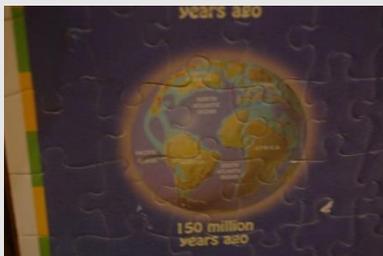
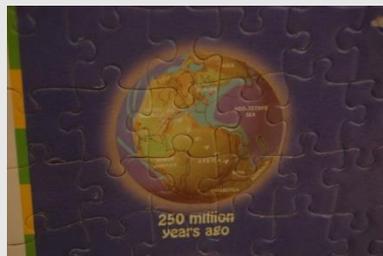
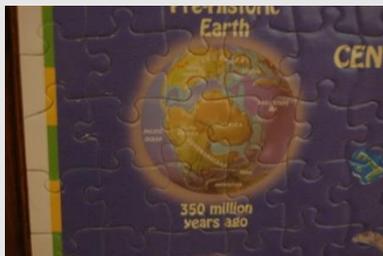
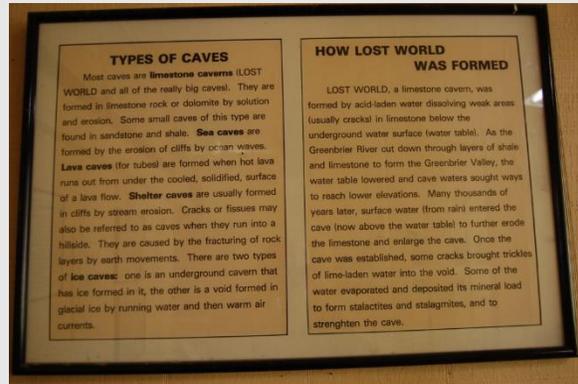




I'm giving up. I'll try to come back in a few days and add a bit more text to the photos, but heck, it's a cavern, and doesn't a picture tell a thousand words. Enjoy the photos that follow and remember there were about one-hundred pics that did not make the cut.









Oct 5th Thursday.

Today is a little more involved. At 11 AM we were going to attend FMCA University. This will be available to all members by Perry, GA Rally. It will fulfill the non-profit mandate of educational options. FMCA will be taking all of its publications and will make articles in the magazines and group them into six or more categories. More categories were recommended in the question and answer session after the presentation. I am looking forward to this program. After this we enjoyed a hotdog/ hamburger lunch. We both needed haircuts and the HHR needed a bath as well; we both feel better after the cuts. at 7:30 this evening we get to enjoy a John Denver tribute.

Oct 6th. Friday: Happy Birthday Abby; TWENTY years old today.

Dec 13th. The Christmas Letter

I'll catch most on all hat's happen the last couple of months. We're still residing at Wildwood, FL at Three-Flags RV Campground. Now for the letter.

Christmas 2017

As in every Christmas Letter Carla and I hope this will find you and your family in good health and spirit. 2017 has been our most difficult year. Dennis, as you might remember, had a stroke in September of '16. Carla and I did all we could to help bring Dennis back as much as possible. By July of '17 we realized that Dennis needed his independence as well. We moved back into the coach and relocated just ten miles from him in Delray Beach, FL.

We were close enough but not in his way. What we did not expect was to have Carla diagnosed with breast cancer. Her salvation from this new challenge was that we were just minutes from one of Florida's best Cancer Treatment Centers, the Boca Raton Regional Hospital. The staff at the hospital almost immediately took her in as a patient, proposed a treatment plan and began treating her within days. The plan included a right breast mastectomy followed by six weeks of radiation therapy. She bit the bullet and followed through on the plan proposed and presently her doctors are happy to report that, for now, she is a cancer survivor.

By now it's September and yes we are excited. Dennis is doing quite well and Carla is back on her feet again with most of her doctor appointments behind her, and then comes Irma.

Still over a week away from us her path continues to come much too close to us for comfort. To be safe we opt to pick up and go north to Three-Flags Thousand Trails RV Park in FL. We were there just one day and the storm trackers had her coming right at us, so we move again, going even further north to Unadilla, GA, and there we stayed. We did get pushed around but we came through it unscathed. However! As we travelled up to Unadilla we got a phone call from my endoscopy doctor; in short he said the results from the test indicate I had cancer! Not what I wanted to hear. Our plans for the beginning of October were to attend a rally in W. VA.



The rally was relaxing and very interesting, but my mind was far from the rally. From W. VA we travelled south back to Wildwood, FL at the Three-Flags, once again. It's a very comfortable campground and only a seventy-five-minute ride to my doctors in Tampa. After an exhaustive litany of pre-op tests, I checked into Florida Hospital on October 31st for a full Whipple operation. After the nine-hour operation I was awoken and told the team felt good about the procedure. Later that week Carla brought me back home. Tomorrow, December 5th I begin six-months of chemo and

radiation. All we can do now is hope and pray for the future. It was not an easy year, but as we look back in retrospect, we're both thankful to Him for our outcomes. For almost thirty years we've lived a very happy – healthy life; Awesome!

Carla, I and Scoots wish everyone a Very Merry Christmas & Safe, Healthy and Happy New Year. www.paulandcarlatakethetfifth.com

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Paul: 407-461-3700 pjgrenier44@gmail.com

12.26th.

Today is actually the 26th, but I would like to record the events of the 25th for my own purpose, should my mental faculties begin to fray even more than they have already. I will begin by listing my only disappointment for the day. It has been some time since Dennis and I have visited. With the Doctors Okay for a visit on the 24th I was very anxious. Dennis chose not to permit the visit, but he told me today that, nonetheless, he had a great Christmas. I don't know where to go from here, possibly nowhere!

We broke the rule last night and attended the 6pm Christmas vigil mass. We found a totally unique location in the church several feet away from the attending crowd; the church was filled to capacity, Fr. John was on schedule for the 8pm mass but showed up at our mass time instead.

He's been a great consolation to me from the beginning of the cancer ordeal. With so many activities I had taken for granted and now I'm told to avoid groups of any size and exert yourself minimally. What's left is quiet contemplation, and for a person like me it's like purgatory. No matter what we topped the day of with presents, a steak dinner to die for, a bag of jumbo shrimp and did not go to bed before we viewed Polar Express once again. Last night was It's a Wonderful Life.

On the other hand, Carla and I also had a great Christmas. Today is actually the January 11th, but I would like to record the events of the 25th for my own purpose. Since this is also a personal blog, I take liberty in sharing our Christmas morning with all who are interested,

We awoke Christmas morning to see a couple of cranes wandering in the vicinity of the coach. Getting mail to us in a timely manner is a challenge, but many made it happen, thank you...



Scoots enjoyed having Muff and Scruff around the last three weeks to play with and occasionally knocking them to the floor.



Not quite the Christmas of the past, since we have all the "Stuff" we really need. But it doesn't mean we can't try to sneak in an item or two, on Christmas.



Top: This year we did two or three "as seen on TV items" this and the one below are the items. Above is a baking tin that will be placed in a crock pot and this will act as an oven, and it worked well. Within a day Carla was baking bread and it came out tasting really good. Below is the "Red Copper" cooker. We've used this at least three times and all came out excellently. A steak, chicken and hash browns. Well worth the \$29.99 we paid for it. It cleans up well and easily for the dish-washer, yours truly.



Scots receive quite a few gifts including this walking harness. She'll, most likely rarely use it. She is definitely not a country cat. Residing on her lazy-boy by the fireplace is as close to country as she likes. Below is a gift Carla had previously, but it had an accident. Not a travel accident, it was dropped in the sink. Thankfully I was able to replace it.



Clothes we don't always need but you can't wear the same thing all the time. A gift her niece, Amy, gave Carla. Actually, we both loved the tin so much it could have been delivered empty, but a gift card was also inside.



Scouts still looking to be the center of attention. No matter how many times I tell her not to play with plastic, she never listens. Like we really needed this, a knife sharpener. Carla was nice enough to look really pleased and surprised. In other words, it was a desperation gift, but our knives were never that sharp.

Even I got my fair share of gifts. A bunch of t-shirts, the good ones, to hopefully replace the ones I'm wearing out. Once a t-shirt starts to fray a bit, it just feels so comfy.



When we took Scouts home from the SPCA the staff gave her a "Mousy". Every night she would spend about fifteen minutes talking and playing with her Mousy. Sometime in the last year or so Mousy ran away from home. We've look high and low trying to find her hiding place, if that were the case to no avail. So, for quite a while Scouts, whether she said so or not, has longed for a replacement member of her family. Santa was good to her and gave her exactly what she needed. She has adopted little Grey Mousy with open paws. She has resumed her talking in the evening and chasing her up and down the coach till eleven until both are so hungry, they feel they have to come get me out of bed for their treats or they just go to sleep.



Our big gifts. I received a Ryobi 1600 pressure cleaner. I witnessed a cleaning crew using this in the past and was impressed on how good a job it did. At 1600 psi, at least it won't rip the paint of the sides of the coach as well. Isn't she a sweetheart? You would think I'd bought her a new Lexus to see the expression on her face, it was only a DVD; Lady Hawk. Most guys would have spent a heck of a lot more money for the same reaction, not bad for \$19.99.



Bought Carla a pool stick a while ago and have been hoping for one ever since, until today; finally! Not as big a mess as when we lived in a stick and mortar home, but none the less, it's a mess.



Scoots is always the first to offer to help!

