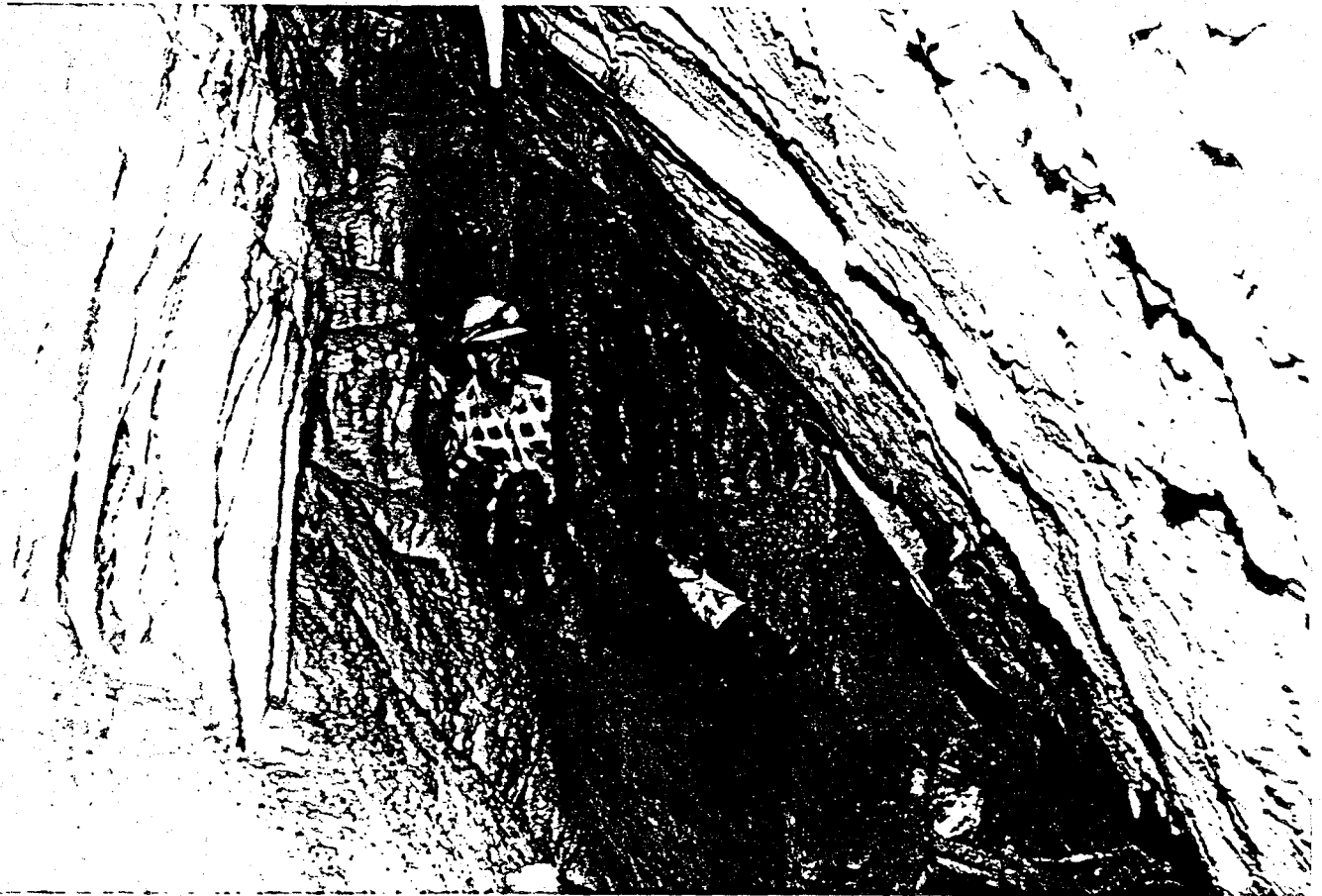


The *FLY*STONE

January 1997

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE CULLMAN GROTTO
OF THE NATIONAL SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Vol. 4 No. 1



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 to be included in the following month's issue. Send items and exchanges to: D.Drake, 110 County Road 1386, Falkville AL 35622.

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CALENDER

Feb 4-Monthly Grotto meeting, 7:30pm, Cullman public library. Program TBA.

May 30 Jun 1, 1997-SERA Summer Cave Carnival, Raccoon Mountain Caverns Campground, Chattanooga, TN. Hosted by Central Alabama Grotto. Contact Michael Gillbert (205) 249-8341.

Jun 23-27, 1997-NSS Convention, Sullivan, MO. Contact: Pam Saberton, 3820 Juniata St., St.Louis, MO 63116. (314)772-6956.

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COVER PHOTO

*Kuenn Drake in Cedar Ridge Crystal, South Pittsburg, TN.
Photo by Patrick O'Diam.*

ECHO CHAMBER

WE WANT YOUR MONEY!

HARKEN! This is the month to re-up your grotto dues. Once again we have held the line on cost, bucking inflation and showing the Clinton regime how business should operate. Grotto dues are as follows: \$8 individual/\$10 family. Subscription rate for the FLOWSTONE remains at \$8 per year, in case you have any friends or relatives who just want the publication. **Remember, in order to be a member of the Cullman Grotto you must also be a current NSS member!** Dues for NSS membership are \$30 per year.

VOTING RESULTS

Last month a special Congress of Grottos issues ballot was circulated to those present at the meeting. Participants were asked to rank in terms of importance six issues that the NSS Issues Committee deems important. The results of our poll show cave closures/purchases as an overwhelming write-in winner. Nearly every ballot had it listed as the #1 priority. The Issues Committee didn't even have it on their list! Internet and Clout for COG made the list. What's wrong with this picture. Another issue that showed up on our poll and didn't make the Issues Committee list was environmental/ conservation.

What is the primary goal of the NSS! Co-ed showers seems to rank higher on the national list than conservation of caves. Sorry...got carried away. Here are the final results of the Cullman Grotto poll:

- #1 Cave closures/purchases
- #2 Irresponsible behavior/drinking at events
- #3 Environmental/conservation of caves
- #4 Membership retention
- #5 Membership growth
- #6 Education
- #7 Secrecy
- #8 Insurance
- #9 More clout for COG

SCC UPDATE

The SCC has signed an agreement to close a purchase of Kennamer Cave and 102 acres in Jackson Co., AL. The property is located near Fern Cave and may have a caver camping area, like the old Fern camping area, on the land.

SOUTH PITTSBURG PIT

Dec. 27, 1996

By: D.Drake

V.Bradford P.O'Diam D.Drake

I was walking about 5 steps behind Vic so I wasn't exactly sure what he was saying about the loggers who had shoved debris into the sink, but I think he said something about "someone's britches."

Recent logging around the sink of this 160-foot Tennessee pit has really changed the landscape and has made the pit much more difficult to rig. Several large trees, and accompanying brush, have been felled into the sink. In order to rig the pit at the most favorable drop point, the rope and the caver must be snaked up, over, under and through the carnage, but make no mistake, the imposition is well worth it.

South Pittsburg Pit is a beautifully sculpted, open air, drop with some very nice, dry flowstone formations to view on the trip down. Victor was first to descend, followed by me. While Vic was climbing out I poked around on bottom. After Vic ascended Patrick came down.

From the bottom, the passage to the right ends after 75 feet at the base of a magnificent flowstone formation that somewhat resembles "The Lip" of War Eagle in miniature. At the base of this formation is a crystal clear pool perhaps two-and-a-half to three feet deep and home to some blind crayfish. Left of the rope, the passage slopes steeply about 25 feet and continues through a keyhole for about 30 feet to the base of a 12 to 15-ft wall. A handline is rigged to a natural anchor at the top of the wall, where a stream passage continues as a hands and knees crawl. The climb up the wall is a treacherous one as water from the stream passage cascades down

it. No one in our group attempted the climb. It is my understanding that the upper passage leads to about 2,000 feet of cave, much of it crawlway. I've never done the cave so I don't know this to be factual. There are a couple of low crawls leading off near the base of the wall, but they don't go.

After climbing out we headed to Cagle's Chasm with definite plans to return and do South Pittsburg Pit again someday.



CAGLES'S CHASM COMPLEX

Dec. 27, 1996

By D.Drake

V.Bradford P.O'Diam D.Drake

The stench was unmistakable...hound dawg ears.

Beagle's were abundant as we parked in front of the kennel across the road from the "permission house." Obviously hounds are a cash crop for the caretakers of Cagle's. Vic knocked on the door of the house for far longer than I would have. He kept saying he could hear someone inside, but no one answered so we geared up and started our trek to the pit(s).

The trail starts out as a 4WD road that runs along side the kennels then turns sharply up the mountain. A foot trail leads off the road and meanders along side a water pipe. The trail eventually terminates at the pit but the water pipe continues on to a spring, obviously, further up the mountain. The hike into Cagle's is not bad, even when lugging 300-ft of PMI and a pack.

Cagle's can be rigged from almost anywhere around the 186-ft pit. We chose the low side. The rappel is very nice to a spacious,

flat bottom. There appears to be a couple of decent sized passages that enter the pit as windows about half way down. At least one of these passages connects to the bottom of another nearby pit (Jeepside-110') as part of the complex. The other apparent passage may or may not connect to a third pit (Shallow-80') which is also part of the maze.

Cagle's Chasm Complex hosts almost a thousand feet of horizontal cave. The obvious passage from the bottom is quickly interrupted by a short drop that must be rigged. A boit has been placed at the top of this drop on the right wall to accomodate rigging. This is the way to the majority of the horizontal passage, however, a less obvious crawl leads to a 25-ft climbdown where a narrow canyon passage leads to an enormous waterfall dome. This room is spectacular. Formations are few, but there is one that is well worth seeing. The formation resembles a haystack but actually appears to be a large breakdown block that is mounded with flowstone. An upper passage continues near the waterfall, but accessing it would present a monumental challenge. Conventional wisdom leads one to believe that as long as this cave has been around and known about someone has figured out a way to push the passage, however, according to the most recent map (1983), it remains unexplored. All three of us toured this room.

I was the first to climb out. While Patrick and Vic were climbing, I walked the sixty feet or so over to the Jeepside entrance and tossed in a few rocks then ridge walked around the side of the hill to a dry streambed. The stream bed looked prime for a cave in a couple of places but yielded zilch. While Pat took pictures of Vic ascending, I walked over and looked at the impressive Shallow Pit sink.

When we got back to Pat's red Raider There was a second vehicle at the "permission house". Again Vic gave them ample opportunity

to answer the door, again no answer, so we loaded up the truck and moved to Beverly. On the way home we stopped at the Liberty restaurant in Scottsboro. The Liberty is renowned for it's "Caver's Log", a book that Marion Smith leaves at the restaurant for cavers to write their trip reports in. It's quite entertaining reading. The next time you're up that way stop in and ask to see the caving book.

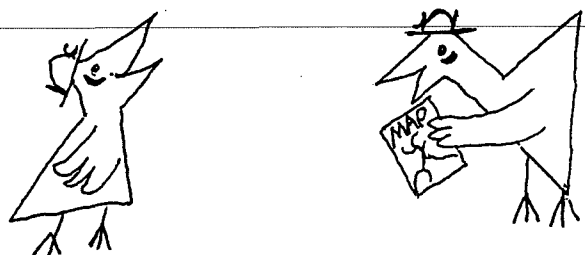
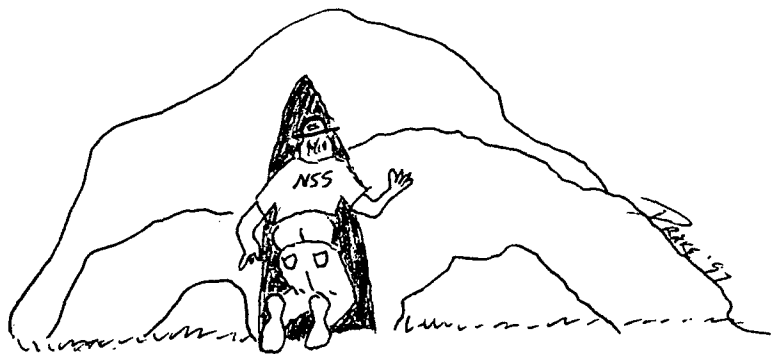
Did you know that Mr. Gunter, the man Guntersville is named after, is the grandson of Will Rogers? I do, thanks to Vic's unending supply of trivia.

I wonder how the Pea River got it's name?

BAT FAX

Red bats, which live in tree foliage throughout most of North America, can withstand body temperatures as low as 23 degrees F. during winter hibernation.

BIRDS OF A FEATHER



"Says here, Look for large crack!"

Cagle Chasm Complex

T MN 5

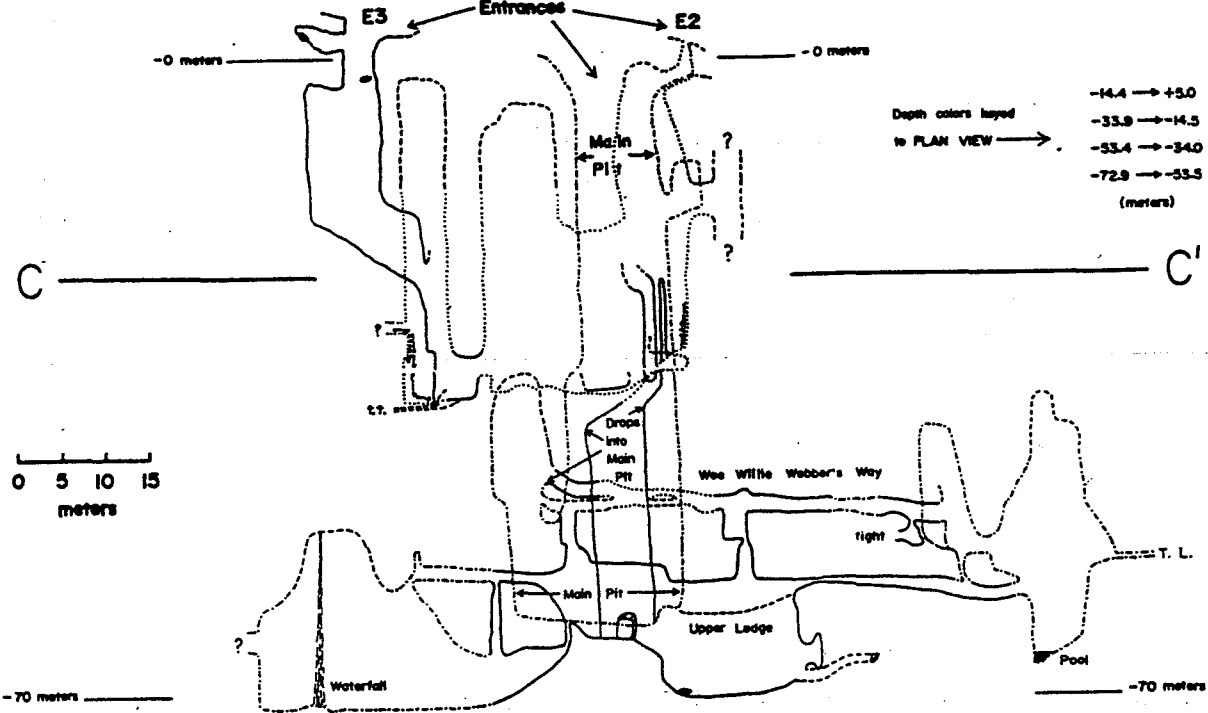
VERTICAL PROFILE
Projection onto PLAN VIEW line C—C'

Legend

Horiz. distance (meters)
from projection line C—C'

-3.9 → +9.0
-16.9 → -4.0
-29.9 → -17.0

A Smyre Map



Depth colors keyed
to PLAN VIEW →

-14.4 → +5.0 Black
-33.9 → -14.5 Red
-33.4 → -34.0 Green
-72.9 → -33.5 Blue
(meters)

Cagle Chasm Complex

T MN 5

PLAN VIEW

Relative Floor Elevations
(meters)

CRG 5 Survey

Survey Length: 629.2 m

1970

Horiz. Length: 409.1 m

May 8, 1983

Vert. Extent: 74.4 m

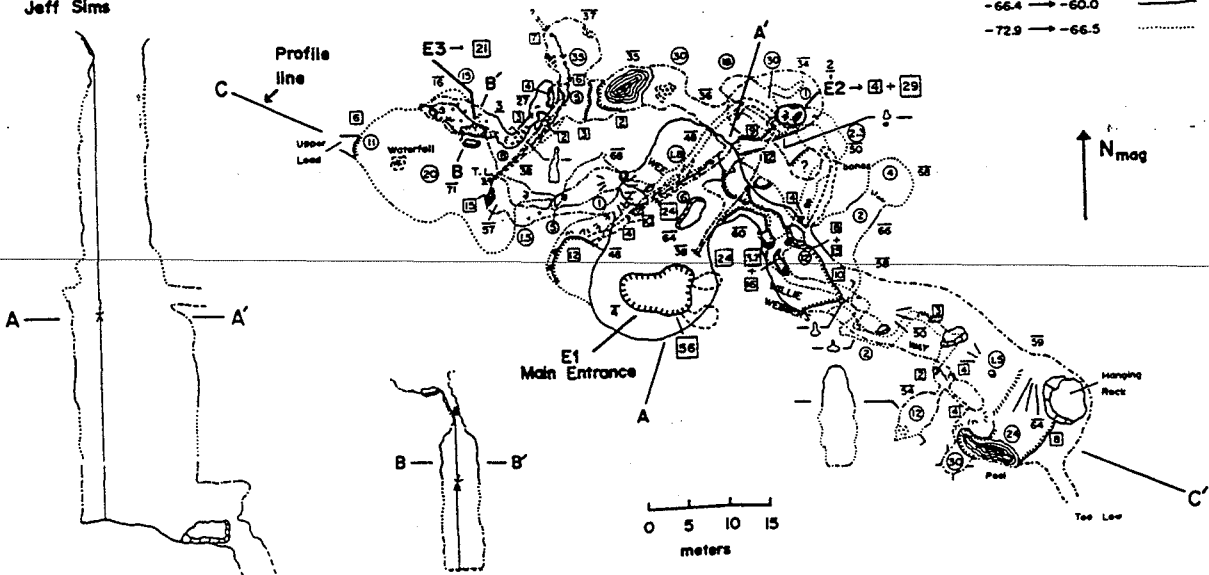
John Smyre
Ron Zawislak
Charles Clark
Jeff Sims

Approximately 12 drops totalling
261 meters may be rigged.

Legend

-1.4 → +5.0
-7.9 → -1.5
-14.4 → -8.0
-20.9 → -14.5
-27.4 → -21.0
-33.9 → -27.5
-40.4 → -34.0
-46.9 → -40.5
-53.4 → -47.0
-59.9 → -53.5
-66.4 → -60.0
-72.9 → -66.5

A Smyre Map



MRS. MILLER'S CAVE
CHRISTMAS EVE, 1996

Victor, Harold, Patrick
by: Patrick O'Diam

'Twas the day before Christmas,
and nothing to do,
so off to go cave'n
the three of us flew.

The 24 of December
is a remarkable date,
for once in his life
Victor was not late!

We went on to the cave
without any fears,
even though falling from the sky
was great big 'ol tears.

The rain did not bother
the fearless young men,
to have backed out then
would have been a sin.

We parked in a ditch
and walked through the woods,
we soon found the cave
and prepared to enter it's goods.

We rigged a hand line
and all climbed down.
At the bottom we found bones
that were all dried and brown.

Next was found
a small little crack,
I went down feet first
and slid on my back.

A canyon was soon found
that was about 95 feet deep,
nothing too dandy,
but I'm glad I didn't oversleep.

A rock that fell in
made a big pop,
then the rope was rigged
and put down the drop.

I soon rigged in
and was first one down.
The look on my face
was far from a frown.

As I Ho, ho, hoed on rope
as if to be Saint Nick,
one of the others said,
"We're cave'n with a hick."

At the bottom,
I took off my pack,
and gave a little chuckle
as I jingled my rack.

To the top of my lungs
I sang "JINGLE BELLS"
while Vic was up top
making bad skunk smells.

Harold came down next
and we climbed up a mound,
under some rocks
till water was found.

A great big waterfall
of tremendous size,
came down from a dome
as if the cave cries.

The mist and the wind
combined were quit chilly.
And all of this time
I still acted a little silly.

I climbed back up
and Victor came down.
I went exploring
and more pits were found.

Harold came up
and Victor did too,
and he talked of milk
from animals that say moo.

I wanted to do
the pit just once more,
even though the cave
is not too hard core.

The others were off
to see some more cave,
and I yo-yoed the pit,
for I am so brave.

On the way out
Vic played ol Saint Nick,
his big ol belly
was as heavy as brick.

We pushed and we pulled
and got Vic through the hole,
the out side air
was our ultimate goal.

We finally realized
we were not going to die,
when we looked up the last climb
and we saw blue sky.

We reached the red Raider
and back to town we flew.
Make'n it back
'bout half past two.

It had been about 3 months
since I'd been below ground,
by the way, Vic told a joke
about some guy named "BROWN."

I'm sorry to those who with me
their Christmas Eve was spent
but good feelings of Christmas
from me was all that was meant.

My story must end,
I have no more words that rhyme.
But to Harold and Victor,
I had a great adventure.

TAQ MEMORIES

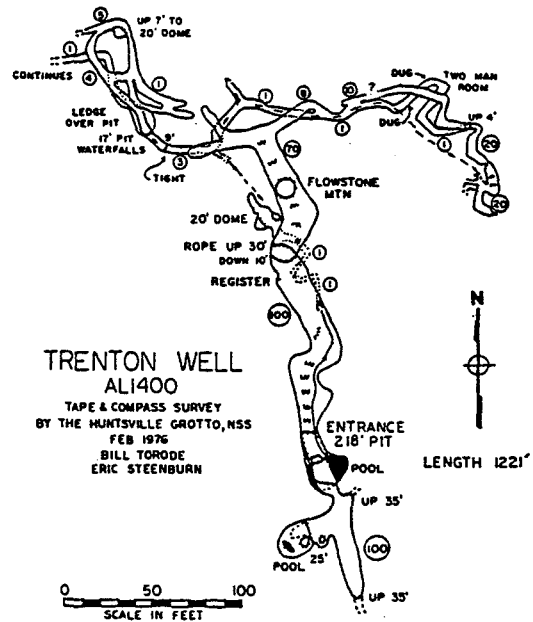
TRENTON WELL
 Jackson County, Alabama
 Bill Torode
The Huntsville Grotto Newsletter
 14(10)97-101

On my first trip to the pit on February 11, 1973, I mapped the front portion, for a distance of 365 feet, up to a low crawl that went upstream and downstream. This went unmaped until a second trip on January 31, 1976, on which Eric Steenburn and I hoped to finish the map. We stopped on the ledge, 55 feet from the bottom of the 218 foot entrance shaft, and mapped a short passage with some nice formations. Next we remapped some of the passage at the bottom of the pit. We also mapped a small passage where a small stream from the entrance ran; we could not follow the water which dropped down to a lower level.

We then headed for the main stream passage, which was our primary objective. Carl Craig is one of the few people who have crawled downstream to an area where it was high enough to walk. He stopped in this area, however, because he was by himself. Some Georgia cavers have gone beyond this point in the passage, which is mostly crawl except the short area where Carl had stopped. The Georgia cavers did not reach an end. Because of this, we decided to crawl upstream first, as this lead was believed to be short. After crawling 46 feet, we got as far as anyone had gotten. At this point, we had to do some digging to continue. After getting through, we proceeded only 23 feet before we got to another dig. This dig was very extensive, but because the material was loose gravel and very easy to move, we were able to dig through in about 40 minutes. The crawl continued for 60 feet and then we were able to climb up into a nice upper level. One section had some nice gypsum crystals lining the walls. The area ended when the passage became too narrow. We then turned and mapped out. Because of the late hour and the energy utilized to dig through the obstacles, we did not map downstream.

On February 14th, we returned to check out and map the downstream section. This area turned out to be very muddy and smaller than the upper stream section. After mapping 104 feet, we got to a piece of orange reflective tape with Carl Craig's name on it. This was at the top of a 9 foot drop, which we climbed down. This was as far as Carl had gone, but the Georgia cavers had gone farther without reaching an end. Just past the 9 foot climb-down is a second 17 foot pit. This pit was impossible to climb down, but we were able to climb back up into an upper level area full of Georgia footprints. The passage made a small loop-around and ended. We were able to climb down in this area to the bottom of the 17 foot waterfall.

We were looking for the crawlway that the Georgia cavers said they had pushed for a long distance without coming to an end. We found a small crawl going out from the bottom of the waterfall, but after a short distance it was evident that no one had been in this crawl. At one point I had to dig out part of the wall. We mapped 60 feet and I crawled on another 50 feet or so with no end in sight. My light started to dim and my pack was back with Eric. This was one of the worst crawls I

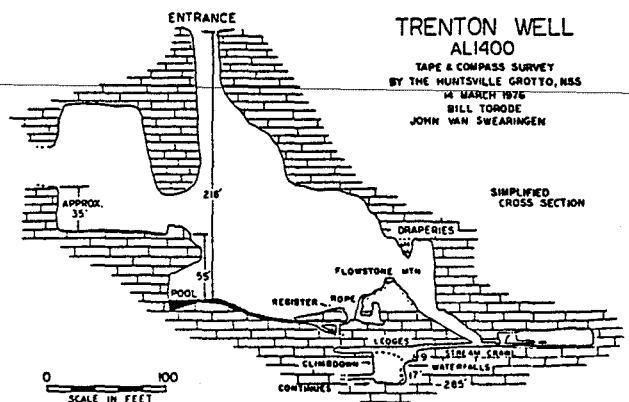


have been in - a lot of very sharp rocks. I decided to quit. If anyone is feeling gung ho and is small, here is the place for you. Eric and I headed back to the upper level, which we mapped, and then headed out.

My next trip back was on March 14th with Doc Owen and J.V. Swearingen. On this trip we had a register to install and a wire to measure the depth of the pit (218 feet). After the installation of the register, we measured the slopes in the cave in order to get the true total depth of the cave, which totaled up to be 285 feet. Since the entrance is located at 1200 feet of elevation, this still leaves 265 feet to the bottom of the mountain.

There are still two leads going. One, a small crawl in the very back of the cave, is going downstream, which could easily open up or drop into another pit. However, no air was noted to be moving through this passage at the time. The second lead is a passage at the top of a 35 foot climb up a wall. It is located on the ledge, 163 feet down from the top of the entrance pit. The wall is dry and clean. There appears to be a high canyon passage going off. The climb could be done with scaling poles and cable ladders.

This wraps up Trenton Well, for me, for a little while.



	Initials	Date
Prepared By		
Approved By		

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South Trust Bank, Callman
Acct # 68-881-081 (Non-Profit)

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11/5/46 Balance Carried Forward			322.7
12/1/46 Deposit		\$2.00	404.77
12/2/46 David Drake - Postage	930		395.77
11/5/46 David Drake	605		389.77
1/6/47 Patrick O'Neil	918		380.04
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MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING

OF

CULLMAN GROTTA OF NATIONAL SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY
December 3, 1996

The regular meeting of Cullman Grotto of National Speleological Society was called to order on Tuesday, December 1996 at 7:30 p.m. in the conference room of the Cullman County Public Library by David Drake, Chairman. Twelve members and guests were in attendance.

There being no copies of The Flowstone available at the time of the meeting, the minutes were unavailable for approval.

No artwork has been submitted for the Grotto patch as of this date.

This months Grotto trip will be a horizontal trip on Sunday, December 8, 1996.

A suggestion was made regarding a clean up project at Hughes Cave. Everyone agreed that Hughes Cave is too far gone.

New officers for 1997 were elected as follows:

Chairman: Patrick O'Diam
Vice-Chairman: Louis Adams
Secretary: Evon Thompson
Treasurer: Mary Adams
Advisor: Vic Bradford

Trip reports were given by David and Victor of Fern Cave.

There being no further business to come before the meeting, the Chairman declared it adjourned.

After intermission, a program was presented by Bill and Miriam Cuddington of the various methods of rappelling and climbing.

Approved: _____
Chairman

Approved: _____
Secretary

The FLOWSTONE

FEBRUARY, 1997

Vol. IV, No. 2

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CALENDER

Mar 4-Monthly Grotto meeting, 7:30pm, Cullman Public Library conference room. Program to be announced.

May 24-Huntsville Varsity Scout High Adventure rappeling training hosted by the Cullman Grotto. Site TBA.

May 30-Jun 1, 1997-SERA Summer Cave Carnival, Raccoon Mountain Caverns Campground, Chattanooga, TN. Hosted by Central Alabama Grotto. Contact Michael Gilbert (205) 249-8341.

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ECHO CHAMBER

DUES

Several people still owe grotto dues for the 1997 year. Dues are \$8 individual/\$10 family and must be accompanied by current NSS status AND were due in January!

DAVE NEEDS...

I am in dire need of pictures, poems, cartoons, money, jokes, trip reports, trip reports and trip reports. I know I'm not the only one going caving. Anything that can be used in the *Flowstone* would be greatly appreciated. My stash is low.

SCC UPDATE, UPDATE

It was reported in last month's *Flowstone* that the SCC had purchased Kennamer Cave but the purchase price was not included. Total cost was \$36,500 for 102 acres, including the main entrance and the land overlying most of the passages. Access rights for the other two entrances, not

included in the 102 acres, were also secured. All Grottos, especially those in TAG, are urged to donate generously to help pay off the loan.

RAPPELING CLASS

As was mentioned a couple of months ago, the Cullman Grotto has been asked to conduct a Varsity Scout High Adventure rappeling class. I talked with Tony Day, who is spearheading the outing, last week in Huntsville. He assured me that the BSA/LDS insurance policy would cover liability. It is up to us to determine the site, provide the instructors and set hours of training. We might also want to generate a hard copy of rules and guidelines to have each participant read and sign before entering the course. We will be our own police. What we say goes!

COVER PHOTO

Bill Cuddington teaching the "rack system" to unidentified scout from Cullman Troop 335 on Green mountain, Madison Co., AL. Photo circa 1973.

IN SEARCH OF THE HOLLAND TUNNEL

Jan.17, 1997

D.Drake

Jeff Lynn

D.Drake

"How many times did you say you had been in this cave?" must have been the question running through Jeff's mind as we stood in the "Igloo Room" trying to decide whether to go back into the depths of Talucah Cave a second time, or exit the cave and come back another time and try to find the "Big Room."

We met at Jerry's Food Haus at two o'clock Friday the 17th to kick the weekend off right with a little caving action. Jeff had never been to Talucah, it was my third or fourth trip. Our intentions were to do a trip to the "Big Room" and back.

The day was a cold one, with temperatures below freezing. We entered the cave through the "Blowing Entrance", one of about a half dozen entrances to this legendary, old cave. We had to use care not to break some ice formations in the entrance on our way in. The Blowing Entrance empties into the main formation area of the cave. Talucah is a little unusual in that most of its formations are near the front of the cave, all but a few are inactive. The cave was once used as a church by one of the local denominations, in fact much of the lumber used for pews and what not still remain in a room now called the "Skylight Room." Dynamite was used to blast a hole in the ceiling of this large room so that the pulpit and other fixtures could be more easily removed after it's holy heyday. Near the Skylight room is a formation area that is home to one of Talucah's few remaining active formations, a massive flowstone haystack called "The Igloo". From this room we followed the stream passage to the

"Bubbling Spring Room." Here is where I got confused. At this point you are to leave the stream passage and enter a large borehole known as the "Holland Tunnel" which will in turn take you back to the "Big Room", the destination point of most trips into the cave. HOWEVER, when we arrived at the Bubbling Spring the Holland Tunnel was gone. This was significant in that it marked the first time in my caving career that an entire passage had simply disappeared...vanished into thin air. Now there is a chance that we weren't where I thought we were, but that's highly unlikely. The fact is, is that the passage is gone...his-to-ry. We circled back to the Igloo Room to re-orient ourselves and to decide whether to exit the cave or make another push, we chose the latter, with the same results. I had been to the Big Room two or three time previously, but each time I was following someone else. Still I was certain I knew the way. When we arrived at the spring the second time, we opted to abandon our search for the Big Room and make a tour of the Waterfall Room.

The passage leading to the Waterfall Room is a miserable, slime tube that empties into a 25-30'-ft dome with a waterfall coming from its' ceiling. Pretty little rimstone dams and pools decorate the floor. The passage opens a bit and continues for another thousand feet or so past this point.

We exited the cave at eight o'clock, four-and-a-half hours after entering . The outside temperature was so cold that our sweat drenched clothes nearly froze on our bodies. Even after looking at the map, which I had left in my car back at Jerry's, we couldn't figure out where we went wrong. We agreed that we would tell the Grotto that we intended to go to the Waterfall Room all along. So that's what I'm doing.





FROM THE MAILBAG



DCG, GEORGIA UNDERGROUND, Vol. 33, Vol. 1: Jim Smith reports of Jackson County's *Geiger Cave* yielding another 1,158 feet of mapped passage via a recently discovered new section called the Big Dome Extension. *Geiger Cave's* length now is 12,890 feet.

CHATTANOOGA GROTTO TAGLINE, Dec. 96: Liz Shrewsbury writes about a study being conducted on the feasibility of building a four lane highway that would run through north Georgia connecting I-59 with I-85 at the South Carolina border. This project would essentially run right through the heart of Georgia caveland, including Lookout and Pigeon mountains. She urges concerned cavers to write the engineering firm and/or Georgia state legislators to voice opposition to this potentially devastating project.

TAGLINE, Via E-mail: Alex Sproul tells of a rash of burglaries carried out by a group of West Virginia -cavers- in which several thousand dollars worth of caving gear was confiscated. One of the victims was Bob Libeman of Bob & Bob fame. The culprits have been caught but much of the gear has not been recovered. He urges all cavers to be on the lookout for "hot" gear at discount prices.

WEST VIRGINIA CAVER, Dec. 96: George Dasher talks about the impending changes to USGS Topographic maps. Increased demand for digitally prepared maps has caused the USGS to alter the way cave maps are produced. The impending changes would delete contour lines from the maps, buildings will no longer be classified as to type, landmarks will not be identified, woodland areas will no longer be shown

by green overprint etc. All-in-all, digitally produced maps are of poorer quality and much more difficult to read. George encourages everyone who is opposed to these changes to write:

Gordon Easton, Director
USGS, National Center
United States Geological Survey
Mall Stop 551
Reston, VA 22092

HUNTSVILLE GROTTO NEWSLETTER,

Feb. 97: JV reports that Fern Cave usage is down from previous years. Only 28 permits were issued in 1996 and only 27 trips were made to what is still the South's finest. Of those 27, only 8 were to Surprise Pit and even fewer, 6, were to Helictite Heaven. The rest were more than likely Upper Formation room tours with the exception of one survey trip and of course our trips to Little Morgue and Hall of Giants. Only 130 people toured some portion of the Fern Cave System in '96.



DOGT'S CORNER

Speleotype Fall-Winter 1986

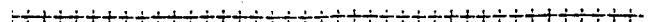
"THE DEPTHS OF SERENITY"

By Doug Paul N.S.S.#18485

We go for different reasons
Like Collins, Dante', and Verne,
Into the depths of nothing
Asking nothing in return.

Wandering aimlessly forward
Serene in our troglodyte state,
Hearing an eternal quiet,
Letting the earth direct our fate.

Inevitably emerging topside
That other life to lease,
Knowing when time has ended
All cavers will rest in peace



CAVE TRIVIA

Lou Simpson

COG SQUEAKS
December 1985, p. 8-18

Caving Terms:

- SNARF:** To take something that belongs to somebody else or at least something that somebody else us using, such as a seat.
- SCOOP:** To explore virgin cave.
- SPELUNK:** Sound a caver's body makes at the end of a fall.
- SPELUNK JUNK:** Cave gear; most cave gear looks like junk because it gets trashed after a cave trip and is often useless after that.
- BROWN:** The color of cave mud and caver's underwear.
- ROCK!** I accidentally dropped a rock on your head.
- IT GOES:** Since I already bothered to come in here, you might as well, too.
- IT ENDS:** It goes, but I don't feel like going any further.
- DRY CAVE:** Most of the time you don't have to swim.
- DOESN'T FLOOD:** There is air in the cave sometimes.
- WALKING PASSAGE:** My feet are touching the floor.
- STOOPWALK:** If you try to walk, you're stupid.
- MILES OF CAVE:** I was in the cave more than ten minutes.
- DEEP PIT:** My light was too dim to see the bottom.
- EASY CLIMB:** I didn't fall this time.
- PIECE OF CAKE:** I wish I had a piece of cake.
- HAIRY LIP:** There was a mustache at the edge of the pit.
- TIGHT CRAWLWAY:** You have to hold your breath.
- WET CAVE:** You have to hold your breath.
- MUDSLOP:** A descriptive term for a soupy mud that goes "skickk!" when you walk in it and tries to pull off your boots; mudslop is thin enough to ooze into your boots if it is deep enough.
- BO!:** Used to test for echoes; actually a variant of BOO!, which is used to test for hodags; a hodag will repeat the word, which will be indistinguishable from an echo.
- HODAGS:** Mischievous gremlin creatures which live in caves; they eat insects, gorp, and goosh.
- GORP:** An acronym which stands for "good old raisins and peanuts"; actually, any combination of munchies consumed in a cave or on a trail.
- GOOSH:** Borden's Eagle Brand Condensed Milk boiled for at least an hour and consumed as a cave food; it is difficult to finish a whole can unassisted.
- GARBAGE PIT:** A trash pit used for a cave entrance.
- RIDGEWALK:** Looking for cave entrances on the surface, not necessarily on a ridge; sometimes used as an excuse to avoid entering a cave.
- BLOWS:** A cave passage or entrance from which air flows.
- SUCKS:** A cave passage or entrance which sucks air or is of low quality.
- CARBIDE LAMP:** Source of odor, heat and a little light.
- WHEAT LAMP:** A superior rechargeable electric light source named after its inventor. Wheat.
- CARBIDE DUMP:** The excretions of nurd cavers who were unable to find their way out of the cave in time to dump their carbide waste on the surface to poison the owner's livestock.
- NURD:** An inexperienced caver, especially one who would continue to perform unacceptably after considerable training; the spelling with the letter "u" is considered derogatory.
- KNURD:** A nurd who caves while intoxicated; drunk spelled backwards.
- KNEURDE:** A nurd who is stuck-up.
- NERD:** A normal caver; all normal cavers are nerds and proud of it.
- SLEAZEWAY:** A crawlway whose walls, ceiling and floor are composed of mudslop.
- BELLYCRAWL:** A crawlway that is large enough to move through without digging.

CAVE TRIVIA (cont.)

7A9 MEMORIES

PROMISING DIG:

An opening large enough for an air molecule to go through.

LONG SHOT DIG:

A solid rock wall with no cracks.

TIGHT CRAWLWAY:

A bat has to crawl on hands and knees.

NARROW CANYON:

You have to make up your mind which way you want to face before you enter it.

BIG TRUNK:

There is enough room in the trunk of your car for all your cave gear.

BOREHOLE:

Not a very interesting cave.

VANDALIZED CAVE:

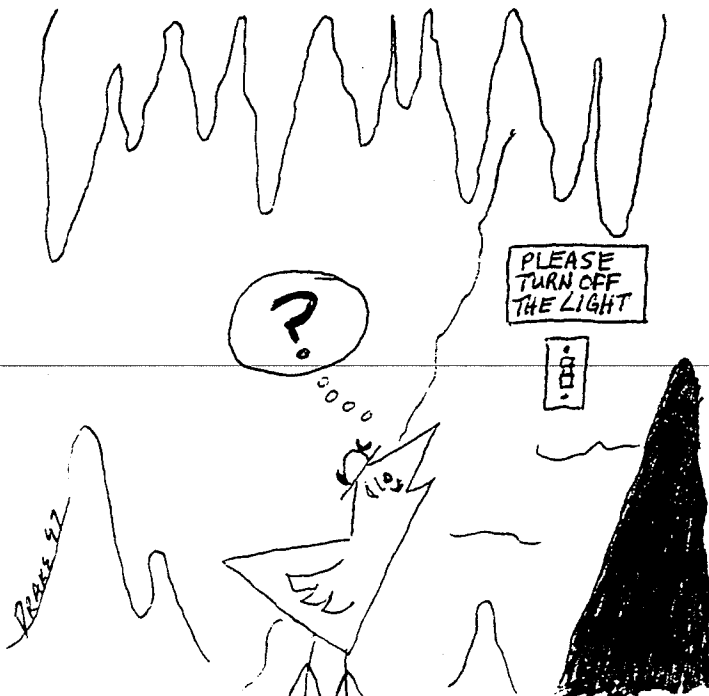
Somebody got there before you.



BAT FAX

The Honduran white bat is snow white with a yellow nose and ears. It cuts large leaves to make "tents" that protect its small colonies from jungle rains.

BIRDS OF A FEATHER



ALABAMA'S LONG CAVES
Bill Torode
The Huntsville Grotto Newsletter
16(11)106-108

The last Alabama long cave list was published in the Huntsville Grotto Newsletter in December, 1972, a little over 4 1/2 years ago. The first five caves have remained in their respective order. The list has 8 caves not on the old list and one cave has been removed - Nickajack, which has its entrance in Tennessee. Of the 8 caves added to the list, only one is a new cave, added to the survey since December, 1972.

Eight caves have increased in surveyed length, the biggest jump being in Canyon Cave with 6,633 feet added. The length of one cave decreased from 8,200 feet to 7,279 feet, according to Lin Guy. The number of total feet mapped increased by 105,518 feet (19.98 miles). Seven caves are still being actively mapped. Ten caves are listed as incomplete, meaning that passage is known to exist but, for one reason or another, no plans are known to continue mapping. Nine caves need remapping. In almost all cases, these caves will yield more feet than the amount given in this list. Twenty-eight caves are listed as complete. Ten caves are listed as potential 1 mile caves and should be if they are completely mapped.

Alabama Long Cave List

Name	Survey No.	Length in Feet	Status of Mapping	Meters
1 Fern Cave	597	82,525	Still Mapping	25,153
2 Anvil	279	66,880	Complete	20,385
3 Russell	169	34,000	Still Mapping	10,363
4 Guess Creek	593	28,681	Incomplete	8,741
5 Engle Double	266	24,276	Complete	7,399
6 Falling Spring	1302	21,144	Still Mapping	6,444
7 Carns Cave	441	18,528	Complete	5,647
8 Guffey	317	18,000	Complete	5,486
9 Anderson	357	17,809	Incomplete	5,428
10 Keaton	446	16,539	Complete	5,041
11 Moore Cave	426	16,264	Still Mapping	4,956
12 Limrock Blowing	311	14,694	Incomplete	4,478
13 Sauca	50	14,628	Complete	4,458
14 Lamons	214	13,551	Incomplete	4,130
15 Long Island	1300	13,493	Complete	4,112
16 Canyon	1000	12,253	Incomplete	3,734
17 War Eagle	565	11,254	Complete	3,440
18 Cave Springs	33	11,062	Complete	3,371
19 Grass Skeleton	224	10,600	Complete	3,230
20 Tony Sinks	78	2 miles +	Needs Remap	3,218
21 Tumbling Rock	171	2 miles +	Needs Remap	3,218
22 Old Blowing	505	2 miles +	Needs Remap	3,218
23 Talucah	47	2 miles +	Needs Remap	3,218
24 Hughes	157	9,403	Incomplete	2,866
25 Gary Seif	290	9,199	Incomplete	2,803
26 Halbrook	416	8,567	Complete	2,611
27 Jess Elliot	323	8,192	Complete	2,496
28 Herrin	6	7,743	Still Mapping	2,360
29 Gaiger	459	7,741	Complete	2,359
30 Eudy	107	7,548	Complete	2,300
31 Roaring River	1031	7,413	Complete	2,259
32 Seward Spring	871	7,279	Complete	2,218
33 Glover	54	7,000	Complete	2,133
34 Allen	781	7,000	Incomplete	2,133
35 Grays	1200	6,867	Complete	2,093
36 Windy River	1349	6,473	Complete	1,972
37 Ivy Hollow	8	6,448	Complete	1,965
38 Blue River	177	6,229	Complete	1,898
39 Hill Bluff	1091	5,863	Complete	1,787
40 Salt River	221	5,835	Incomplete	1,778
41 Mrs. Miller's	1500	5,777	Complete	1,760
42 Tally Cave	443	5,676	Complete	1,730
43 Honeycomb	36	5,475	Complete	1,668
44 Chapel	208	5,475	Needs Remap	1,668
45 Bone Cave	1328	5,340	Complete	1,627
46 Montague	379	5,300	Incomplete	1,615
47 Indian Rock	535	5,300	Complete	1,615
48 Bob Clark	1100	5,300	Complete	1,615
49 Dunham	329	1 mile +	Needs Remap	1,609 +
50 Wolf	192	1 mile +	Needs Remap	1,609 +
51 Turtle	198	1 mile +	Needs Remap	1,609 +
52 Kenamer	490	1 mile +	Needs Remap	1,609 +
53 Co-Op	1083	5,084	Still Mapping	1,543
54 Doodiebug	195	4,200	Needs Remap	1,280
55 Poodle	225	?	?	?
56 Log	223	?	?	?
57 Mike's Wolf	203	?	?	?
58 Johnson	220	?	?	?
59 McClusky	86	?	?	?
60 Deer Head	742	?	?	?
61 Odyssey Cave	1568	3,300	Still Mapping	1,005
62 Summer Double Pot	?	?	No Map	

62 Caves over 1 mile = 727519.41 ft = 137.79 mi = 221.75 km

	Initials	Date
Prepared By		
Approved By		

Callman Branch of Nat. Speleological Society
 South Trust Bank, Callman
 Acct # 68-881-081 (non-profit)

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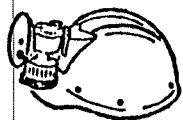
46th Annual SERA Summer Cave Carnival

Hosted by the
Central Alabama Grotto

Raccoon Mountain Caverns
Campground

Chattanooga, Tennessee

May 30, 31, & June 1, 1997



Let us to take a moment to introduce ourselves. We are the Central Alabama Grotto. During the year of 1997, we will be celebrating our 5th year as a NSS affiliated grotto. What better way to celebrate than to host the 46th Annual SERA Summer Cave Carnival. We hope that you will join in on our party.

Much thought has gone into the choosing of the dates and location of SERA '97.

We feel that the dates will provide a more favorable climate here in TAG as

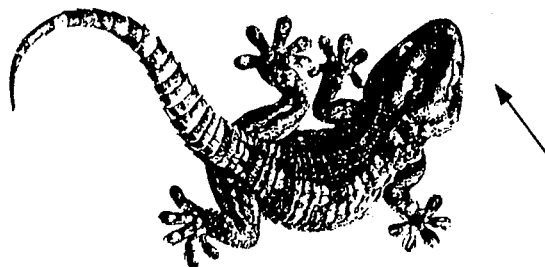
well as giving cavers with children a opportunity to attend.

We hope that everyone will be as pleased with the location as we are. We feel that Raccoon Mountain Caverns Campground (Raccoon) is an ideal location for caving in TAG. It is conveniently located just three miles off I-24 in beautiful Lookout Valley. From this locale, you are within a one hundred mile radius of two-thirds of the known caves in the United States. Raccoon has such amenities as full service hook-ups, some even with cable, ample primitive camping, bathhouses, a swimming pool, a playground, hiking, and many onsite activities for those who want a more restful weekend. To soothe your muscles and mind after a long day of caving, you might want to try the " hot tub / spa. "

It is important to note that early arrival, before May 29, must be arranged with Raccoon by calling (423)-821-9403. If you have any questions regarding SERA '97, feel free to contact CAG at the following:

Central Alabama Grotto
1175 Fulton Gap
Sylacauga, Alabama 35150-7877

Michael Gilbert - (205)-249-8341
Adam Frey - freyada@eng.auburn.edu



Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____

Phone: (____) _____

NSS #: _____

Grotto / Affiliation: _____

Guests: _____ NSS #: _____

	Cost	Qty.	Amount
NSS Members:	\$20	_____	\$ _____
Non Members:	\$25	_____	\$ _____
Children 8 & under:		_____	Free
Pets:	\$15	_____	\$ _____
T-shirts:	\$10	_____	\$ _____
S ___ M ___ L ___ XL ___			
Pre-registration discount \$5 / person if post marked 4/20/97		_____	-\$ _____
Total:			\$ _____

Checks payable to " Central Alabama Grotto " and mail to "SERA '97" c/o Grotto Address

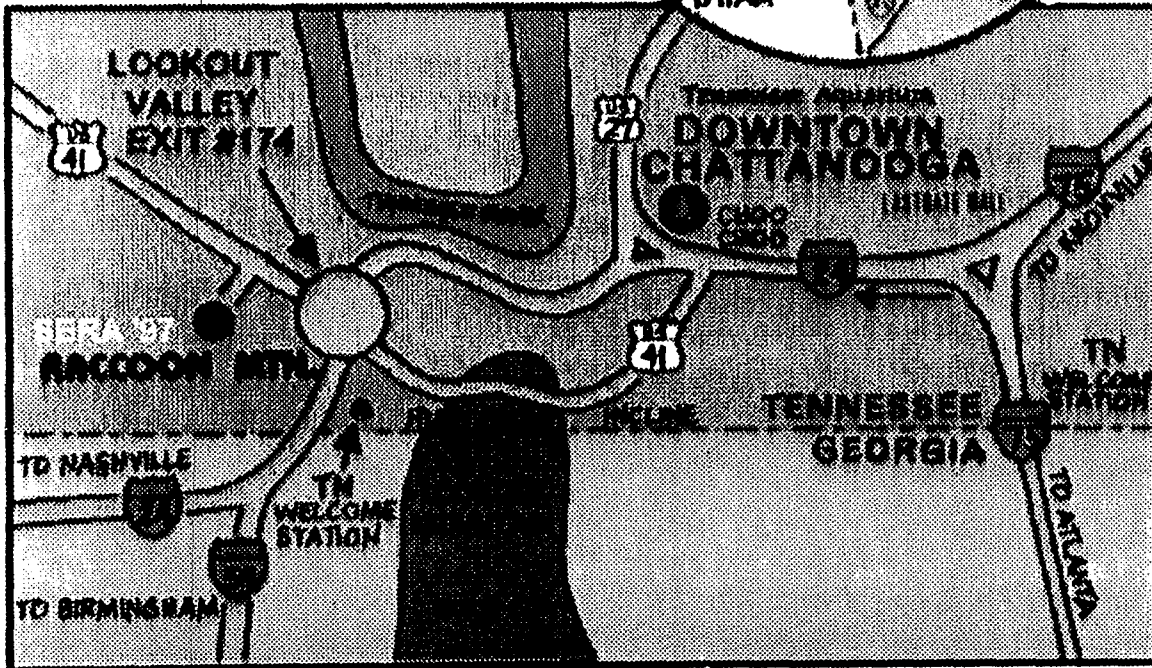
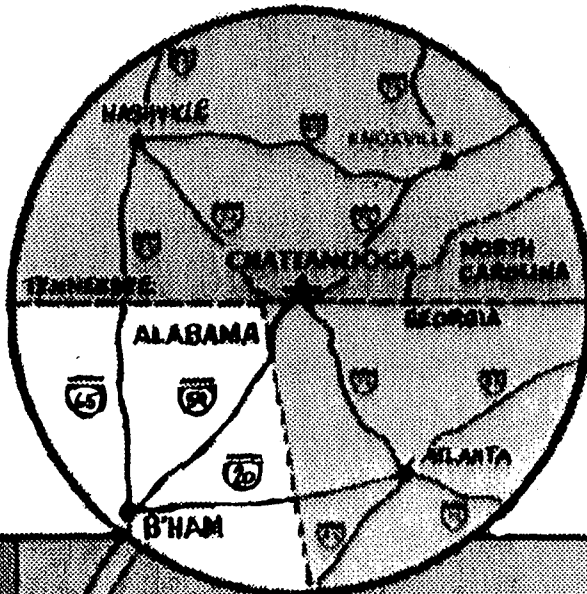
Improved campsites: W/E \$10.00

They are LIMITED! FULL \$16.00

Call Michael @ 205-249-8341 to RESERVE!

Directions:

From I-24, take the Lookout Valley (Tiftonia) Exit #174, Go north on U.S. 41 about 1 ¼ miles (500 yard past the highway patrol office) and turn left at the entrance.



CopyAmerica

1022 20th Street S.
Birmingham, AL.
(205)-323-0101

Copy America suppr Cave Conservation

Central Alabama Grotto

1175 Fulton Gap Sylacauga, AL 35150-7877

RACCOON MOUNTAIN

Just outside the city limits of Chattanooga, nestled in the grandeur of the beautiful Tennessee mountains, you are invited to experience an amazing contrast between the serenity of nature's finest sights and sounds against an abundance of action packed adventures and a relaxing, family oriented atmosphere.

In the few pages of this brochure it is impossible to describe fully the vast array of things to see and do which is available for visitors to Raccoon Mountain. Upon arrival, one can choose between a leisurely stroll underground, a thrilling sled ride down the mountain, a timed race on a Miniature Formula Car, or a relaxing ride on horseback. Camping accommodations are situated in the middle of the Raccoon Mountain Attractions Complex.

The variety of activities pictured herein will provide you with a hint of the variety of exciting things to do, the rugged natural beauty, and the relaxing atmosphere available to individuals, families, school groups, church groups, businesses, ball teams, scouts, and numerous other organizations seeking a place for fun and fellowship at one convenient place.

EXPERIENCE YOUR VACATION IN THE MOUNTAINS OF SOUTHEAST TENNESSEE!

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RACCOON MOUNTAIN

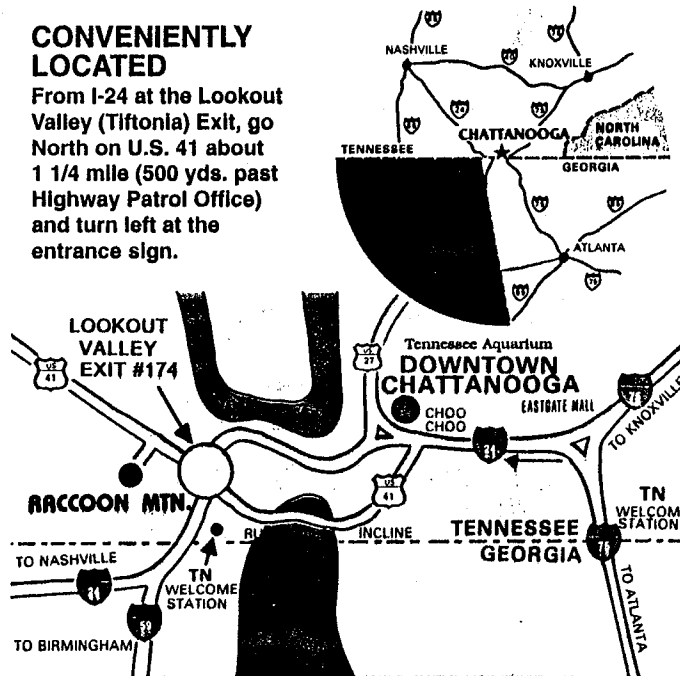
THE FAMILY FUN PLACE



BEST OF ALL - NO LONG WAITING LINES

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From I-24 at the Lookout Valley (Tiftonia) Exit, go North on U.S. 41 about 1 1/4 mile (500 yds. past Highway Patrol Office) and turn left at the entrance sign.



5 minutes to Downtown Chattanooga (but you're still in the country)
5 minutes to most Lookout Mountain Attractions
10 miles west of Interstate 75
1.3 miles off Interstate 24

RACCOON MOUNTAIN

CHATTANOOGA



Tennessee

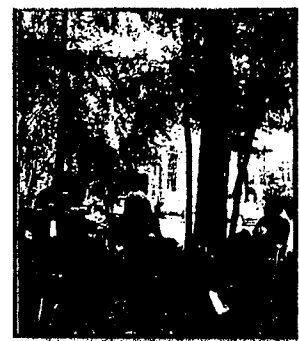


THE FAMILY FUN PLACE

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ALPINE SLIDE



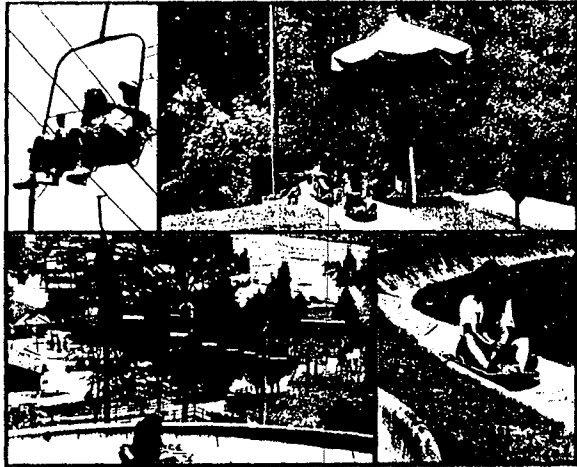
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(423) 825-5666

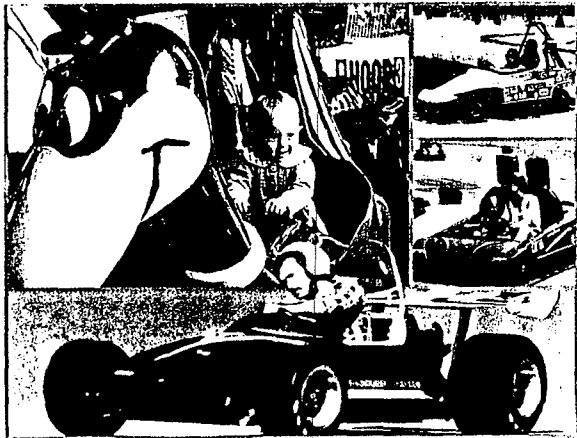
ALPINE SLIDE

Slide down the beautiful mountainside on an exciting and exhilarating ride over ½ mile long. You are in complete control while sledding. The Alpine Slide is similar to a bobsled ride and is not a water slide. Come as you are and bring the entire family.



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Race against the clock in our unique, scaled-down Grand Prix Race Car. Challenge a friend or try to beat your previous times. Driver's license required for all Grand Prix Racers. Go carts available for ages 10 years and up. Power Wheels for young tots.



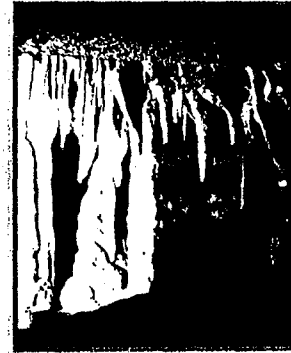
Enjoy everything Raccoon Mountain has to offer. In addition to what you've seen here, you can use one of our picnic areas for a relaxing meal outdoors. Also, souvenir shopping, sandwich and snack foods, as well as some game machines provide visitors with a diversion from the other attractions at Raccoon Mountain. Group rates available on all attractions.

CRYSTAL CAVERNS

CRYSTAL PALACE TOUR
An informative, fun and educational 45 minute easy walk into the heart of Raccoon Mountain. Bring your cameras - you'll see thousands of natural formations - even an extremely rare shield formation. Enjoy 60° temperatures year-round.



WILD CAVE EXPEDITIONS
Trained cavers guide you on challenging 2, 4, 6 hour and overnight tours through a vast underground network of corridors, chambers, canyons, tunnels, and streams. We provide the equipment. Reservations required.



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Primitive water & electric and full service with cable sites in a beautiful valley only minutes from downtown Chattanooga. Playground, swimming pool, hiking trails, arcade, volleyball, horseshoes, bath house and laundry.

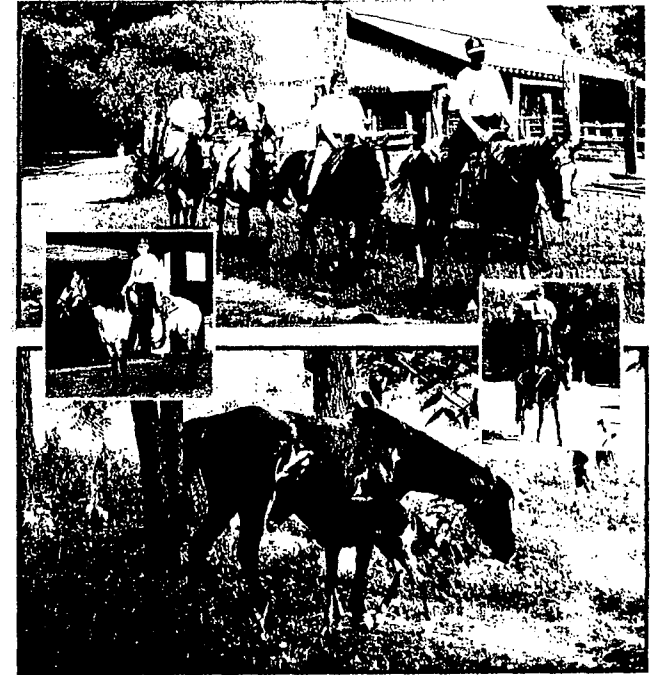


GEMSTONE PANNING
Experience the thrills of finding gemstones the old fashioned way - by using a gold pan to sift the sand in our water panning trough. Ideal activity for all ages.



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One hour guided or unguided tours or 6 hour guided mountain tours available. For more information call Raccoon Mountain Stables at (423) 825-1175.



GROUP ROUTES AVAILABLE DISCOUNT COUPONS

RACCOON MOUNTAIN \$1.00 DISCOUNT PER PERSON

Off regular admission to any one of the following:
1 Ride on Alpine Slide 1 Night of Camping
2 Laps on Grand Prix 1 Cave Admission

LIMIT: 4 PERSONS, 1 COUPON PER DAY, NOT GOOD WITH OTHER DISCOUNTS

RACCOON MOUNTAIN \$1.00 DISCOUNT PER PERSON

Off regular admission to any one of the following:
1 Ride on Alpine Slide 1 Night of Camping
2 Laps on Grand Prix 1 Cave Admission

LIMIT: 4 PERSONS, 1 COUPON PER DAY, NOT GOOD WITH OTHER DISCOUNTS

The

FLOWSTONE

March 1997

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE CULLMAN GROTTO
OF THE NATIONAL SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Vol. IV No. 3



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 to be included in the following month's issue. Send items and exchanges to: D.Drake, 110 County Road 1386, Falkville AL 35622.

The Cullman Grotto will exchange by request with any publishing grotto.

Republication of articles or items contained within the Flowstone welcome providing credit is given to source.

Annual dues for the Cullman Grotto are eight dollars (\$8) for individual membership or ten dollars (\$10) per family. Dues are payable at the first grotto meeting of each year and include subscription to The FLOWSTONE. Subscription rate for non-members is eight dollars (\$8) per year.

The Cullman Grotto meets the first Tuesday of every month at 7:30pm in the Cullman County Public Library conference room, 200 Clark St NE, Cullman AL. Visitors and prospective members are welcome.

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Custodian: Louis Adams
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Cullman AL 35056
205-739-0369

CALENDER

Apr 1-Monthly Grotto meeting, 7:30pm, Cullman Public Library conference room. Program to be announced.

May 24-Huntsville Varsity Scout High Adventure rappelling training hosted by the Cullman Grotto. Site TBA. Possibly Blount Springs.

May 30-Jun 1, 1997-SERA Summer Cave Carnival, Raccoon Mountain Caverns Campground, Chattanooga, TN. Hosted by Central Alabama Grotto. Contact Michael Gilbert (205) 249-8341.

Jun 23-27, 1997-NSS Convention, Sullivan, MO. Contact: Pam Saberton, 3820 Juniata St., St.Louis, MO 63116. (314)772-6956.

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THANK YOU

The Drake family would like to express our heartfelt thanks to Louis and Mary Adams, Victor Bradford, Patrick O'Diam, Bernard Powell and the Jim Schmidt family for your presence and consolation during the loss of our mother. We would also like to thank all of you who kept us in your prayers these past few trying months. Your expressions of sympathy will always be remembered.

KENNAMER

A check for \$100 dollars has been mailed to the Southeastern Cave Conservancy on behalf of the Cullman Grotto. The money will go toward the lease of Kennamer Cave, Jackson Co., AL.

COVER PHOTO

Bernard Powell at lip of 188-ft drop in Fern's Little Morgue. Photo by Patrick O'Diam

MORE SOLICITATION

If you have not yet payed your grotto dues for 1997, you are two months past due...get with the program.

ACS

For those interested in joining the Alabama Cave Survey, I have requested applications for membership from ACS Chairman Tom Moss. As I understand it, membership will be a prerequisite to obtaining a new ACS book. If the applications are not here by the April meeting and you still want to join the ACS, I would suggest contacting Tom Moss at 205-837-0899 or email tamoss@ingr.com

SERA WINTER BUSINESS

The Georgia Speleological Society will host the 1997 SERA winter business meeting and banquet on Saturday, Apr 5, 1997 in Rome, Georgia on the campus of Berry College. If anyone is interested in attending see me I have a limited amount of applications.

SECRET PIT

Jackson Co., AL
17 Feb 97
D.Drake

V.Bradford D.Drake

2/17/97

Vic Bradford 15247

David Drake 15430

Cullman Grotto

"Nice Pit"

BOOM!

"Crraaap!, that was a big rock!", I said, swallowing hard.

"Reckon someone's up there and threw it in?", Vic wondered.

"Heeey", I shouted looking upward to the pit entrance, then turning toward Vic, it was at that instant we realized there may be a problem...a BIG problem.

We had broken pit protocol by both being on bottom and leaving no one up top and now Secret Pit was calling our hand.

"While signing register large rock falls. Kinda disheartening. Glad no one was on rope. BE CAREFUL!"

The above entry was left in the register at the bottom of Secret Pit, Jackson Co., AL. The large rock turned out to be only the size of a volleyball but the reverberation inside the cavity made it sound the size of a Volkswagon. After falling 144 feet, a volleyball size rock would definately kill. Had Vic not seen the register and insist we sign it, one of us, probably me, would have been on rope at the time of the

rockfall. Apparently we had disturbed it's resting place near the top of the pit on our rappel down and it took a few minutes for it to release from the viscous grip of it's muddy bed.

The day started when Victor and I rendezvoused at Jerry's the morning of President's Day 1997. To celebrate this momentous occassion (cough) we chose to bounce a couple of Jackson County pits. The first being the seldom visited Secret Pit (our entry in the register was the first since 1993).

Secret Pit is located high on Split Rock mountain in the Paint Rock valley. Jackson Co. road 500 takes you to the parking area where a steep climb eventually leads to a small sink containing the entrance to the 144-ft. drop.

The sink slopes steeply on the upper side, rigging is done on the lower side, however,

the tree usually used for rigging has fallen victim to loggers.

Facing uphill we found a small tree to the right of the sink that made an adequate directional, we then backed up to a larger tree. The rope fed nicely

between two boulders slanting downward into the small mouth of the pit. Lush, green moss and smooth limestone underlying the rope's path made a pad unnecessary. The rappel is free except for the first ten feet then the pit bells out beautifully. Pictures taken from the bottom looking up are breathtaking, but then so is rockfall.

I was first down and started scouting around on bottom as Vic rappelled. As he was descending I heard what I thought to be a large chunk of mud hit the floor near the rope. This "chunk of mud" was later found to be a rock, smaller than the one that got our attention a few minutes later, but still large enough to make us even more disenchanting about climbing out. I had planned on bouncing the pit a second time and trying out my new Petzl Stop, but the

**"Crraaapl,
that was a big
rock!"**

unexpected "stone shower" altered my desire. The pit is devoid of formations but its shape and acoustics make the difficulty in getting to Secret Pit worthwhile. Just remember to leave someone on top.



RIDGEWALKING IN BLOUNT CO.

As reported by Victor Bradford

Victor and one of his boys have been ridgewalking recently in Blount County and although nothing that would qualify has been found, several interesting finds are worth noting. Vic's son Lee, who is an avid hunter, told his dad about a couple of sinks with pits at the bottom that he had found while hunting. Vic has bounced both pits and reports that there is no going passage in either. The pits are both in the 20-30 foot range. These pits and the ones that Kevin and Arlon found earlier plus Lucky Cave all lead one to believe that something worthwhile exists in this area.

Lee also reports of finding dozens of smaller sinks ranging in depth from 5-15 feet on another hill just to the north.

This is definately the time of year to do ridgewalking but the arrival of foilage is not far away. I've always felt that the first 200-footer south of the Tennessee River would be found in Blount Co., the question is, "Who's gonna find it?"



KENNA PIT

Jackson Co., AL

17 Feb 97

V.Bradford D.Drake

To get to Kenna Pit, follow the same directions that apply to Secret Pit, just go a little further down Co Rd 500, a little higher on an adjacent mountain and hike a lot steeper trail/streambed, but the trouble is well worth it as the caver is rewarded with a spectacular little pit. As short drops go, this is one of the nicest I've done.

Kenna Pit is a 120-ft. drop about 500 feet above the Orgy entrance to Kennamer Cave. Kenna Pit is actually the sixth entrance to Kennamer Cave but its only connection is a low, wet, belly crawl. It is a well decorated hole with three or four apparent passages intersecting the pit as windows. Most of these are not accessible and none of them are easily accessible.

From the bottom you can climb down a 20-ft breakdown slope into a small dome room with an upper stream passage. Someone has dropped a small tree down the pit and leaned it up to what looks to be large walking borehole, but according to the map, may terminate as a dome.

Another passage that enters the pit as a window set back in an alcove, appears to have a large quantity of guano-covered flowstone at its mouth and again appears to be large walking passage. My bet is that it's virgin as access would be extremely difficult at best...but then again, Torode's probably done it.

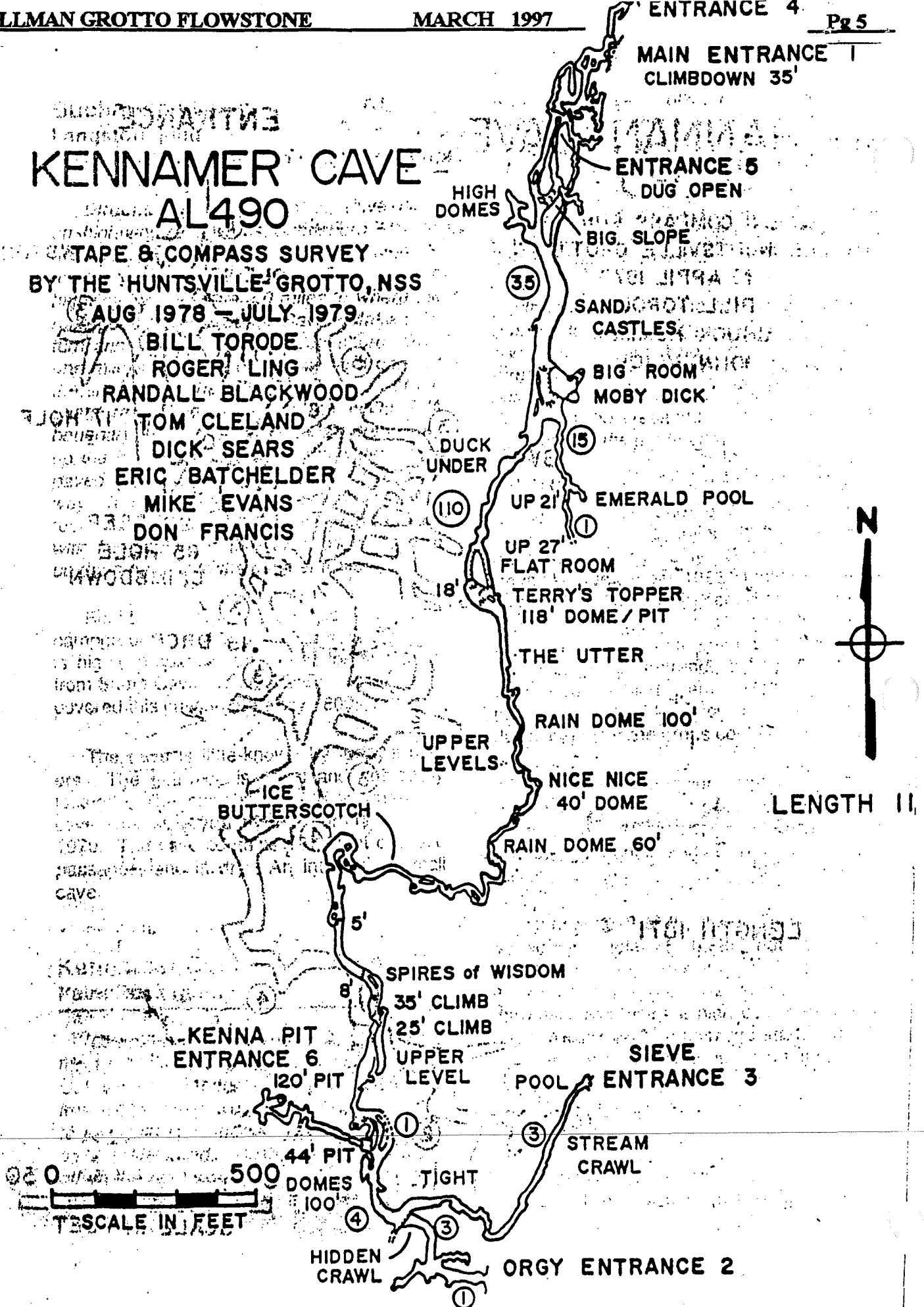
BAT FAX

Vampire bats adopt orphans and have been known to risk their lives to share food with less fortunate roost-mates.

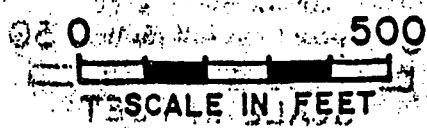
KENNAMER CAVE AL490

TAPE & COMPASS SURVEY
BY THE HUNTSVILLE GROTTOS, NSS
AUG 1978 - JULY 1979

- BILL TORODE
- ROGER LING
- RANDALL BLACKWOOD
- TOM CLELAND
- DICK SEARS
- ERIC BATCHELDER
- MIKE EVANS
- DON FRANCIS



LENGTH 11



SCC STUFF

The SCC is holding another raffle to raise money to buy and lease caves. Currently the SCC is working on seven new acquisitions in TAG. The prizes for this raffle will be gift certificates from the 1996(7) PMI/Petzl catalog.

- First Prize: \$300 Gift Certificate
- Second Prize: \$200 Gift Certificate
- Third Prize: \$100 Gift Certificate

Tickets may be ordered by phone or internet using your Visa or Mastercard from SCC Chairman Bill Putnam at 770-822-0003 or email scc@msm.edu. I have also requested that tickets be mailed to the grotto, however at printing they had not arrived.

The drawing will be held as soon as all tickets are sold. Winners will be notified by phone. Only 300 tickets will be sold.

Also, choice plots still remain for purchase around Neversink in the "Buy A Piece Of The Pit" campaign. Your contribution of \$40, \$250 or \$500 gets you an honorary Certificate of Ownership as well as a T-shirt. Send your money to: SCC, c/o Greg Eck, 2140 CountryClubDr, Lawrenceville, GA 30293. To pay with Visa or Mastercard, call Greg at 770-682-5179.



LATE-NIGHT CAVE'N

February trip report
By: Patrick O'Diam

S.Arrington P.O'Diam

This past month I finally got to go cave'n again. One Saturday, I called Scottie to

see when he might be able to go, and as it turned out, about 5:00 p.m. we were off to Neversink. After stopping at Taco Bell and refueling, we started up to the pit about 7:00 p.m. The moon was out and full that night, so it was bright, yet it was still low in the sky. We reached the top and rigged the pit. Now that the best rigging tree is dead and signs are up not to rig there, (do you need a sign to not rig to a dead tree?...Ed.) we had to rig in a spot that was less favorable. It made the lip a little harder, not bad, yet not the same good-ol Neversink that I remember. After each of us did the pit once, we were talking about how we wish we had a pulley to rig in the tree at the lip. Scottie forgot his pulley but I had mine, yet I had forgot to get some webbing. Not to fear, Scottie had his. A pulley was quickly rigged and the rope placed through that, therefore we just walked up to the pit, rigged our racks, turned around and went. The rope touched the roots of the tree for about an inch.

We each did the pit three more times, the last time climbing tandem. It was really nice that night. The weather was cool, (I think it got down in the 20's that night) but down in the hole it wasn't bad at all. By the time we were leaving the moon was on up and shining about a third of the way down the pit, lighting up the waterfall, which by the way, was really flowing.

We pulled up and headed home. We arrived back in town a little before 12:00 mid. That was the first time I had ever been there after dark, and I really enjoyed seeing it in the moonlight.

BIRDS OF A FEATHER



"We call this one Dolly"

BAT OF THE MONTH

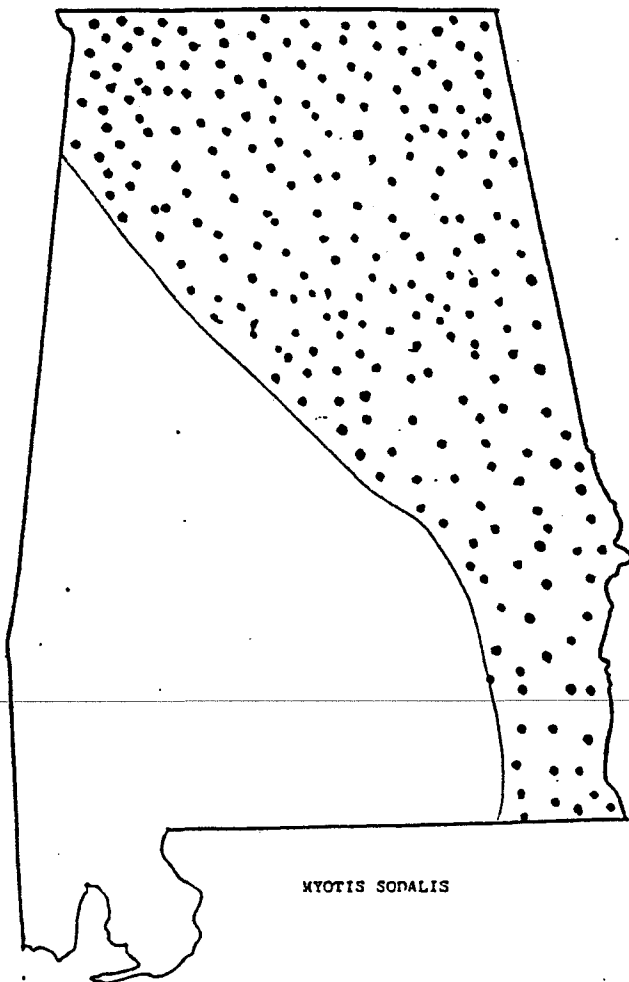
By John Marshall

Myotis Sodalis: Indiana Myotis

Description: Forearm, 35-41mm; wingspread, 240-267mm. This is a medium sized Myotis, with dark gray to black dull fur. It bears a close resemblance to M. lucifugus, except that M. sodalis has a keeled calcar and M. lucifugus has glossy fur.

Distribution: In Alabama, this species is found across the northern part of the state down through the east central and south-eastern section to the Florida line. Miller and Allen (1928) collected them near Anniston and Mohr (1932) collected them from Saltpeter Cave in northwestern Alabama. Its distribution in Alabama is not well documented.

Habitat: These bats primarily inhabit caves and mines. Little is known about their summer habitats and no breeding colonies are known (Barbour and Davis 1969). In the winter they congregate in large colonies, although none are known from Alabama. They are often found with M. grisescens, M. sodalis is only a winter resident in Alabama (Mohr 1932).



MYOTIS SODALIS

7A9 MEMORIES

ACANTHUS SINK CAVE NO. 2
Marshall County, Alabama
Birmingham Grotto Newsletter
(December, 1976)

After extensive mapping in Acanthus Sink Cave #2, in Bryant Mill Hollow, a brand new caving area discovered last year by Steve Durham, Tom Lamb, Dave Howell and others, the probability of a connection between Acanthus and nearby Haden's Dilemma was determined to be high. Acanthus begins as a stoopway, becomes water crawl, then opens to walking passage and rooms; a branch of it then becomes low water passage again. Haden's Dilemma begins as a 28 foot drop, requiring rigging, continues as a short climb down to a stream level. The inner stream passages of both caves had on previous trips been explored but not as far as possible; the characters of the two passages was the same, and the two were generally pointing toward each other.

Mapping began on November 21 at the entrance to Haden's Dilemma; ignoring a number of promising unexplored side passages, we mapped directly into the stream passage. After mapping around 850 feet of very wide (30') passage with typically 2-3 feet of a and as much water, we reached an area where the ceiling dipped down low. Mapping ended here since a paper notebook was being used, but several members of the group pushed ahead a bit farther. After two swims (deep water with a foot or less of air space) the passage was recognized as the River of Fire area of Acanthus (so named for the quantities of methane which belch up from the stream bottom). The advance group exited via the Acanthus entrance; the rear group, some of whom were becoming seriously chilled, backtracked and exited via the Haden's Dilemma entrance.

Total surveyed distance as of this writing stands at about 3500 feet. It is thought that the cave will exceed a mile in length once the as yet unexplored passages are added into the survey.

Note: While cavers have been welcome to Bryant Mill Hollow thus far, their activities have been under the strict supervision of the Hollow's owner, Mr. Haden Tidmore of Guntersville. In the interests of continued good cave owner relations, please be sure to check with Mr. Tidmore before any visit to the hollow.

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Approved By		

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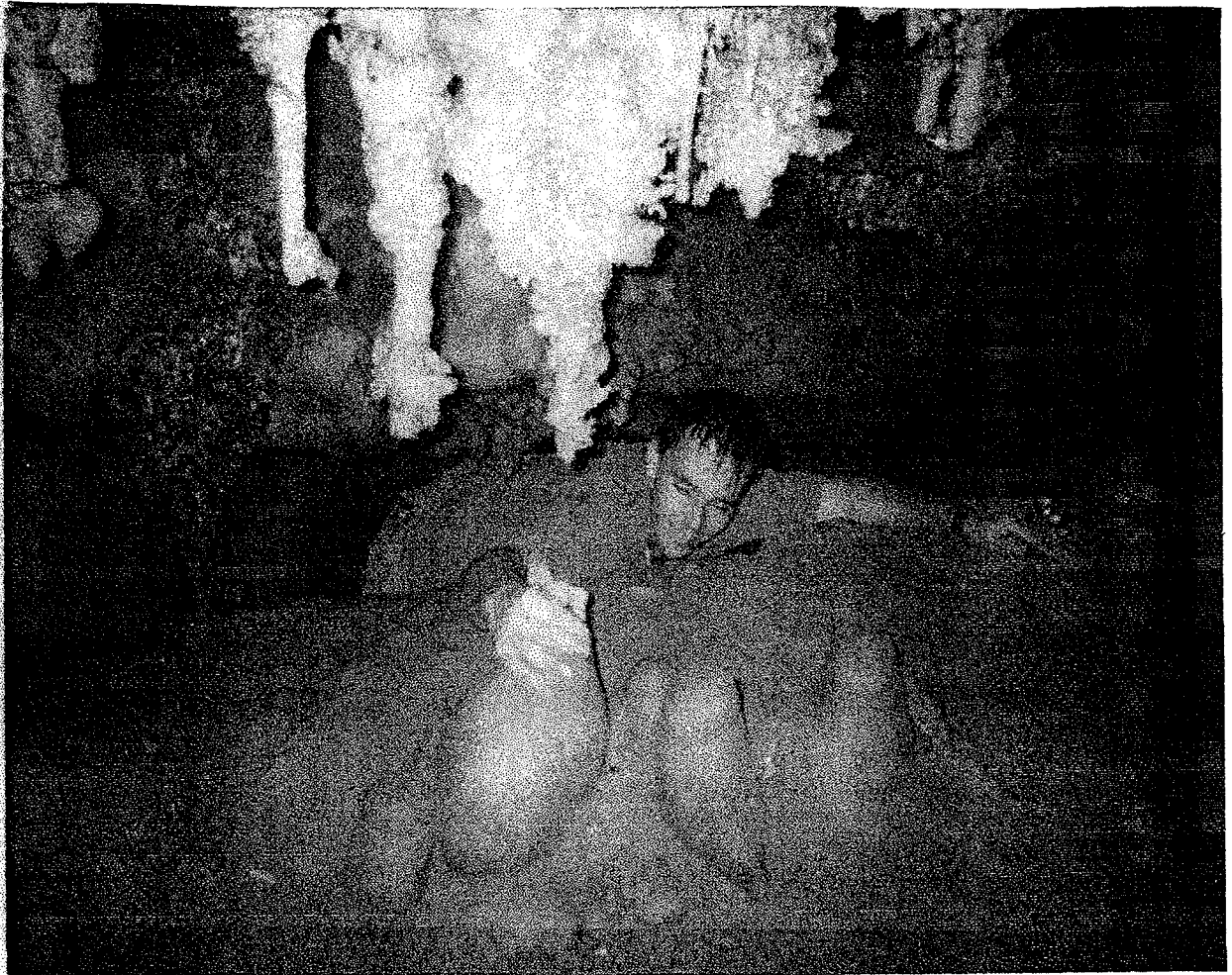
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FLOWSTONE

APRIL 1997

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE CULLMAN GROTTO
OF THE NATIONAL SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Vol. IV No. 4



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 to be included in the following month's issue. Send items and exchanges to: D.Drake, 110 County Road 1386, Falkville AL 35622.

The Cullman Grotto will exchange by request with any publishing grotto.

Republication of articles or items contained within the Flowstone welcome providing credit is given to source.

Annual dues for the Cullman Grotto are eight dollars (\$8) for individual membership or ten dollars (\$10) per family. Dues are payable at the first grotto meeting of each year and include subscription to The FLOWSTONE. Subscription rate for non-members is eight dollars (\$8) per year.

The Cullman Grotto meets the first Tuesday of every month at 7:30pm in the Cullman County Public Library conference room, 200 Clark St NE, Cullman AL. Visitors and prospective members are welcome.

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CALENDER

Apr 5-Grotto trip TBA.

Apr 19-Alabama Cave Survey meeting, 10am, Natural History Museum, Anniston, AL.

May 6-Monthly Grotto meeting, 7:30pm, Cullman Public Library conference room. Program to be announced. Trip following meeting.

May 24-Huntsville Varsity Scout High Adventure rappelling training hosted by the Cullman Grotto. Site TBA. Possibly Blount Springs.

May 30-Jun 1, 1997-SERA Summer Cave Carnival, Raccoon Mountain Caverns Campground, Chattanooga, TN. Hosted by Central Alabama Grotto. Contact Michael Gilbert (205) 249-8341.

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BAT FAX

In the wild, important agricultural plants, from bananas, breadfruit and mangoes to cashews, dates and figs rely on bats for pollination and seed dispersal.

ECHO CHAMBER

ERRATA

It was reported in the March Flowstone, that the grotto had mailed a check for \$100 to the SCC earmarked to go toward the leasing of Kennamer Cave. It should have read toward the purchase of Kennamer Cave.

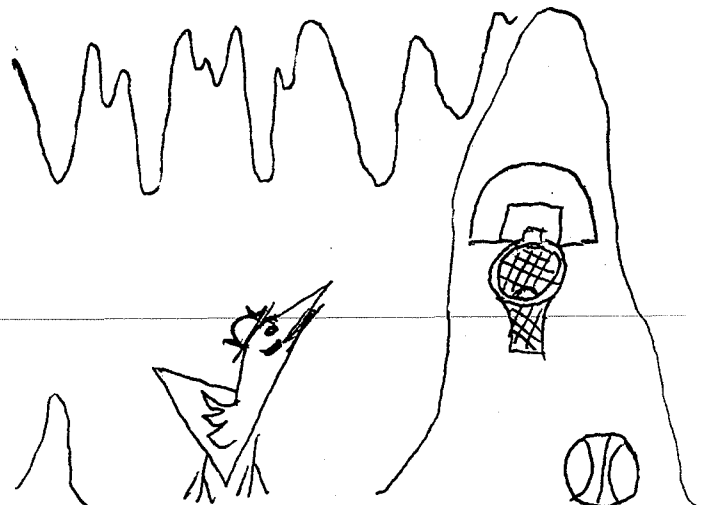
RAFFLE TIX

The grotto has a limited number (15) of tickets available to the current SCC raffle. The price is \$5 per ticket or 5 tickets for \$20. See D.Drake if interested.

COVER PHOTO

Scottie Arrington in Helictite Heaven, Fern Cave, Jackson Co., AL. Photo by Patrick O'Diam. April 9, 1994.

BIRDS OF A FEATHER



THE RAPING OF THE FINAL FRONTIER

TORODE PIT

March 22, 1997

By D.Drake

V.Bradford G.Moon R.Dunn
H.Calvert J.Lynn S.Arrington
B.Powell D.Drake G.Ledbetter

They don't come much prettier than Torode [I'm talking about the pit Bill...Ed]. On an afternoon straight out of a storybook, nine of us did one of TAG's finest. This seldom visited shaft rewards the diligent caver with 190-ft of freefall and 500-ft of massive cavern. Oh, and be sure to take a camera.

The bulk of the group met at the library at 8am then rendezvoused with me at the Baileyton Supermarket. After making the mandatory stop at the Guntersville Texaco, where we met Gary, we headed to Grant to pick up Glenn Ledbetter. Some of the group had caved with Glenn previously, but for the rest of us it was our first meeting.

We first obtained permission to do the pit from Mr. Gross whose yard you must park in and who has been the main contact on previous trips. Mr. Gross said that his neighbor and landowner Mr. Hall had become irritated at some previous cavers who had torn up a gate and left trash behind and encouraged us to stay off his land on the hike in. This we did as best we could. The abundance of loose rock and unseen holes make every step an adventure as you traverse down the mountainside. Before reaching the pit we encountered what we thought was a logging operation, however upon closer inspection Bern deduced that what we had thought to be a "skidder road" was actually a huge mudslide involving a good portion of the mountain. Dozens of trees fell victim to the onslaught of mud and car-sized boulders. At this point we began to believe we had gone too far or were not on the right bench, however,

Scottie and Rocky pushed on a little further and located the sink.

Torode Pit keeps a pristine look about it because of the hike in and the hike out. Not many care to risk ankle and limb climbing down the steeeeeep, breakdown littered hillside and then face the worst part of the trip on the way out. How steep is it? Let's just say we considered rigging the mountain.

Located on a bench midway up a mountain in Skyline, AL., the capacious Torode sink is probably 70 to 80-ft high on the upper side. We rigged the lower side and ran two 300-ft lengths of PMI over a large boulder perched atop a 20-ft slope down to the lip. Scottie and Rocky were the first to descend as they were leaving to meet Patrick O. in Woodville at 1:30. We allowed them to bounce the pit before the rest of us rappelled into the chasm. The shaft is cylindrical and spacious with an apparent lead or fissure intersecting about 50-ft down. The main, and only, passage leading off from the bottom is behemoth, probably 40X40, and leads to a 30-ft breakdown climb at the end of the cave. At the top of this climb are the only formations to be found. The ceiling and walls of the cave are speckled generously with bats. One of the most spectacular sights associated with this pit is the view from the back of the cave as one looks back toward the entrance. Filtered sunlight pouring in from the top of the pit is framed by the passage entrance some 500-ft away. It is truly an awesome sight.

We arrived back at the vehicles at about 4pm and noticed the other landowner, Mr. Hall, out at his horse barn. Ambassador Bradford strolled over to make conversation and before long Mr. Calvin Hall was showing us a better route to the pit. We talked for nearly an hour and left with a real sense of accomplishment. Not solely for conquering another TAG pit, but for solidifying our relationship with another very generous landowner.

WHO NEEDS AN OLD-FASHIONED RACK?

Trip report by Patrick O'Diam for
the first weekend in March

Louis Adams Scottie Arrington
Mary Adams Patrick O'Diam

Scottie was about 200 feet down the 586 foot pit at Fantastic when he yelled back to the top, "Oh Crap! I forgot to bring my rack!" Even though some people are starting to say that racks are old fashioned and should not be used, I would like to see someone do Fantastic on a Petzl Stop. Mary, Louis and I decided to keep our racks to do the drop, but Scottie decided if racks are for wimps, he would just do a rackless (and very reckless) rappel. The manly-man did a body rappel so as not to be classified as an "old fart" that didn't know how to have any fun.

Scottie arrived at my house about 6:45 and Mary and Louie at 7:00 (7:05 by my watch.) We were off to Georgia to do Ellison's Fantastic Pit. We had planned on this trip for weeks and were afraid the weather would be bad, but with good luck, the weather was great. I said the day was to nice to go underground and we should just go on up to Whiteside. I guess no one wanted to do that drop at midnight. That's about what time it would have been when we got there had we gone. Besides, it is closed this time of year. On the way up we laughed and cut-up the entire time. We

"Oh, about 700 feet." The ranger looked in disbelief and said, "No, how many feet of rope do you have when it's not all tied together?"

stopped off at Hardee's for breakfast. Soon we had crossed over Lookout Mountain and were close to the pit. The road to the parking place was closed but it was no match for the Trooper.

When we arrived at the parking lot, a truck from Louisiana was there with TAG and bat stickers on it. Someone else had beaten us there. We filled out the register and started up the mile long trail to the entrance of the cave. The trip up took about an hour and when we reached the top we noticed a good sized waterfall, that hadn't been there on previous trips, going into the small entrance. Scottie and I decided to go on back and check out the warm-up drop. We both got drenched just getting into the cave. We walked the thousand foot borehole passage that was an ankle deep river running back to the warm-up drop. There we found two other cavers, one from Louisiana and the other from Mississippi. They had driven too far not to do the cave. We waited with them until they got down and then we had 20 minutes to get back out of the cave before Mary and Louis got worried. We were off! We ran back up that passage making a big splash. I was really enjoying my new Nite Light. It lit the passage up very well. We made it to the entrance in 9 minutes and climbed out, getting drenched once again. No words were spoken, we just packed up and started back down the hill. This was probably the first time we let good judgement

prevail over desire. It was way too wet to do. We wanted Mary to enjoy her first time for something like that, and with all that water, none of us would have had a good time. At the bottom we noticed the blue hole that Vic said, "If it is running, don't

even go up." On our way up we didn't pay

much attention to it, because it looked calm. Now the water was flowing quite fast. I guess Vic was right again.

We then were off to Little River Canyon to do the 185' drop there. We drove along Lookout Mountain until we got to Mentone, AL., the home of the guord lady. Soon we were in Desoto State Park where we decided to take a bathroom break at the ranger station. When Louie asked the ranger if we needed permission to rappel in the park, he straightened his back up, pushed his chest out, twisted his handlebar moustache and said, "Yes, how many feet of rope do you have?" Louie replied, "Oh, about 700 feet." The ranger looked in disbelief and said, "No, how many feet of rope do you have when it's not all tied together?" Louie then replied about the same, yet went down to how many feet of rope with the exact inches. I don't think he ever believed us.

We arrived at Weaver overlook where the 185' bluff is and after the bluff was rigged, Scottie discovered he had forgotten to pack a rack. He could not decide the night before which rack to take, so he ended up not taking any. That would have been a fast rappel into Fantastic had we gotten to do it. Anyway, he used Mary's gear and we played around for awhile. When we were tired of playing, we ate some more of that great food that Mary fixed for us. When our bellies were full, we rode around a bit more and then headed home.

The folloing day I thought about going 4X4ing but Louie suggested going to Painted Bluff so we went there. As we were at Louie and Mary's getting ready to leave, we were talking about Scottie not having any gear with him because he thought we were going 4Wheel'n, so he was going to use Mary's gear. As we were leaving he said, " Oh, I need to grab a rack." It was then stated that if he didn't need a rack at Fantastic, he didn't need one at Painted Bluff.

The bluff was very nice. The wind was blowing hard and the weather was great. It was my first time there and I really enjoyed it. Mary sat up top and watched us, the deer and the bald eagles. Louie and I climbed tandem the last climb of the day. It was a nice evening. The entire weekend was good. It was a bit of a disappointment not to get to do Fantastic, but it will still be there when we go back in drier weather. As bad as Scottie didn't want to, he still made all his drops this weekend using a rack, not his own, yet he still went back to the best rappelling device there is. (Louie, I know exactly where I am!)

7AG MEMORIES

CHAPEL CAVE
Morgan County, Alabama
Birmingham Grotto Newsletter
(January, 1976) 5-6

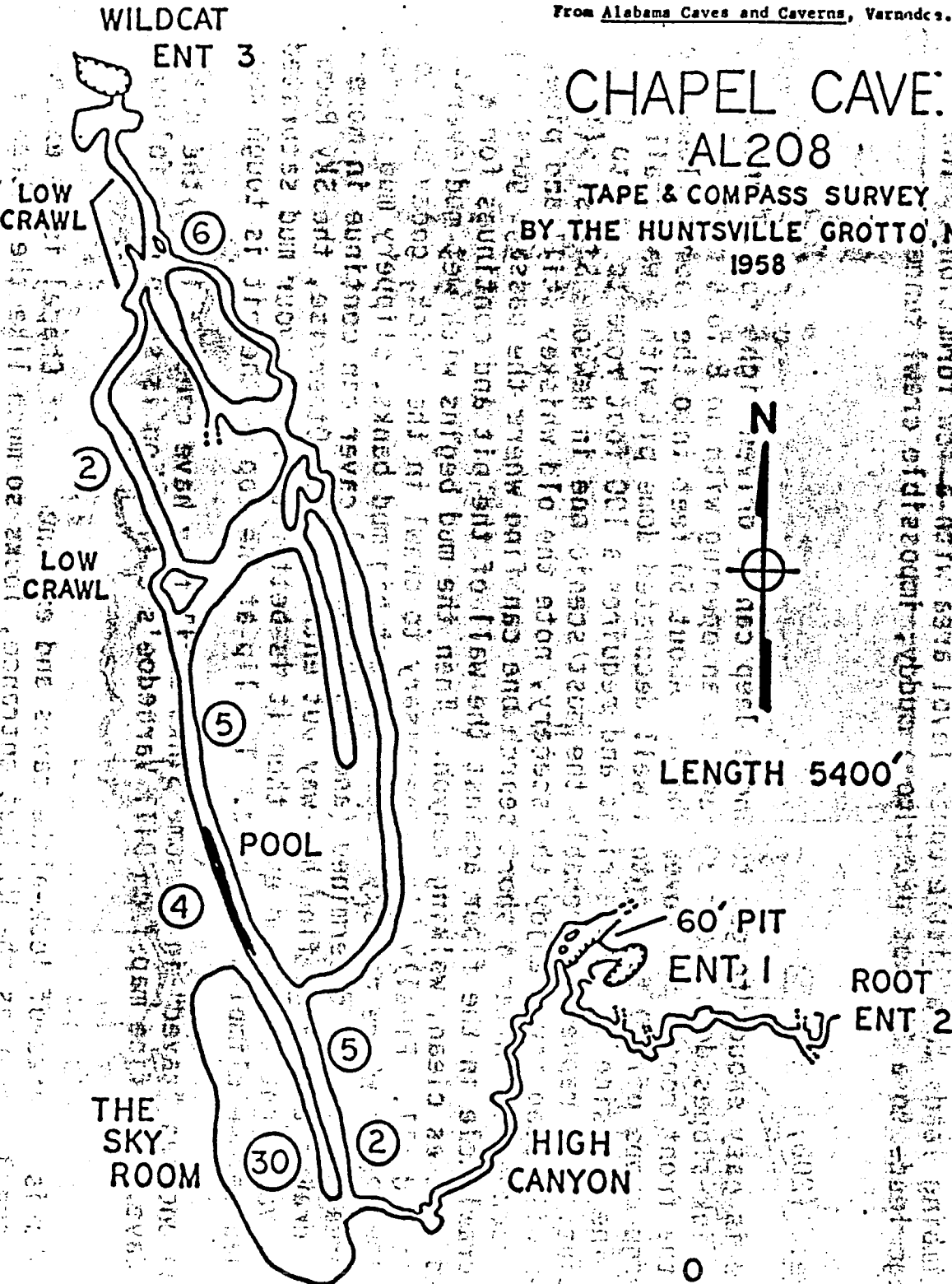
The entrance is a large arch with a climb down to a sloping ledge of flowstone and break-down. From the ledge the dome pit extends up about 40 feet and down 60 feet. Two talus blocks provide rappel anchors on the ledge, but a 120 feet of rope are needed to rig the drop safely. The rappel is initially down the face of a flowstone drapery and requires particular care, especially as bats occasionally dangle between the folds of the drapery.

After a few feet against the rock, the rappeller is free to rotate and enjoy viewing an occasional formation, some very attractive dome architecture, and a waterfall which is fortuitously located to the right. An old still at the bottom adds a touch of Morgan County spirit to the cave. A hole in the wall opposite the rope involves the caver in a muddy, winding stream slot with an abundance of duck unders and crawl overs. A 50-foot crawl at the end of this passage leads into the Sky Room, apparently so named for the white patches which give the appearance of stars on the smooth, domed ceiling. We chose not to push the remainder of the cave which is a muddy crawl of such magnitude as to make Grave's seem a wind sprint. The climb out is easy and enjoyable all the way to the lip. There the rope lies flush on the smooth flowstone for about 15 feet which helps one to maintain his respect for the pit.

From Alabama Caves and Caverns, Varndolce.

CHAPEL CAVE: AL208

TAPE & COMPASS SURVEY
BY THE HUNTSVILLE GROTTO, N.S.S.
1958



LENGTH 5400'

60' PIT
ENT 1
ROOT
ENT 2

The Botanical Survey of Neversink

By Alan Cressler

As part of the Southeastern Cave Conservancy's management plan of the Neversink Property, a botanical survey was conducted at the pit and adjacent sink area. On July 5, 1996, Stephen M. Bowling, a botanist-wetlands specialist with Golder and Associates of Atlanta, completed the detailed inventory. Additional species from the main pit were provided by myself.

Over the years, amateur and academic botanists have looked at plants in and around the sink. The closest thing to a complete plant survey was made by caver Michael Ray for a college degree requirement the mid-1980s.

Although Neversink is jewel of the caving world and the habitat is highly specialized, the pit can only boast one truly rare plant. That is the little fern called *Single-sorus Spleenwort* (*Asplenium monanthes* L.) It is a protected plant in Alabama, where Neversink is located. In a good year when the

plants have not been killed back by freezes, several clumps of the fern can be observed on the sensitive ledges to the left of the main rig point.

Steve spent about six hours looking at almost every plant in the sink. His survey yielded about 130 species of trees, shrubs, and herbaceous plants. Most species are highly representative of the limestone mountain slopes in Jackson County. The complete list will be published at a later date.

During the botanical survey, we noticed that several of the more sensitive vegetation areas were being damaged from tramping. With the vegetation removed, the soil is eroding into the pit. This is having a bad effect on the plants on the pit ledges.

It is a good policy to stay on established trails and don't trample existing plants growing around the pit.

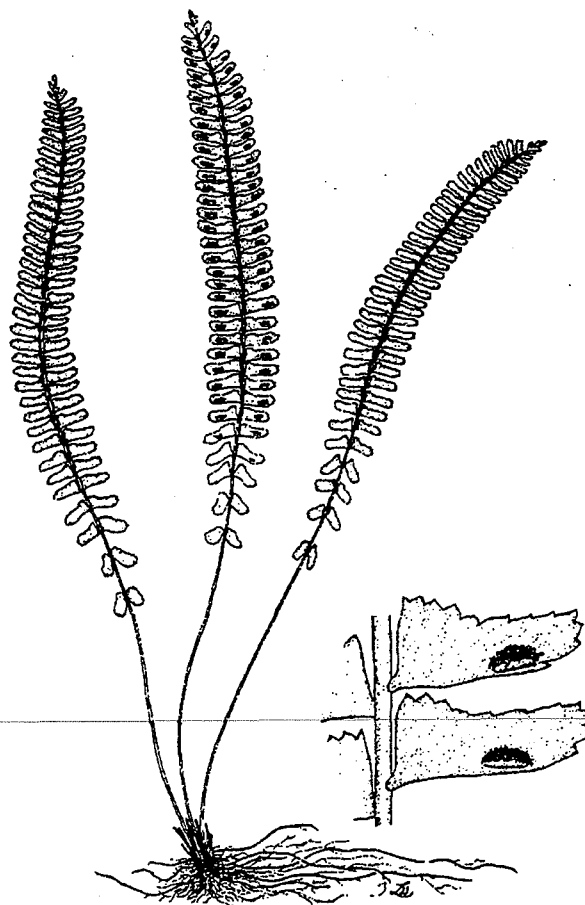
Single-Sorus Spleenwort

Spleenworts are a type of fern of the genus *Asplenium*, having feather-like fronds and once thought to cure spleen disorders. The Single-sorus Spleenwort which grows at Neversink is a wide ranging plant in the tropics. It is rare in the United States, occurring in about seven sites in four states. In the U.S. it is able to exist in special habitats like Neversink.

The Single-Sorus Spleenwort has fronds up to 12 inches long. Each blade (or leaf), has a single spore case, or sorus. The blades are smooth on the lower side while the upper side is pinnate, resembling a feather. The blades attach to the main stalk at a point low on the blade. The blades are asymmetrical.

For more information consult *How To Know The Ferns And Fern Allies* by John T. Mickel or *A Field Manual Of The Ferns And Fern-Allies Of The United States And Canada* by David B. Lellinger.

Special thanks to Steve Franks of the Department of Botany, University of Georgia, and Alan Cressler for locating information and artwork for this article.



Southeastern Cave Conservancy, Inc.

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E-MAIL 71155,765@compuserve.com

13 March 1997

To: Cullman Grotto of the NSS
c/o Mary Adams, Treasurer
Post Office Box 1555
Cullman AL 35056

We thank you very much for your continuing support and gift of \$100.00 dollars to the SCC, Inc. Your commitment to the SCC is the base we must have to continue acquiring new properties.

As you are aware we closed the purchase of Neversink Pit and just made our last loan payment at the 1996 Annual Meeting held in Chattanooga TN. Every dollar sent in will help the SCC treasury recover from this payoff as we have a bank balance of less than three thousand dollars. As the Conservancy acquires more caves, our annual expenses increase as we have to pay property taxes, insurance and maintenance on our holdings. We need a sustaining base of members to meet these continuing commitments.

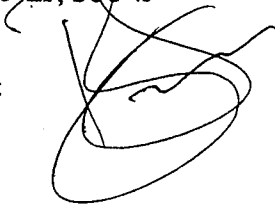
In addition to the Neversink project we have an agreement ready to sign for the lease of Surprise Pit in Fern Cave, Jackson Co., AL. As we finish these deals we will need funding to move on with other projects the membership proposes at our meetings.

Our latest news is that we signed an agreement to close a purchase of Kenemer Cave and 102 acres in Jackson County AL. This property is located near Fern Cave. (Update, We have closed the deal; it's now the property of the SCC, Inc.) Your donation will be applied to this purchase per your request.

Thank you for helping the Conservancy acquire and protect caves.

Sincerely,
Southeastern Cave Conservancy, Inc.
Buddy Lane, Treasurer
NSS 12054LF, SCC 43

BL:bl
SCC Gift



MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING

OF

CULLMAN GROTTO OF NATIONAL SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY
March 4, 1997

The regular meeting of Cullman Grotto of National Speleological Society was called to order on Tuesday, March 4, 1997 at 7:30 p.m. in the Conference Room of the Cullman County Public Library by Patrick O'Diam, Chairman. 29 members and guests were in attendance.

The minutes were read and approved by all present.

See David Drake, Historian, for applications for the Alabama Cave Survey, which are \$10.

A Boy Scout training trip is scheduled for May 24. Anyone interested in helping with the training, contact David Drake.

A \$100 check was mailed towards the acquisition of Kennamer Cave.

Grotto T-shirts are available for \$12 each or \$10 each for two or more shirts purchased.

Membership cards for the Cullman Grotto has been tabled until a decision is made as to a permanent Grotto logo.

Turkey season starts March 21, so beware of caves on hunting club property during this season.

Trip reports were given by David Drake, Victor Bradford, Patrick O'Diam and Scottie Arrington.

There being no further business to come before the meeting, the Chairman declared it adjourned and there was a slide show presented by Patrick O'Diam.

APPROVED _____
Chairman

APPROVED _____
Secretary

The

FLOWSTONE

MAY 1997

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE CULLMAN GROTTO
OF THE NATIONAL SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Vol. IV No. 5



Victor at South Pittsburg Pit

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 to be included in the following month's issue. Send items and exchanges to: D.Drake, 110 County Road 1386, Falkville AL 35622.

The Cullman Grotto will exchange by request with any publishing grotto.

Republication of articles or items contained within the Flowstone welcome providing credit is given to source.

Annual dues for the Cullman Grotto are eight dollars (\$8) for individual membership or ten dollars (\$10) per family. Dues are payable at the first grotto meeting of each year and include subscription to The FLOWSTONE. Subscription rate for non-members is eight dollars (\$8) per year.

The Cullman Grotto meets the first Tuesday of every month at 7:30pm in the Cullman County Public Library conference room, 200 Clark St NE, Cullman AL. Visitors and prospective members are welcome.

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CALENDER

May 11-Grotto trip TBA.

May 18-SCC Annual Membership Meeting and Spring Board of Directors Meeting, 10am, Hampton Inn, US Hwy 72, Scottsboro, AL.

May 24-Huntsville Varsity Scout High Adventure rappelling training hosted by the Cullman Grotto. 10 am, Blount Springs.

May 30-Jun 1, 1997-SERA Summer Cave Carnival, Raccoon Mountain Caverns Campground, Chattanooga, TN. Hosted by Central Alabama Grotto. Contact Michael Gilbert (205) 249-8341.

Jun 3-Monthly Grotto meeting, 7:30pm, Cullman Public Library conference room. Program to be announced. Trip following meeting.

Jun 23-27, 1997-NSS Convention, Sullivan, MO. Contact: Pam Saberton, 3820 Juniata St., St.Louis, MO 63116. (314)772-6956.

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BAT FAX

Bats are exceptionally vulnerable to extinction, in part because they are the slowest reproducing mammals on earth for their size. Most produce only one young a year.

ECHO CHAMBER

GROTTO IN A.C.S

Lone Bat Cave will be included in the new ACS book now being printed. Although location coordinates were not entered in time for printing, a map of the cave did beat the deadline. Lone Bat will mark the first Cullman Grotto entry in the Alabama Cave Survey.

COVER PHOTO

Victor Bradford yo-yoing South Pittsburg Pit, South Pittsburg, TN. Photo by Patrick O'Diam, Dec. 27, 1996.

RAPPELLING CLASS

As has been mentioned the past few months, the Cullman Grotto has been asked to conduct a rappelling class for Varsity Scouts, ages 14-18, May 24 (Memorial Day weekend). Scouts will be coming from Athens, Huntsville, Decatur, Guntersville, Scottsboro, Cullman, and Fayetteville, TN. There could be as many as 70 scouts show up for this training. The class will be held in Blount Springs. All who wish to participate in this venture are urged to do so. Obviously with this many boys we will need all the manpower and rope we can provide. The plan is to drop several ropes over drops of

THE NIGHT TIME IS THE RIGHT TIME

D.Drake
April 1997

Trip One-Mrs. Miller's

P.O'Diam J.Cammon D.Drake

"How 'bout Cracker Jack?"

"Now, it'd be too wet"

"What about War Eagle?"

"Closed"

"Natural Well?"

"Better not, I've got new tires"

And so the post meeting conversation went as we tried to come up with a cave that was relatively close and open at 10:00 at night.

Finally Patrick interjected, "Well, we could go to Mrs. Miller's." Jon and I seconded the motion, as neither of us had done the cave. Jon needed to swing by his house and get his gear

so Pat and I decided to go ahead and drive to Arab and wait for him at the Pharoah Shop.

Jon's run of bad luck with his quality vehicles continued as he had to change a flat tire before arriving at the designated rendezvous point just before Pat

and I were about to pull out. "Now, I just hope I can recognize the right road when I see it", Patrick mumbled as we drove off in the caving GEO.

"Call Vic", I muttered, "We're running out of Marshall County roads to try."

"But it's 11:30", Pat lamented.

"That's alright", I assured, "He's probably just getting in from feeding the mules."

We made our last attempt at contacting Vic at 12:40am. When this attempt was unsuccessful we changed plans and decided to go wallow in the mud of Beech Spring Cave. As we headed toward Union Hill, Patrick yelled, "There it is, that's the road." We quickly made a U-turn and headed down our road to the promised land.

"I know we're in the right spot", Patrick stated apologetically. "We've got to be standing right on top of the cave." But we weren't, in fact we never found Mrs. Miller's that night. It was still cool ridgewalking an obscure hillside in North Alabama at 2:30 in the morning though.

Trip Two-Neversink

S.Arrington D.Drake

Returning home from the Alabama Cave Survey meeting April 19, Scottie and I decided to go pit bouncing later that evening.

I had

"Call Vic", I muttered, "We're running out of Marshall County roads to try."

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wanted to do something in the Anniston area after the meeting but was the only one of our group who had brought any equipment. Besides, none of us were aware of anything deep in the area with the

exception of a couple of closed 400-ft bluffs. Since caving was out of the picture for the time being, we chose the next best thing....Pizza Hut.

I met Scottie at Jerry's at 8:15pm where we loaded up in Scottie's pickem-up truck and headed for a moonlight encounter with Neversink.

The mist from Neversink's waterfall created a fog which consumed the pit's cavity

and rendered headlamps nearly useless while on rope. Irradescent lichens growing on the nearby walls gave forth an eerie glow as we climbed.

We both bounced the pit twice with Pizza Hut very nearly delivering on my second climb, if you know what I mean. We were back by 1:30am. I was sawing logs by 2:00.



 FROM THE MAILBAG 

Windy City Speleonews: Rich Whisler reports of a new cave found in southern Indiana. Dreamside Cave was named after a "unique and colorful" formation found within. The cave currently has over 1300 feet of passage and is still going, albeit low and wet. Survey should be complete sometime in 1997.

Huntsville Grotto Newsletter: Reports that the owner of Walnut Cave, a popular horizontal, has closed the cave on the advice of his attorney. The owner was erroneously told that he was liable for any accident that occurred in his cave. Negotiations are under way to educate the owner on current Alabama Cave laws and to get the cave reopened on some type of basis. At present Walnut Cave should be considered closed.

Jan-Feb, 1997 Focus, published by **Scottsboro Advertising & Marketing:** Cathedral Caverns is set to open as a tourist facility sometime in mid-1998. \$1.3 million is currently being spent on development of Cathedral Caverns State Park, according to Gov. Fob James and officials of the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.

Guntersville Advertiser-Gleam: Four Marshall County men spent thirty hours trapped in a cave, with no light and no food. The ill equipped novices entered Cave Mountain Cave near the Guntersville dam in Marshall county, AL., Thursday afternoon, April 3, with two flashlights and no knowledge of the cave or the sport. After a short time the batteries in the flashlights went dead leaving the four trapped. Two of the men tried to feel their way out but abandoned that idea when one of them fell and hurt his side.

On Friday TVA police noticed a car parked near the start of the trail leading to the cave and realized the same car had been there the day before. They notified the sheriff's office who had already been contacted by the family of one of the men. After concluding that the car belonged to the missing men, officers called out the Guntersville Rescue Squad. By midnight Friday rescue unit personnel were working their way into the cave. They located the two men who had started out on their own several hundred yards from the entrance.

The injured man was extricated in a Stokes basket and taken to the Guntersville-Arab Medical Center's emergency room where he was treated and released.

One of the men said it was his first time to go caving and it was definitely going to be his last. [Here-here.....Ed.]

SCC Newsletter: The annual meeting of the Southeastern Cave Conservancy will be held Sunday, May 18 at the Hampton Inn on Hwy 72 in Scottsboro. It will include a presentation on current and planned acquisitions as well as an opportunity for members to ask questions and make suggestions regarding plans, activities and policies of the SCC. A Board of Directors meeting will follow a short recess for lunch.

Newsletter of the Southeastern Cave Conservancy

Number 7, Winter 1997

SCC Neversink Photo Series

By Bill Putnam

Many of us have enjoyed the beauty and splendor of Neversink, and many of us have tried to capture that beauty on film. Now the SCC has done that for you. John Van Swearingen IV, an award-winning photographer and caver, has produced two beautiful, high-quality color prints of TAG's finest pit.

"A Mid-Winter's Dream" features the pit's waterfall. This nighttime exposure with illumination provided by moonlight is truly beautiful and unique. The second print, "Startrails over Neversink", is a view looking straight up from the bottom of the pit. The time-lapse exposure, supplemented with strobes to illuminate the pit's walls, has several star trails in the sky over the pit.

We are pleased to offer your choice of one of these 8x10 full color prints, with matte, to contributors who donate \$20 to the SCC Cave Acquisition Fund. If you donate \$40 or more we'll send you both prints. All donations go directly to buy and lease caves and are fully deductible according to IRS rules for charitable contributions.

Contact Bill Putnam, 1865 Eagle Summit Ct, Lawrenceville GA 30243-6669, (770 822-0003) to make a donation and choose your print. Please include \$3 postage and packaging.

Acquisition Update

The SCC is dedicated to the acquisition and management of caves and karst lands. Here is a summary of our current acquisition projects.

Anderson Cave, Ala. Lease. Verbal agreement with owner - paperwork pending. Cave currently closed. Property contains several caves.

Anvil Cave, Ala. Lease. Under investigation. Cave currently closed.

Cemetery Pit, Rusty's Cave, Ga. Purchase. Under investigation. Caves are currently open. Property contains several caves.

Gourdneck Cave, Tenn. Lease. Verbal agreement with owner. Paperwork pending. Cave currently open.

Horseskull Cave/ Jacks Hole, Ala. Lease. Negotiation in progress. Cave currently closed.

Junkyard Cave, Tenn. Lease. Under investigation. Cave is currently closed.

Little Airplane Cave, Tenn. Lease. Draft lease submitted to owner for review. Cave currently closed.

Logsdon Cave, Ky. Lease. Under investigation. Owned by the Nashville Grotto.

Tiftonia Pit, Tenn. Lease. Negotiation in progress. Cave currently closed.

South Pittsburg Pit, Tenn. Lease. Verbal agreement with owner - paperwork pending. Limited access by permission only.

SOUTH PITTSBURG PIT

B. Powell
S. Arrington
Rocky Dunn

V. Bradford
H. Calvert
Randy Dunn

As trips often do, this one started out in the morning, because we wanted to get an early start. We met at the Cullman Library, waited for stragglers to drag in and started the drive east on 69 to Gunter'sville, stopping along the way to pick up Scotty's nephews in Baileyton.

Another stop at the Texaco station and we were soon on our way past Scottsboro on 72 heading north towards South Pittsburg which is just across the Alabama line. The weather was fair that morning although a bit nippy and we made good time on the drive up, arriving at our destination at about 10:30.

We parked on a hillside drive just out of the way and hoofed it up and around the side of the hill to avoid crossing any local residences yards. It was only about a quarter of a mile hike and we soon arrived at the logging road that runs right by the pit entrance. The hike was just enough to warm us up.

From the hillside at the pit entrance the Tennessee river and the bridge crossing there are clearly visible when the leaves are off the trees but much less so after spring.

After securing Scotty's rope and feeding it over a convenient pine log that spanned the crack entrance we began the 105 ft. descent. The pit itself has a lot of character and detail and at times when the sun is unobstructed there is a beam of light that traverses the north end of the pit illuminating some flowstone formations and generally creating what could be a great photo opportunity if you had a camera.

There is passage to be explored if you so choose and animal bones litter the fall line off the breakdown pile at the south end of the pit.

Some of the younger guys were climbing out in near three minute timings. The rest of us, how can I say this, took somewhat longer, but we didn't mind. All in all, we did the pit and might have done it again but a cool stiff breeze made the stay chilly unless you moved around so by 3pm we were back at our vehicles loading up for the ride home. Scotty's group acted like they might do something else, but that'll be their story. Vic slept all the way back but did comment that it was the shortest trip back that he remembered. South Pittsburg Pit

Go out and cave,
Bernard

7AG MEMORIES

REYNOLDS PIT
Ed Yarbrough
Speleoneus
16(6)82

"Twas the day after Christmas when Alan Lenk and I returned to Nashville from a trip to Cumberland Caverns, the pit in Ben White Cave and other delights. As I walked in the door Judy told me that Jimmy Hiatt, an old friend from high school days, had called about a "three hundred foot pit at Carthage." Hmmm.

This may be the age of miracles, but I was still a bit skeptical as Jimmy told me about the hole his brother Johnny and their family had found during a Yuletide hike in Carthage, Tennessee. He reported that Johnny had descended thirty feet to a ledge and saw no bottom. Rocks seemed to bounce down the shaft for a long time, hence the modest 300 foot estimate. Next day Jimmy, Alan and I were in I-40 with rope in the trunk and gleams in our eyes.

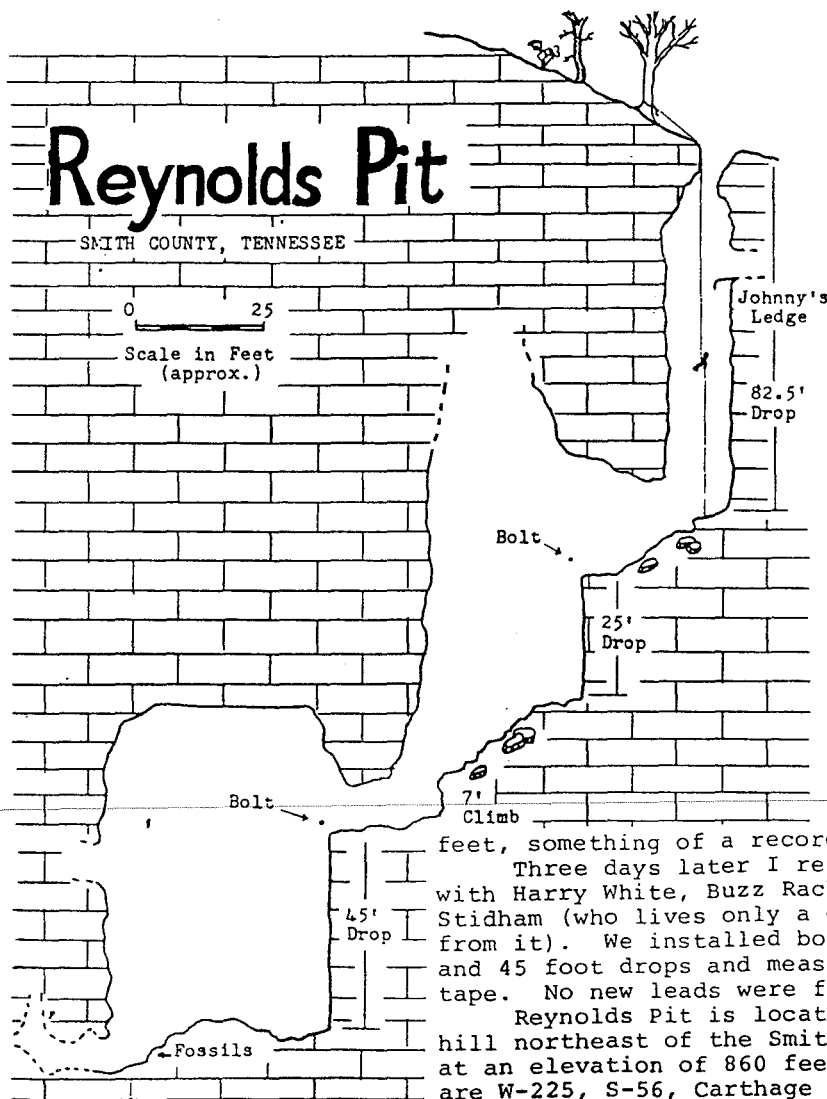
The pit was on the property of Ed Reynolds, actually within the corporate limits of Carthage. The opening was about four feet by six feet and did indeed go "straight down." Still the incurable skeptic,

I only put 150 feet of rope in the hole and started down. I passed the ledge Jimmy had mentioned and found the floor 82.5 feet below the surface. But there was a slope.

Loose breakdown and bones formed the steep slope that led to a twenty-five foot drop some fifteen feet below the bottom of the first pitch. I remained on the rope and did this drop only to find another slope and short drop beyond. By then I was running short of rope so I got off and called for Alan. He soon joined me on the slope and stayed on rappel to do the seven foot (climbable) drop beyond me. As I was going down the climb he went ahead and found another drop.

This is where those of little faith had to go back up and retie the rope. I clipped on the Jumars and climbed out of the pit, amid some grumbling. ("Smith County pits aren't supposed to require more than 150 feet of rope.") Jimmy was elated to hear that we were still going down. He had built a nice fire and waited patiently as I again disappeared over the rim of the pit.

The final drop proved to be 45 feet and somewhat wet. We explored a short passage at the bottom and then began the ascent. The total depth of the cave was put at about 200



feet, something of a record for Carthage! Three days later I returned to the pit with Harry White, Buzz Rackley and David Stidham (who lives only a quarter mile away from it). We installed bolts above the 25 and 45 foot drops and measured them with tape. No new leads were found.

Reynolds Pit is located on a prominent hill northeast of the Smith County Courthouse at an elevation of 860 feet. (Millimeters are W-225, S-56, Carthage quad.)

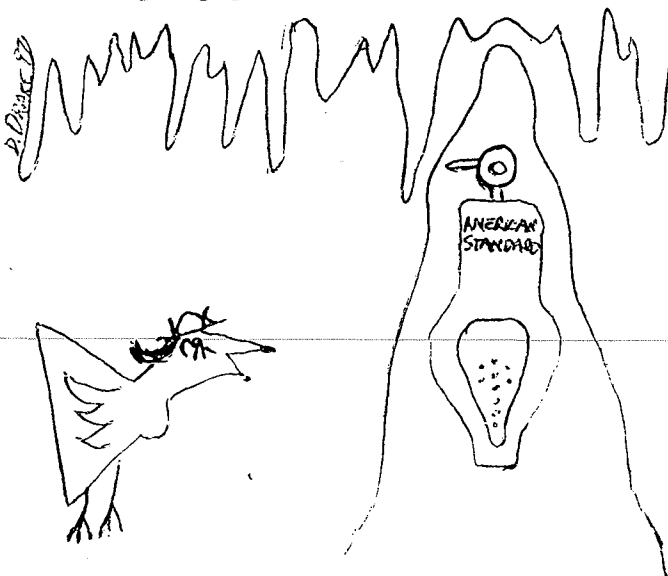
Kennamer Cave Property Management Plan

Southeastern Cave Conservancy, Inc.
Adopted November 14, 1996
Modified February 8, 1997

The following plan was adopted by the Board of Directors to define the management of the conservancy's Kennamer Cave property. The intent of this plan is to protect the property and to preserve the good relationship that the SCC has established with the surrounding landowners. The board recognizes that many cavers and organizations throughout the country have supported the acquisition of the property, and wishes to make access as open as possible. Please observe the rules and encourage others to do the same so that this unique and beautiful natural site may be enjoyed by all.

- 1 While membership is not required for access to the Kennamer Cave property, the Conservancy strongly recommends that visitors be members of the Conservancy. Membership in the National Speleological Society is also encouraged.
- 2 Permission is not required to visit the property.
- 3 Use only the designated parking area and trail until you reach the SCC boundary. We have been given permission for parking and access across the neighbors property but do not own it. When using the non-SCC owned entrances (Kenna-Pit, Orgy or Lower) remember that you are on our neighbors land and that you are a guest. This is also true of the parking area and the first half of the trail to the main sink entrance.
- 4 Park along the road or in the clearing off the main road. Do not block the main road or the 4WD road at the parking area.
- 5 To minimize impact, the Conservancy prefers that groups visiting the cave be small. Please try to keep the number of people in your group to twelve (12) or fewer. Large groups have greater impact on the cave environment.
- 6 Use of the property for any type of commercial activity, including caving or other recreational activities, is not allowed.
- 7 Hunting is not allowed except by direct written permission of the SCC Board. The Board has given permission only to the neighboring landowners and our designated local caretaker. No other hunters are allowed. The trail and the area around the main sink entrance is a posted safety zone, and no shooting is allowed into or around those areas.
- 8 To avoid parking and over-use problems during caving conventions and special events, access to the property will be limited during those events to prearranged trips organized through the convention or event.
- 9 Please keep noise to a minimum, and be discreet while changing clothes.
- 10 Modifications to the cave or property, including the placing of bolts or other artificial anchors is prohibited without the express written consent of the SCC Board.
- 11 The property will be maintained in its natural state and will not be developed, improved, or exploited in any way, except as necessary to maintain the boundaries and access trails and to manage its usage as a natural area.

BIRDS OF A FEATHER



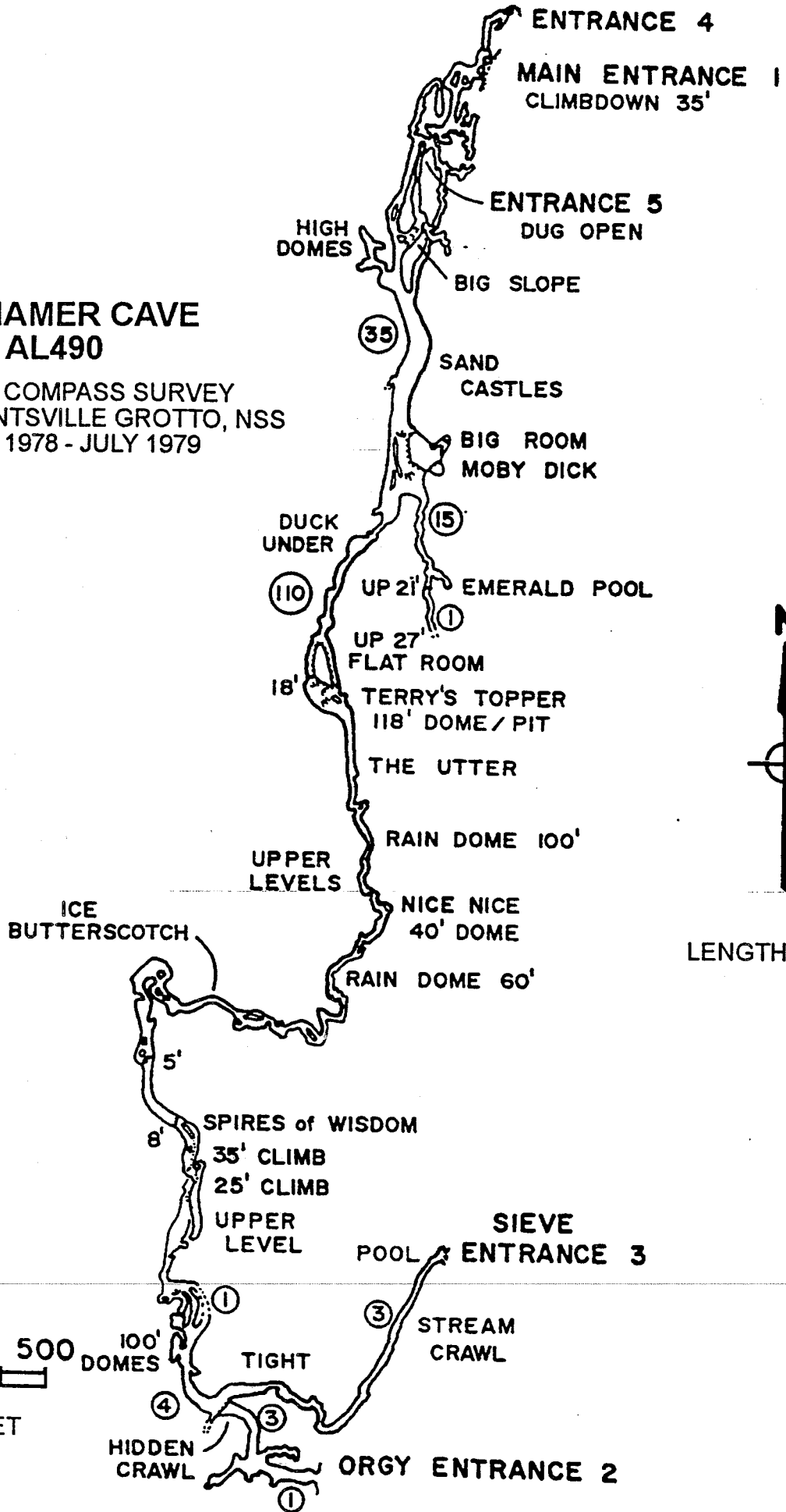
"Honey, what do they call this formation?"

SCC Schedule Of Events

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| April 5 | SCC presentation at the SERA winter Business Meeting, Windshape Center, Berry College, Rome, Georgia. |
| May 18 | Annual SCC member's meeting, Scottsboro, Alabama. |
| May 30-June 1 | SCC booth at the SERA Summer Cave Carnival, Raccoon Mountain Campground, Chattanooga, Tennessee. |
| August 16 | SCC Board Meeting, Knoxville, Tennessee. |
| October ?? | SCC booth at the TAG Fall Cave-In, Valley Head, Alabama. |

KENNAMER CAVE AL490

TAPE & COMPASS SURVEY
BY THE HUNTSVILLE GROTTO, NSS
AUG 1978 - JULY 1979



LENGTH 10,888



DCG TAG Closed Cave and Cave Access List

April 1997

Please share this information with all your caving friends!
You may freely copy this, as long as it stays intact.

CLOSED CAVES

The following caves are closed! Please go somewhere else.

Afterbirth Cave (GA)	Hall Cave (TN)	Quarry Tube (TN)
Airplane Cave (TN)	Hambrick Sinks Cave (AL)	Rainpot (AL)
A. J. Cave (AL)	Hardins Junkyard Cave (TN)	Richard's Cave (GA)
Allen Switch Cave (AL)	Herring Cave (TN)	Roaring River Cave (AL)
Arm Pit (GA)	Hughes Cave (AL)	Roll Tide (AL)
Baby Hog Horror Hole (TN)	Indian Cave (TN)	Royal Shaft (AL)
Balcony Sink (AL)	Jarrell's Cave (TN)	Sand Mountain Cave (TN)
Bell Spring Cave (AL)	JHS Cave/ Norseman's Well (AL)	Sinkhole (TN)
Big Hammer Cave (AL)	John Fisher Cave (TN)	Skylight Cave (AL)
Borderline Cave (AL)	Kaolin Pit (AL)	Smith Cave (TN)
Bluff River (AL)	Kenamer Pit (GA)	Snail Shell Cave (TN)
Boxcar Cave (GA)	Keyhole Cave (TN)	Steve's Pit (AL)
Brown's Cave (AL)	Longs Rock Wall Cave (GA)	Stevie Wonder Hole (AL)
Bulldog Cave (GA)	Kudzu Cave (AL)	Steward's Spring Cave (AL)
Byers' Cave (GA)	Linder Mountain Cave (TN)	Stolen Well/Davis Cove Cave (AL)
Cairn Blowhole (AL)	Lost Pig Cave (TN)	Tate Cave (AL)
Cave of the Domes (TN)	Lumberyard Cave (TN)	Tiftonia Pit (TN)
Chapel Cave (AL)	McAllister Sink Cave (AL)	Trillium Cave (TN)
Cripps Mill Cave (TN)	Mikes Wolf Cave (AL)	Upper River Caves (AL)
Crossings Cave (AL)	Mill Cave (TN)	Valhalla (AL)
Dead Man's Pit (GA)	Mega Well (AL)	Vast Caverns (AL)
Dancing Fern (TN)	Montague Cave (TN)	Walking Fern Cave (AL)
Davis Cove Cave (AL)	Mountain Cove Farms Caves #1, 2, and 3 (GA)	Walnut Cave (AL)
Devil's Den (AL)	Norseman's Well (AL)	Walrus Pot (AL)
Devil's Dungeon (AL)	Paint Rock River Cave (AL)	War Eagle (AL)
Drag Fold (GA)	Patriot Pit (TN)	Weigand Pit (AL)
Engle Double (AL)	Peacock Cave (AL)	Wild Man Cove Cave (?)
Falling Cave (AL)	Peacock Cave (GA)	Will Stone Cave (TN)
Four Kings Cave (GA)	Pearson's Pit (GA)	William's Saltpeter Cave (AL)
Frick's Cave (GA)	Peterson's Pit (AL)	Wolf Cave (AL)
Gary Self Cave (AL)	Pretty Well (AL)	Wynne Cave (AL)
Graham Cove Cave (AL)	Pryor Spring Cave (TN)	Wynne's Pit (AL)
Guntersville Cavern (AL)		

Cave Access And Other Useful Information

Antler Pit (AL): Avoid during hunting season.

Invil Cave (AL): Bluff entrance accessible from Flint Creek is still open. All other entrances are closed.

Anderson Spring Cave (GA): Cave is open, but access from the bottom is not. Come in from the top of the mountain down Rape Gap.

Balcony Sink/ Falling Cave (AL): These are alternate names for the same pit. The pit is closed (and posted with "No Caving" signs).

Barrel Cave (AL): Permission required. Contact owner Jim Gifford (205-776-2137 E).

Big Coon Valley (AL): Ownership status is unsure, but road is gated and cavers have been chased off by people with guns. Caves in Big Coon Valley include Iron Hoop Cave and Jess Elliot Cave. Some caves in Big Coon Valley (such as Iliad/Odyssey and Elmo's Canyon) are on Skyline Wildlife Management Area land. Take care not to trespass on private property in accessing them.

Bill Ellis Pit cluster (AL): Contact landowner, John Harris, of Huntsville, AL prior to visit for permission. His pit cluster includes: John Harris Hole (AJK 3200), Gotchee Goo Pot (AJK 3201), Hoot Owl Hole (AJK 3202).

Blowing Spring Cave (TN): The Wicked Splendor entrance of Blowing Spring Cave is closed during hunting season.

Blue Hole (GA): In Crockford-Pigeon Mountain Wildlife Management Area. Please do not park or camp within 100 feet of the spring. Gate is open year round. Please bring your own rope to do Fantastic Pit. NO ropes are to be left overnight in the cave. Also, you must fill out the required sign-in card at the parking lot.

Blue Springs Cave (TN): Permission from owner Lonnie Carr is required. Contact him at 615-761-2704.

Bowling Cave (AL): Permission required.

Bull Cave (TN): Park permission is required. Trespassers will be prosecuted. **Byers' Cave (GA):** Byers' Cave is closed. Jerry Reeves of NAG Grotto (AL), however, is allowed to lead a limited number of trips to this cave. Contact him for information.

Cagle's Chasm (TN): Closed after dark. Cavers must be off the mountain before dark.

Case Cave (GA): Gated. Case Cave is located on State of Georgia property and is managed by Pigeon Mountain Grotto P. O. Box 471, Lafayette, GA 30728). To obtain permission to visit the cave, contact Pigeon Mountain Grotto three weeks prior to trip. The Grotto plans to conduct one trip per month for experienced cavers. Other group trips (Scouts, etc.) will be handled on an individual basis. Three weeks notice is mandatory.

Cedar Ridge Crystal Cave (TN): Gated. Contact Chattanooga Grotto to arrange access.

Conley Hole (TN): Closed during hunting season.

Cripps Mill Cave (TN): All entrances of the cave are to protect the bat population. Trespassers will likely be arrested and can be fined up to \$10,000.

Dick Pit (AL): Avoid during hunting season (November-January).

Doodlebug Cave (AL): The new owner, Herman Owens, is reportedly allowing cavers to visit the cave. Get permission from him before going.

Dry Creek Cave (AL): Permission required. **England Cove Area (TN):** This area is gated. Closed during hunting season. Contact Jerrell Killian of the Upper Cumberland Grotto for more info. This area includes Skagnasty Cave.

Eudy Cave (AL): Permission required.

Falling Spring Cave (AL): The landowner of Falling Spring Cave and the land around it is Tommy Bean (205-259-6760). Contact him for permission to enter the cave. Park your vehicles outside the gate across the 4WD road that goes to the cave in an easily identifiable parking area. The landowner of this parking area is Colonel Hambrick (215-437-8039) and you must contact him for permission prior to parking on his property. It's about a two mile walk to the cave from the parking area. This cave is only open during the summer and the group must consist of three cavers. One visit per year is allowed. (Note: There seems to be a lot of confusion about the name Falling Springs. Falling Springs is not the same cave as Falling Cave. Falling Cave, which is also called Balcony Sink, is closed).

Fargo Well (AL): Permission is required from the landowners at the base of the mountain. They are very friendly, but are particular about where you park.

Fern Cave (AL): The Surprise Pit entrance requires a permit to visit. The Johnson entrance is on Wheeler Wildlife Management Area land and also requires a permit to visit. Contact Access Coordinator John Van Swearingen IV ("J. V.") of Huntsville Grotto (AL) to obtain a permits for either entrance. Only NSS members will be allowed to obtain a permit. The West Passage of the cave is closed. The Morgue entrance and Little Morgue entrance of Fern are home to a bat maternity colony and are closed between August 15 and April 15. Violators will be prosecuted.

Fiery Gizzard Cove area (TN): Charlie Smith of Fiery Gizzard Cove has requested that cavers do not visit the caves on his property during hunting season. Some of the caves included in this list are Solution Rift, Sawmill Well, Hermit's Cave, Rachel's Garden.

Four Wells (AL): Open only by written permission between June 1 and September 30 of any year. Write to landowner: Mr. W. M. Savalle at 334 Island Dr., Scottsboro, AL 35768. You must fill out a liability form which he will send you and have written permission from him in return before visiting the pit. Area is frequented by his guests so please do not try to sneak in.

Gouffre (TN): Access landowner requires that cavers be out of the cave and off her land before dark. It is probably best to do this cave during daylight savings hours and get an early start. Cavers have been ignoring this request and the access landowner is angry.

Graham Cove Cave (AL): Landowner may allow occasional small groups, but cavers have worn out their welcome here and the cave should be avoided for a while.

Gross Skeleton Cave (AL): Permission required. For permission to enter upper entrance, contact Mr. Ken Albrecht, 4044 County Road 77, Scottsboro, AL 35768 (205-259-0744). Permission will only be granted to groups that call ahead and which are led by an NSS member. To access the cave via the bottom entrance, obtain permission from the landowner, Mr. Weeks. Mr. Weeks does not want people to drive through his property, but has allowed cavers to hike through.

Guffey Cave (AL): The real landowner of the cave (not the people who own the parking lot) wants all cavers to contact him before visiting. His name is Dan Harbin, and can be reached at 205-878-9489.

Guntersville Cavern (AL): Gated. Bat population must not be disturbed. Hairy Pit (AL): (Upper entrance) Avoid during hunting season. Hall's Pit (AL): Closed during hunting season. At other times, contact the landowner ahead of time for permission. Be aware that the landowner is getting irritated at the amount of caver traffic on his land. Landowner: Robert Smith of 3205 Searcy Drive, Huntsville, AL 35810.

Hardins-Junkyard Cave (TN): Junkyard Cave entrance is on private property and closed.

Hang 'Em High (TN): To park above cave, call Julie or Michelle (423-837-0849) prior to visit (they have mean dogs on the property).

Hering Cave (AL): Get permission from owner, Magnolia Woodard.

Hershel Cave (AL): Permission required. Contact owner, Jim Gifford (205-776-2137).

Honeycutt Cave (TN): Landowner is caver friendly, but does not consider the cave to be open to everyone as of right now. Honeycutt Pit is open.

Johnson Cave (TN): Please do not block the owner's gate!

Keystone River Cave (TN): Closed during hunting season.

Kingston Saltpeter Cave (GA): This cave is owned by a private foundation, but administered by the NSS. It cannot be accessed without crossing gated private property. Contact Larry Blair (NSS member, GA) for information.

Lamon's Cave (AL): All caves in this cove are closed unless you are accompanied by Avis van Swearingen (phone# 205-498-2420) or Greg Freese (phone# 205-498-3324) Both are Huntsville Grotto members.

Laurie's Misery (AL): Permission required. Landowner is Jim Gifford (205-259-3929 D).

Long Island Saltpeter Cave (AL): Contact Butch Feldhaus of the Chattanooga Grotto (TN) to arrange permission.

Lost Creek Cave (TN): Contact Jim Rylander, Jr. (son of the landowner) at 423-376-6837 for permission to camp at Lost Creek.

Lowery Cave (GA): Lowery Cave is not officially closed. It is, however, a Gray Bat hibernaculum and should not be visited during hibernation season.

Lumberyard Cave (TN): Closed due to PCP contamination.

McAllister Sink Cave (AL): All caves in McAllister Sink are closed.

McClungs Hole (AL): Closed during hunting season.

Mink Cave (AL): Mink Cave is owned by Ken Albrecht (who also owns the upper entrance of Gross Skeleton). See entry for Gross Skeleton (above) for Mr. Albrecht's address. Do not go to Mink Cave without Mr. Albrecht's permission.

Montague Cave (AL): Please call John Newman (205-495-2672) of the National Park Service for access information.

Moses' Tomb (AL): Cavers must talk to Russell White's son before parking in the field and visiting the pit. Be aware that Russell may not actually own the pit and it is rumored that the owner does not like cavers on his land.

Mystery Falls (TN): Gated. Contact Buddy Lane of Signal Mountain, TN for access information.

Neversink (AL): The Southeastern Cave Conservancy now owns Neversink and the pit is open.

Newsome Sinks area (AL): This area is closed to all vehicles. This area is an endangered species habitat and the penalties for trespassing are severe. Contact Michael Martin at (205) 498-2580 for more information about cave access in this area. Caves in this area include: Mikes Wolf Cave, Peterson's Pit, Sycamore Cave, Hughes Cave (access only through Foxes Lost Cave), Rabbit Cave, and Chapel Cave.

No Cave (AL): Closed during hunting season.

Obscure Magnificence (AL): Closed during hunting season.

O. B. Smith Cave (AL): Permission is required to visit the cave. Contact the landowner, Gary Lackey, at P.O. Box 802 106 W. Laurel St., Scottsboro, AL 35766.

Owen Spring Cave (TN): Call Ben Long (615-942-6765) a day or so before you plan to visit the cave. Mr. Long is in charge of the Sequatchie Water Works, Inc. which draws its water from the cave and will need to shut off its pumps while the cave is occupied. Visitors to Owen Springs Cave must be in good health.

Peacock Cave (GA): Peacock Cave and all caves in the area are closed.

Peacock Hollow area (AL): All caves in Peacock Hollow are closed. Caves in this area include: Caim Blowhole, Rainpot, and Peacock Cave.

Pearson's Pit Area (GA): All caves on this hillside are closed. Cavers completely wore out their welcome here.

Pipeside Pit (AL): Pipeside is closed during hunting season, but open the rest of the year. Contact Jim McCamy (205-574-9344) for permission to visit the pit. He will want to know how many cavers are in your group and when you plan to go.

Procession Mountain Pits: Closed during hunting season. This group of pits includes: Slit Rock Pit, Shaft Drop, Blackwood Pit, Procession Pit, Brigadoon Pit, Hammer Saver Pit, and Thorn's Blasted Crack.

Richard O'Hara's Bloody Elbow Cave (AL): Closed during hunting season.

Roaring River area (AL): Closed. This area has been leased to a turkey hunting club and the road into this area has been gated and posted no trespassing. This area includes War Eagle, Roaring River, Roll Tide, Royal Shaft, Skylight Cave, Upper River Cave and any other caves in the vicinity.

Rockeater Pit (GA): Access from bottom is closed. Park as if going to Moses' Tomb and hike over Low Gap.

Rousseau Well (AL): Access is closed due to over-visitation.

Russell Cave (TN): Please contact John Newman (205-496-2672) of the National Park Service for access information.

Shelta Cave (AL): Gated. Owned by the NSS. Contact Bill Torode of Huntsville, AL to arrange access.

Sitton's Cave (GA): Park at subdivision swimming pool, not on the street. Do not change clothes there.

Slime Pit (AL): Permission required. Contact owner, Jim Gifford (205-776-2137).

Snail Shell Cave TN): Owen Scott (FL), the owner of the main entrance sink to the cave, is distressed about the amount of partying done and garbage left at the cave. He came very close to closing it. He is generally favorable to cavers, however, and it would do us well to make cave clean-up a part of every trip to Snail Shell.

Stephen's Gap Cave (AL): Stephen's Gap is closed during hunting season, but open the rest of the year. Please contact Jim McCamy (205-574-9344) to obtain permission to visit the pit. He will want to know when you are going and how many cavers are in your group. Some Grottos have been sent forms that can be filled out with the above information and mailed or faxed ahead of time to Mr. McCamy (of the Scottsboro Rescue Squad).

Summers Double Pot (AL): The landowner, Mrs. Frances Summers, no longer lives on the property. She has moved to Rivermont Nursing Home in S. Pittsburgh TN. At this point, it is unclear whether Summers Double and the other caves in the area (Chili Pot, Wayne's Murder Hole, Bennet Cove Cave, and No Gain for Pain cave) are still open.

Talucah Cave (AL): Get permission from landowner Margaret Henderson. Show her your NSS card.

Tom Cave (AL): Avoid during hunting season.

Trenton Well (AL): Open by special permission only. Contact Roger Haley of the Huntsville Grotto (AL) for information. Closed during all hunting seasons.

23 Dollar Pit and other pits on hillside (AL): The landowner of the land crossed to access these pits is getting irritated at the amount of caver traffic on his land. We should limit the number of caving trips here.

Tumbling Rock Cave (AL): Closed Sunday mornings between 11 AM and 4 PM (unless you have pre-arranged the trip with the Precise family). Entrance fee is \$ 5. Note: The Precise family has provided rooms for cavers to change clothes in behind their barn. Please do not change clothes out in the open in their yard!

Valhalla (AL): Valhalla (the pit, itself, not just the access!) is completely closed! This includes access from the top. Do not trespass. The landowner below the pit is extremely angry at cavers and has asked the local law to arrest trespassers and to tow any vehicle parked on his land. (Please do not try to contact him. He adamantly wants nothing to do with cavers.)

Varnedoe Cave (AL): Varnedoe Cave is now open from the top (due to a new landowner). Park at the fire station.

Wet Cave (TN): The owner, a caver named Harry Smith, requests that you call him before visiting at 615-598-5536. A responsible third party must be informed of your plans and exit time.

Wicked Splendor Cave (TN): See note for Blowing Spring Cave.

Williams Saltpeter Cave (AL): The bottom entrance of Williams Saltpeter Cave is closed. The landowner, Jerry Kallenbach, is very angry and has written a letter to the NSS threatening to turn cavers over to the Sheriff (if they survive his dogs and shotgun) if they trespass on his land. Do not trespass on posted land in Williams Cove.

Wil's Welsh Well (AL): Permission is required from the landowners at the base of the mountain. They are very friendly, but are particular about where you park.

Xanadu Cave (TN): Gated. Call Ned Littell for access. He is listed in the NSS Membership Manual.

Other access of concern to cavers:

Mt. Yonah (GA): Mt. Yonah is gated and closed. It's reported that trespassers will be arrested. There's no cave here, but its been a popular place to practice climbing and ropework.

Bee Rock (TN): The new owner of this area is building a Bed & Breakfast nearby, and has asked that climbers and hikers limit their activities to 9am-5pm Monday thru Saturday and 12pm-5pm on Sunday.

Information about hunting seasons:

- Alabama Wildlife Management: 205-242-3486
- Tennessee Wildlife Management: 615-781-6500
- Georgia Wildlife Management: 706-295-6041

If you have any additions, up-dates, corrections, or questions about this list, please contact Andy Zellner at:

2994 Kodiak Court
Marietta GA 30062
770-977-7136
andy@pcpipeline.com

The

FLOWSTONE

JUNE, 1997

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE CULLMAN GROTTO
OF THE NATIONAL SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Vol IV, No 6



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 to be included in the following month's issue. Send items and exchanges to: D.Drake, 110 County Road 1386, Falkville AL 35622.

The Cullman Grotto will exchange by request with any publishing grotto.

Republication of articles or items contained within the Flowstone welcome providing credit is given to source.

Annual dues for the Cullman Grotto are eight dollars (\$8) for individual membership or ten dollars (\$10) per family. Dues are payable at the first grotto meeting of each year and include subscription to The FLOWSTONE. Subscription rate for non-members is eight dollars (\$8) per year.

The Cullman Grotto meets the first Tuesday of every month at 7:30pm in the Cullman County Public Library conference room, 200 Clark St NE, Cullman AL. Visitors and prospective members are welcome.

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CALENDER

Jun 7-Grotto trip TBA.

Jul 1-Monthly Grotto meeting, 7:30pm, Cullman Public Library conference room. Program to be announced. Trip following meeting if anyone's interested.

Jun 23-27-NSS Convention, Sullivan, MO. Contact: Pam Saberton, 3820 Juniata St., St.Louis, MO 63116. (314)772-6956.

Oct 9-12-20th Annual TAG Fall Cave-In, Sequoyah Caverns, Valley Head, AL. Hosted by DCG. Contact Kathy Mackay (404)378-4549.

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ECHO CHAMBER



RAPPELLING CLASS

(Continued fom last month)

varying lengths so the scouts can start small and work up to big. The training should last 4-5 hrs. [Above was inadvertently left off of notice in last months EchoChamber. It completes sentence "The plan is to drop several ropes over drops of..."]

Special thanks to all grotto members and others who played a part in instructing, obtaining permission from the landowner, supplying equipment or just monitoring ropes. Details of the days activities are found on page 3.

CAVE REGISTERS

Anyone interested in maintaining a cave register in a cave that lacks such, should contact D.Drake. The CCUS (Contemporary Cave Use Study) of the NSS will supply PVC-type registers complete with register books, pens, baggies and PC software free of charge to NSS members and internal organizations.

FALL CAVE-IN

Pre-registration forms are in for the 20th Annual TAG Fall Cave-In. Pre-registering will save \$10 over the "at the gate" charge. **NO DOGS WILL BE ALLOWED** at this years Cave-In per the landowner who had some of his animals attacked last year by unleashed dogs. Anyone who shows up with a dog will be turned away. See D.Drake for registration forms.

MISCELLANEOUS

If you have any gear that you wish to sale on consignment at this month's NSS convention, or if you want to pull a shift in the booth, see D.Drake for details.

The Eastern Region of the NCRC is holding their Weeklong '97 training course August 2-10 at Dailey, WV. See me if your interested.

COVER PHOTO

Helictite Flower, Helictite Heaven Room, Fern Cave, Jackson County, AL. Photo by Patrick O'Diam.

GROTTO SHINES AGAIN

SCOUT RAPPELLING CLASS

May 24, 1997

By D. Drake

What was supposed to be a herd of about 70 varsity-age scouts from north Alabama, turned out to be a group of 16 plus their leaders for an afternoon of rappelling instruction provided by the Cullman Grotto.

The grotto was asked last fall by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints if we would be interested in hosting a High Adventure activity for varsity-age scouts from across north Alabama.

Louis and Mary Adams secured permission from a local landowner to use an old rock quarry, located on his property, as the training site. The quarry has been dormant for quite sometime and is on restricted land.

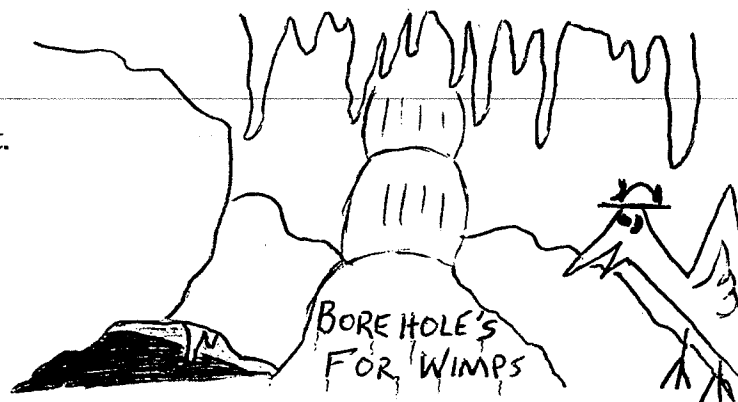
I met Harold Calvert and Steve Moringg (a local youth leader with the Church) at Country Jim's store at 8:15 Saturday morning. The plan was to hike in to the quarry and clear some underbrush away from the landing area of a couple of short drops we had planned to use and rig the ropes. Moments after we arrived at the bluff line, Patrick O'Diam, Kevin Baker, Scotty Arrington and his nephew Randy Dunn showed up, with Bernard Powell not far behind. Kevin and Scotty suggested we rig the short ropes at a different place along the bluff line thus eliminating the need to clear brush. We lowered three ropes over drops ranging from 30-35ft and put two more over drops of 117ft. Once the ropes were rigged I headed to a pre-determined rendezvous point to meet the scouts.

Two troops from Huntsville and our Cullman troop were all that turned out to participate. They and their leaders and our grotto group made a total of twenty-six present as the training session began. At this point Bern was the only person up top, so we had him demonstrate for the group a proper descent.

As the first group of boys was rigging in, Kuenn and Amel Drake arrived. Victor Bradford wondered in about an hour later. Patrick and Harold manned the short ropes while Kevin and Scotty provided instruction at the long drops, even helping an eleven-year-old girl with a broken arm do the drop. Kuenn alternated in between the long and short drops providing support. For the most part, Victor, Bernard and I belayed.

The days activities could not have run any smoother. Everyone seemed to have enjoyed themselves and, other than a sprained ankle contracted by Patrick, there were no injuries. There were alot of superlatives used describing how "awesome" the bluff was and what a "cool" sport rappelling was. We even had a military man *admit* that the rack system was far superior to the Army's "double-D ring" method [duh]. We were thanked repeatedly for our efforts on another successful campaign. Don't be surprised if we're asked to do it again in a year or two.

BIRDS OF A FEATHER



BACK TO HOOPER'S

May 7, 1997

By D.Drake

V.Bradford G.Ledbetter
D.Drake Guest

Following the Huntsville Grotto meeting May 7, Glenn Ledbetter, his neighbor, Vic and I drove to the top of Monte Sano to do America's most convenient pit, Hooper's Well.

At the library I mentioned to Vic that I'd like to go do a pit after the meeting. Glenn, who was sitting next to us, overheard what I had said and commented that he and his neighbor had been thinking the same thing, so at the end of the business portion of the meeting and before the slide program began, we exited the premises headed for the 88-ft Hooper's Well. Glenn and I were the only ones to drop the pit, both bouncing it twice. Probly'll do it next month too.

BAT FAX

Desert ecosystems rely on nectar-feeding bats as primary pollinators of giant cacti, including the famous organ pipe and saguaro of Arizona.

7AG MEMORIES

HISTORICAL FIND IN LONG ISLAND SALTPETER CAVE

Jackson County, Alabama

Bill Torode

Huntsville Grotto News, 13(12)106

On 3 July 1972, while looking for a cave just across the Tennessee River from the Stevenson area, we stopped to talk to a farmer about the location of a nearby cave. He didn't know about the cave we were looking for, but started telling us about a big salt-

peter cave about 10 miles away. I had never heard of any cave in that area and was very skeptical of his description. He claimed that its entrance, next to the road, was big enough to drive into and that there used to be a large saltpeter kettle outside.

The next day, Randall "Doc" Owen, Alex Sproul, John Van Swearingen IV, and I headed into Long Island Cove to locate the cave. On the way back into the cove we stopped some four-wheelers and asked them about the cave. One boy said there wasn't any cave entrance big enough to drive into but there was a cave just around the hill from a spring. We stopped at the spring, which was probably where the farmer thought the entrance was, but found no cave.

We fanned out above the spring. While walking east, Alex found a trail and followed it up to the entrance; the rest of us arrived shortly. The entrance had been dug out but was still a crawl for the first few feet. It was also blowing a large blast of cold air, indicating a large cave.

Alex and Doc went in and to the right, exploring; J.V. and I went in and to the left, mapping. After several hundred feet, we concluded that we were in an Anvil-like maze of passages, most of which had been mined for saltpeter. 1031 feet were mapped on this first trip.

The next weekend we decided to camp out at the cave overnight. Doc Owen, J.V., Dick Graham, and I set up our tent and headed into the cave. A few hours later, Alex Sproul and family came by, followed by Bob Campbell and family. They explored around for a little while and then left. We mapped for four hours and then drove into Stevenson for dinner at the Town-co Restaurant. That evening we went back into the cave for two more hours of mapping before sacking out for the night. Graham went back to Huntsville that evening, as did Bob Campbell and family.

The next day, after striking camp, we went back into the cave and mapped for nine more hours. Alex discovered a big lower level and took us down into it. Here we found a number of names and "Co K 10 Regt" written on the wall along with the date "Sept 3, 1863" in one room with a 60'-high ceiling. This trip produced mapped footage of 2233' on Saturday and 3133' on Sunday, for a total of 6397 feet.

The next weekend (15 July) saw Dick Graham and myself back at Long Island, as it had been named. We started mapping in the maze area and soon mapped into a low crawl that appeared virgin; it opened into a nice room and on the far side a walking passage exited in two directions. We headed into the air current and mapped for several hours down a nicely formed virgin passage to its end. Back at the junction, we mapped only a hundred feet before coming upon a big breakdown room. We mapped the room, leaving many side leads unchecked.

A few very faint footprints were found in the room. A 35' climbdown in the middle of the room led down into a previously-mapped area. On the way down, we found scratched on the wall

US ARMY

C. GODDARD LT COL & AAG
W. S. ROSECRANS MAJ GEN USA
SEPT 5, 1863

Up until this time we had thought that the names we had been seeing were those of Confederate saltpeter miners. But these names rang back to a long-forgotten high-school history course; a little research later proved us right:

Major General William Starke Rosecrans was Commanding General of the Army of the Cumberland during the latter part of the Civil War. In the fall of 1863, Confederate General Braxton Bragg occupied the impregnable Lookout Mountain near Chattanooga, effectively blocking the Union Armies from entering northern Georgia. During July and August, General Rosecrans occupied the Bridgeport-Stevenson, Alabama area and was preparing to attack Lookout Mountain. Rosecrans' army crossed the Tennessee River and on September 3 we surmise that some of his troops discovered and captured the Confederate Saltpeter Works in Long Island Cave. On September 5, Rosecrans, Lieutenant Colonel C. Goddard, Major Hodson, and many other members of the general's staff toured the cave and, some 800 feet in, scratched their names on the wall of what we have named the Register Room.

Alarmed that his southern escape route might be cut off, General Bragg withdrew from Lookout Mountain to a spot near the Chicamauga River on September 9 and there waited for reinforcements from Gen. J. E. Longstreet. Rosecrans played into their hands and the famous Battle of Chickamauga, one of the bloodiest in all history, took place on September 19-22. The Confederates won, though in name only, for their losses exceeded 17,804 men, while Union losses were 16,179. The Chickamauga, named for a fierce Indian battle fought on the same spot, means "River of Death."

We headed home after mapping 2353 feet and discovering a piece of history.

The next day J.V., Doc, and I went back to our maze mapping. Toward the end of the day we went down into a large lower passage which had a small stream and a lot of mud. We mapped some 700 feet to a solid flowstone end. This passage, when laid out on the map, ended at the foot of the hill just below the entrance. We named it Super Tunnel.

On 29 July, while attending the SERA meeting near by, John Prestage and I went on my sixth mapping trip to Long Island. We mapped all day, finishing up the maze area in the front section.

August 5th saw a Huntsville Grotto trip to the cave; some 25 people showed up. Doc Owen and I went back and started mapping around the biggest room. People came touring through, but most left after a few hours. We finished mapping at about 5:30, with a grand total of 13,493 feet, making Long Island the largest new cave added to the Alabama Cave Survey since January 1969 when New Fern was discovered.

I talked later with Leonard Munson of

the Chattanooga Grotto and he informed me that they had found the cave years ago, but did not get past the first room. They hadn't thought much of the cave and it had never been reported to anyone. Very few, if any people since the saltpeter mining days, ever discovered the rooms in the back of the cave. Dick Graham and I may have been the first people to have seen General Rosecrans' name since he wrote it on the wall one hundred and nine years ago.

A Doctor Lee, who lives in Chattanooga, owns the land that the cave is on. We met him several times while driving in. He was most cordial and gave us permission to camp on his property and explore the cave. No one lives in the back of Long Island Cove, though Dr. Lee's hired hand, a Mr. Russell Posey of Flat Rock, is frequently on the property working. Anyone visiting the cave should ask permission if anyone is present and be sure to close all gates.



QUE SERA, SERA

May 31, 1997

D.Drake

A wet but enjoyable day at SERA began when Vic arrived at my house at 8:45 Saturday morning. After obtaining nourishment in Guntersville, we headed for Raccoon Mountain Campgrounds and the 46th Annual SERA Cave Carnival hosted, this year, by Central Alabama Grotto. Hats off to CAG for putting on a splendid event despite adverse weather conditions.

We arrived at the campgrounds shortly after 12N EDT and promptly ran into John McCrary and Jeff Lynn. They were headed to watch the climbing competition. After a quick buzz around vendor's row, and finding out we had just missed the last guided "wild" trip into nearby Crystal Caverns, Vic and I headed that way as well. We watched several people climb the 30 meter timed competition, but most impressive was John Brown. John is the only caver who can glaze a rope *ascending*. The heavens opened during the climbing

competition, so we donned ponchos and headed back to vender's row spending the next couple of hours popping in and out of vendor tents, spending money, and avoiding the precipitation.

I spent a good deal of the afternoon trying to find a Chattanooga area pit to bounce but no none knew of anything close that was open, so at 4pm we left SERA and headed back to Alabama with intentions of doing Neversink.

SHERWOOD MOUNTAIN POT

May 31, 1997

V. Bradford D. Drake

I missed the South Pittsburg exit as we were heading to Neversink so I exited at Martin Springs and woke up Sleeping Beauty to ask him which way to go. Vic indicated that if we would continue down I-24 for a few more miles we could exit at Sewanee/Monteagle and take Hwy 56 to the Alabama state line just outside of Stevenson.

Before we got to the Sewanee exit, I spotted a very obvious cave opening in the cliffs lining I-24. I stopped the car and ran across the interstate to check it out. Airflow and the pungent smell of guano greeted me as I stepped into the opening.

The entrance appeared to be a fairly large dome room prior to the interstate slicing it in half. About 12-15ft up the wall, a stream passage emptied into the room. The wall was unclimbable without a handline and the only way to secure a handline would be to bolt your way up. Thwarted, I recrossed the street and we continued on to Sewanee. About this time a light bulb clicked on in Vic's head and he remembered, (with some difficulty), a pit just outside of Sewanee that was not only open, but was close to the road as well. We stopped at a Waffle House at the Sewanee/Monteagle exit and got a bite to eat before proceeding to the pit.

The road leading to Sherwood Mountain Pit runs right by University of the South, site of next year's NSS Convention. We made a brief detour to tour the campus, the highlight of which came when Vic pointed out a store he had bought a bag of ice from back in 1989. After leaving the enchanted campus we turned on Tennessee hwy 56 and began a steep and winding descent from the top pf Sherwood Mountain.

Sherwood Mountain Pot is located about 70-ft off the road and about a hundred feet back up the mountain from the parking area. The drop is an open-air 84 footer with no going passage. The entrance is approximately 8-ft by 4-ft. The walls are scalloped and there are a few dry, flowstone formations in the pit. There is a register at the bottom of the pit, however, despite it's proximity to the road , the pit is seldom visited. The last entry in the register was from January of '97. On this day, the pit was very drippy. I bounced it twice and we exited.



HEY CAVERS!

The Dogwood City Grotto of the National Speleological Society has a new permanent address.

Please send all correspondance to:

**Dogwood City Grotto
3232 Cobb Pkwy
Suite 264
Atlanta GA 30339-3496**



ENDOWMENT FUND ESTABLISHED *YOU CAN MAKE IT GROW*

by Dave Luckins
NSS President

The National Speleological Society draws great strength from being a volunteer governed society. In virtually every aspect of our society a volunteer is involved in making decisions or in conducting the business of the society. Our volunteers decide how we will accomplish our objectives of study, exploration, conservation, and fellowship. This unique volunteer structure is an enormous strength that ensures that the society, as an organization, remains in the hands of the members.

That strength can also be a weakness in times of economic stress. The NSS relies on its members to fund all the activities of the society by three means: dues, bookstore sales, and your generous donations to various restricted funds. When the economy falters and things get tough, the NSS experiences tough times too. Dues income, bookstore sales, and donations all slacken but the need to study, explore, and conserve does not lessen. Faced with similar problems other organizations have created *Endowment Funds*.

What's an Endowment Fund? Well, *endow* means, simply to supply with income. So, an endowment fund is a fund set up to supply the NSS with income in the future. The whole idea of an NSS Endowment fund was conceived by Ted Kayes, and the Richmond Area Speleological Society (RASS) helped kick the fund off with a very generous donation of \$2000. Grottos, Sections, members, and friends of the society are able to make donations to the Endow-

ment Fund. Money donated to the Endowment Fund will be invested by the National Speleological Foundation and no withdrawals will be permitted for ten years. That means the fund will be managed professionally and the principal will be protected and allowed to grow. If we're generous with our donations, the income generated by investments, along with compounding of the income, will allow the fund grow so that ten years from now the society will be able to draw out the annual income to help fund society activities. I tend to look on this as an opportunity to give the next generation of cavers a generous gift to encourage them as they continue to study, explore, and conserve caves. The income produced by this fund will certainly help stabilize NSS finances during any rough economic times down the road.

To really get the fund off the ground with a bang, RASS has issued a challenge to each of us. RASS will match dollar-for-dollar every individual donation raised before the end of the Missouri convention. The challenge is simple. RASS will match all individual donations of \$100 or less for the first \$5000 raised. This is a wonderful opportunity to double the impact of your tax deductible donations.

If you would like to participate in the RASS challenge, simply mail a check (for \$100 or less) to NSS, 2813 Cave Ave., Huntsville, AL 35810. Be sure to indicate on the envelope and the check that the donation is for the Endowment Fund. I hope you'll discuss funds at your next grotto meeting and dig deep into your pockets and your grotto's pockets. Let's really build this fund for the future.

"Don't let the speleopologists scare you away"

CONVENTION AS A CAVING OPPORTUNITY A SECOND OVERVIEW

Ed note: In the last issue, Janet Thorne gave us her overview of Convention in "The NSS Convention: A Microcosm of the Caving World." In this issue, Diana Truitt offers a different perspective of Convention. The narrative at the end is courtesy of Evelyn Bradshaw. See you all at Convention '97 in the Cave State of Missouri!!

We arrived in Salida, Colorado, about 6:00 p.m. on Saturday, August 3, set up camp at 7,000 feet, and started counting the Fourteeners.

On Sunday the 4th, Tom and I went on "the most excellent geology field trip." We were driven around in air-conditioned buses, with the geologists guiding our way through the ancient sea beds. We had lunch at the National Mining Museum in Leadville. These field trips were helpful in orienting us to the surrounding terrain that we would be living in for the next week.

On Monday the 5th we took the "25-mile" trip to the Great Sand Dunes National Monument. Every 25 miles Tom would assure us that there were only 25 more miles to go. We stopped at the valley view hot spring and saw the entrance to a mine/cave. (They seem to find caves while mining in Colorado.)

Tuesday the 6th we climbed a fourteener (in the truck). We got as far as the chalet, about 1200 feet from the top, then the truck stopped. I think I got some gray hairs on the jeep trail—it was a white-knuckler!!

Wednesday the 7th we got up early because this day would be our busiest by far. We got to raft Brown's canyon for eight great miles, then we were chauffeured to Cripple Creek country for an evening of gambling.

Thursday the 8th I did Splinter Cave at the campground.

Friday the 9th we actually did some caving in another cave found by miners, Porcupine Cave. The Museum of Natural History is conducting a dig there. It seems this cave was formed, closed naturally, then was found by miners.

Saturday the 10th we had a pretty long drive home.

This brief narrative by Diana Truitt appeared in *Sonar*, the newsletter of the Tulsa Regional Oklahoma Grotto (November 1996). If anyone thought after reading Janet Thorne's description of convention that it was all meetings and workshops, with fellowship and some parties thrown in, think again. The NSS national convention, which is held in many different areas of the country, is a prime opportunity not only to meet and make friends with cavers whom you might otherwise never get to know, but also to visit caves and other sights in new areas, often things off the typical "tourist trail." Both active cavers and armchair cavers will have an enjoyable and memorable week.

The *NSS Administrative Memo* is sent by the National Speleological Society to NSS Officers, directors, committee heads and some subcommittee members, and one to each internal organization. Other NSS Members may arrange for subscriptions (\$10.00 a year for the *Memo* together with monthly mailings from the NSS office—which include minutes of BOG meetings and monthly membership updates—or \$3.00 a year for the *Memo* only). Subscription requests, and material of interest to the above recipients may be sent to the editor, Jean DeVries, 2370 Chippewa, Jenison, MI 49428 (616)457-9664, or via the Internet at DeVriesj@aol.com. The *Memo* publication is quarterly, with the exact date of issuance dependent on material received. All NSS publications, including expressly grotto newsletters, are encouraged to copy any or all of the *Memo* contents so as to enhance communications within the Society. ISSN No. 1065-2558.

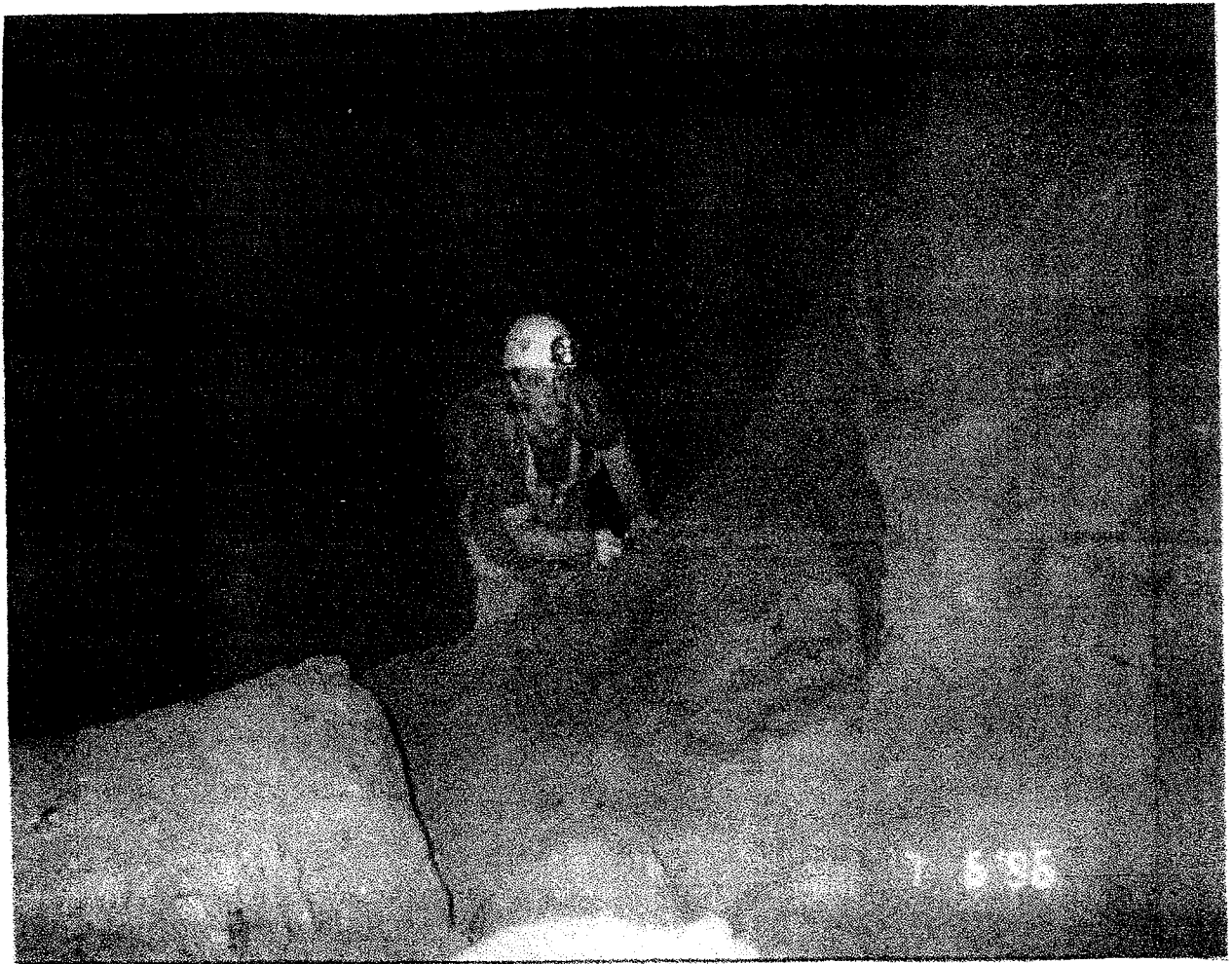
The

FLYBOWSTONE

July, 1997

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE CULLMAN GROTTO
OF THE NATIONAL SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Vol. IV, No. 7



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 to be included in the following month's issue. Send items and exchanges to: D.Drake, 110 County Road 1386, Falkville AL 35622.

The Cullman Grotto will exchange by request with any publishing grotto.

Republication of articles or items contained within the Flowstone welcome providing credit is given to source.

Annual dues for the Cullman Grotto are eight dollars (\$8) for individual membership or ten dollars (\$10) per family. Dues are payable at the first grotto meeting of each year and include subscription to The FLOWSTONE. Subscription rate for non-members is eight dollars (\$8) per year.

The Cullman Grotto meets the first Tuesday of every month at 7:30pm in the Cullman County Public Library conference room, 200 Clark St NE, Cullman AL. Visitors and prospective members are welcome.

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CALENDER

Jul 6-Grotto trip TBA.

Aug 5-Monthly Grotto meeting, 7:30pm, Cullman Public Library conference room. Program to be announced. Trip following meeting if anyone's interested.

Aug 9-Grotto trip TBA

Sep ?-Grotto picnic. Date and venue TBA.

Oct 9-12-20th Annual TAG Fall Cave-In, Sequoyah Caverns, Valley Head, AL. Hosted by DCG. Contact Kathy Mackay (404)378-4549.

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ECHO CHAMBER

CAVE FEES

The NSS has formed an ad hoc committee to investigate the Forest Service's plan to implement a cave fee policy in New Mexico and Arizona. The assumption is that the Forest Service is planning to use the fees they collect to hire additional staff to run Ranger-guided Adventure Tours of many of the caves--including vertical caves. This plan would seriously jeopardize the fragile, non-renewable resources of the underground.

NSS Conservation Chairman, David Jagnow, is soliciting all members of the NSS to participate in a letter writing campaign to local Senators and Representatives to help block this proposed plan. If the USDA Forest Service puts their plan into effect, it could mean that fees would be charged for underdeveloped caves on federal lands across the nation.

Petitions blocking this move are being circulated nationwide. A blank petition has been included in this newsletter for you to place if you so desire. Also addresses of key Forest Service personnel and others have been include should you wish to repond in writing.(see pgs 8, 9)

CONVENTION KUDOS

Once again the Cullman Grotto returns from the NSS Convention laden with awards in vertical categories and have re-established ourselves as one of the premier vertical grottos in the country.

Grotto members Bill & Miriam Cuddington, Patrick & Missy Lynott and John McCrary all attended this years convention in Missouri. Bill introduced the climbing contest to the NSS at the 1967 convention in Birmingham. He and Miriam have been conducting the affair since.

John came home with best overall time (men) in the 30m climb at 34.6 sec., while Miriam brought home best overall time (women) at 101 sec. Both recieved 300 ft. lengths of PMI for their efforts. Miriam then gave her rope to the 16-year-old girl that finished second. Way to go Miriam!

Congratulations to the #1 male and #1 female climbers in the world for 1997!!! Let's defend those titles in Sewanee 1998.

When we gonna break in that rope John?

COVER PHOTO

Scottie Arrington at Warm-up Pit, Ellisons Cave, GA. Photo by Patrick O'Diam.

FANTASTIC PIT

By Patrick O'Diam

May 10, 1997

S.Arrington R.Dunn P.O'Diam

The trip was planned just a few days before we went. We started off from my house about 5:30pm and we picked up Randy shortly thereafter. The entire trip was full of delays. The first setback came when we tried to eat supper at Dairy Queen in Arab. It took about twenty minutes to get our orders. [That's why they call it fast food....Ed.] Finally we were back on the road. We were about five or six miles from the parking area for Ellison's Cave when we encountered delay #2--the bridge was out. After about thirty minutes of driving around, not knowing where we were going, we came out on the other side of the bridge. Soon we were at the parking area. The time was about 9:30pm.

We filled out the card and were off to the top of the mount. The one mile hike, that climbs over 800-ft in elevation, took us about forty-five minutes with our packs and gear. When we reached the top it was noted that there was alot of water flowing into the entrance. We all got wet going in. Just inside were hundreds of bats. We stopped to take a picture before working our way back to the warm-up pit. Scottie then asked for the red, 200-ft rope to rig the 124-ft pit. That was our third delay--I had carried the rope up the hill, but the bats at the entrance had distracted me and I had failed to bring it back to the pit. Randy and I went back to retrieve it through a passage that was a foot deep in water.

The 700-ft rope was lowered down the Warm-up Pit. As I went over the lip, I was unsure if the rope was in the waterfall or not. The rappel turned out to be dry with the waterfall about five feet away. When the three of us were down, we went across the room and

started back to the 18-ft nuisance drop where you have to climb up to the attic. Delay #4--The rope that is always rigged at this drop was super frayed-BAD-abaout ten feet up. While Scottie and Randy made their way back to the warm-up pit, I climbed the frayed rope slowly. I had to unattach my Petzls and pass them over the frayed part then reattach above it. Scottie climbed the warm-up then cut off about 35-ft of the extra rope. We derigged the old rope and put the new rope down the nuisance drop.

Soon we were at the 586-ft drop. When the rope was rigged, Scottie informed us that he was not going to do the drop because his knee was bothering him. I went down first. About 75-ft down is the Balcony where you can rig a 510-ft drop. This is the level where the water comes in. I looked down to see if the rope was in the waterfall but it was not. The rope was about five feet from the water but the mist and the wind were strong so it was as if you were in the water. I could not get started on my rappel, having to feed the rope for the first 200-ft. Finnally I started to go. Randy came down after me. We didn't stay on the wet, clod bottom for very long. We climbed tandem out in just a little over twenty minutes. It was about 2:30am when we reached the top. We worked our way back toward the entrance. I reached the top of the warm-up pit about 4:00am and was having a nice little nap until Scottie came and made me pull rope. We got out of the cave at 5:00am just as the sun was rising. We traveled home a different way. I can barely remember driving around in circles in Rome, GA. Scottie took over the wheel somewhere around Crossville and we made it back about 10:00.



BAT FAX

Bats can travel as fast as 60 mph (96 km/h).

WHAT REALLY HAPPENS AFTER GROTTO MEETINGS

By: D.Drake

At an hour when most civilians are nestled on the couch watching some inane television show, cavers leaving grotto meetings around the country are sprouting wings (batwings of course) and flying off to some predetermined destination to talk caving, watch caving, eat caving or, as has been the case with a few recently, go caving. Late night trips to Hooper's Well, Stephen's Gap, Neversink and Mrs. Miller's have broken the old habit of sleeping during the late hours of night and replaced it with something, well, shall we say, less mundane. These late night jaunts make the following day, or in some cases the same day, more challenging and sleep the next night more anticipated.

Trips to Glove Pit, and Natural Well are on the agenda as possible destinations following meetings the month of July. Come join us, you might like it. But then again you may prefer that uneventful ritual of sleep. Old habits are hard to break.

POET'S CORNER

Cave Widow's Complaint

anonymous

*The Florida Speleologist
Volume 32, Number 1*

'Don't worry about a thing, my
dear,
I'll be out by twelve I'm sure.'
But he'll be late,
And she will wait;
Cave Fever has no cure.

Out by twelve means maybe by
seven,
And start worrying at eleven.
Twelve hours past due,
She thinks of rescue,
Starts praying up to Heaven.

Not long past midnight,
Nearly shaking with fright,
She calls up the rescue squad.

They scramble to action,
Steeling their guts
For a one by one search
Of all Pizza Huts.

STEPHEN'S GAP

By Victor Bradford

Evon Thompson NSS 42137
Tracy Calvert NSS 42243
Harold Calvert NSS 42242
Bernard Powell NSS 38911
Victor Bradford NSS 15247

It was cloudy with a forecast of scattered showers on Saturday morning, June 21. We left the Cullman library in Harold and Tracy's van headed for Stephens Gap, a 143-ft pit with a large horizontal entrance only a few yards away. The entrance leads downward and curls out to connect with the pit just above the famous pedestal.

Between Cullman and our regular Guntersville pitstop, we ran into several showers. At the pitstop we stocked up on goodies, ice and some more milk for me. After hitting the road again, it wasn't long before we were pulling off at our parking spot for Stephen's Gap. Just as we unloaded our gear from the van, it began to rain so hard that we decided to get back in and wait it out. About the time we all began to tire of Evon's dirty Elvis jokes, two cars pulled up and one of the drivers asked if this was the parking spot for Stephen's Gap. Harold said it was. After a little while everyone got out of one car and into the other, a total of 3 men and 2 women, and began playing cards. When they were going from one car to the other, Bernard and I got a good look at one of the gentlemen. Sometime later, while we were still waiting for the skies to clear, Bernard said that one of the guys we saw didn't look like he could make the hike to the pit, much less do the drop. Just as I was about to agree with him, the same guy handed Harold what looked like a thick magazine. He said we

might like to read he and his wife's journal of their trek 250 miles across the wilderness of Alaska last summer, carrying 85lb. packs and pulling another 200lbs. of food and gear behind them on sleds. So much for mine and Bernard's observation. The journal, complete with pictures, told of them crossing a glacier, two major rivers and many swift streams.

By now we had been stuck in the van for one hour and fifteen minutes. The rain began to let up and we decided to take our chances. We got our packs out once again and started our hike to Stephen's Gap while our friends were still playing cards. We stopped along the way to peer into the depths of Pipeside Pit, then continued along the trail. As we reached Stephen's Gap it began to rain again so we made a hasty retreat into the horizontal entrance. There was alot of water pouring into the pit entrance from the recent rains. This was the first visit for Harold, Tracy and Evon. They thought it was beautiful, as everyone does, and began to take pictures. The rain stopped so Bernard and Harold went topside to rig the rope down the keyhole. I stayed on bottom with the girls.

Our friends began to show up about this time, and in conversation with them, we found out that only one of them was a caver and he was from Florence, AL., two were from Alaska, two were from Utah and one was from Arizona. The man from Florence said he was an NSS member and was going to teach the others to rappel over the horizontal entrance, which he did without gloves or a belay. I told them that needed someone to belay new people on rope. After that they began belaying. After a few trips down this drop, a few of them went over to the keyhole where Bernard and Harold were rappelling and with their help went down that drop as well. The highlight of the day for me (other than Evon's jokes) came just as we were leaving the pit when the older gentleman from Utah rigged into the rope and made the

best rappel of the day of all the newcomers. Not bad for an 81-year-old. With that we started back down the trail and to the van, which hoped would still be there. There have been some break-ins lately at the parking spot. We loaded up and headed back to Cullman after a wet but good day.



BIRDS OF A FEATHER

FERN CAVE'S ELEPHANT EARS

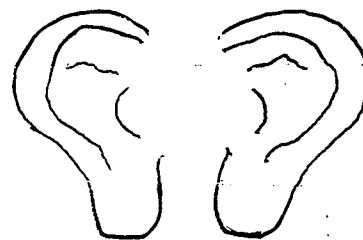


BEFORE vandalism

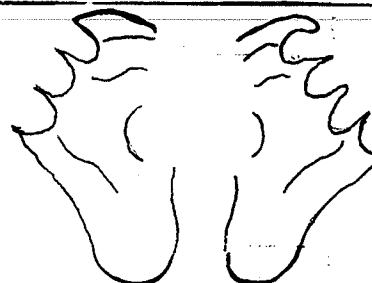


AFTER vandalism

EVANDER HOLYFIELD'S EARS



BEFORE vandalism



AFTER vandalism

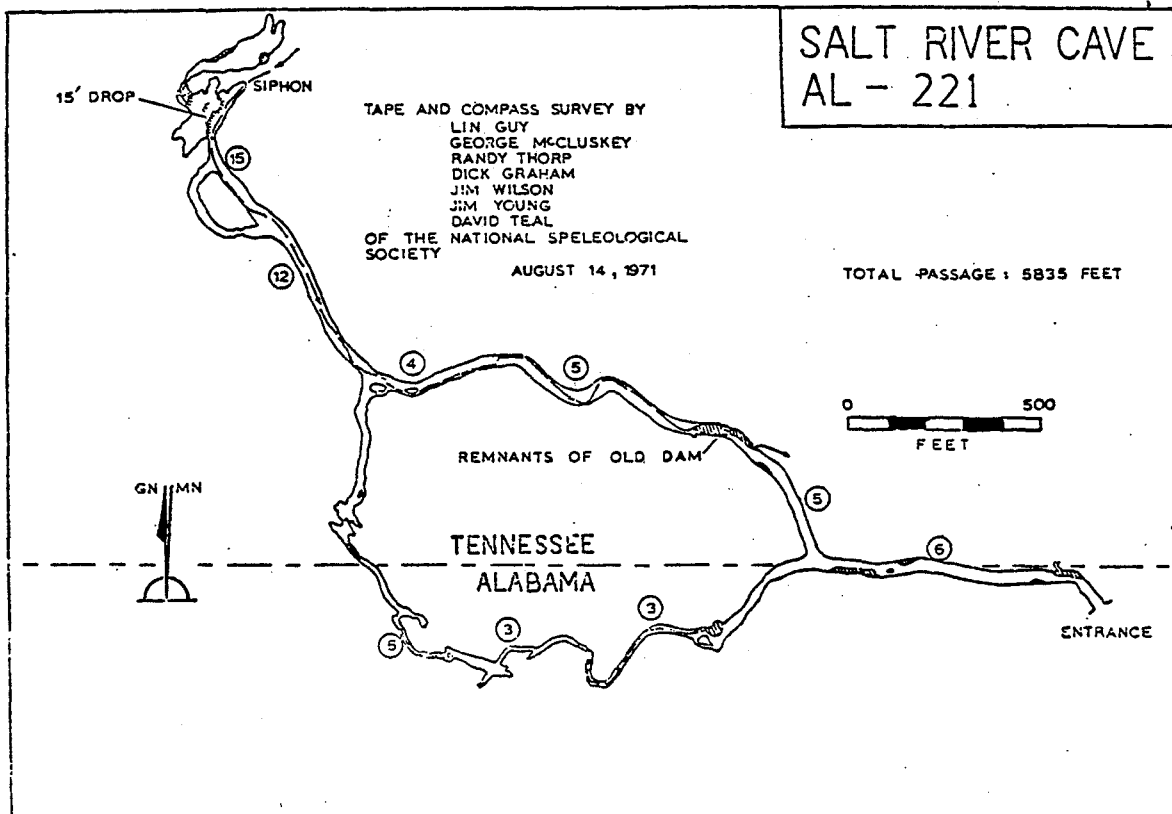
749 MEMORIES

ANOTHER MILE-LONG ALABAMA CAVE
Jackson County, Alabama
Lin Guy
Huntsville Grotto News, 12(12)112

Three springs ago, John Cooper visited a large stream-passage-type cave near the Tennessee state line. Although his interest in Salt River Cave was primarily biological, he told us about it because he noticed that a large portion of it was unmapped. George McCluskey and I finally arrived there on July 20, 1968, after mapping a small Guntersville cave and also after tearing up the back seat of my car to get the keys out of the locked trunk! Three days later, we brought Randy Thorp with us and mapped three thousand feet of the easiest cave passage in Alabama...only after we plotted it out on paper we found that most of it wound up in Tennessee. The trip ended shortly after George observed that a large crayfish had crawled up his pants leg. We noted that the old wooden bridge which gives access to the cave made miserable noises as we chugged across it.

Gonce, Ala., told us that the ford could be easily crossed. A herd of cows ran ahead of the car and were boxed in by the car and a gate in front of us. After some doing, they were driven back into the pasture. Although the water was up slightly over the other trips, sand bars in the stream had shifted to make the trip to the back drier. A few hundred feet were mapped in the dry room high above the "almost siphon" and then we started mapping down a large dry tunnel which headed due south from the stream. After the tunnel degenerated into crawlways, our progress slowed down somewhat, and several hours later it seemed we had bitten off more than we could chew for a leisurely afternoon trip.

During the mapping of a low, wet stream crawl, conversation began to turn to things like dry clothes, hot food, sunshine...and the like. I explained rather halfheartedly that we were probably very near another side passage which would take us right out the entrance. Ha, ha. After noting the large wind which was going the way we were, we



On June 7, 1969, a larger group of seven went into the cave. One intrepid explorer, otherwise known as Dick Graham, settled down into the ice water at the end of the stream passage and, with a colorful air mattress, disappeared into the "almost siphon". It turned out to be too much of a task, and we made our way for the entrance. The old bridge, contorted now with age, looked as though it might suddenly dump us into the water, but it held up once again.

Jim Young, David Teal and I arrived at bridge site on August 14 only to find no bridge and a questionable ford in its place. The owner of the land, who lives close by at

pushed on, and in a very few minutes David was yelling that our guess was right. Salt River had officially become another long Alabama cave, with 1.1 miles of passage mapped.

Word Search

Mammoth Cave Sights

The Michiana Caver
Volume 22, Number 4

Y	T	I	C	F	E	I	H	C	S	E	N	I	A	H	R	S	P
R	K	Y	L	E	L	T	Y	M	L	R	L	D	N	X	V	I	W
E	R	I	C	K	O	O	O	T	A	E	N	B	Y	R	L	A	F
P	V	R	S	M	A	R	R	T	I	U	V	T	R	L	N	R	G
A	D	A	M	O	T	N	L	I	T	C	S	E	A	A	O	C	O
R	H	A	E	S	N	A	R	O	S	R	T	R	L	Z	M	A	R
D	M	Y	L	N	L	Y	R	A	E	T	S	E	E	A	N	D	I
R	D	E	A	A	O	S	X	V	K	O	S	N	L	V	N	E	N
T	A	I	D	W	T	O	I	C	F	F	N	G	A	O	M	D	S
M	I	I	A	H	R	R	B	H	O	I	O	L	A	O	I	E	N
W	R	P	G	M	O	I	E	R	A	L	L	S	D	R	G	V	I
B	O	I	S	H	O	R	A	G	A	E	O	S	N	D	D	R	A
R	R	L	C	S	C	N	A	T	Y	L	H	N	I	I	E	E	T
W	L	E	L	U	E	R	D	O	S	T	L	R	N	B	U	A	N
L	O	L	L	O	A	L	F	G	E	S	B	A	M	A	R	R	U
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ALBERTS STAIRWAY
 ANETTAS (Dome)
 ARMCHAIR
 BOONE (Ave)
 BOTOMLESS PIT
 BRIDAL ALTAR
 CHIEF CITY
 CLEVELAND (Ave)
 DIAMOND GROTTO
 DRAPERY (Room)
 DISMAL HOLLOW
 ECHO RIVER

ELIZABETHS DOME
 FLORISTS GARDEN
 FROZEN NIAGARA
 GORINS (Dome)
 GOTHIC (Ave)
 GRAND CROSSING
 HAINES (Dome)
 MAMMOTH (Dome)
 MARBLE (Temple)
 NATURAL BRIDGE
 PILLARS OF HERCULES
 (Proctors) ARCADE

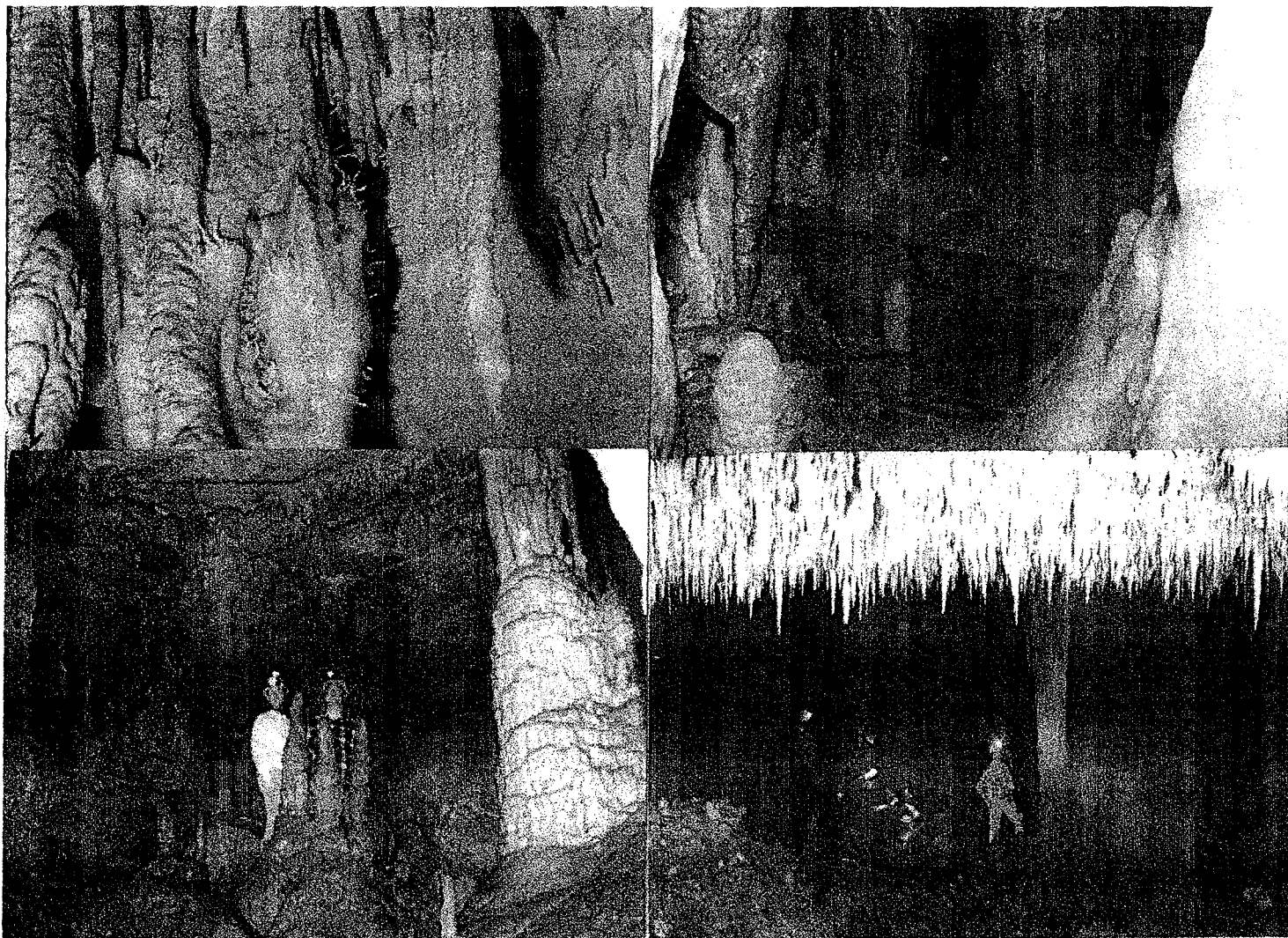
ONYX COLONNADE
 RIVER HALL
 RIVER STYX
 ROCKY MOUNTAINS
 RUINS OF KARNAK
 SNOWBALL (Room)
 STAR CHAMBER
 (The) MAELSTROM
 VALHALLA
 VALLEY OF FLOWERS
 VIOLET CITY
 WRIGHTS ROTUNDA

The **FLOWSTONE**

August 1997

Vol. IV, No. 8

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE CULLMAN GROTTO
OF THE NATIONAL SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY



CEDAR RIDGE CRYSTAL

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CALENDER

Aug 9-Grotto trip TBA.

Sep 2-Monthly Grotto meeting, 7:30pm, Cullman Public Library conference room. Program JV's SCC slide series. Trip following meeting if anyone's interested.

Sep ?-Grotto picnic. Date and venue TBA.

Oct 9-12-20th Annual TAG Fall Cave-In, Sequoyah Caverns, Valley Head, AL Hosted by DCG. Contact Kathy Mackay (404)378-4549.

Aug 3-7, 1998-NSS Convention, Sewanee, TN

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ECHO CHAMBER

GROTTO ROPE

The Grotto's 600-ft piece of PMI finally took it's maiden voyage, albeit only 450-ft was actually used. Patrick O'Diam, David Drake and Randy Dunn did a 7/19 trip to Fern's Surprise Pit.

To help recoup the expense of purchasing the rope, there is a \$5 per head charge to use the rope and it must be returned clean. It's well worth it though as it beats having to buy a rope. Wanna do a deep one?, see the rope's "nanny", Louis Adams.

KENNAMER CAVE OWNERSHIP

The Cullman Grotto has recieved Honorary Ownership status from the Southeastern Cave Conservancy for our donation of \$100 dollars toward the purchase of Kennamer Cave. CG now "owns" 100-ft of passage in this latest acquisition of the SCC. The SCC stills needs a tremendous amount of money to pay off the debt of purchase. You can help by "Buying a Piece of the Cave." For each \$50 dollar tax deductible donation you will recieve Honorary Ownership of 50-ft of passage and an

SCC/Kennamer Cave Owner t-shirt complete with a cave map on the back. Ownership of landmark sections and formations are available for larger donations. Anyone interested in owning a piece of the cave or joining the SCC should see D.Drake.

SEPTEMBER PROGRAM

Next month's program will feature a slide series by John VanSwearingen IV (JV). The slide series will feature SCC owned caves, including some fantastic shots of Surprise Pit, as well as selected other slides from JV's renowned collection. The SCC portion of the slide series was shown last month at the Huntsville Grotto meeting. It's a very impressive series, plan to come and bring a friend.

COVER PHOTO

Patrick O'Diam, KuennDrake and others in Cedar Ridge Crystal, South Pittsburg, TN. Photo by Patrick O'Diam, circa 1993.

TUMBLING ROCK

June 28, 1997

By Patrick O'Diam

Scottie Arrington

Patrick O'Diam

For sometime I have wanted to just go cave'n. All I have done lately is vertical and I've been on rope each trip. The last time I had done any real horizontal cave'n was April 9, 1994, well over three years ago, and that was a trip to Helictite Heaven in Fern Cave. Scottie suggested we go to Tumbling Rock so we were off. At the end of Jackson Co. road 111, we found several cars of other "so called" spelunkers. We paid the \$5 per person to get in while the owner tried to get us to buy t-shirts and maps. Scottie got a shirt.

As we got ready to go in, Scottie discovered that he did not have a bracket to mount his Nite Lite on his forehead. His bracket is screwed onto his helmet which was back at his house. The cave owners were nice enough to let him borrow a helmet with mount. T.R. was still the same as I had remembered it. It has some nice formations in consideration of the number of people that go in there. I think twenty-one people were in the cave during the time we were in there. We passed a group of four within the first fifteen minutes. Then we passed a group of thirteen people while they were up in the King's Shower looking at the Topless Pit.

After several crawls on our hands and knees, as well as our bellies over very hard rock, we made it to Mount Olympus...a 200-ft mountain near the back of the cave. We climbed to the top to see the Pillar of Fire, which is very nice. The nice, slick mud made the descent much easier and quicker than the way up. We came out and passed another group

of two at the King's Shower. They had set glow sticks all tge way from the entrance and that did help us find our way out easier. We came out having been underground a little over five hours. Not bad for a couple of vertical seekers who have come out of horizontal retirement.



TWO CLIMBERS FALL TO THEIR DEATHS

WEST GLACIER, Mont. (AP) - Searchers on Saturday found the bodies of two men who fell to their deaths during a climb on one of Glacier National Park's peaks.

Mark Robison of Columbia Falls and Chris Foster of Whitefish were close to the top of 9,891-foot Rainbow Peak when they fell, park spokeswoman Amy Vanderbilt said.

"They were knowledgeable and very experienced climbers and mountaineers," Ms. Vanderbilt said.

Rangers said the men, both 24-year-old seasonal employees in the park, were climbing in a steep, snow-covered chute on the peak's north face.



ANOTHER ONE HOOKED ON VERTICAL CAVE'N

By Patrick O'Diam

June 19-20, 1997

My 15-year-old cousin from Ohio came down for a week to do some stuff. We went up to Tennessee to run some whitewater for a few days and then finished up the week underground. Nick came down when I finished school in '93. He was only 11 then and I took him rappelling off a 30-ft bluff. Well, that was the only rappelling he had ever done until Thursday, June 19th.

It was close to noon and the temp was about 90 degrees as we started up to the top of the mount where Neversink is found. When we reached the top, Nick looked at the map and said, "Dang, the Cullman Grotto sure does own a big section."

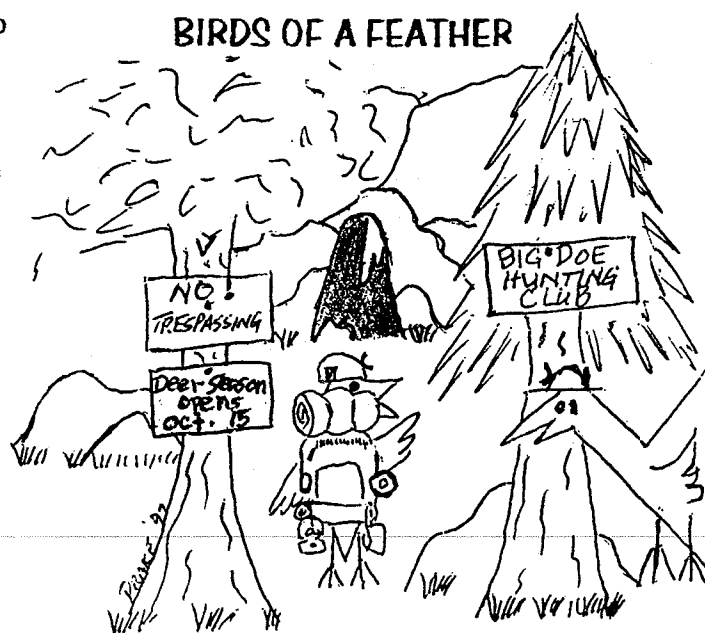
We rigged two ropes and I went down beside him. The sun was out bright and there was a lot of fog coming up from within. The waterfall was flowing strongly and the ledges were green with plants. This is the prettiest time of year to go there. The rays of sun coming down through the fog and shining in the mist formed rainbows. The sight was breathtaking. We had a great time and Nick really loved it. He did it twice and I bounced it an additional time. Nick then decided to go somewhere else. We went to Little River Canyon, also very pretty this time of year. We were going to do Weaver Point but, on the way we stopped off at another one we sometimes rappel. We just looked around and got ready to go but my truck was not ready to go. The starter decided to act ugly and not work at all. I called my dad (who lives just 15 miles away in Fort Payne) and as we waited for him to get there, we tied a rope to my bumper and did that 100-ft drop. My dad pulled up just as we were packing away the last of our stuff.

Friday morning we were to meet Scottie at 7:30 to go to Tumbling Rock, yet I had no way of going. I called Scottie and got a rain check on it. Friday morning was spent towing my truck into town and then waiting to get it fixed. 5 hours later and \$250 poorer, we were on our way again. We couldn't decide what to do. I named several things and we still thought we would go on to Tumbling Rock and then Nick said, "I would like to do a cave, but I really want to do something vertical." We decided to do both. Before we knew it, we found ourselves in South Pittsburg at Cagle's Chasm. We both went down and did some of the cave there and then we climbed tandem out.

Nick climbed below me but he stayed up with me really well. I think he would fit right in with the Cullman Grotto. He loved being on rope.

We next shot up to Cedar Ridge Crystal and spent about an hour in that heavenly decorated, small cave. The formations in there are wonderful. After getting nice and muddy, we came out and headed for home. That night I checked the NSS Member's Manual and found about 600 cavers from Ohio and also a grotto in Dayton where Nick is from. He was very excited. Two days after he got home he called to tell me he joined the NSS and that he had also been on the Internet and checked out the home-pages of some Ohio cavers. Nick said to me, "I found out where everyone up here goes cave'n." "Oh yeah," I replied, "Where?" Nick answered with a little laugh, "On one guy's home-page it says he has gone to Neversink, Valhalla, Cagle's Chasm, Surprise and Fantastic!"

I think I will be seeing more of Nick within the next few years.



"They can't keep me out if I'm already in!"

HOT AS A FIRECRACKER ON THE 4th of JULY

July 4, 1997

By Scottie Arrington*

I thought Patrick and I were going to take his mother to Neversink but when hen called to wake me up, about 7:30, he said his mother was not going. I got my gear together not knowing if we were going to end up at Neversink or some other cave. When I got to Patrick's I found him about 40-ft up a tree. He had tied weights onto the rope he was rigged to and was trying to come back down, but was having little luck. I helped him get down and we ran down to Vic's to agrivate him for a little while. He did not plan to go with us at first, but after 45 minutes of persuasion, he went into the house to change and get his stuff.

We took off not knowing where we were going. Vic finally decided to take us to Drake Pit, a 109-ft pit on Green mountain, just outside of Huntsville. We drove up the hill as far as we could, which cut out more than a half mile of walking up a steep hill. We wanted to walk as little as possible, seeing as it was noonday and the temperature was about 95 degrees. It was too hot to be doing what we were doing. We walked about 10-15 minutes uphill then waited on Victor another 10-15 minutes to catch up. Patrick and I gave Vic a hard time all day. We bugged him about everything. If someone didn't know better, they would think we hated him. (We really do have alot of respect for him but we could never let him know that or he would get the big head.)
[Plus it's proper to respect your elders...Ed.]

The pit is right in the middle of a dry streambed and the cool air coming from the entrance was a much needed air conditioner. Vic told us stories about how he and Arlon had

short-rigged the pit one time. Patrick tied a knot in the end of the rope and we lowered the rope down. The 100-ft mark went down and we kept putting what seemed to be another 25-30 feet on down. Patrick started down and about 3/4 of the way down he yelled back up, "Vic you did it again, the rope's not on bottom." He then pulled what little rope was left on up, untied the knot and lowered it back down-stil not on the bottom, but as he got closer to the end of the rope, he saw that it was only 6-in from the bottom. I came down next. The drop is not too bad. The wall is there the entire way, but it bells out just enough to make it freefall. Little light comes in so flashlights are needed. Patrick climbed then I did. On my way up I found the 100-ft mark on the rope. That 25-30 feet of rope we supposedly put down past the mark turned out to only be 9-ft. All three of us thought we had put down alot more than that but the 100-ft mark was only about 10-ft from the lip. Patrick did the drop once again and Vic followed him. When each of them were on rope, and almost back at the top, the strangest thing happened. It came a rain storm, but it only rained in the pit. Everywhere else the sun was out. (I guess a little melted ice from a Playmate cooler could have had something to do with it.) Vic then showed us a few other pits in the area and we then listened to Vic snore all the way home.

*alias Patrick O'Diam

BAT FAX

Fishing bats have echolocation so sophisticated that they can detect a minnow's fin as fine as a human hair, protruding only two millimeters above a pond's surface.

SD

799 MEMORIES

129

WEIGAND
Bill Torode
Huntsville Grotto News, 13(1)4

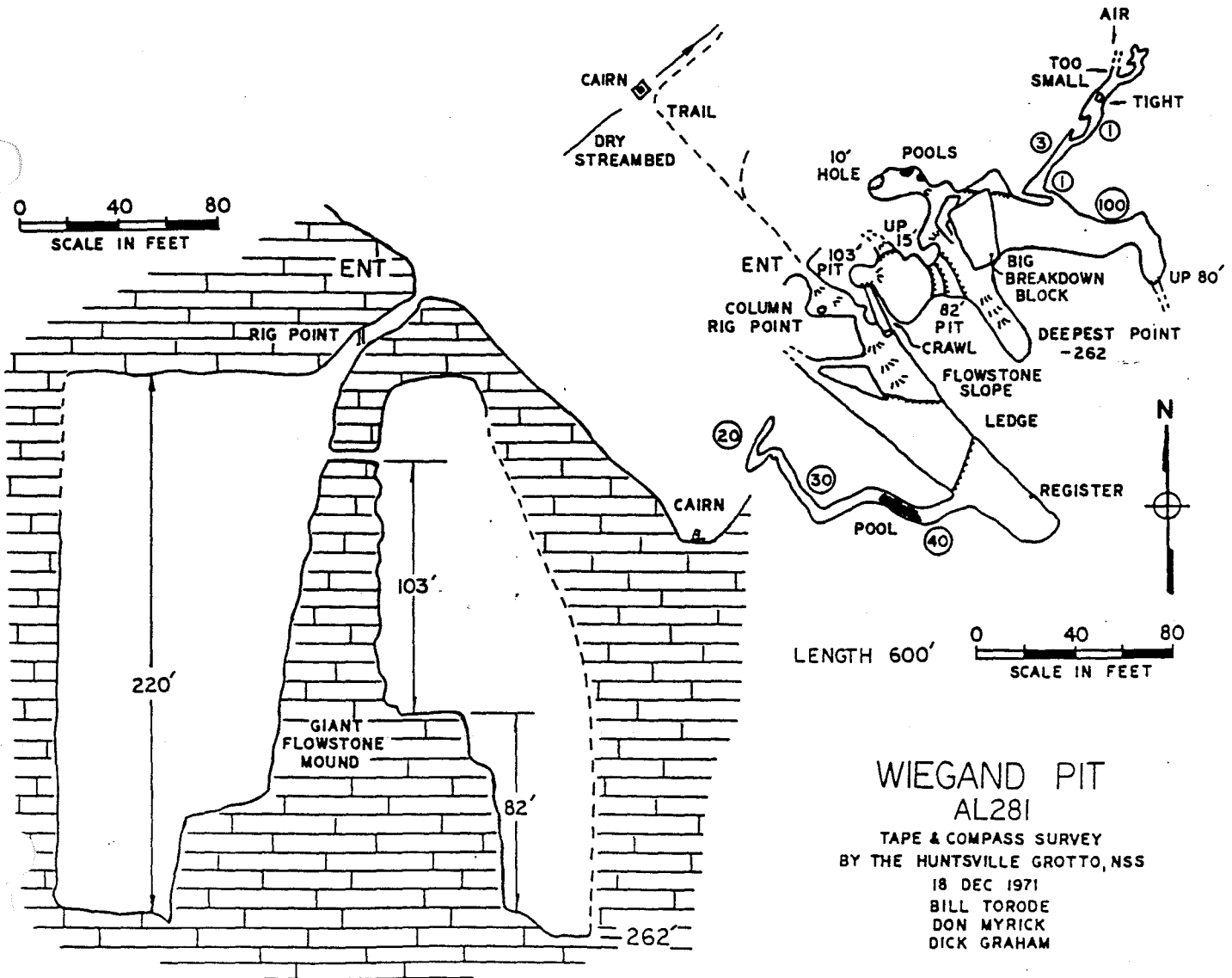
Weigand Pit has long been one of the famous "lost" pits, along with Halfshot and Kelly Natural Well. All three were presumably found by credible observers and then could not later be found again; all three were supposedly nice pits, well worth the finding. Occasionally somebody would go out and look for Weigand, and in this way several other caves were found.

On December 10, 1971, I received a card from Marion Smith asking about a pit up around Engle Double found by a Tennessee caver. I called Bill Cuddington about it and he told me that Richard Newell had heard from Mr. Clemons about a pit but not much was known about it. On Tuesday night, December 14, J. V. Swearingen and I drove out to Mr. Clemons' house and asked him about it. He told us that back around August and September a Ward Resur had camped back in the sinks, looking for a deep pit that a neighbor of his, a Mr. Preston King, had found many years ago while logging in that area.

Mr. Resur, who was from Sherwood, Tennessee, did not find the pit and finally Mr. King showed him where it was. Resur and a photographer girl friend from New York finally went down the pit. During this time Mr. Clemons and his son visited the pit and marked a tree in the creek bed at the place to turn up the hill.

On December 18, Dick Graham, JV, Alex Sproul, Jim Hall, Don Myrick and I drove into the area in Graham's new 4-wheel-drive GMC. We immediately found the blazed poplar tree, but we thought we must be too low, so we continued up the mountain past Frenchman's Pit (A1 623) to the top of the mountain. Realizing our mistake, we headed back down and found the entrance easily from the blazed tree. Dick, Jim, and JV rigged the pit with a 300' Blue Water.

A short climb down leads to a small room with a large column on the far side. This is an ideal rig spot. Graham went down first; the rest followed shortly, except that I was outside cutting a trail down the mountain. I rappelled in last; I climbed down a 45° slope for 45' to the top of the drop.



Word Search

Cave Formations

Shelly Forbis

Green River Grotto Review
Winter

M	I	T	E	Y	S	G	U	O	D	O	C	E	T	T	Y	R	E
S	A	N	S	T	L	L	Y	A	L	G	O	M	N	B	E	D	V
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O	U	T	T	S	O	D	A	S	T	R	A	W	T	Y	T	O	C
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L	T	A	H	Y	R	E	P	A	R	D	N	A	O	L	L	F	L
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P	O	E	L	B	B	U	B	E	V	A	C	Y	M	L	T	L	A
H	C	A	V	E	P	E	A	R	L	E	L	E	S	T	S	N	O
I	D	R	A	P	T	I	Z	Q	C	A	V	D	W	E	A	L	L

CAVE BUBBLE

HELICITITE

CAVE PEARL

RIMSTONE DAMS

COLUMN

SHIELD

DOG TOOTH SPAR

SODASTRAW

DRAPERY

STALACTITE

FLOWSTONE

STALAGMITE

The

FLOWSTONE

September 1997

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE CULLMAN GROTTO
OF THE NATIONAL SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Vol. 3, No. 9



GROTTO PICNIC - LITTLE RIVER CANYON

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Sep 13-Grotto picnic, Buck's Pocket. This will act as grotto trip for the month.

Oct 7-Monthly grotto meeting. Cullman Public Library conference room. Trip following meeting if anyone's interested.

Oct 9-12-20th Annual TAG Fall Cave-In, Sequoyah Caverns, Valley Head, AL Hosted by DCG. Contact Kathy Mackay (404)378-4549.

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ECHO CHAMBER

NEW GROTTO

August 1, 1997

The Internal Organizations Committee is pleased to announce the chartering of another grotto:

**Lookout Valley Grotto (Serial No. 414)
P.O.Box 415, Valley Head, AL 35989**

Initial chair: Steven Whited, 38833 US Hwy11, Valley Head, AL 35989

Many of you in SERA probably know this is the site every year of a TAG event sponsored by the Dogwood City Grotto. What you may not know is that it is also a community selected by some active Michigan cavers for their retirement. This should give the new grotto good prospects for longevity.

Evelyn

SERA GUIDEBOOKS

Additional copies of the 46th Annual SERA Summer Cave Carnival guidebook have been printed and may be purchased for \$6.50 (Shipping and handling included) by sending check or money order to: CAG, 1175 Fulton Gap, Sylacauga, AL 35150-7877.

COVER PHOTO

Mary Adams, Louis Adams, Victor Bradford, Don & Ann O'Diam and others at last years grotto picnic. Little River Canyon State Park. Photos by Patrick O'Diam.

NATURAL WELL

The bumble bees that had nested at Natural Well earlier in the summer have been eradicated. A recent trip to the pit reported no problems. It is not known whether the bees left on their own or if they were coerced, either way they're gone.

THANKS

My thanks to Victor Bradford for helping with transportation to and leading a trip through Tumbling Rock Cave August 27. Sixteen missionaries from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints got their first taste of TAG caving and seemed to love every minute of it. The trip was to the King's Shower and back. Vic mentioned that the cave was as dry as he had ever seen it. The King's Shower was actually more of a Pauper's Drip.

Thanks also to cave owner Billy Precise for his graciousness. For those who haven't been to T.R. in awhile, Billy now has Tumbling Rock Cave t-shirts for sale. The shirts have a map of the cave screened on them as well as some nice color pictures. Cost is \$16 with a portion of the money going to the SCC.

BIRTHDAY SURPRISE

July 19, 1997

D.Drake

Patrick O'Diam Randy Dunn David Drake

Happy Birthday to you.

As Pat finished the final refrain, I mentioned that it might have marked the first time the "old standard" had been sung on the bottom of Surprise Pit. Probably not, but maybe. For my 42nd I vowed to make a freezer of ice-cream on the bottom, I know that'll be a first...if I can figure a way to get ice down there before it melts.

I met Pat early the morning of July 19 at his house. We loaded up his Red Raider and went to pick up Randy.

We arrived at the parking area just outside the hunting club gate at about 9:30 and started the two mile hike to the trailhead. The trail leading up Nat mountain to Fern Cave was literally covered with spider webs and somehow I ended up in front. Most of the walk along the first bench, especially through the "bamboo forest", was akin to being trapped in a bag full of "angel hair" somewhere in southeast Asia. Arachniphobics would have perished on the spot. While I was busy expelling the eight-legged pests from my ear and nasal canals, I walked past the trail fork that leads to the Fern sink. 100 feet later I suggested we cut through the woods and get back on the "right" trail, however the suggestion was vetoed. It had been years since I had taken the trail to the Johnson entrance, the one we were now on, but I could remember when skidders first blazed the

"You want me to carry the rope awhile?" I asked, secretly hoping he would say no. I didn't offer again til we were at the top of the "Mother-of-All-Hills."

path. I remembered that on a rainy day it was next to impossible to climb without grabbing small sapplings and pulling yourself up. I also remembered thinking how glad I was that Patrick was carrying the 600-ft rope. You want me to carry the rope awhile?", I asked, secretly hoping he would say no. I didn't offer again til we were at the top of the "Mother-of-All-Hills." The trail empties out about sixty feet west of the Johnson entrance. We trekked on eastward to the Fern sink.

The sink was as pretty as I've ever seen it. The water flow was such that we were able to enter the wet entrance without getting drenched. We made our way back to the

breakdown bridge with intentions of possibly rigging the third rig point. Since none of us had ever rigged that drop before, and were unsure of the traverse, we chickened out. The third rig point is the

shortest drop in the pit but supposedly the prettiest. We ended up rigging the traditional second rig point. As we were rigging to a natural anchor, we heard voices coming down the passage. We were joined by Jim Richards, a friend of Bill Cuddington's from Virginia, now living in Knoxville, and his guest from Atlanta. They rigged to bolts and dropped their rope alongside ours.

Randy, Patrick and I bounced the pit with Randy posting the best time, 9:35. Only Jim's friend from Atlanta did the pit on their rope. They derigged and headed out as Patrick was bouncing the pit a second time.

As we neared the entrance on the way out we noticed a white crawfish in a small pool of water. The waterfall cascading into the sink provided a refreshing shower before we headed

down the mountain. The crawfish and spiders were not the only critters encountered this day. As we were hiking the road back to the Raider, a three-foot-long black snake of some descent slithered across the road less than four inches from the toe of my boot.

Arriving at the truck we found Jim and company enjoying a cold one and sitting on the tailgate of their truck. Patrick just happened to have his photo album with him so we spent the next 40 minutes looking at cave pictures and reminiscing of great times in TAG, present day included.



WHITESIDE, N.C.

JULY 26, 1997

By: Patrick O'Diam

Louis Adams
Mary Adams

Patrick O'Diam
Scottie Arrington

Scottie arrived at my house around 11:00 p.m. Friday. We packed up and were off to Highlands, N.C. We went through Atlanta and made our way up to the area through the curvy roads. As we pulled into the parking area for Whiteside at 4:30 a.m., we noticed that two other trucks were already there. It was still about 30 minutes til daylight but we wanted to be the first up to the bluff, seeing as there is only one good place to rig. We started up the trail, being very quiet whereas not to wake the others in the parking area. We did not want to have to race to the top to get the rigging point first.

By the time we reached the top of the mountain it was starting to get daylight. First, we tied the rope pads together to make one

monster of a rope pad, about 30 feet long. All in all, about 50 feet of rope pad was used. Scottie did all the rigging, first rigging the small ledge going down about 50 or 60 feet to the bolts where the main rigging point is. From here the drop is 600 feet. He got the rope rigged and then proceeded to rig the pads. This looked to be big job. It was around 6:30 when he went over the lip. I went to the observation point and watched rig the rope pad and then do the drop. About an hour later I was about to take a nap when Louis and Mary walked up. About 15 minutes later, scottie popped his head up over the edge.

The day was clear up above the fog. The valley was a little foggy in the morning but soon cleared off. The bluff is about 2,000 feet above the valley floor, so one gets the feeling of being way up. [Because you are.....Ed.] Little time was wasted and Louis was on rope. He rappelled down to the ledge about 150 feet above the ground and got off on the ledge which is about two feet wide. That is also where the register is located, as well as the end of the freefall. The remainder of the drop is against the wall. There is about 400 feet of freefall on the bluff and he had done the best part. Louis waited on the ledge while Mary came down and then returned to the top. While they were both down, Scottie and I got into their lemonade. That was some tart stuff! After Scottie stopped jumping around, he took off running. I think he ran down to the Jeep and back twice. That stuff was an energy booster.

After Mary came up, Louie soon followed. I got on rope close to mid-day. The drop is an eye opener. It is a different world under the ledge. In the freefall, I along with the others, always faced away from the wall. The entire rappell and climb I was facing out overlooking the valley. It was quite nice. Upon reaching the ledge, I decided to follow Louie's advice and not Scottie's. The last 150 feet did not look too inviting. I found a place to sign the

register and then procede back up the rope. By the time I reached the ledge, I was super tired. The sun baking on the bluff was quite hot. I derigged the rope pads and the main rope and

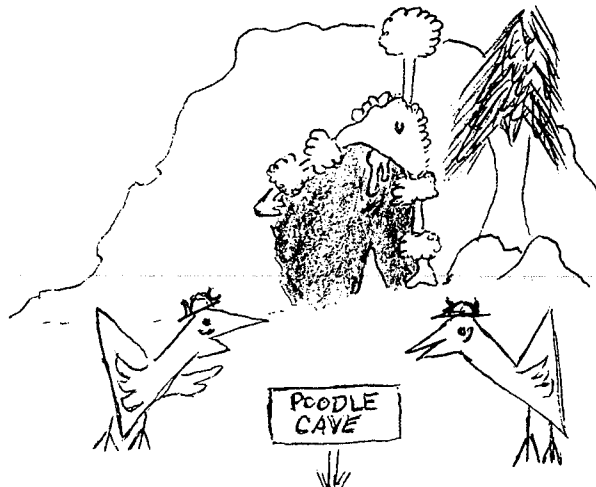
...at 10:05 I was awakened when Scottie yelled, "Dang it, I dropped the rope pad!" Other than that we slept very well.

came on up. Soon we were on our way down the mountain.

After we ate lunch, we went riding around the Smokey Mountains with Mary and Louie. We had a good time looking for bears and learning about rhodadendrun as well as flim and other flowers. We ate ate supper in Cashiers, N.C. where we spent the night. We got to bed around 10:00 p.m. and at 10:05 I was awakened when Scottie yelled, "Dang it, I dropped the rope pad!" Other than that, we slept very well. The next morning nwe took the long way home and had a good ol' time. We got home sometime around 6:00 Sunday afternoon.



BIRDS OF A FEATHER



"Take my word for it, it's definately a wet cave!"

'TIS THE SEASON

Hunting dates for Alabama

Deer-Archery: Oct.15-Jan.31

Deer-Gun: Nov.16,23,29-30

Dec.13-14,20-21

Jan.10-11,24-25

Turkey: Apr.1-30

Hunting dates for Georgia

Deer-Archery: Sep.20-Oct.24

Deer-Gun: Nov.12-15,Dec.17-20

Above dates are primarily for the Skyline Wildlife Management Area in Alabama and the Crockford-Pigeon Mountain Wildlife Area in Georgia. Hunting dates vary from county to county and caves on these properties are not necessarily all closed during these times. Check closed/limited access cave list and obtain a copy of the 1997-98 Hunting Seasons and Regulations handbook from any hunting license dealer for complete details. Tennessee dates were not available at press time.



SCC BUYS FRICKS CAVE

by Bill Putnam and Kenneth Huffines

Newsletter of the Southeastern Cave

Conservancy

The Southeastern Cave Conservancy is now the owner of Fricks Cave, 10,000 endangered Gray Bats, Georgia's only known population of the rare Tennessee Cave Salamander, and 33.8 acres of north Georgia karstland. Without a doubt Fricks is Georgia's richest biologic spelean environment. It is one of two Gray Bat caves in Georgia. The cave is in Walker County on the eastern flank of Lookout mountain. Get ready for the "Buy a Fricks Cave Bat" program coming to a caving event near you!. Details will be announced soon.

TAG MEMORIES

126

SD 72

GEIGER CAVE
 Bill Torode
 Huntsville Grotto News, 13(10)85

During the fall of 1959, I went on my first wild cave trip with the Huntsville Grotto to Tumbling Rock Cave. Along the way we passed two cave entrances right next to the road. I asked about them as the entrances were very imposing. At the time, the others said that they were small caves and didn't go anywhere, so thru the years when anyone asked me about the caves I told them what I had been told. So no one ever went to the caves that I know of.

During August of 1970, Dick Graham, John Prestage, and I went to Kyle's Cave (AL289), the first entrance that you see next to the road on the way to Tumbling Rock. We started mapping at the small spring entrance and mapped 1504' of nice stream-passage cave. We next went to the second cave entrance, located 1300' west, which was Geiger Cave (AL459). We went in the entrance 25' to the end and found two other entrances. Bill Varnedoe had mapped this cave in 1962 and the map is in the 1965 Red Book (Alabama Caves, by Tarkington, Varnedoe, and Veitch). I felt there had to be more cave than that, since during the wet season a large stream comes out the entrance. We began searching the side of the hill directly above the entrance. We were about to give up when I found a small entrance only 30' away from the cave. It appears that the passage collapsed, separating the main cave from the large entrance that you see from the road. We went back into the cave about 1000' to a crawl. Because it was late, we decided to leave the mapping for another time.

Another time happened on 26 November 1971. Jim Wilson, John Prestage, Connie Pierce, Rick Moses, and I ended up at the entrance to Geiger Cave. Just inside, we mapped a very small maze and then after 1500' of low wide passage we came to a pool of water 3' deep with one foot of air. Let me mention that a very strong current of air was blowing into the cave. I waded into the pool. Naturally, the deepest spot was where you first go in; from there on it was mostly shallow wading.

500' in, the passage was beginning to open up nicely, so I started back to try to convince one of the others to continue mapping in; about half way back I met Rick and we decided to explore in and map out. A short distance past where I had stopped, we found a side passage with a great deal of air blowing into the cave and going upstream. We pushed the passage to what all cavers dream of finding--another entrance. We went out and looked around so we would be able to find the entrance later from the outside.

We began mapping at the entrance, worked back to the main passage, and mapped upstream for 600', stopping in a 10' diameter passage stretching onward as far as we could see. But it was getting late and Rick, Jim, and Connie had a long drive back to Knoxville, so we headed back to the others, who were mapping through the 500-foot-long stoop over lake. Several bling white cave fish were observed in this pool. Total mapped was 3852 feet. The front half of the cave

had been explored by the local people, but we feel sure that they never got beyond the water.

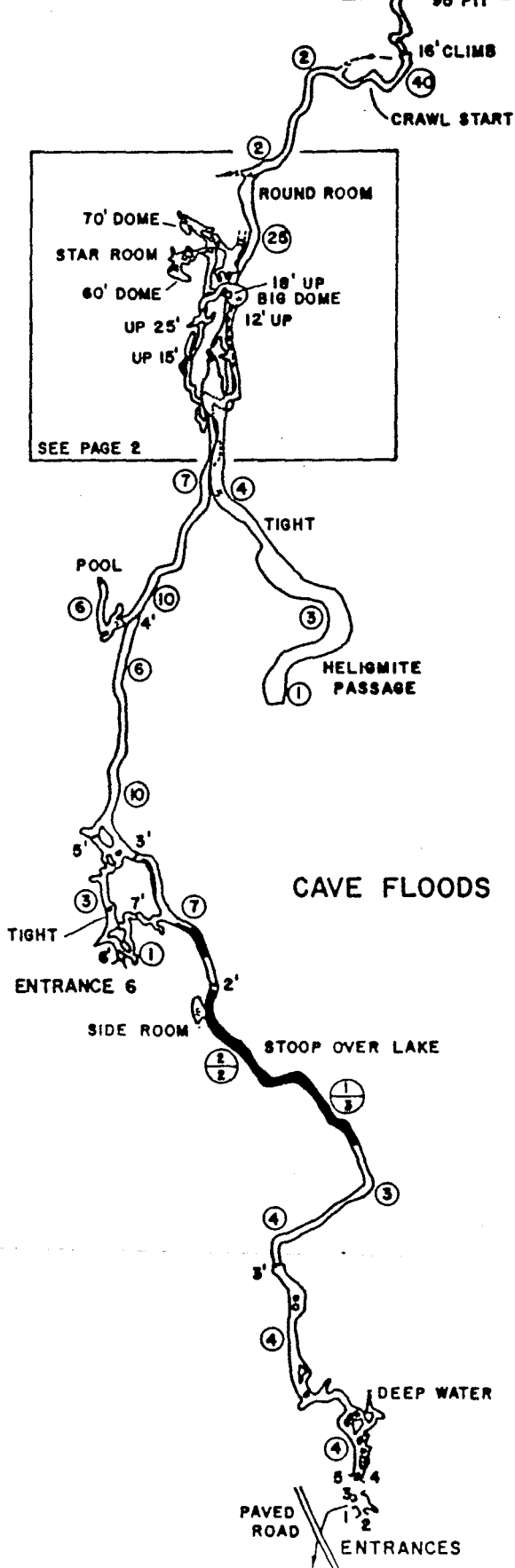
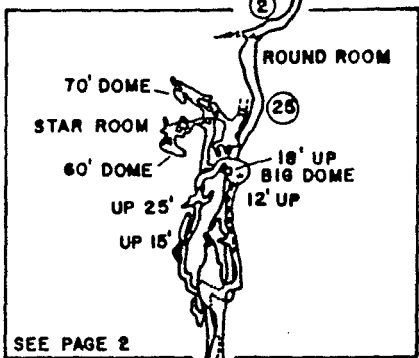
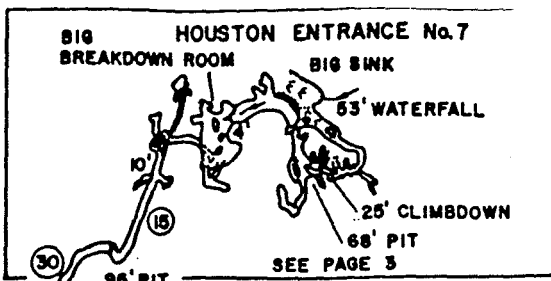
On 28 November 1971, Bob Campbell, Alex Sproul, J. V. Swearingen, Butch Gallagher, and I went back to the new entrance. We spent twenty minutes pounding to bits a small rock which made this entrance a lot easier to negotiate. J. V. and I mapped two small loops around the new entrance; then we picked up the previous survey point, mapping up the main passage. After 300' of nice easy passage, we came upon a side entrance. We mapped 150' to a 40' dome in breakdown, with a small waterfall and no apparent way out. Back in the main tunnel, Alex came back to report that the passage entered a stream crawl 300' further, but halfway was a hole in the ceiling to an upper level. We mapped up to the stream crawl and stopped. All the air is rushing up this passage indicating an upper entrance somewhere. We ate lunch and then tackled the climb up 18' of wall in a small dribbling waterfall.

Bob Campbell and I started mapping the upper level with a blah crawl that opened up into big walking, climbing-around passages. Unfortunately, all the passages ended after a short distance.

Everyone else was off exploring other passages that had to be left for another day. On this trip we mapped 2270 feet. It appears that the lower cave floods during the wet time of the year, so we didn't get back that winter.

I finally got back on 8 June 1972 when Bob Campbell and I returned to the upper level. We surveyed a short distance into a 70' dome about 50' up, where there appeared to be a large passage going off. I climbed up 20' but was unable to climb the last 30'. We went back to another passage and started mapping a nice 40-foot-high, 10-foot-wide passage for 230' into a nice room. A pit on one side was chimneyed down for a total of 69' in short climbs, but the passage in the bottom ended in a mud fill. The main passage leaving the room quickly went into a low crawl--so low that Bob couldn't get thru--so I continued solo-mapping the passage for another 400 feet. Just past the tight spot, the passage opened up to 3' high and 40' wide; patches of ceiling contained helectites, soda straws, etc., all very nice. This finished up everything in the upper level that we could get into; maybe someday we will go back with my scaling pole and climb that wall. Most of the upper levels laid out on the map directly over the lower level, making it a big mish-mash of passages.

Back down in the lower level, the last unexplored lead was the stream crawl. This time, during the summer, air was coming out of this passage. I crawled 143' upstream to where it got a lot smaller, so I quit. Some one smaller, more of a stream crawler, might get further (after all, the air and the stream get through!). Total mapped for this "small cave next to the road" is a respectable 7741 feet.



GEIGER CAVE AL459

TAPE & COMPASS SURVEY
 BY THE HUNTSVILLE GROTTO
 OF THE NATIONAL SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

NOV 1971 - SEPT 1983

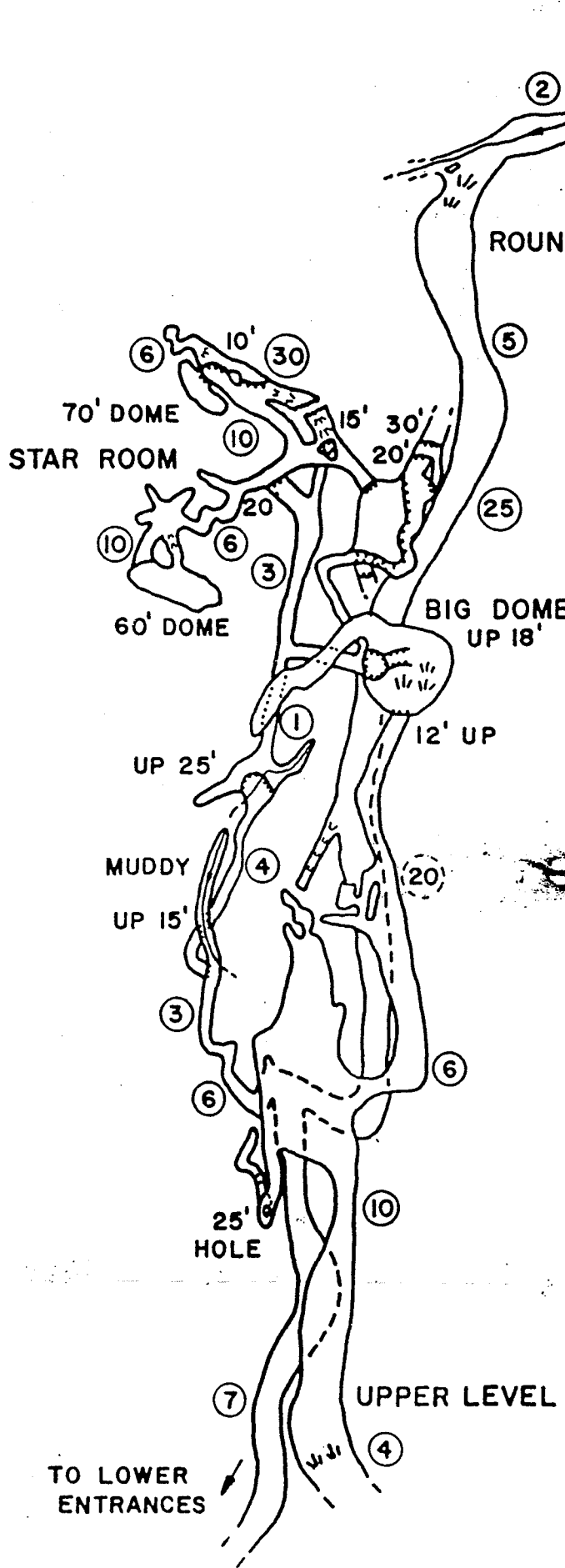
- STEVE ATTAWAY
- BOB CAMPBELL
- JIM HALL
- RICK MOSES
- MARION SMITH
- JOHN VAN SWEARINGEN IV
- BILL TORODE
- JIM WILSON



LENGTH 10,892

Page 1 of 3

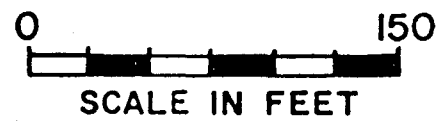


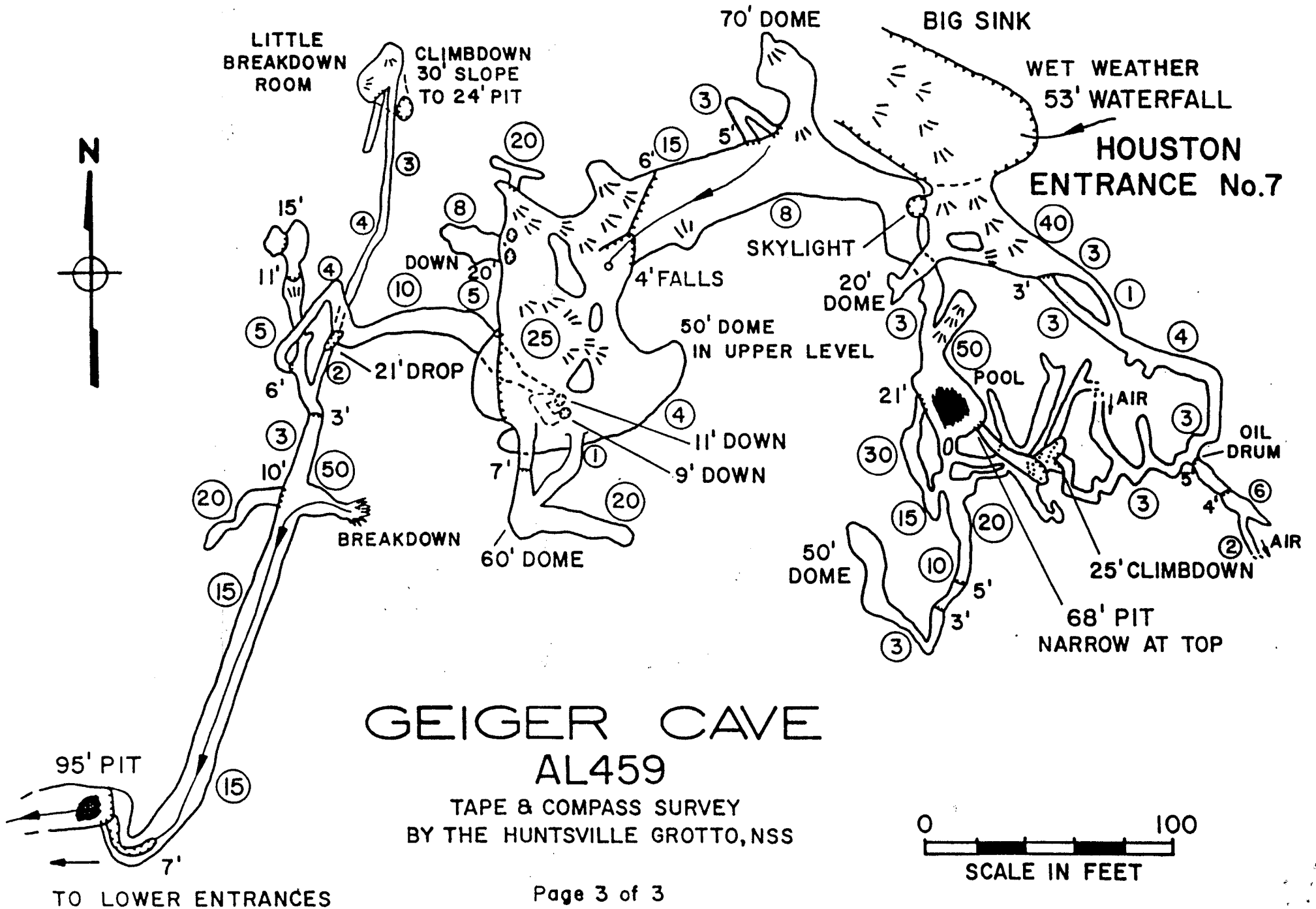


GEIGER CAVE AL459

TAPE & COMPASS SURVEY
BY THE HUNTSVILLE GROTTO, NSS

Page 2 of 3





*The Southeastern
Cave Conservancy
Proudly Confers Upon
the Cullman Grotto*

*This Certificate of
Honorary Ownership of One
Hundred Feet of Passage in
Kennamer Cave*

The

FLOWSTONE

October 1997

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE CULLMAN GROTTO
OF THE NATIONAL SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Vol. 3, No. 10



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The Cullman Grotto will exchange by request with any publishing grotto.

Republication of articles or items contained within the Flowstone welcome providing credit is given to source.

Annual dues for the Cullman Grotto are eight dollars (\$8) for individual membership or ten dollars (\$10) per family. Dues are payable at the first grotto meeting of each year and include subscription to The FLOWSTONE. Subscription rate for non-members is eight dollars (\$8) per year.

The Cullman Grotto meets the first Tuesday of every month at 7:30pm in the Cullman County Public Library conference room, 200 Clark St NE, Cullman AL. Visitors and prospective members are welcome.

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CALENDER

Oct 9-12-20th Annual TAG Fall Cave-In, Sequoyah Caverns, Valley Head, AL Hosted by DCG. Contact Kathy Mackay (404)378-4549.

Oct 5-Grotto vertical trip TBA.

Nov 4-Monthly grotto meeting. 7:30 pm, Cullman Public Library conference room.

Aug 3-7, 1998-NSS Convention, Sewanee, TN

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ECHO CHAMBER

SAFETY FIRST!

By now most of us are aware of the recent tragedy that took place at Stephen's Gap over Labor Day weekend, when an Atlanta woman rigged into a "pig-tail" and rappelled off the end of the rope. It was reported that the woman was in her 40's, a member of a Georgia grotto, and experienced in vertical caving. Although all the details have not been made available, it is obvious that several safety practices were overlooked or disregarded culminating in her death. Cullman Grotto safety chairman Bill Cuddington points out that the most basic of safety procedures were not applied. i.e.:

- No knot at the end of the pig-tail
- Not double checking rigging
- Not looking down while descending
- Those who were on top or bottom were unaware of what was going on.

Obviously hindsight is 20/20, but hopefully this accident will serve as a reminder to all who engage in this potentially hazardous sport that no matter how many times a person has been on rope, failure to observe safety first, everytime!, can result in serious injury or death.

Cullman Grotto's condolences go out to the woman's family. In a sense she too was a part of ours, the caving family.

MORE CG COMMUNITY SERVICE

Victor, Micah, Harold and myself led another group of scouts and their leaders on a tour of Tumbling Rock Cave, Saturday, Sept. 27. Four scouts and three leaders from LDS Troop 235 out of Athens, AL. were taken on a trip to the King's Shower, the highest dome pit in the U.S. at 396 feet, and back. With the exception of one scout complaining of chest pains on the way out, the trip was uneventful. Once outside and rested up, the young man soon recovered.

At the same time we were in Tumbling Rock, Patrick O'Diam and my father, Charles Drake, were taking a group of Huntsville scouts through Cedar Ridge Crystal in South Pittsburg, TN. Afterwards the group drove to Scottsboro for a sightseeing trip to Neversink. Thanks to all who shared their time and experience to introduce these folks to caving the right way.

COVER PHOTO

David Drake at 15 ft drop in Poodle Cave, Morgan County, AL. Photo by Patrick O'Diam.

TIGHT SQUEEZE ON GREEN MOUNTAIN

By Micah Sims
Sunday August 25, 1997

The day started out just like always, everyone met at the library for the trip to O'Hara Fare Well. There were six people attending the trip: Harold Calvert, Jeff Lynn, Bernard Powell, Victor Bradford, myself and Glenn Ledbetter, who we met on the way. We all piled in Jeff's Toyota and were on our way. After some serious bull shooting and joke telling, we met up with Glenn.

We started up the mountain toward the parking area. Everyone geared up and we started the hike to O'Hara. I volunteered to go in first and check out the situation. I crawled in and Jeff handed in the gear. Jeff tried to enter but could not make it in. Harold tried and couldn't make it in. Then Glenn tried. He made it further than Jeff and Harold, but still couldn't make it in. Glenn started to climb back out but became lodged. I, still in the cave below him, tried to push him out by the feet but couldn't move him an inch. I then took off his knee pads but that didn't help. The rest of the group rigged a handline and that helped a little bit. Everyone else was starting to worry, but Glenn kept his cool. After about ten to fifteen minutes he finally slid out, exhausted. I then began my ascension out of the hole. I too had a problem getting out, but not like Glenn.

After a little rest we proceeded to Three Turkey Plunge, a nice 150 ft. drop. After a little hike and a bit of hunting we found it. Bernard and Victor rigged the pit and we started down. After entering you could tell that staying dry was going to be impossible. Upon reaching the bottom a pool of water was visible and was inhabited by crawfish. Several skulls were also visible, apparently from some unlucky animals.

The ascent was just as wet as the descent, but much slower.

The last one out was Viic, so he was going to bring up the rope pads. The only problem was that he dropped them on the way up and was too tired to go back down and get them. I once again jumped in [not literally I hope....Ed.] and volunteered. After returning to the surface, we packed up and began our way back to the vehicles. We then proceeded to a local store for refreshments and then home. We arrived at the library and dispersed to our cars with a shower in mind.



MONTE SANO HIKER SUFFERS 25-FOOT FALL

HUNTSVILLE-A 19-year-old hiker suffered serious injuries following a 25-foot fall at Monte Sano State Park in September. Mike Dunn was hiking alone when he fell. People who were on the trail later heard him screaming and summoned help about 6 p.m. Several rescuers dropped on rigged ropes to reach Dunn. He was rescued about 7:45 p.m. "He didn't have any serious bleeding or obvious external wounds, but it's possible he suffered chest and spinal injuries," said rescue supervisor Kenneth Burke.



BIRDS OF A FEATHER



Caver's Strike Back

TRIP TO ELLISON'S

(Or So We Thought)

By Micah Sim's

Saturday August 16, 1997

Six o'clock Saturday morning and everyone was at the library for the trip to Ellison's. There were several people attending the trip: Patrick, Bernard, Scottie, Harold, Victor, Randy and myself. Patrick had a couple of walkie-talkies to use on the trip. After talking it over we left out for Ellison's. After a couple of hours, a few jokes, a bite to eat and a milk break, we arrived at the parking area. The place was packed with vehicles. Assessing the situation it was decided that we do something different. Bernard said something about Moses Tomb, but we only had two ropes, a 200 footer and the grotto 600 footer., so that was out. Victor mentions Cemetary and Pearson's. So with Pearson's in mind we head out. On our way there we run into Chuck Henson at a local store and he informs us that the pit is closed. Once more we are disappointed, so off to Cemetary Pit we go. Arriving at the parking area we can see that the so called trail is grown up with brush and Victor is not certain on the location of the thing.

Harold mentions Cedar Ridge Crystal, then in a flash of light Vic has a brainstorm. He mentions we do Cedar Ridge and then a nearby pit called Sawmill Well. Once again we are on the move. The group decides to do the pit first and then the cave on the way home. As we make our way through Firey Gizzard Cove, the location of the 155 ft pit, we pass Mr. Smith, the owner of the pit. In a haste we turn around and Patrick tries to catch up with him. Patrick then exercises some of that "Hot Pursuit" driving and almost gave me and Victor a heart attack. We finally flag down Mr. Smith and ask for permission to do the pit. He is more than glad to grant it to us. He also informs us of

other cavers doing some horizontal caving on his place and said they might join us at the pit, if they are not already there. With this in mind we turn around to get the others.

We start our trek up the mountain on a logging road and it starts getting a little rocky and rough, so we back down until we find a place to park. We start walking up the hill not certain that we are at the right place. After some hunting around we found it right by the road. It is then we find out that this pit is a new one for Vic as well as us.

Scottie and Patrick rig the pit and Patrick starts down only to find out it is short rigged by about 15-20 feet. Of course we all jokingly place the blame on Vic. Patrick finds a rock ledge about 30 feet from the bottom to rest upon while we change rig points. The result is a small, unimpressive tree with a little bit of webbing tied to it and alot of poion ivy growing into the pit. Even though the rappel was against the wall most of the way, it was an impressive pit.

We finally climb out, derig, make a few jokes, and head back down the hill. On our way out we stop and thank Mr. Smith, and he tells us that the other cavers were to be bushed to do the pit and they went home.

Once again we were on the road making our way to Cedar Ridge Crystal. The team finally arrives, but only Patrick, Harold, Scottie, Randy and myself enter the cave. We do not stay very long, but I am still impressed with formations. As we rest outside, two motorists pull off the interstate right below us and look about, not knowing we were anywhere around. After the motorists leave so do we, heading for home. We stop in Scottsboro to eat at the Liberty cafe. After a good meal we head for Cullman. Going through Guntersville we had a little mix up with the walkie-talkies, but we cleared it up and finally arrived at the Library at about nine o'clock. Although the day didn't turn out as planned, we still had a good time.

READER'S DIGEST • MAY 1997

A WOMAN from the audience approached Merlin Tuttle after his lecture on bats. "When I was a child," she told him, "a bat got tangled in my hair."

No way could that happen, said Tuttle, founder of Bat Conservation International (BCI) in Austin, Texas. While Tuttle discourages people from handling bats or other wild creatures, he is an experienced biologist and decided to prove his point by doing something unusual: he offered the woman \$20 to see if he could get a bat interested in her hair.

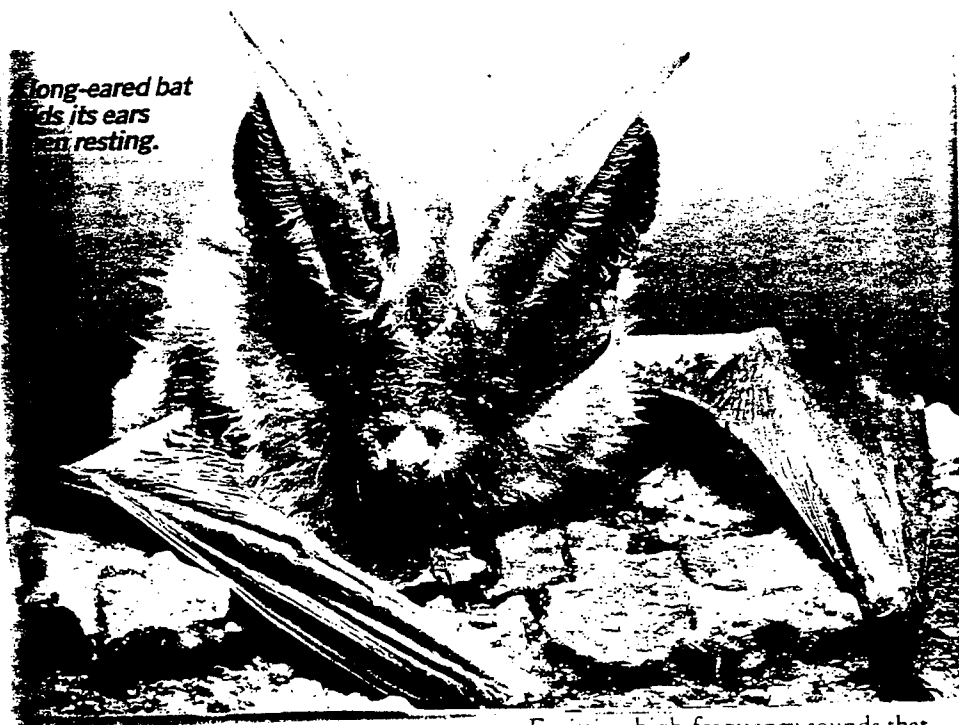
"Do you promise you can get him out?" she asked.

"I'll pay you an extra \$20 if he

Thanks to conservationists, these prodigious pollinators and pest controllers are coming in from the cold

A Love Affair With Bats

BY KRISTIN VON KREISLER



Long-eared bat folds its ears when resting.

doesn't jump out on his own," Tuttle said.

When the woman came to his office, Tuttle set a bat on her head. Instantly it flew away. Then Tuttle wrapped a clump of the woman's long, brown hair around the animal. The bat popped up like a cork in water.

Tuttle paid the woman \$20 and gave her some facts: Humans would need military night-vision scopes to see as well in the dark as some bats do. Most bats also "see" not just with their eyes, but with echolocation.

Emitting high-frequency sounds that bounce off potential prey and return as echoes, bats can detect objects only two millimeters long and as fine as a human hair.

So with all that going for them, Tuttle asked, "How could a bat get tangled in a head of hair?"

Good question, the woman conceded. The creature from her childhood, Tuttle guessed, was probably just a big insect. She left Tuttle's office amused—and enlightened. And Tuttle was glad to have debunked yet another bat myth.

Critical Role. For anyone who will listen, the message of Merlin Tuttle and other conservationists is clear: bats, whose nearly 1000 species make up a quarter of the earth's mammals, are not creepy, worthless creatures. "They're among the gentlest and most benign of animals," says Tuttle, 55.

New research shows they're better friends to humans than anyone ever realized. In a single season, for instance, 150 big brown bats can consume 600,000 cucumber beetles, which, if allowed to lay eggs, could produce 33 million cucumbers—a serious agricultural pest. A BCI-sponsored study identified some 300 plant species worldwide that need bats for propagation. From these plants, roughly 450 commercial products are made at an annual value of hundreds of millions of dollars.

Yet for all these good works, the world's bat population is severely threatened. Millions of bats perish each year because of carelessness or fear on the part of humans. Many people still think of bats as dirty, rabid predators. But Tuttle emphasizes that bats are extremely clean: they even groom themselves like cats. And less than half of one percent of bats contract rabies. "In the U.S., in fact, dog attacks may kill as many people annually as bat rabies killed in the past 15 years," says Tuttle.

Devastated Habitat. The campaign by Tuttle and others to change the public's thinking about bats has been an uphill battle. Tuttle got a crucial insight into bats' vulnerability while earning his Ph.D. in ecology and evolution from the University of Kansas. One night he went with friends to Alabama's Hambrick Cave to watch almost a quarter-million gray bats fly out to forage. Sitting on rocks by the cave's entrance, Tuttle and his friends waited. And waited.

Alarmed, Tuttle finally rushed into the cave to see what was wrong. Shining his headlamp into the shadows, he found the remains of fires and fireworks. Smoke from the blazes had suffocated many of the bats. And Tuttle knew that noise from the fireworks

probably damaged the echolocation capabilities of any survivors. Devastated, Tuttle thought, *Something has to be done to stop this destruction.*

After talking with colleagues and other conservationists, he could see that persuading the public to save bats would not be easy. In North America, more than half of the 45 known bat species are either listed as endangered or are in alarming decline, making them one of the continent's most rapidly disappearing mammals. In 1963 the 25 million bats in Arizona's Eagle Creek Cave made up the largest bat colony in North America. Now the cave's bat population may be less than ten percent of its earlier size.

Change in Feeling. In 1975 Tuttle took a job as curator of mammals at the Milwaukee Public Museum. His work permitted him to pursue bat studies all over the world, and on March 12, 1982, Tuttle founded Bat Conservation International. Most foundations and agencies, however, ignored BCI efforts. Bats had not only suffered from bad press—in the United States alone, many millions of dollars

These flying foxes can disperse seeds over thousands of square miles in one night.

PHOTO © RICK AND NORA SCHERSWILLER 1997

a year were being spent to *kill* bats.

To change such attitudes, Tuttle traveled the country, giving lectures to any group that would listen. Everywhere, he emphasized one theme: losing bats could have serious ecological and economic consequences.

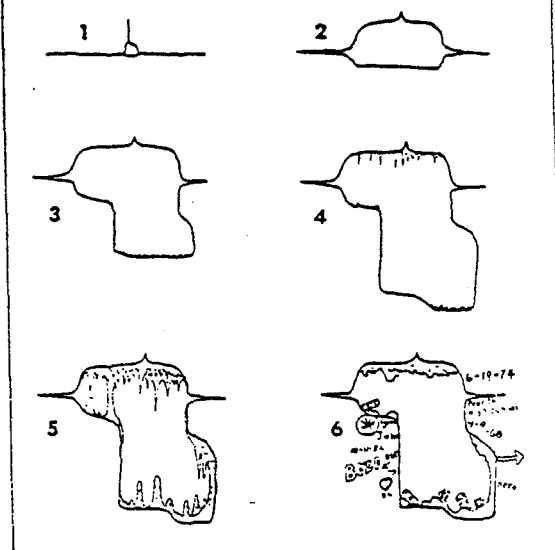
His efforts became widely publicized. Readers marveled at his photographs, which showed everything

from flying-fox bats with six-foot wingspans to bumblebee bats weighing less than a penny.

Gradually people started changing their feelings about bats. A corporate contributor gave BCI a \$10,000 grant and printed a million bat brochures. A philanthropic foundation donated money for Tuttle to hire a secretary. Member contributions increased. Within three years



Cave Evolution: Step Step Six



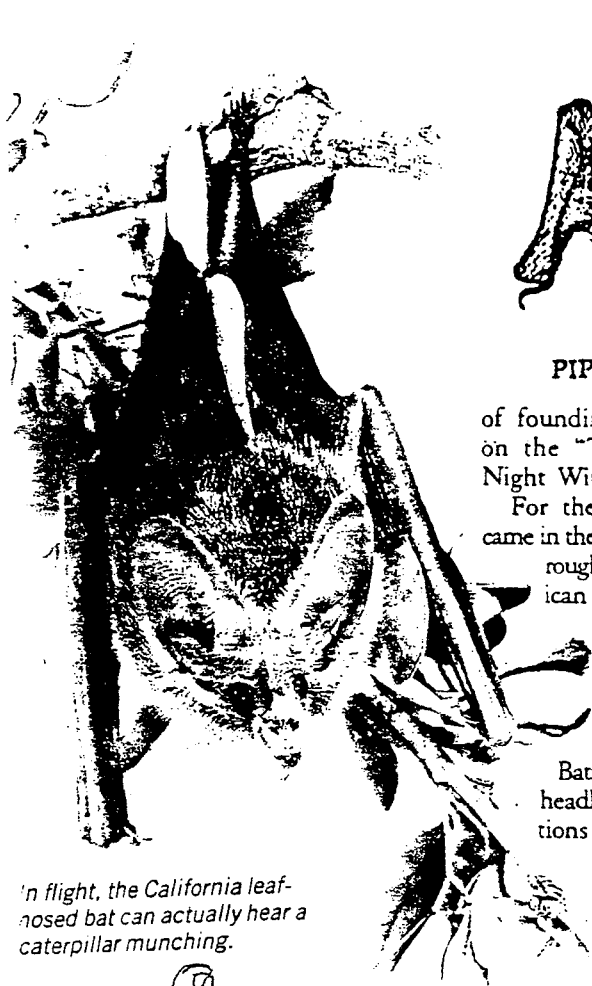
CIG NEWSLETTER
Volume XXIX, No. 2

The Novice

Tevis Kouts

The Potomac Caver
Volume 38, March

I walked the cave.
I went underground.
I wanted to see
what could be found.
The beauty they hold,
of I'd been told.
But to see with my eyes,
what a surprise.
Stalactites, stalagmites,
rooms of great height,
dainty helectites,
columns of might,
rivers and pools
that are crystalline clear,
all gifts from the earth
shedding her tears.
The life that abounds there
has made it their home
in a whole different world
all of their own.
They live without light,
forever in dark.
It's a blackness so strong
it tears at the heart.
But the wonders I saw,
down in that cave
have inspired my life
to this very day.



In flight, the California leaf-nosed bat can actually hear a caterpillar munching.



PIPISTRELLE

of founding BCI, Tuttle appeared on the "Today" show and "Late Night With David Letterman."

For the organization, a key test came in the mid-1980s in Austin. There, roughly a million-and-a-half Mexican free-tailed bats had moved in under the recently rebuilt Congress Avenue Bridge. Newspapers captured the mood of city residents—"Mass Fear in the Air as Bats Invade Austin" warned one headline—and many signed petitions to exterminate the bats.

Tuttle knew that Austin could become a test for a major public-education program. In 1986 he resigned from the Milwaukee Public Museum and moved BCI to Austin. He invited community leaders on field trips to learn about bats. He also gave bat-education materials to local schools. Before long, students formed bat clubs and wore bat T-shirts and buttons.

Soon hundreds of people were gathering at the bridge to watch the creatures rise in great black clouds and fly off to hunt. The next March when the bats migrated back to Austin from Mexico, local newspapers now welcomed them home. Collaborating with BCI, the Texas Department of Transportation even funded research to design some bridges that would attract more bats.

Favorite Tactic. Old mines became another BCI target. Each year hundreds of them were sealed for public safety. This sometimes meant that thousands of bats were inadvertently buried. In Iron Mountain, Mich., for example, up to a million little brown bats hibernated in the Millie Hill mine. Because officials feared that peo-

ple might climb the chain-link fence surrounding the 300-foot vertical shaft, however, plans were made to fill it.

So Tuttle went to Iron Mountain and used a favorite tactic: persuasion by education. He took Zoie, a flying fox, to the town's two elementary schools and talked with students about bats.

"Tomorrow night I'll be at the library," Tuttle told the children. "If you can get your parents to bring you there, I'll show you bats from all over the world."

On that snowy night, the temperature dropped below zero. Expecting few people to brave the weather for Tuttle's lecture, the librarians set up 20 chairs. But 300 parents and children appeared. "I know many of you may fear bats," Tuttle began, "but you're in for a surprise." And then he started showing slides. One was a close-up of a California leaf-nosed bat with big ears and a comical face. "Does this animal look scary?" he asked.

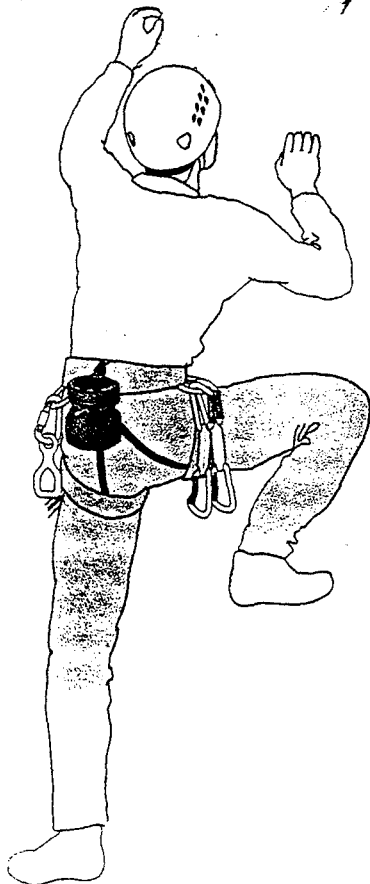
The audience laughed.

By the time Tuttle finished, BCI had won many converts. A few weeks later, local businesses agreed to donate materials for a heavy steel cage that volunteers built over the mine shaft. The bats kept their home.

ONE RECENT EVENING, Tuttle traveled to the San Antonio area and visited Bracken Cave, a bat sanctuary owned and protected by BCI. The cave is the largest remaining home for bats in the United States. Here, 20 million Mexican free-tailed bats return every March to have their pups—which hang, squirming and jostling, up to 500 per square foot. Every summer night, the colony eats about 200 tons of insects.

As the bats circled up from the cave entrance, the sky slowly turned black with the creatures, their flapping wings filling the air with sound. Tuttle was totally absorbed. As the bats rose higher and higher, he considered the creatures' fate.

The struggle to save them, he knew, had only just begun. What mattered most to Tuttle was the power of researchers and BCI members around the world combining their energy and talents to save these endangered creatures. The proof of this new love affair with bats was everywhere—but mostly, right now, it was above him, filling and darkening the sky.



799 MEMORIES

"RECONNASISSANCE OF FOUR SOUTH ALABAMA CAVES"

Paul and Viola Boyer

Huntsville Grotto Newsletter 12(12)111

Since our visit with the Alexanders (Nov. 1970), where we learned about caves near our part of Florida, we have been making a desultory search for them. South of Montgomery we didn't see much possibility for caves except in the Mariana and Crystal River limestones, continuing the trend to the northwest from our nearest Florida karst at Mariana. Our investigation of South Alabama caves has shown us that there are possibilities of caves even among the thin marl and limestone beds of the rest of the Gulf Coast Tertiary rocks, such as the Byrum marl above the Mariana limestone (both Oligocene), and the limestone bed in the Clayton Formation (Paleocene).

In January and February of this year (1971) we tracked down Sanders Cave, Ala. 167, in Conecuh County, and found it to be developed completely in the Mariana limestone. The cave map in existence is a sketch map which does not show the three other entrances to the left of the main entrance as one faces the low bluff overlooking a swampy run. Walking into the entrance, one comes to the most impressive room in the cave, about 30 by 60 feet, with a three-foot-round skylight 25 feet above the floor. The main passage takes off from the back of this room in a meandering eight-to fifteen-foot-high stream passage (dry) for 500 feet before lowering to a stoopway and then a crawlway. The crawlway forks just before getting less than a foot high; it could be dug farther.

Sanders Cave is on private property (absentee landlord estate), but the access must be gained through private property with permission. The cave is a well-known camping and drinking spot, judging from the 150 pounds of trash that we removed from it on our first two visits. In July a small colony of bats was observed in one of the main passage domes; several of them were banded. Pipistrels were noted farther back in the passage. The bat population may have been ten times larger because many of the ceiling alcoves are stained black, and the mud had some guano mixed with it.

Booger Hole (Ala. 383), near Shady Grove, Pike County, is locally rumored to have thirteen rooms going back under the hill. It falls far short of local legend, being essentially a joint controlled fissure with a single room about 30 feet long and five to six feet high, with streams flowing into it from a tube crawl and an impassable joint crack. The crawl can be pushed another 60 feet to a tiny dome, and possibly a little further. The entrance room once connected to the outside through a stoopway under a ledge of crystalline limestone about five feet thick, but a block dropped down and sealed the old entrance. The cave is now accessible through a narrow pit dropping ten feet through loose soil. A few bats were noted, but rather reluctantly in such close quarters.

Rock Cave (Ala. 132) in Butler County is 30 miles to the west of Bogger Hole, in an outcrop of the same limestone (Clayton Formation), and is also developed under a single five-foot-thick bed of limestone. In the case of Booger Hole, the material below the limestone is a clayey gray sandstone, and for Rock Cave it is similar, with noticeable mica content. Rock Cave is entered through a bedding plane crawl under a three-foot-high ledge, and opens to a stoopway within 200 feet. The stoopway is floored with pools of water and a particularly sticky gritty mud. This passageway continues until it divides into two equally muddy branches. The ceiling of the main passage, about halfway in, and the end of the main passage, once exhibited a transparent blade type of speleothem, similar to the icicles of Glory Hole in Georgia. Broken stumps are all that remain of them.

The owner of Rock Cave has been pestered by hunters and other vandals to the point where he is very reluctant to allow cavers to visit. This cave has little scenic value except for its length of about 1000 feet, unless you like gritty sticky mud to your waist! The most interesting features of it are the small echinoid fossils in the roof (sea urchins 10mm. across). The cave crickets there were the largest we have ever seen (6-7 cm.).

On September 12 we tracked down Rockhouse Cave in Covington County, very close to the town of Florala on the state line. This cave proved to be better than its name, with a mapped length of 387 feet. The entrance span is under a ledge of what is probably Byrum marl. From the back of the rock shelter around breakdown blocks opens a standing room. From the back of this room a stream may be followed as a stoopway for another 300 feet to a small breakdown dome, where a few soda straws and stalagmites have developed. Several side passages appear to drain nearby sinkholes into the trunk stream. One of these sinkholes contains a crawl passage on about the same level as the main cave stream passage. It probably connects with it through a narrow joint crack. This swallow hole is just one of the several sinkholes nearby which are equally as promising. It is easy to understand why they haven't all been checked. The jungle-like ground cover is most difficult to penetrate.

The cave life noted consisted of several medium-sized (3 cm) crayfish not yet devoid of color and ten to fifteen flying or solitarily roosting small gray bats, probably Pipistrels.

We still haven't found any rumor of caves in the outcrop belt of Mariana limestone east of Andalusia or west of the town of Mariana. The Mariana limestone may be buried under younger sands. Our experience with Rockhouse Cave shows that we should not be blind to the cave possibilities in these younger formations, even though they look like loose pink sand in most road cuts. The caves of South Alabama are big enough to get you out of the blazing sun, which is all we ask of a cave in this part of the country.

HARBIN'S PIT GREEN'S WELL

September 6, 1997

By Patrick O'Diam

I didn't think I would make it on this trip. Everyone was to meet at the normal place, the library, at 8:00 a.m. The Boy Scouts had a run through town and I had to work at the Police Dept. that morning. I drove by the library and talked to Micah, Jeff, Harold and Bernard who were all at the library a little early. I told them not to look for me because after the run I needed to go home to do woodwork. As I was waiting for the runners to come by, Vic drove up with Ramsey, his 125lb. puppy that doesn't like to be looked at!

I think most of the group left the library around 8:30. Since I had one of the first posts in the race, the runners came by me rather early and I was finished. I decided with school and work and all, this might be the last time I would have a chance to go caving for awhile, so I went home and packed my gear and hit the road by 9:00. With the many stops the other guys made, I passed them in Guntersville but they didn't see me. Soon, before I reached the parking place

side of the road. I went on to Harbin's and waited another 20 minutes for Vic and the others. Soon the rest of the group got there. They seemed a bit surprised to see me already there. We walked to the pit and got it rigged. Ramsey had everyone a little on edge. Soon he walked up to me and when I made eye contact with him, he tried to kiss me on the lips, yet he was not showing too much love. After this, Vic chained him to a tree.

The pit was very nice, I think it was about 105 ft. The way we had it rigged, the

As I was waiting for the runners to come by, Vic drove up with Ramsey, his 125lb. puppy that doesn't like to be looked at!

rope was totally free from the lip. There are several nice formations to look at on the way down and back up. Micah and I climbed tandem. Next we went to Green's Well. Vic talked to the man in the house at the bottom and soon we were off. I drove and Glenn took his

4-wheeler. There

was very little water going in but there was still enough to where you would get wet on the climb back up. We all did the pit and some of us pushed the cave for a ways. We had an enjoyable time. Ramsey didn't seem to be enjoying himself being chained to the tree, but we felt safer knowing as long as we stayed away from that tree, he could not eat us.

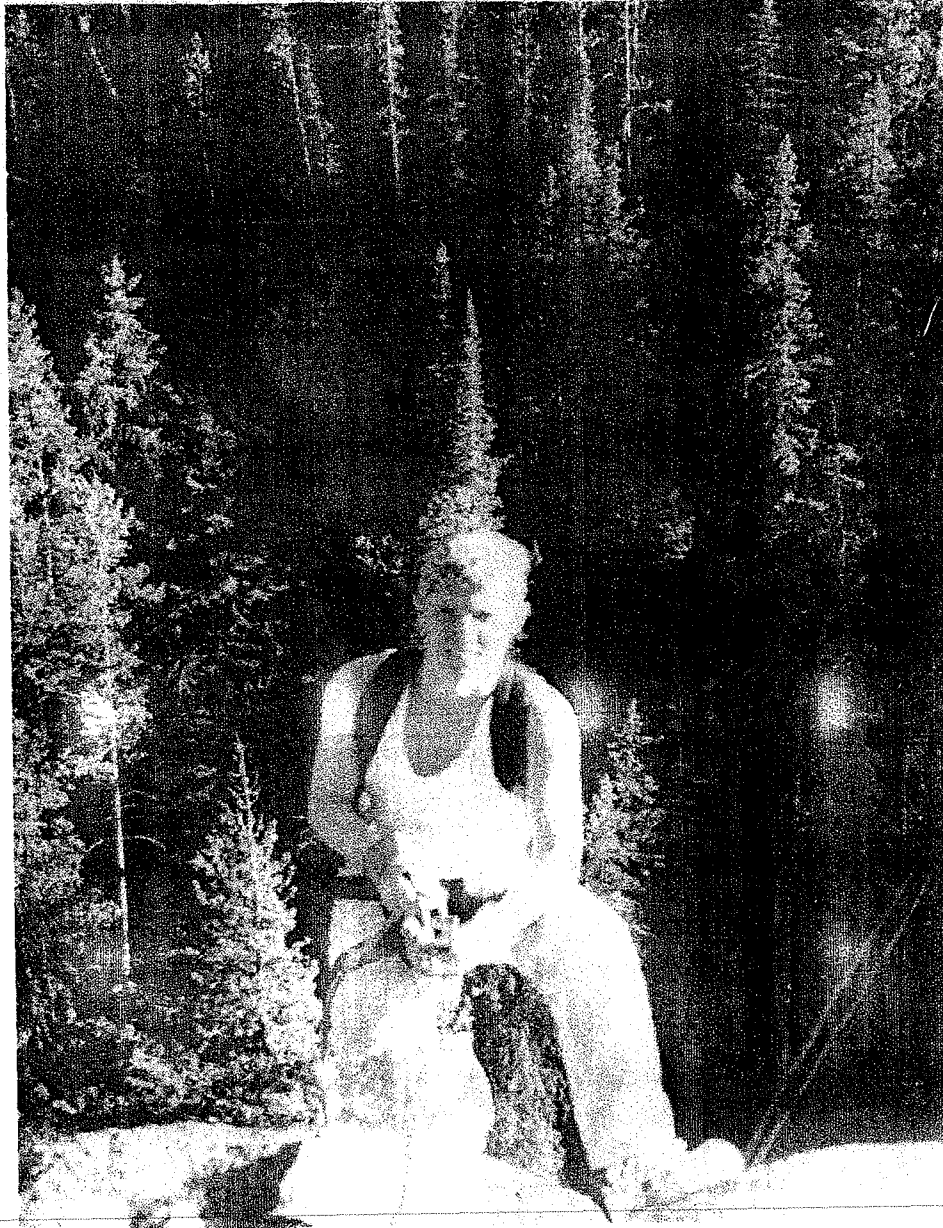
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FLOWSTONE

November 1997

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE CULLMAN GROTTO
OF THE NATIONAL SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Vol. 3, No. 11



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The Cullman Grotto meets the first Tuesday of every month at 7:30pm in the Cullman County Public Library conference room, 200 Clark St NE, Cullman AL. Visitors and prospective members are welcome.

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CALENDER

Nov 8-Grotto horizontal trip TBA.

Dec 2-Monthly grotto meeting. 7:30 pm, Cullman Public Library conference room.

Dec 7-Grotto vertical trip TBA.

Feb 7, 1998-Quarterly meeting of the Southeastern Cave Conservancy, Inc. at ITT Technical Institute. B'ham. AL. 10am. Contact Scott Fee, 205-854-PITS or scottfee@usa.pipeline.com or www.scci.org.

Aug 3-7, 1998-NSS Convention, Sewanee, TN

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ECHO CHAMBER

ADOPT-A-BAT

The Southeastern Cave Conservancy is now offering the adoption of 10,000 bats in Frick's Cave. You get a certificate stating your Bat's name and a cool sticker for only \$10.00! Sections of Kennamer Cave as well as A-Piece-of-the Pit(Neversink) remain available. Contact Scott Fee at 205-854-PITS or www.scci.org.

LITTLE RIVER CANYON FALL

Huntsville TV stations reported a fall at Little River Canyon State Park TAG weekend. Apparently a Ms. Johnson was watching rappellers November 12, when she fell a reported 300'. More reliable sources say the fall was only 85'. Apparently the woman lost her balance and tumbled over the edge of the cliff. Details are sketchy but the woman is not believed to be a caver and was not attending the TAG Fall Cave-In. According to park rangers, the woman was alive when rescue units left albeit in critical condition.

TRAVELERS

A spelunker, a Hindu, and a Jew were cruising through Iowa when their vehicle sputtered and died. The three walked to the nearest farm house just as it became dark. The farmer looked over the trio and said they were all welcome to spend the night in the barn. The Hindu volunteered to stay in the barn and headed towards it. Several minutes later a knock was heard at the door. The Hindu had returned and said he could not spend the night in the barn because of the cows. It was a religious taboo.

The Jew said he had no problems with sleeping in the barn and headed off towards it. Several minutes later another knock was heard at the door. The Jew had returned and said he could not spend the night in the barn because of the pigs. It was a religious taboo.

So the spelunker said he would spend the night in the barn and headed off towards it. Several minutes later there yet another knock at the door. The farmer opened the door and stood facing the pigs and the cows, who said, "no-way!"

*The Meramec Caver
Volume 26, Number 5*

COVER PHOTO

Patrick O'Diam rappelling at Virginia Cascades, Yellowstone National Park. Photo by Shane Drake, 1993.

3-IN-1

By D.Drake
Sept 27, 1997

V.Bradford M.Sims
H.Calvert D.Drake

Three caves in one day? Hundreds can boast that accomplishment I'm sure, but two had been my personal best until now.

The day started by leading a group of Athens, AL scouts on a tour of Tumbling Rock. After emerging from the cave into the warm, mid-afternoon sunshine, we started discussing the possibility of bouncing a nearby pit. Obviously, Neversink was mentioned due to its close proximity to T.R., however, we were hoping to come up with one that none of us had done before. Following several minutes of indecisive drivel, the human GPS, Victor Bradford, answered the call.....uhh, sort of.

"Oh, I know one," Vic exclaimed excitedly. "It's that multi-drop over by Indian River Cave, now what the hell's the name of that cave," he continued absentmindedly.

I started naming every Jackson county multi-drop I could think of, but each guess was countered with the same response, "No, that ain't it either, what the hell's the name of that pit."

"How deep is it?" I would ask.

"Oh, I don't know," he would reply.

"The first drop's 82 feet or so."

The laundry list of caves continued spewing from the ranks until finally, by process of elimination more than anything else, I struck gold, "The Diggings?"

"Yeah, that's it," Vic recalled. "I don't know why I couldn't think of that."

I felt it my civic duty to remind him that, with age, the mind is the first to go.

He was mumbling something about "showing me *age* in a back alley" as we loaded into Harold's Plymouth van and headed for The

Diggings Pit.

THE DIGGINGS PIT

Diggings is easily accessible. On dry days, a 4WD vehicle will take you right to the pit with little trouble. Wet days are a different story, but more on that later. By foot, the pit is not more than a half mile from the main road. The parking area is a trash dump for area roofers, comprised mostly of piles of old shingles and roofing nails, some of which have spilled onto the access road. After a great deal of coaxing and assurance that I had removed any nails from the path, I talked Harold into driving the van across some of the shingles. My thoughts were that we would continue on down the access road toward the pit, thus decreasing the walk time. However, Vic informed us of looming mudholes the size of China, so we parked the van on the other side of the trash piles and started walking. In effect, my coaxing had gained us an additional 15 feet and put us in unneeded jeopardy of a flat tire.

Prior to locating the pit, we crossed said mudholes and came to the conclusion that someone had indeed experienced trouble negotiating them recently, like today!

Arriving at The Diggings we found an extremely muddy, Chevy Z-71, 4WD, pick-up. We also noticed a rope down the hole with no one left up top guarding it, a cardinal caving sin, yet one that we have all committed. We could hear voices on bottom, and could tell that someone was climbing. I mentioned, tongue-in-cheek, that since no one was guarding the rope we should yell "ON ROPE" and get their attention. No sooner had the words left my mouth, when Micah does the deed. There were several seconds of uncertain silence before someone below said, "Hey, we're on rope!". After assuring the now nervous cavers that everything was cool, the ascents continued. One-by-one they lipped the pit, Pam White, Tim White and Bill Davis, all members of the Huntsville and/or Cullman Grottoes. We were among friends. Tim informed us that they were just bouncing the pit and were planning to bounce

another pit on the same hillside. We decided to leave their rigged rope down Diggings so Harold, Micah and I could bounce it, while Vic, Bill and the Whites took the rope we had brought to go rig the other pit.

The Diggings Pit is located in a steeply sloped sink. It is a two-drop cave that terminates in a series of domes. The entrance drop of 82' is very impressive if you climb around to the north side of the sink and look back into the cave. It is followed by a 59' drop that could actually be broken into two drops of 40' and 19'.

Rigging from the obvious rig point puts you against the wall the majority of the way, however, rigging to a large tree and redirecting on the sink's east side gives you a free drop for the first 82'. The cave is void of any pretties, but is a very enjoyable and convenient pit to do.

NO TURKEY FOR JERRY

We weren't exactly sure where the other pit, *No Turkey for Jerry*, was located, we just knew that it was flagged and further down the same access road. We figured we'd just walk til we saw the truck. That we did, but the truck had been halted by a large wash in the road at the bottom of a small hill. It was there abandoned because it could proceed no further. We made a dry run down the hillside before deciding that the pit was not where the truck was parked.

No Turkey for Jerry is one of the most unique pits in TAG. The others were in the process of climbing as we arrived at the pit, which is neither in a sink or a rock outcropping. This inauspicious little hole at the base of a tree, which as Micah put it, "must have been found by dumb luck," wins the smallest opening award hands down. The entrance is just big enough to squeeze your body through, provided you raise arms above head. The 120' shaft

is never more than 2-3 feet wide for the entire rappel. A small room at the bottom is big enough for three people. With the exception of a few small formations in the room at the bottom, the pit is barren almost resembling a hole drilled with a "well auger". As small as the entrance is, an animal in the 100-120lb range fell to it's death through the opening. As best we could tell it was an animal with horns, yet the skull didn't resemble that of a deer. We concluded it was either a calf or a goat.

I was the first of our threesome to climb. My knee Gibbs failed on the climb out, so I was thankful the shaft was as small as it was. I had to chimney each time it was my left foot's turn. I did my rope walking with my foot Gibbs and my QAS. Had the pit been larger I would have had to do a changeover, rappel back down and construct a sit-stand system or borrow someone elses rig.

As I neared the the lip, I could feel rain beginning to fall, even though Bill insisted it was urine splashing off a flat rock. As I was derigging, the rain intensified so Tim, Pam and Bill headed back to the truck to get it turned around, change clothes and wait to give us a ride back to our vehicle. Meanwhile, Vic, who was not climbing this day, sought refuge under a huge, leaning, oak tree. Once the rope was pulled and all gear packed away, we began our trek to rendezvous with the others. As we approached the

...I could feel rain beginning to fall, even though Bill insisted it was urine splashing off a flat rock.

aforementioned wash, I could see Bill walking toward us, soaking wet, still in his caving clothes and saying something about being glad that his replacements had arrived. I could see Tim scurrying around in the woods looking for large stones and Pam sitting

motionless in the front seat of a pick-up truck that hadn't moved an inch since we passed it on the way to the pit. I knew then that we were in trouble. Excuse me, I mean *they* were in trouble. Harold's van was safe on higher ground with a shingle

strewn path leading out to the main road.

"We're stuck," Bill relayed, as the four of us drew near.

"The rain's made the hill too slippery and my truck won't climb it," he bemoaned.

"I'll make a deal with you then," I offered.

"We'll help get you out, if you'll change our tire if it's flat."

"I'll make a deal with you then... We'll help you get out, if you'll change our tire if it's flat."

After agreeing in principle to the verbal contract, we began working on the task at hand. When backing up the hill again proved fruitless, we began filling in the wash with enough stones to enable us to drive the truck forward to a turning point. We felt if we could get a running start, the hill could be conquered. After succeeding at getting the truck turned around, Harold and Micah climbed into the bed to add extra weight, which turned out to be just enough to get the job done. I then climbed in for the journey back to the parking area. Now I've never been on the back of an angry bull, haven't ever rode a mechanical bull, but I've experienced all the thrills and spills of the Professional Bull Riders Tour after a single ride in the back of a pick-up with Bill Davis driving. This day turned out to be a dandy...Cowboy Up!



FROM THE MAILBAG

B'HAM GROTTO NEWSLETTER, Oct. 1997-The B'ham grotto is currently in the process of pushing and mapping a find in Big Coon Valley. Although a bolted drop was found inside the cave, it apparently has not been reported to the ACS. The area has potential for deep caves and hopefully this one will map out to 400' deep or better.

WINDY CITY SPELEONEWS, Oct. 1997-An unconfirmed report via e-mail states that a military patrol in the Amazon rain forest of Ecuador was attacked by a swarm of bats. A similar attack earlier allegedly resulted in eight children dying of rabies and 24 others requiring medical treatment. [*Bats?.....Ed.*]

CAG'S, ALABAMA UNDERGROUND, Vol.V, No.3-A non-profit organization consisting of many cavers and cave organizations have formed "The Friends of Scott's Gulf" in an effort to have this popular Tennessee wilderness area protected from developers and miners. Access to the property has already been severely impeded by current land owner Bridgestone/Firestone. The area is home to over 70 caves and is also a favored destination of whitewater enthusiasts, hikers, climbers, hunters and campers. Parties interested in getting involved or making tax deductible contributions should contact Ross Cardwell at (615)738-2760.

BAT FAX

Tiny woolly bats of West Africa live in the large webs of colonial spiders.

McCLUNG'S HOLE

By Victor Bradford
July 27, 1997

Harold Calvert NSS 42242
Micah Sims NSS 42671
Victor Bradford NSS 15247

On this day, Harold, Micah and I had decided to do McClung's Hole. The pit is located at Blount Springs, and at 149' is the deepest pit in Alabama south of the Tennessee River. Harold and I left our trucks at Country Jim's store and we all climbed into Micah's 4WD and started up the mountain. The road had some bad washes but we didn't have any trouble getting to the top. Micah then turned down an old logging road for about 150 yards to make our very short hike to the pit even shorter. We got our gear and headed to the pit. After forty yards we came upon a small depression just twenty feet above the entrance to the pit. This is the same depression that Micah had discovered the day before without finding the pit. I had given him directions about a week before and he had come this close to finding it. This was the same depression I had found more than twenty years before. I didn't find the pit that day either.

The entrance to the pit is located in the wall of a very small bluff. If you are standing just above or just below the wall, you cannot see the entrance. Since we were using Harold's rope, he rigged the pit and went down first, placing a couple of pads as he went. I went down next and got off on the big ledge a little over half way down. Micah then came down and rappelled past the ledge to join Harold on the bottom. After looking around on bottom awhile they both joined me on the ledge where we looked around some more and one by one headed up and out of the pit. After pulling up the rope and resting awhile, we hiked back to the truck and drove down the mountain. At Country Jim's store we enjoyed some cool drinks and shot the bull for an hour and a half then Harold and

Micah headed for Palisades Park and I headed for home.



7AG MEMORIES

Readers Digest January 1991

In one of America's deepest caves, we encounter a world of wonder and danger

MY JOURNEY BENEATH THE EARTH

Condensed from "A Wolverine Is Eating My Leg"
Tim Cahill

I am in Ellison's Cave, about to rappel down Incredible Pit, the second-deepest cave pit in the continental United States. The drop is 440 feet, about what you'd experience from the top of a 40-story building. If you took the shaft in a free fall, you'd accelerate to more than 100 miles an hour and then-about five seconds into the experience-you'd decelerate to zero. And die.

Cavers try to "make the connection" through a mountain. That is, they go in one entrance to the cave and then crawl, climb, slide or swim through various obstacles to exit by another. In Ellison's Cave, lying deep below Georgia's Pigeon Mountain, our challenge is to negotiate Incredible Pit and then Fantastic Pit, at 586 feet the deepest cave pit in the continental United States. We must conquer both before we can make the connection.

Dropping into these natural cave shafts on a single rope is terrifying. I check my rig for the fifth or sixth time. Is the rope threaded properly through the rappel rack? This is a horseshoe-shaped device

that acts as a brake during descent. There is a right way and a wrong way. The wrong way is called a "death rig."

It seems wise to ask the experts who brought me here. "Am I death-rigged, or what?" I ask Kent Ballew, an experienced climber who works for Larry "Smokey" Caldwell, my trainer, our expedition leader and one of the most accomplished vertical cavers in the world.

Kent gives my rappel rack a cursory glance. "Looks good to me."

No one should enter a cave alone, or without proper training. For mine, Smokey started me off on a simple outdoor cliff. Soon I progressed to sinkholes-large pits open to the air. Finally he decided I was ready for Ellison's Cave. "You've been to the chapels," I was told. "Now we're going to the cathedral."

Most of the caves in the southeastern United States are limestone formations. In the distant past, the area was a vast sea filled with creatures that absorbed calcium compounds from the water. When they died, their skeletons formed limestone beds that remained after the sea retreated.

Rainwater seeping through topsoil absorbs carbon dioxide and so forms carbonic acid. Limestone is soluble in this weak acid, which finds cracks and fissures in the broken humped-up rock of the old sea bed. Over centuries, rainwater carves out great halls.

Because there is no green plant life in a cave, there is no carbon dioxide. The weakly acidic water wants to reach chemical equilibrium, and carbon dioxide, absorbed in the green world above, is suddenly released in the stone passages below. Limestone that had once been in solution becomes solid, and fantastic formations are created.

A single persistent drip can form a stalactite, a stone icicle. A stalagmite grows up from the floor. Small sheets of water flowing down the side of a wall can form flamboyant multicolored stone draperies, and water running along the cave floor leaves a river frozen in stone. These formations have an alien, sculptured beauty that suggests

some ancient and nonhuman intelligence at work. They are reason enough to venture into caves. But the urge to go where no man has gone before is what takes hard-core cavers into a world where comfort and safety are cruel jokes.

Often passages are so low that you must walk the equivalent of several city blocks bent over at the waist. Others are so small you must wiggle through, snakelike. Getting caught in such holes is a panicky, claustrophobic situation. Even the best cavers sometimes have to be "talked through" them.

The wet cold drains the body of heat. You can actually see the onset of hypothermia in a cave like Ellison's, where the year-round temperature stands at 55 degrees Fahrenheit. Just hold your hand up and shine a light on it: five streams of steam rise from your fingers.

Drowning, like hypothermia, is not uncommon. Without warning, a thunderstorm can fill the passages with rushing water. Since the caver doesn't know what the weather is outside, he must constantly look for and mark rooms that have high and accessible ledges.

My small crisis of courage has passed, and now, secure that I haven't death-rigged myself, I feel an eerie, dreamlike calm. I walk backward to the edge of the pit, lean back on the rope and begin falling out into nothing. I tighten the bars on my rack to slow down. A hotshot like Kent Ballew can take this 440-foot drop in two minutes. I want to make my descent last, to spend half an hour savoring Incredible Pit. There is a monumental symmetry to the pit that sends the soul spinning: it is a cathedral, crafted of stone and darkness.

At times the rope hangs so far from the wall that there is nothing to be seen but the shimmering of my light. I feel something of what astronauts must feel on space walks: I have never been so alone, so exhilarated.

In time I am able to see my light reflect off the calm pool at bottom of Incredible Pit. I hang for a while, take a flash gun from my pack, and wait for Kent and Smokey to get on the rope. They position themselves at intervals, and then we all turn off our

lights while photographer Michael "Nick" Nichols opens the lens on his camera. At a signal, everyone flashes, and we have a picture of the enormous cavity. Nick takes several shots. Then we all drop onto the floor of the cave for another 12 hours of hard travel to our next challenge, Fantastic Pit.

We climb, crawl and sweat through a world of spaghetti passages. Hours later, square in the gut of the mountain, I am led down a keyhole-shaped passage about ten feet high. Off to the right is a clear, almost transparent formation with glassy bubbles in it that drops about three feet from the ceiling. It resembles ice and is called the North Pole for that reason. "Looks like a chandelier, doesn't it?" Nick asks me. "I think this is the most beautiful cave formation in the south."

It may be, but just past the North Pole is a passage that leads down to Angel's Paradise, a cavern about ten feet square and five feet high and completely filled with delicate Epsomite and gypsum formations: spun glass and crystal-clear needles and cotton candy. It is a pristine underground wilderness, and for a moment, it is mine alone. I feel dizzy with fatigue and privilege.

Emerging into a dry, sandy stream bed nearby, we eat lunch, then move down a narrow passage and climb over what Nick calls the "Horrible Thing"-a slick, muddy rock that blocks a tunnel. I need help getting up the Horrible Thing. *How helpless I am in the face of such obstacles-how perfectly dead I'd be alone here*, I am thinking as I tumble eight feet down the other side onto the floor of a room 250 feet long and 600 feet high.

Ascending is complicated. You walk up the rope, lifting one foot above the other using a pair of Gibbs ascenders-little metal gadgets that slide easily up a rope, yet hold when pressed down. A safety device called a top Jumar allows you to rest. As you climb, you slide the Jumar up the rope. When you are tired, you simply sit in a seat harness, and the Jumar holds you. I can climb about forty or fifty steps before I need to sit, breathless, in my seat harness.

At the 400-foot level, a boulder the size of a small house hangs from the wall. My instructions

are to sit there and wait while Nick prepares to shoot. I sit suspended in space for 15 minutes, sweating profusely in the chill, and my entire body, leaking heat, is literally steaming. The smooth, ovoid walls that envelope me shimmer and glitter in the dim light. I feel at peace in a hostile world. There is a sense of a connection made.

After the photograph is taken, I pull myself over the lip of the balcony, 50 stories above the pebbled floor. From here it is a simple misery to belly-crawl up a stream bed, claw over another horrible thing and do some simple climbing until we reach the Agony, a 1500-foot exit that requires more belly-crawling. This is the natural exit, but some years ago cavers discovered the Ecstasy, a stand-up passage that leads us out of the mountain. We complete our journey 15 hours after it began.

A lot of people who don't go into caves don't understand why others do; but the truth is simple. We are, all of us, explorers from our first breath. The land may be replete with shopping malls and fast-food outlets, but drop deep into the earth and there is a pristine wilderness of danger and challenge and alien beauty. There is wonder left in the world.



BIRDS OF A FEATHER



"That El Nino is one bad dude!"

The Rise and Fall of Batman

Paul Steward

State police in Gotham City today issued arrest warrants for Batman. After numerous complaints from state agencies and local utilities the police have been forced to seek out the Caped Crusader. He is only wanted for questioning at the present time. One of the agencies most interested in questioning Batman is the National Speleological Society. It has been learned that the bat cave, one of the largest and most beautiful caves in the area, was stripped of all formations and gutted to make room for all of Batman's equipment. Also thousands of bats were gassed to death before construction began in the cave.

No one has ever really seen the bat cave, but several local residents say a large cave did exist in the hills

outside Gotham City. This cave is now nowhere to be found. One resident was quoted as saying he saw "truck loads of dead bats and real pretty rocks" being driven out of town. Local laws do exist that forbid the destruction of cave formations and cave life.

Gotham City Gas & Electric would like to question Batman. It is rumored the electric bill to run the cave must be in the millions by now after all these years. The phone company is also questioning his illegal use and hookup of the bat phone. Local police say the batmobile is not registered in the state motor vehicle office, nor is Batman a licensed driver in any state. The FBI and the CIA want to talk to Batman concerning illegal use of computer systems

and breaking into protected government files. The NRC wants to know where he gets the plutonium for the batmobile's atomic batteries and where is he dumping the spent waste.

Several women say Batman is the father of their children and are demanding child support. And Robin, Batman's most trusted companion, is suing him, stating he was forced to spend most of his youth in the bat cave and has nightmares about all the criminals he was forced to deal with. Is this the end of the Caped Crusader? Will Batman turn himself in, or will he join the ranks of his villains who run from the law? Stay tuned, same bat time and same bat newspaper.

*Central Jersey Caver
March*

Acquisition Update

By Mark Wolinsky

Tiftonia Pit, Hamilton County Tennessee

A 120 foot deep pit with no horizontal passage. The owner has received the SCC's proposal and is very interested in cooperating with the SCC. He will review his options with 2 other family members. Acquisition looks good. Please - cave still closed.

Anvil Cave, Alabama

Well known for it's maze passages, Anvil is Alabama's longest cave. Bill Putnam has presented the owning family's attorney with a offer to purchase. A dialog has started and a sale looks possible.

Fox Mountain, Dade County Georgia

The 332 acre mountain side containing Cemetery Pit, Rusty's Cave, Hurricane Cave (and it's newly discovered upper entrance), several smaller caves, plus passageways of Byer's (but not the entrances) is targeted for SCC protection. A meeting with the owner is expected this May.

Anderson Cave, Birmingham Alabama

This unique property contains approximately six caves in a small limestone ridge. One cave, Anderson, is a gray bat cave. The SCC has presented the owners with a proposal for a ten year lease, after which the property will be gifted to the SCC. We are currently waiting for the proposal to be approved.

Woodard Sink, Davidson County, Tennessee

Investigation complete. A meeting with the owner is being arranged.

Junkyard Cave, Nashville, Tennessee

Davidson County's longest cave. Research of the property and history of ownership are underway.

Horse Skull Cave, Jackson County, Alabama

These two significant caves contain historic signatures and unique formations. The SCC and the owner have just reached a deal. The SCC will lease 40 acres plus 50 foot strip to road, then purchase. Payments will be \$250 a month for 18 months with a balloon payment for remaining balance after 18 months at \$400 an acre. Next step: board approval of terms.

Airplane Cave, Hamilton County, Tennessee

On hold until midsummer.

Hollow Ridge Cave, Mariana Florida

This caver owned cave was for sale but owner has changed his mind. Discussion is under way for a lease or conservation easement.

Logsdon Cave, Hart County, Kentucky

The owners of this cave are interested in leasing it to the SCC.

The

FBOWSTONES

December 1997

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE CULLMAN GROTTO
OF THE NATIONAL SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Vol. 4, No. 11



SANTA IN THE OFF SEASON

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 to be included in the following month's issue. Send items and exchanges to: D.Drake, 110 County Road 1386, Falkville AL 35622.

The Cullman Grotto will exchange by request with any publishing grotto.

Republication of articles or items contained within the Flowstone welcome providing credit is given to source.

Annual dues for the Cullman Grotto are eight dollars (\$8) for individual membership or ten dollars (\$10) per family. Dues are payable at the first grotto meeting of each year and include subscription to The FLOWSTONE. Subscription rate for non-members is eight dollars (\$8) per year.

The Cullman Grotto meets the first Tuesday of every month at 7:30pm in the Cullman County Public Library conference room, 200 Clark St NE, Cullman AL. Visitors and prospective members are welcome.

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CALENDER

Dec 7-Grotto vertical trip TBA.

Jan 31, 1998-National Cave Rescue Commission Winter Business Meeting, DuDose Conference Center, Monteagle, TN. For info contact Butch Feldhaus at bfeldhaus@compuserve.com or (423)238-7009.

Feb 7, 1998-Quarterly meeting of the Southeastern Cave Conservancy, Inc. at ITT Technical Institute, B'ham, AL, 10am. Contact Scott Fee, 205-854-PITS or scottfee@usa.pipeline.com or www.scci.org.

Aug 3-7, 1998-NSS Convention, Sewanee, TN

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ECHO CHAMBER



GROTTO ELECTIONS

Elections for Cullman Grotto officers will be held at this month's meeting. Nominations were made at the November meeting, however, those who were not in attendance last month will have the opportunity to nominate just prior to the election. Nominations at the November meeting were as follows:

- Chairman:** Patrick O'Diam
David Drake
- ViceChair:** Bernard Powell
Gary Moon
- Secretary:** Evon Thompson
Miriam Cuddington (has since withdrawn)

Two offices were unopposed. Mary Adams will serve again as Treasurer and Victor Bradford will continue as Advisor. In addition, all Committee Heads will continue to function in their respective callings. The newly elected officers will begin their terms in January.

COVER PHOTO

*Louis Adams rappelling at Little River Canyon.
Photo by Patrick O'Diam, 1996.*

FUTURE PROJECT ?

A recent trip to Cullman County's longest cave, Hedrick's cave, manifested the need for a clean-up trip. This clean-up trip would not be to remove beer cans, broken glass and graffiti, but to remove logs, branches, clumps of weeds and other trash that have been washed into the cave's entrance by the inflowing streambed. The cave is a sewer for rain drainage from the surrounding hillsides, and the entrance is now completely blocked by the debris. 4 or 5 people working for a couple of hours could remove the existing piles of debris and make the cave passable. The installation of some type of mesh screening or fencing might also be explored to prevent future buildup within the cave. (see article on page 3)

OOPS!

Beginning with the September 1997 Flowstone, for some reason I flashed back (no comments). The Sept., Oct., and Nov. issues are referred to as Volume 3 on the cover page. All issues published in 1997 should be Volume 4. I'll try not to let it happen again. It'll be something else next time.

HEDRICK'S CAVE/ INTERSTATE RAMP CAVE

By D. Drake

November 8, 1997

Kuenn Drake Amel Drake
Will Drake David Drake

A whole lot of desire but very little time allowed us to do some caving in our own backyard for a change. Kuenn and I have been caving for over 25 years, have lived in Cullman county for most of our lives, yet neither of us had ever been to Cullman county's longest cave, Hedrick's Cave.

I was looking at the topographic map of the Falkville quad one Sunday afternoon and located Hedrick's Cave in the bottom of a large sink. The following Saturday Kuenn, his two sons and I decided to do a little ridgewalking, six miles northwest of our houses, to try and locate the cave physically. We parked Kuenn's Jeep approximately 2500 feet from where we determined the sink to be and set off in search. Several small sinks and some of considerable size dot the landscape in this area near the Cullman/Morgan county line. There aren't alot of karst features on the Cullman county side of the line, but limestone becomes prevalent as you cross to the Morgan county side.

Kuenn located Hedrick's Cave at the end of a massive wash. The wash is indicated on the topo as a streambed, but in actuality is nothing more than a channel for drainage from the surrounding hillsides. This canal carries an enormous amount of water directly into the cave. Mounds of logs, limbs and other debris have been washed into the mouth of the cave.

According to the map, Hedrick's becomes a crawl just beyond the 10' high entrance. As a consequence there is nowhere for the debris to go so it continues to pile up almost totally sealing off the entrance. We

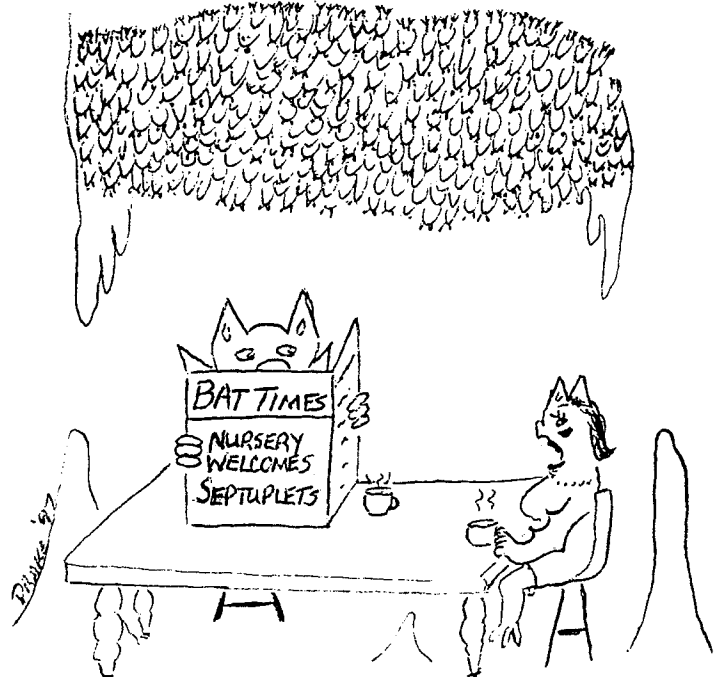
removed enough of the trash to allow us to crawl over the pile and drop down into passage, however ten feet later we were again greeted by another choke of debris.

The cave entrance and main passage is much more impressive than I had imagined, although a clean up effort is needed before the cave can be pushed.

After being disappointed at Hedrick's, we hiked back to the Jeep and drove a quarter of a mile to Interstate Ramp Cave. This cave's obvious entrance is located right beside the on ramp to I-65 at Lacon. It begins as a low wet crawl before opening up to a small formation room. The formations are all old and inactive but at one time were probably quite pretty. A portion of the ceiling has fallen, probably brought down by dynamite when the interstate was being built, destroying several rimstone pools and flowstone. Although no discernable airflow was noted, the cave continued on as a low wet crawl from that point. I chose to retreat and join the others who were waiting back at the entrance.

These two fine examples of northern Cullman/southern Morgan county caves only reinforce the reason why we do most of our caving in Jackson County.

BIRDS OF A FEATHER



"Seven of 'em huh?"

7AG MEMORIES

THE EXPLORATION AND SURVEY OF
RUNNING WATER CAVE, GEORGIA

Dade County, Georgia

Marion O. Smith

Georgia Underground 10(5)139-145

On Lookout Mountain near Dade County's community of Cave Springs is one of Georgia's best named caves. The name Running Water alone should give the reader some idea of what is involved in a trip to it. Sure, a visitor can stay dry, but all that shows is that he hasn't ventured very far from the entrance. For years the challenge of Running Water was its low stream-crawl passages, particularly the one above a seven-foot waterfall.

Richard Schreiber and Rockeater Grotto member, Richard Logan, discovered Running Water on a ridgewalk on December 4, 1966. The cave was entered again on July 16, 1967, by Schreiber and Ken Pennington.¹ According to the Rockeater Grotto records, they entered the upstream passage and "Richard pushed on with Ken finally admitting temporary defeat due to cold water and recent illness. Richard soon returned with reports of virgin passage on and above a deep pool that stopped his exploration on this date...." Schreiber left a record of his visit by writing on the mud walls, "7-16-67 RW More ahead."²

Unless Schreiber and others returned later in 1967, there were no other trips until he and Susan Newell entered the cave May 19, 1970, for the purpose of mapping it and dragging a pole back to the waterfall. Susan later wrote that they started the survey,³ but left the pole "relatively near the entrance" because she found a lead downstream which they followed until they hit the water table. "The passage continued as a dark hole at the bottom of a deep round pool about twelve feet in diameter...."

For the next year Susan kept mentioning Running Water and describing its challenges and glories, but was unable to interest anyone into doing anything constructive about it. In the spring of 1971 she and Diane Cousineau relocated the entrance and the point in the cave where you go upstream, the Cascade, which Susan described as being a seven-foot high flowstone slope of about 30°, extending the width of the passage.

During August 1971, Susan returned once more, this time with West Georgia Grotto member, Gene Wiggins. Their goal was the same as in 1970; to drag the pole beyond the Cascade to the Waterfall-Pool Room, get up the waterfall, and determine what was beyond. Once beyond the Cascade, Susan was plagued by carbide lamp problems, which were eventually solved. Susan described the rest of the trip as follows:

So we pressed on. I with our two packs and Gene with the pole. Imagine the worm tube,⁴ wet and in gravel, with two packs and a twelve-foot pole. But the trip was worth seeing the site of the pole's new location. It is a room about thirty feet in diameter, filled with blue water which is probably 6 to 8 feet deep in the center--perhaps deeper. It drops in depth quickly from the edge. There is a "chert walkway" which rims the pool. I've never seen one like it before. Large, loose pieces of chert

like big coal ashes or clinkers or whatever you call them with all the limestone dissolved away. At the far side of the room about 6 feet above the water's surface is a large flowstone "tongue" over which water is falling from a hole, possibly three to four feet in diameter. We placed the pole at this point..., and Gene went up to check around...Gene went perhaps another hundred feet and came back with the report that the passage was very much like what we had already seen, wet and low. We headed on out, and...Gene fell in the chimney and messed up his shoulder.

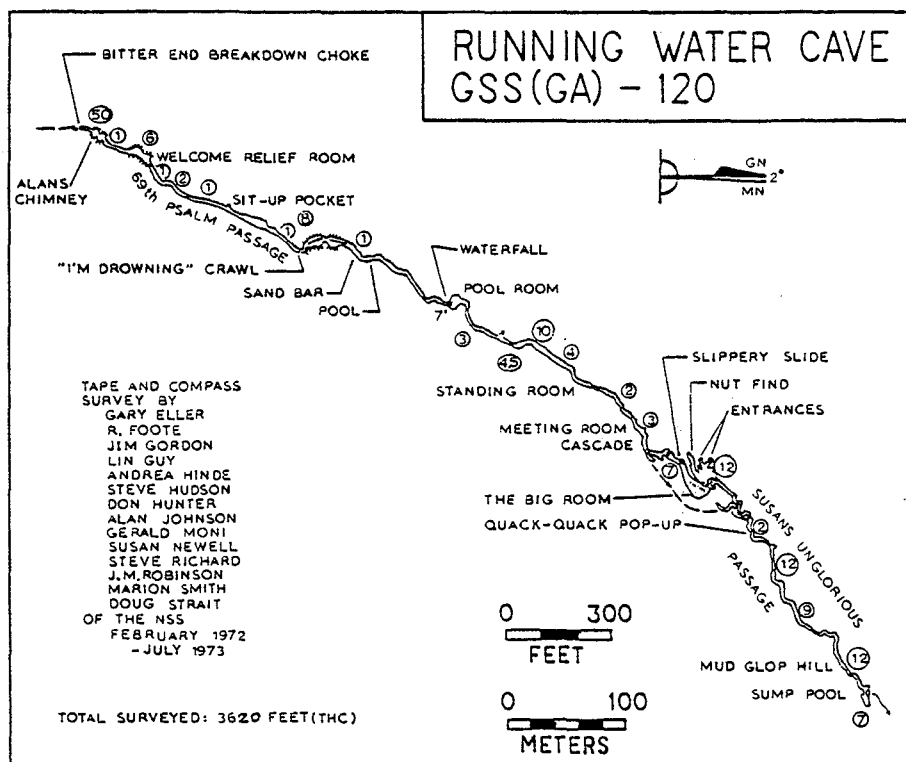
The chimney Susan referred to is the thirteen-foot climb-down about fifty feet from the entrance. It is particularly difficult to negotiate on the way out when explorers are covered with mud. During most subsequent trips a handline was placed there. In his fall, Gene dislocated his shoulder which Susan had to pop back in place while they were still underground.

Following Susan's directions, Marion O. Smith and Andrea Hinde entered Running Water on December 19, 1971. They took a few photographs, but explored no further than the Cascade.

It was about this time that Dogwood City Grotto members were discussing possibilities for a grotto project. Finally, in a DCG executive meeting at Dan Dougherty's house on January 26, 1972, it was decided that the survey of Running Water Cave would be that project, and accordingly, the next grotto "easy" trip would be to get things started.

The "easy" trip took place February 12, 1972, and a total of seventeen people entered the cave: Faye, Jackie, and Sheri Reynolds, Alan Johnson, Rick Foote, Ben Northcutt, Marion O. Smith, Andrea Hinde, Neil and Bobbi Lennon, Steve Hudson, Ernest Kelly, Dan Dougherty, Sr., Susan Newell, and three men from Georgia tech's Outward Bound group. The thirteen-foot chimney claimed another victim when Bobbi Lennon fell and sprained both her ankles. Susan and the Outward Bound people went back to the waterfall where she and some of them climbed it. But they got little or no further than Wiggins had the previous August. Cold water and chills forced a retreat, an episode to be repeated in the exploration of this passage. Meanwhile, Hudson, Hinde, Johnson, Foote, and Smith surveyed the dry front portion of the cave back to the Cascade, a distance of 547 feet, and Neil Lennon and Jim Youmans opened up an easier to enter second entrance, about ten feet from the original entrance.

Two weeks later, Steve Hudson, Susan Newell, Don Hunter, Steve Richard, and Marion O. Smith returned and surveyed the "left" or downstream passage Susan had discovered in 1970. This passage begins as a belly crawl near the base of the infamous thirteen-foot chimney, followed by a muddy and equally hairy climb-down of over twenty feet. From there the water is followed through breakdown to a predominately walking-sized passage which is characterized in sections by large volumes of dark mud. The largest mound of this material was found about 150 feet from the Sump Room and was aptly named Mud Glop Hill. The whole down-



stream area was named Susan's Unglorious Passage, with a total surveyed for the day of 929 feet.

Enthusiasm for Running Water waned, and it wasn't until July 4, 1972 that another mapping trip was made. This time Susan Newell, Jim W. Gordon, and Marion O. Smith surveyed a few miscellaneous leads at the bottom of the twenty-foot chimney and near the Cascade, for a total of 159 feet. Everything was now clear for the survey upstream.

On August 5, 1972, Doug Strait, Anne and Bill Knox, John M. Robinson, Susan Newell, and Marion O. Smith began the survey upstream. Since progress was necessarily slow in the wet crawls, Anne and Bill elected to exit before reaching the Waterfall-Pool Room. When the rest reached the waterfall and tried to climb it, the twelve-foot pole, which was thoroughly waterlogged, broke. John played the role of the sacrifice and boosted the rest up the waterfall, then went out. Susan, Doug, and Marion then surveyed about 260 feet beyond the falls, into virgin territory. The passage seemed to be opening up, with the ceiling rising from less than a foot to nearly five feet, then boom, the roof dropped to eighteen inches, half-filled with water. The survey stopped here, with 1,013 feet for the day, but Marion explored ahead at least 150 feet past two small standing-up rooms to another tight, low crawl with a large gravel bar to the right.

The next trip was to be the push to the end. The crew was composed of Steve Hudson, Susan Newell, Jim W. Gordon, Alan Johnson, Terry Cate, and Marion O. Smith. This time two members, Hudson and Johnson, wore wet suits. However, the services of Hudson were lost when it was found he couldn't be pulled up the waterfall. He boosted all the rest and

then after waiting a while, exited. While Jim, Alan, and Marion started surveying, Terry and Susan went ahead as far as the gravel bar, but no further, declaring it looked like it ended. They got chilled and also headed out, Susan losing her carbide light in the pool below the falls. The three left surveyed to the gravel bar. There Jim faltered. The idea of continuing the survey was canned and it was determined to at least try to reach the end of this miserable passage. Marion and Alan crawled on. Past the gravel bar things began to look up, the passage actually reached standing height. Then the old familiar story, the ceiling dropped again. Back into the water. Then more problems, failing light. Marion had to change carbide, which was done in a small dry side passage. Getting the lamp re-lit was difficult because Alan was using an electric rig. Again they entered the "main" passage, and crawled another couple hundred feet before Marion accidentally extinguished his lamp. They now had to beat a retreat. Running Water had won again! Where they stopped the passage was about four feet wide, two feet high, with a foot of water. The known limits of the cave had only been extended about 350 feet and the map increased by 242 feet. So much for this "push to the end" trip.

The DCG Running Water project was supposed to have been completed by the end of 1972, but there just wasn't motivation enough to attempt another push after the October fiasco. Finally, nine months later, another crew was assembled. On July 14, 1973, Dr. P. Gary Eller, Jim W. Gordon, Lin Guy,⁵ Alan Johnson, Gerald Moni, and Marion O. Smith assaulted the cave once more. All but Lin and Gerald wore wet suit tops and a cable ladder was carried for the waterfall, enabling

799 MEMORIES (cont.)

everyone to climb it for a change. This time the survey was continued with a determined enthusiasm. When Lin got chilled a couple hundred feet beyond the gravel bar, he and Jim left. The rest mapped through the water passage to a couple of rooms of standing upright proportions, and then to the end. Just a few feet from the furthest penetration, a breakdown choke, were two straight-up chimneys. Alan climbed up in one of them almost fifty feet and declared that he felt he was near the surface. Unfortunately, he could go no higher, and the crew was obliged to make the long crawl back through the cave. The survey of Running Water Cave was over at last, with 730 more feet added to the map.

The length of Running Water Cave is not very impressive, just 3,620 feet, nor is the map very interesting to look at, being more or less a straight line in a SW-NE direction. But in terms of being a challenge, Running Water hangs in there with the best of them.

Notes.

1. The Rockeater Grotto records indicate that Schreiber and Pennington entered the cave July 17, 1967. This evidently is an error of their records.
2. This mud writing was washed away by flooding in the cave after the heavy rains of the winter of 1973.
3. These survey notes were misplaced.
4. The worm tube is an 85-foot low crawl in Pettyjohn's Cave, Walker County Georgia.
5. Lin prepared the map for publication.



TRAGEDY IN FERN

November 2, 1997

(taken from news reports and eyewitness accounts)

36 years after it's initial discovery, Surprise Pit claimed it's first victim when a 35 year old Memphis woman was critically injured as the result of an uncontrolled rappel.

Alexin Hampton, a photographer for St. Jude's Children's Hospital in Memphis, was part of a six member group exploring Jackson county's Fern Cave, which contains the 437' Surprise Pit.

Ms. Hampton had been rappelling for 3 years but this was her first attempt at the third deepest pit in the U.S. According to witnesses, all seemed to be going well until the last 30 or 40 feet when she apparently started making an adjustment to her rappel rack. It was at this time that she lost rappel and fell the remainder of the way. Upon impact it was noted that her rack was still rigged with 4 1/2 bars, however it was rigged for a right hand rappel. Ms. Hampton is left handed. It is not known if this contributed to the fall. Her immediate injuries included a broken pelvis and ankle but nothing appeared to be life threatening. Members of her group climbed out of the pit and called the Sheriff's Department at 2:30 pm Sunday.

Cave rescue volunteers from Tennessee, Alabama and Georgia responded to the call and worked nearly eleven hours to get the woman out of the cave. Ms. Hampton was conscious for much of the rescue, however, approximately 30 feet from the entrance of the cave she went into cardiac arrest. She was extricated and CPR was performed to no avail. A deputy coroner who was part of the rescue team pronounced her dead at the scene.

Members of Ms. Hampton's group commended the efforts of the rescue team which included Cullman Grotto's Bill Davis and Huntsville Grotto's Pam White who served as paramedic and nurse on the bottom of the pit.

[EDITOR'S NOTE]

Since most helmet mounted lights will not penetrate the vastness of Surprise Pit, it would seem feasible that a person could drop 30 or 40 feet at a rapid pace before realizing how fast they were going. After all, the rappel is taking place in total darkness. Ms. Hampton however, was apparently aware of her speed of descent as her gloves were scorched and her hands blistered.

Cullman Grotto condolences go out to Ms. Hampton's family.

Breaking all the Rules

On Saturday November 1 troop 335 went on a hike through the hills of Blount County, about 15 miles southwest of Cleveland. David Hollingsworth was the trip leader, he took us through some of the places where he hiked when he was much younger. We hiked through pastures and then woods and then on top of about an 80 foot bluff. After descended the bluff we followed a creek, a feeder to the Locust Fork. Following the creek we noticed that the once sandstone rock was turning into LIMESTONE! Towards the end of the hike we spotted an opening in a rock. Now the Boy Scout motto is 'Be Prepared' that was not the case on this trip -- no flash lights -- that was a problem. All of us except, David. He had a little maglight. So we decided to explore the cave with the tiny battery powered flashlight. David had been in it before and said he would meet us at the other end. The cave was a narrow walk/stoop passage, and with only a little light the 8 of us had a hard time. If the light was in the front the first 3 could see and everyone else was left in the dark and visa versa. At one point we got our Indiglo watches out, but they did not work too well either, unless of course we were listening to Disco music. There were some formations in the cave, stalactites and small soda straws. We also saw a few bats. The cave twisted and curved and split 2 times but our cave guide Kuenn Drake said not to worry his senses told him the way to go. There were 2 spots where you had to do some chimneying to get across. At a fork close to the end, after the last chimney Kuenn told George, a hyper active kid to

go on ahead and check out one of the passages. He went through a crack, and then let out a horrible scream, resembling a girl, jumped back and hit his head on the ceiling. As it turned out what made him scream was David lurking in the shadows. All in all it took us about 30 min. to get through...not to shabby for getting 8 people through a cave with a tiny maglight.

By Amel Drake

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THREE DOWN, ONE OUT

Nov.29, 1997

D.Drake

Patrick O'Diam Micah Sims
Harold Calvert David Drake

After months of planning, the day had finally arrived, a trip to the big one, Ellison's Cave and the 586' Fantastic Pit. We met at Pat's at 3:30am. It being a holiday weekend, we wanted to increase our chances of being the first ones at the pit. We thought that by leaving at 3:30 we could be heading up Pigeon Mountain by 7:30.

We arrived at the parking area to find two cavers just crawling out of their sleeping bags. One of them approached us as we were "packing up." We found out that they were from North Carolina and had pre-rigged the cave the day before for a through trip today. We declined their offer to accompany them on the through trip, but accepted their offer to use the rope already rigged in Fantastic. We'll gladly oblige not carrying 600' of rope up a steep

mountain anyway! The rope at the Warm-Up pit was extremely dirty, requiring a hand-feed the entire 128'. This was a miserable rappel for all four of us. We made our way up to the Attic via the 18' nuisance climb then on back to the lip of Fantastic where we made a disheartening discovery. There was NO ROPE! Packs and other gear had been stashed there, but no rope. Had another group entered the cave before us and removed it?, had it fallen into the pit?, had we been made the butt of a cruel joke? All of these scenarios ran through our heads as we plotted our recourse. We were peeved but our lot was far better than that of the North Carolina cavers. If someone had indeed taken the rope, the "through-trippers" were going to arrive at the bottom of Fantastic with nothing to climb. And worse yet, they were going to think we took it! We decided to check the 510 rig point to see if the rope was there. Only one problem, none of us knew how to get there.

Back at the nuisance climb we remembered seeing a rope tied to a natural bridge there, descending to a passage 20' or so below. We concluded that the rope wasn't just there for looks so we dropped it. 40 or 50 feet on down the passage we came to another drop of about 20'. We rappelled into a large room with a narrow crack leading out. Through the crack was another room with a difficult 7' climb that led to a belly crawl around the edge of Fantastic Pit. The crawl terminated in a waiting room where the 510' rig point was and guess what, so was the rope! Why anyone would drag 600' of rope through this miserable excuse for a passage was beyond any of our reasoning, especially when there was nice borehole leading to the 586' rig. Nevertheless this is where the Carolina cavers decided to rig.

(At)..the lip of Fantastic we made a disheartening discovery. There was NO ROPE!

Another problem, a major one, surfaced in the crawl to the waiting room. The passage had a constriction that I was unable to force my large frame through. Patrick, Harold and Micah squeezed through with minimal difficulty, but no amount of contortion allowed me passage. I tried head first, feet first, right side, left side, prone, supine, arms out front, arms behind, left arm front-right arm back, right arm front-left arm back, every possible angle produced the same result. I could not force my shoulders and/or sternum through the constriction. I was also thinking how near impossible it would be to

have to make a rescue from this area of the cave, so I told Patrick "I'd rather be disappointed that stuck" and exited the cave while the others did the pit.

I'll get over it. The pit ain't goin' anywhere.

NOTE: Reflecting back on our conversation in the parking area prior to heading up the mountain, I recall the NC caver we were talking saying something about the through trip taking about 18 hours depending on whether or not his companion could remember the way. I recollect him saying it had been 15 years since the last trip. As impossible as it may sound, they may not have known about the 586' drop.

P.S. For the few of us that still climb with Gibb's, let it be known that the Petzl guys had problems climbing the dirty rope at the Warm-Up Pit, while my Gibb's breezed right up. GO GIBBS!

BAT FAX

Male epauleted bats have pouches in their shoulders that contain large, showy patches of white fur, which they flash during courtship to attract mates.
