

The FLOWSTONE

Vol 25 Issue 6

June/July 2018



Kayaking in a Cave

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

CULLMAN GROTTO FLOWSTONE

June/July 2018
Volume 25 Issue 6



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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.

Official Grotto Address

Cullman Grotto
c/o Harold Calvert
123 Co. Rd. 250
Cullman, AL 35057
webecavers@hotmail.com

Newsletter Exchange

The Flowstone
Sharon or Perry Clayton
1628 Edmondson Rd
Hanceville, AL 35077
dcpbookwyrms@hotmail.com



2018 OFFICERS		APPOINTMENTS	
Chairman Harold Calvert (256)287-9770 webecavers@hotmail.com	Vice Chair Scott Murphy smoothys1@gmail.com	Advisor Vic Bradford <i>by carrier pigeon only</i>	Membership/Library David Drake (205)790-1350 dmdrake1@gmail.com
Secretary Evon Thompson binerbat@gmail.com	Treasurer Tracy Calvert webecavers@hotmail.com	Safety Jeff Lynn (256) 558-7042	Webmaster Kuenn Drake kuenn.drake@gmail.com

Front Cover: *Kayaking in a Cave on Duck River, TN*

Photo by: *By Scott Murphy*

ECHO)))) CHAMBER

Two Elite Climbers Fall to Their Deaths Scaling El Capitan in Yosemite

By Christina Caron
New York Times
June 3, 2018



Two elite climbers fell to their deaths on Saturday while ascending El Capitan, one of the best-known rock formations in Yosemite National Park in California.

The climbers, Jason Wells, 46, of Boulder, Colo., and Tim Klein, 42, of Palmdale, Calif., were scaling the Free Blast route on the granite monolith El Capitan when they fell around 8:15 a.m., the National Park Service said in a statement.

The climbers were tethered together, said Stefan Griebel, a climber who has ascended El Capitan with Mr. Klein and Mr. Wells in the past. Yosemite National Park rangers received several 911 calls and rescuers responded but the climbers did not survive the fall, the statement said.

El Capitan, a flat-topped cliff that looms more than 3,000 feet above the Yosemite Valley, is a favorite of rock climbers. During the park's peak season as many as 80 people may be on the rock formation on any given day, said Ken Yager, president of the Yosemite Climbing Association.

The climbers who fell were "very experienced," he said, adding, "Something weird happened. There's no doubt in my mind."

The Free Blast route that Mr. Wells and Mr. Klein were climbing is about 1,000 feet high, near another popular route called the Nose, said Mr. Yager, who has climbed El Capitan numerous times.



Let It Sink In: The White House Sinkhole Is No More

By Betsy Klein, CNN
Updated 9:10 PM ET, Tue May 29, 2018



The sinkhole steps from the briefing room on the North Lawn was filled in with concrete, the surrounding area covered with dirt and a fresh layer of sod.

The sinkhole, which was first spotted a week ago Saturday following days of heavy rainfall, became a social media sensation, but the first family, staff, reporters and visitors to White House grounds were never in any immediate danger.

"On Friday, May 25, crews excavated an area around the small sinkhole on the north White House grounds. We found an underground void about six to eight inches in diameter, which was likely caused by recent heavy rains that eroded the soil," park service spokeswoman Jenny Anzelmo-Sarles said in a statement Friday evening. "In the coming days, we will plug the void with concrete, fill in the excavated area with gravel and soil, and resod. The excavation confirmed that the sinkhole, which did not grow larger since it was first noticed on May 20,

does not pose a risk to the White House."

Workers dug a nearly waist-deep hole Friday afternoon. The perimeter around the sinkhole, two traffic cones with some caution tape, was expanded to a larger enclosure with orange safety fencing over the weekend. But after more work in the area on Tuesday, the only evidence of the sinkhole was four short wooden posts and a rectangle of slightly greener grass.

View image on TwitterView image on Twitter

"Sinkholes are common occurrences following heavy rain," the park service noted.

The geology of the White House doesn't naturally lend itself to sinkholes, said expert Terry West, a professor of earth, atmospheric and planetary sciences and civil engineering at Purdue University. Most sinkholes, West told CNN, form from cavities in underground limestone, but "the geology at the White House is really not that type at all. It's more of a sandy clay material that is remnant from when the oceans were at a higher elevation."

West suspects the sinkhole resulted from previous construction on the lawn. This particular stretch of grass has had its share of disruption over the years; during the Obama administration, the lawn was excavated and under construction for months.

"It would seem to be a sinkhole that would come about by an underground collapse of some sort, would be my best guess. It could be some construction debris that was not very highly compacted and has now begun to settle and fill in with soil around it, but it looks like it'd be more related to man-made activities than to natural causes," West said.

It could also be the result of a leaky water pipe that caused erosion, West said. There is an in-ground irrigation system on the lawn to keep the grass green.



NSS "White House" Demolition Update

By Geary Schindel
May 29



Folks, Here is an update on the Smith (white) House. As many of you know, we've been told by the City of Huntsville to bring the white house up to code or tear it down. We no longer have a need for the house since we now have plenty of storage room at the new NSS Headquarters.

The white house is located over the footprint to the NSS Shelta Cave Preserve and next to the old NSS Headquarters on Cave Avenue. We've decided the house needs to go. We've thought about seeing if the Huntsville Fire Department would like to use the house for fire training but that has a lot of issues, first, the side of the house is covered with asbestos siding. Second, runoff from fighting the fire would drain into the cave. The right thing to do is to demo the house.

The estimated cost for removal is just under \$20,000. We've raised approximately \$7,500 so far. It seems there are city fines and possible jail time for the two officers of record (Gaylene Speaect and I) and our

earlier fundraisers were based on keeping both of us out of jail (at least me, Gaylene looks better in an orange jumpsuit than I do).

Seems that we raised a fair amount of money with some donating to keep us out of jail and some willing to pay extra to have us spend a few nights in the Huntsville Cross Bar Hotel. No, do not get this confused, this is not one of those cool lock them up and raise bail fundraisers, this is a real bread and water in the local hoosegow issue for Gaylene and I. So, we're asking for your help.

THANKS for your support.



Fungus that Causes White-Nose Syndrome in Bats Detected in South Dakota for the First Time



SOUTH DAKOTA – A fungus that causes white-nose syndrome (WNS), a deadly disease of bats, has been detected on bats in South Dakota for the first time. The fungus was detected on one western small-footed bat (*Myotis ciliolabrum*) and four big brown bats (*Eptesicus fuscus*) in Jackson County at Badlands National Park on May 10, 2018, during proactive WNS testing conducted by the National Park Service Northern Great Plains Network in collaboration with the University of Wyoming. This is also the first

known detection of the fungus on a western small-footed bat. Current evidence indicates that WNS is not a direct health risk for humans.

Bats are important for healthy ecosystems and contribute at least \$3 billion annually to the U.S. agriculture economy through pest control and pollination. WNS has killed millions of bats in North America—with mortality rates of up to 100 percent observed at some colonies—since it was first seen in New York in 2006. To date, WNS has been confirmed in bats from 32 states and 7 Canadian provinces. South Dakota joins Mississippi and Texas as states that have detected *Pseudogymnoascus destructans*, (Pd), but not confirmed WNS. WNS, named for the powdery, white Pd growth that often appears around infected bats' muzzles.

The fungus was detected in South Dakota during field examination of live bats using ultraviolet light and swab samples sent to the Colorado State University Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory for testing. Those results were repeated in follow-up tests by the U.S. Geological Survey's (USGS) National Wildlife Health Center. While these results confirm the presence of the fungus, they do not confirm the WNS disease, which can only be confirmed by microscopic examination of tissue samples. Tissue samples were not taken during this sampling.

“The early detection of the fungus in South Dakota was the result of collaborative efforts made possible by a National Plan to respond to white-nose syndrome,” said Jeremy Coleman, National White-nose Syndrome Coordinator for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which leads the national response to WNS. “As the disease continues to spread across North America, biologists

from many agencies are working together to prepare for and detect Pd as soon as possible and are ready to respond.” The National Park Service supported the operation with funds dedicated to WNS response in national parks to actively protect bats and their habitats.

The National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, USGS National Wildlife Health Center, University of Wyoming, and South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks will continue to work together to screen for Pd and WNS in South Dakota. “Because these bats were captured after they emerged from winter hibernation, we don’t know where they came from or where these individual bats encountered the fungus,” said Silka Kempema, biologist with South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks. “We’d like to find that out.” Pd affects bats while they are hibernating. Bats can disperse hundreds of miles when they leave hibernation sites in the spring.

“The National Park Service works with many other state and federal agencies of the White-nose Syndrome Response Team to learn more about the fatal disease and how to slow its spread,” said Michelle Verant, National Park Service Wildlife Veterinarian and WNS expert. “Because of these proactive efforts to look for Pd, we are better positioned to respond and protect valuable bat populations.”



NSS Webinar Femur Fractures: Practical Effective Traction Splinting for Technical Rescues

Presented by: Lance Tysom
Date: June 5, 2018 at 9:00 PM EDT



This webinar is a presentation exploring current trending, indications, and application of femur traction splinting based on evidence based, best practices. We will discuss the limitations of available commercial traction splints. Participants will learn a fast and effective creative use of the KTD (Kendrick Traction Device) which translates to any rescue environment.

Applying a traction splint to a patient with a suspected femur fracture is not a trivial decision. Effective application and monitoring of a traction splint is technically challenging. Its one of many high-acuity, low-frequency, events which makes it a perishable skill. Managing a patient with a traction splint in place is also challenging - particularly so in the setting of a technical rescue, cave rescue. The evolution of commercially available traction splints is not practical when considering its use in a cave rescue or back-country environment. Rescue and SAR personal need knowledge, skills, and equipment to effectively manage femur fractures.

Presenter: Lance Taysom, RN, BSN, CEN, CPEN, CFRN, EMP, WEMT

Lance started as an emergency nurse and shortly began taking hospital patient transports by ground and fixed wing. In 1997 Lance began a full time career as a flight nurse/paramedic. In addition to his current flight job, Lance works as an educator and consultant for wilderness medicine and backcountry survival, training individuals and teams from Nepal, American Samoa, Indonesia, and across the US.

Lance enjoys mixing his pre-hospital and emergency medical care experience and training with his passion for adventure in the outdoors. Lance works as a rotor and fixed wing flight nurse/paramedic, emergency department nurse, and wilderness medicine instructor for NOLS. He also volunteers for the Bannock County SAR team and seasonally for the National Park Service Denali Climbing Rangers, providing medical support for high altitude SAR operations. Lance and his wife Cami make their home outside Pocatello, Idaho where they enjoy working with area EMS and SAR teams, and raising dogs and grand girls.



Boys soccer team trapped in a flooded Thai cave has been found alive — nine days later

By Kristine Phillips
July 2 at 2:12 PM

Twelve members of a boys’ soccer team in Thailand and their coach have been found alive nine days after the group was trapped in a cave in the northern part of the country.

The governor of Chiang Rai province, Narongsak Osatanakorn, said that all 13 were found safe at about 10:30 p.m. local time Monday, but the days-long rescue operation isn’t over, as rescuers still need to figure out how to get the team out of the cave, Thai News Agency reported.

The next step would be to check on the team members’ health condition, Narongsak told reporters.

“We will take care of them until they can move,” Narongsak told reporters, who applauded at the news,



Saardluan told the AP.

From CNN:

The international rescue operation -- which includes the Thai Navy SEALs as well as experts from the US, China, Australia and the UK -- had been working to reach a large, deep chamber, informally known as Pattaya Beach, where the missing boys were believed to have taken refuge.

The missing boys (above), with their coach, are seen here in a photo taken from the coach's Facebook page.

Osottanakorn said the rescuers had reached Pattaya Beach but found it was flooded. The Thai Navy SEAL divers continued a further 300 to 400 meters where they located the team.

The Thai Navy released a video on Facebook apparently showing the moment the group were found. In the almost 5-minute clip, the boys are illuminated by torchlight while a diver can be heard speaking to them. "How many of you?" one of the rescuers calls out in English, before a faint "Thirteen!" is heard in response.

"Thirteen? Brilliant!" the rescuer says, before continuing: "We are coming, it's OK, many people are coming ... we are the first." The rescuer then tells them: "You are very strong, very strong."

according to AFP. "We will bring food to them and a doctor who can dive. I'm not sure they can eat as they have not eaten for a while."

ABC News foreign correspondent James Longman tweeted that one of the rescuers told him the boys and their coach are weak but not in critical condition. A doctor will spend the night with the group and determine when they're strong enough to be taken out.

"They're 2 miles in, it's an arduous trip. And the rain is coming. But they're alive," Longman said.

The boys, ages 11 to 16, and their coach, 25, disappeared June 23 after entering the flooded Tham Luang Nang Non cave in a national park in Chiang Rai.

Dozens of local and foreign rescuers, including a team of Navy divers and several cave experts, had spent the past few days helping to locate the team, but rising and muddy waters showing no signs of receding have stymied efforts and blocked access to chambers of the cave. According to the AP, rescuers drilled a hole into the side of the cave to try to drain the water, while others attempted to find

alternative routes inside.

"There's not much we can do right now. We have to wait for the water level to decline. [Divers] can't do anything right now," Interior Minister Anupong Paojinda said on Thursday, the AP reported.

On Monday, however, a brief break in the weather allowed rescuers to go further into the cave and keep water levels from rising, according to AFP. They had hoped to find the group, known as the Wild Boar soccer team, on an elevated ledge called Pattaya beach, but that area has also been submerged. The group was found roughly 1,000 feet away, Narongsak told reporters.

The cave system is at least four miles long and waters can reach 16 feet during the rainy season, from June through October, Police Col. Kam



Amid the emotional discovery, Governor Osottanakorn warned that the mission is "not done yet" and a medical team needs to enter the cave network to assess the boys.

"We will drain all water out from the cave then we will take all 13 people out of the cave. We are now planning how to send (a) nurse and doctor inside the cave to check their health and movement. We will work all night," Osottanakorn said.



TAG Calendar

July 2
Grotto Meeting
L&N Train Depot, Arnold St 7:30PM

July ?
Grotto Trip
TBA

July 26-29
HCRU Rescue Technician: Cave Rescue I/II
Brindlee Mt. Fire Station #1
Union Grove, AL

July 28 - August 4
2018 NSS Convention
Helena, MT

October 4-7
TAG Fall Cave-In
Lookout Mountain, GA

Editor's Note: In the absence of new trip reports this month, here is another classic report from days gone by:

No, no, no, NO!

by Harold Calvert
From the March 2000 Flowstone

Don't you ever get tired of the strange questions that you are asked when people find out you are a caver?

Do you ever find anything in there?
NO.

Ain't them cave thangs full'a snakes?
NO.

Here's a good one - You goin' cavin' at NIGHT ?

Hey it's night there all the time anyway.

Here's a favorite - You been to Bangor?

It's hard to escape the dreaded Bangor syndrome. I recently spoke at a scout meeting near Tuscaloosa when during the meeting a scout mother asked, you guessed it, You been to Bangor?

While at a football game an elderly man saw the NSS tag on the KB minivan. National what? Ain't that some kind of bird watching thing?

NO, it's caving.

Oh ok...hey, you ever find anything down there?

One guy where I work saw some of my pictures and asked, " You ever been to Lake Purdy cave? (Anderson) Man ain't that sumthin'! That thing goes all the way to FLORIDA! We went halfway once but had to turn around ,we dun been

in there 6 hours!"

Same guy 3 weeks later.... "You been to Lake Purdy cave? That thing goes plum to Georgia!"

Here we go again.... Seems all Alabama caves exit into different states. Bill Torode must be keeping all those maps hidden.

When another guy saw pictures he asked -Do you ever bring any formations back? will you bring me one? NO.

Well, show me where to go. NO NO NO.

To run through a few quick questions.

NO, we don't find anything.

NO, its not full of snakes.

NO, we are not a bat worshipping cult (the bat stickers).

NO, my arms don't get tired from climbing that far on rope.

NO, I don't repel, I rappel.

NO, I am not a spelunker, I am a caver.

NO, you can't take your hammer. Or your paint ,or your string.

And finally, about Cullman Grotto,

NO, I don't work for the college, and

NO, YOU HAVE NOT BEEN THERE!



Minutes of the Meeting of the Cullman Grotto of the National Speleological Society
May 7, 2018

The regular monthly meeting of the Cullman Grotto of the National Speleological Society was called to order on Monday, May 7, 2018 at 7:40 pm by Harold Calvert, Chairman. 9 members were present, no guests.

The minutes from the April meeting were read by Sharon Clayton in the absence of Evon Thompson, Secretary. A motion was made by Arlon Baker to accept the minutes as read and was seconded by Perry Clayton. The motion was approved.

The Treasurer's report was given. After a \$10 check was written to the United Way for room rental we had 505.28 in our account.

The Flowstone editor asked for submissions for the newsletter. Photos, articles and anything else that you would like to send are welcome.

The Webmaster says he is a few months behind on uploading the newsletters, but the website is OK otherwise.

The Vice Chair says he has a guest for next month's meeting. He will elaborate during new business.

Announcements:

- NCRC Training – May 12-19 at Camp Skyline
- NSS Convention – June 19-25
- HCRU Training – July 27-30

Old Business:

Discussed the Rickwood Caverns project. No work projects set up yet.

New Business:

Presentation by guest at June meeting about Bangor cave, with slide show.

Upcoming Grotto Trips:

Trip scheduled for May 19 to Gourneck Cave.

Trip reports were given.

The meeting was adjourned at 9 pm.



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

June 4, 2018

At 7:30 p.m., prior to the business meeting, there was a presentation on Bangor Cave by author and historian, Greg Burden.

The regular monthly meeting of the Cullman Grotto of the National Speleological Society was called to order on Monday, June 4, 2018, at 8:40 p.m. by Harold Calvert, Chairman. 11 were present.

The minutes from the May meeting were not available at the time of the meeting.

The treasurer's report was given.

The editor needs submissions for the Flowstone. Send stuff!!!!

Announcements:

NSS Convention will be held from July 28th through August 4th.

The June grotto trip will be on June 16th to Anvil Cave.



A group of teens are looking for someone to take them somewhere on June 26th.

Old Business:

Everything is being gotten together for the door project at Richwood Caverns. Amanda White is the new Park Ranger at Rickwood Caverns.

New Business:

Alabama Bat Working Group request help in monitoring bats and white nose syndrome. It may be possible for volunteers to get into some closed caves. Harold Calvert will acquire more detailed information.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.