

The FLOWSTONE

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July 2019



A Monthly Newsletter of the Cullman Grotto of the National Speleological Society

CULLMAN GROTTO FLOWSTONE

July 2019

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The Flowstone is published monthly by the Cullman Grotto of the National Speleological Society. Items submitted for publication must be received by the 20th of each month for inclusion in the following month's issue.

The Cullman Grotto will exchange by request with any publishing grotto. Republication of items within *The Flowstone* is allowed provided credit is given to author and source.

Membership to the Cullman Grotto is fifteen dollars (\$15) per year for individual or twenty dollars (\$20) per year for family. Dues are payable at the first grotto meeting of each year (January) and includes subscription to *The Flowstone*. Subscription rate for non-members is fifteen dollars (\$15) per year.

The Cullman Grotto meets on the first Monday of each month unless the first Monday falls on a holiday or otherwise noted. In those cases the meeting will be held on the second Monday. Meetings begin at 7:30 p.m. and are held at the old L&N train depot, Arnold St., Cullman, AL. All visitors and prospective members are welcome.

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Front Cover: The Cullman Grotto hits a milestone!

Photo by: Chuck Tice

ECHO)))) CHAMBER

Dear grotto leader,

Please see the OTR website for the upcoming Old Timers Reunion, held in Dailey, WV, August 29-September 2, 2019. www.otr.org or on the OTR2019 Facebook page.

If you have any questions about OTR please contact the OTR chair, David "Shack" Shackelford at otr2019@otr.org.

Bob Hoke

OTR Propaganda Department

Humans Crawled Through a Cave 14,000 Years Ago. We Can Still See Their Perfectly Preserved Footprints

<https://elifesciences.org/articles/45204>



About 14,000 years ago, a party of five barefoot people — two adults, one preteen and two children — walked and even crawled through a dark passageway in a cave, according to a new study that analyzed the hand- and footprints these individuals left behind.

To light their way, these late Stone Age people likely burned bundles of pine (*Pinus*) sticks, which archaeologists also found in the cave, known as Grotta della Bàsura, in northern Italy.

The cave's ceiling was so low, that at one part, the ancient explorers were forced to crawl, leaving behind "the first evidence ever of human footprints left during crawling locomotion," that is, in a "crouching walk" position, said study first author Marco Romano, a postdoctoral researcher at the Evolutionary Studies Institute at the University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa.

Researchers have known about the ancient human presence in Grotta della Bàsura since the 1950s. But the new analysis is the first high-tech look at these particular trackways, in which the researchers used laser scans, sediment analysis, geochemistry, archaeobotany and 3D modeling to study the prints.

There were so many prints — 180 in all — that the researchers were able to piece together what happened that day during the upper Paleolithic (also known as the late Stone Age). According to the different sizes of footprints, it appears there were five people: a 3-year-old, 6-year-old, a pre-adolescent (8- to 11-year-old) and [two adults](#), the researchers found.

This group was barefoot and didn't appear to be wearing any clothes (at least not that left any imprints in the cave). After walking nearly 500 feet (150 meters) into the cave, the party arrived at the "Corridoio delle Impronte" (footprint corridor), and then fell into single file, with the 3-year-old in the rear.

"[They] walked very close to the side wall of the cave, a safer approach also used by other animals (e.g., dogs and bears) when moving in a poorly lit and unknown environment," Romano told LiveScience in an email.

Shortly thereafter, the [cave roof](#) dropped to below 31 inches (80 centimeters), forcing the adventurers

to crawl, "placing their hands and knees on the clay substrate," Romano said.

The explorers then passed a bottleneck of stalagmites; traversed a small pond, leaving deep tracks on the waterlogged ground; climbed a small slope beyond the "Cimitero degli Orsi" (cemetery of the bears); and finally arrived at the terminal room "Sala dei Misteri" (room of mysteries), where they stopped.

Once in that room, "the adolescent and children started collecting clay from the floor and [smeared it on a stalagmite](#) at different levels according to height," Romano said. The group's torches left several charcoal traces on the walls. Then they left the cave.

The motley crew shows that "very young children were active members of the upper Palaeolithic populations, even in apparently dangerous and social activities," Romano said.

The new study is "a beautifully presented piece of work," said Matthew Bennett, a professor of environmental and geographical sciences at Bournemouth University in the United Kingdom, not involved in the research. "It's a group of individuals exploring a cave, which is cool, but we knew that anyway," he told Live Science.

TAG Calendar

July 1
Grotto Meeting - This month's cave trip will be discussed at the meeting.

Karst-O-Rama 2019
Jul 19 - 21, 2019
Great Saltpetre Cave Preserve,
Salt Peter Cave Rd, Livingston, KY

2020 NSS Convention: Elkins, WV
July 27 - 31, 2020



***Cullman Grotto
25th Anniversary Reunion!***

This year marks the 25th anniversary of Cullman Grotto. There are several others in the state that are more than twice that age. But it's a big milestone for our grotto.

We live in a cave rich area, which means lots of cavers. The fact that just an hours drive from two major grottoes means that the pool for gaining members has always been a struggle for us. And yet, we survive.

I am proud to be a member for 24 of those 25 years. Also proud that I have held office in the grotto for the majority if this time.

Being this is the anniversary, we decided to plan a grotto reunion for

all past and present members.

This event was held in June at Palisades park, in the Amelia porter building. Forty-five past and present members attended, along with a few other family members.

Good food was enjoyed, as well as some rope time for anyone interested.

I can personally say that the grotto has given me a purpose, an excitement, and sense of accomplishment that was so needed.

And we have had many great adventures. Trips to Mexico to do Golondrinas, California to do El Capitan, Colorado for Black Canyon. Numerous cavations in Utah, New Mexico, Kentucky, along with countless other adventures. I have been fortunate to see places that I know for sure that no one has ever seen. And places that will never be seen by no other. I have done the deepest pit in the state as well as the deepest in the US.

I would like to personally thank all the grotto members that help out with all the stuff that keeps us going.

So I ask each of you, what does caving and the grotto mean to you.

For me, its family. When I am underground or on rope, nothing crosses my mind except what is happening right then. It's also a sense of accomplishment to do the things we get to attempt. A passion for a hobby that would be hard for me to live without. Stepping into a cave that you know without any doubt that no one has ever touched. These things and so many more.

I challenge each of you to give a few

short lines about what caving means to you and send them to our editor.

Happy 25th anniversary to the grotto, the next 25 will be just as much fun.

"Let us go down from this place".



May 2008. Slaughter Canyon, Carlsbad National Park, NM.



Jan 2009. Varnedoe Cave - Entr #1. Will, Kuenn, Harold, and Scott



Feb 2009. Glory Hole Cave-GA. Kuenn, Ted Hailes, Stan Tew, Jess Jenkins, Harold, Evon



Feb 2010. Kenamer Cave. Harold, Scott, Aaron, Patrick, Wend, Jeff



Top: Black Canyon of the Gunnison
Bottom Keyhole Canyon, Zion National Park



March 2012. Limrock Leprechauns



Scouting and Cullman Grotto's Anniversary

By Wayne L. Duncan
Scoutmaster, Troop 330

Troop 330 and later Crew 938 have enjoyed a long relationship with the Cullman Grotto. Around the year 2000, Harold Calvert discovered that I was a Scoutmaster. As our conversations developed, the passion for our two programs became evident. Then one day Harold asked if I had thought of adding caving to our scouting experience, I had not. As we talked, I discovered he did not mean Rickwood Caverns but a "Real Wild Cave". At first, I wasn't sure about this proposal, but soon realized how this experience would enhance my scouting objectives, and caving

did. The Grotto provided an experienced team who worked well with the inexperienced scouts and adults we brought to the table. Our goals included building Character, Self Confidence, Self-Reliance, Bravery and Trustworthiness. Caving placed scouts in situations where relying on others was necessary. This made it easier to teach skills like the Buddy System, Emergency procedures and what to do when Lost. Being in this unusual environment made teaching these skills appear more important and imperative to learn. In a dark, damp cave the importance of knowing these skills become much more realistic to a scout ... ME TOO! LOL. One must be Brave and Trust others to go into the unknown of a cave. Thanks to the Cullman Grotto we were able to reinforce the skills we felt necessary to grow into manhood, and you played a HUGE role in the development of our scouts.

It was an honor for me, Wade and Judy, to attend the 25 Anniversary of the Cullman Grotto. We wanted you to know how important you were to our scouting program and the friendships that ensued from these experiences. Although our scouts are around 30 years old, they remember each of you and reminisce often about their caving experience. They speak of the fun times, scary times and how lucky they were that the Cullman Grotto shared their underground world.

The adults wanted to teach skills we felt important to our children, the fact it was fun and scary was a plus. I thank all of you.



Anvil Cave

June 22, 2019
By Mike Huff
Photos by Scott Murphy

On June 22nd the Montgomery Grotto held its monthly trip to Anvil cave. There were 6 people on the trip, Huffs and Bob from MGM and Scott and Legina from Cullman. The trip requires a long flat water paddle to access the cave and we were pleasantly surprised with the weather being hot but enough cloud cover to not bake. After the long paddle we made it to the cave to begin our adventure.

Having uncharacteristically copied the map we opted to push towards a section that hadn't been done by our group before. According to the map, there was a good section on the south eastern side of the system that had potential for a loop route. After a few wrong turns, we were able to find the single passage section we had seen on the map. Unlike most of the other sections, this part was not as open and more trouble to navigate due to many low sections, but had the added benefit of no graffiti.

Minutes of the Meeting of the Cullman Grotto of the National Speleological Society

June 3, 2019

The regular monthly meeting of the Cullman Grotto of the National Speleological Society was called to order on Monday, June 3, 2019, at 7:50 p.m. by Harold Calvert, Chairman. 6 were present.

The minutes from the May meeting were read. A motion was made by David Drake to accept the minutes as read and was seconded by David Drake. The motion was approved.

The treasurer's report was given.

The editor needs submissions for the Flowstone.

The webmaster reported that The Flowstone issues are all online but and the issues with the website have been resolved.

Announcements:

NSS Convention will be held on June 17-21 in Cookeville, Tennessee. Bridge Day is October 19th.

Old Business:

The grotto will celebrate the 25th Anniversary of the Cullman Grotto on Saturday, June 8th, with a picnic and rappelling at Palisades Park. Ropes will be rigged early and food at 3:00 p.m. Please contact any previous member and invite them to the celebration.

Need submissions for a 25th Anniversary T-shirt.

New Business:

No new business.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m. with a lot of reminiscing following the adjournment.



All in all a great day!



We had a good push towards the end of the passage, but ultimately decided to retreat when the bent over walking/crawling gave way to full on belly crawling with no end in sight. We missed out on finding the rest of our planned route, but have more areas to look forward to exploring. Our backwards track took us through even more unintentional new areas and eventually we ended up back at the entrance via our completely unplanned route...typical Anvil trip.

Other than a shoe blowout by Bob, the trip went as planned and everyone had fun. Once we exited the cave, we had the added bonus of paddling back after a thunderstorm, which made conditions a lot cooler than expected.



Cullman Grotto 25th Anniversary Celebration

