

The FLOWSTONE

Vol 25 Issue 4

April 2018



Welcome to Spring!

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

CULLMAN GROTTO FLOWSTONE

April 2018

Volume 25 Issue 4



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Visit us: www.cullmangrotto.org or

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

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

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

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

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Front Cover: *Rabbit Ears, Caver Style!*

Photo by: *Scott Murphy*

ECHO)))) CHAMBER

150 People Hid Out in a Cave After a Tornado Warning Hit Georgia

By Jennifer Calfas
www.travelandleisure.com
 MARCH 20, 2018



When aggressive storms ripped across the south this week, dozens of people found refuge in a nearby cave.

That's according Atlanta's CBS 46, which shared photos of a number of people in one of Georgia's numerous caves. The television station reported that more than 150 people hid out in the cave in Cave Spring, Georgia, as a tornado headed toward the town.

The small town Cave Spring sits near the Alabama-Georgia border, about 70 miles northwest of Atlanta. The town is named after its famous limestone cave, known for its stalagmites and "Devil's Stool" rock formation.

The photos, shared late Monday night, came as Georgia, Alabama and Tennessee saw massive storms, baseball-sized hail, powerful winds and conditions ripe for a tornado rip through the region. The storms significantly damaged homes and knocked out power for thousands of

residents.

Residents in Alabama saw "significant damage" as a result of the storm, the state's governor Kay Ivey said in a statement Monday. Ivey said state resources would be used to help impacted areas. "Our first priority is ensuring our people are safe," Ivey said. "Please stay out of affected areas and let first responders do their job."



Cave Drawings May be Evidence of First Spoken Language, MIT Researcher Says

By Laney Ruckstuhl
 Globe Correspondent
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Cave drawings may show evidence of the development of spoken human language, a Massachusetts Institute of Technology professor suggests in a new paper.

MIT linguistics professor Shigeru Miyagawa co-authored the paper, along with researchers from Tokyo and Brazil. It was published in the journal *Frontiers in Psychology* on Tuesday.

Miyagawa and fellow researchers argue that cave art was not just used for visual representation. The authors note the work of other scholars who have observed that cave art is often strategically placed in acoustic "hot

spots," ideal for strong echoes, MIT said in a statement.

Miyagawa's team believes this may be evidence that humans were generating sounds in those spots, and that the sounds may have then been portrayed in the paintings, which would make the paintings the first record of a language.

"There's this idea that language doesn't fossilize," Miyagawa said in the statement. "And it's true, but maybe in these artifacts [cave drawings], we can see some of the beginnings of homo sapiens as symbolic beings."

Much of the world's best-known cave art exists in France and Spain, although examples of it abound throughout the world. In recent years, for instance, scholars have catalogued Indonesian cave art they believe to be roughly 40,000 years old, older than the best-known examples of European cave art.

Geometric engravings on pieces of ochre from the Blombos Cave in southern Africa have been estimated to be even older, at least 70,000 years old. Such art suggests a cognitive capacity that humans spread to the rest of the world, MIT said.

"Cave art is everywhere," Miyagawa said. "Every major continent inhabited by homo sapiens has cave art. . . . You find it in Europe, in the Middle East, in Asia — everywhere, just like human language."

For now, the paper is simply a hypothesis. But Miyagawa and his fellow researchers say cave paintings should be studied further with regard to their connections to language.

"I think it's very clear that these artists were talking to one another," Miyagawa said in the statement. "It's a communal effort."

No Elevator Service After Successful Rescue from Stranded Elevator

Carlsbad Caverns

March 27, 2018

Contact: Rod Horrocks



On March 26, one of the secondary elevators at Carlsbad Caverns National Park became stranded at 740 feet below the surface with three visitors inside due to a mechanical issue.

National Park Service rangers communicated with the visitors via the elevator phone system to ensure their well being and to keep them updated. The park activated the inter-agency search and rescue team consisting of the Carlsbad Fire Department and National Park Service (NPS) rangers. The rescue team set up rigging in the hoist way and with three EMT/paramedics inside the operational elevator and an NPS ranger up on top, lowered themselves to the stranded car. After reaching the visitors, the team harnessed up each visitor with a lifeline and transferred them through the roof escape hatches to the operational elevator. After 3.5 hours, the visitors were safely back at the park's visitor center in good spirits.

"This is the first time we've had to conduct an elevator rescue operation and it went smoothly because the inter-agency search and rescue team had just recently trained for this exact scenario," said NPS Incident

Commander Tim Havens.

An inspection indicated that the elevator became stranded due to a worn travel cable. The travel cable sends the correct signal to the controls that allow the elevator car to operate. Plans to repair the cable and reinstate elevator service are currently being developed.

Until the cable is repaired, there is no elevator service into and out of the cavern. Visitors will still be able to enjoy the cavern by hiking the Natural Entrance Trail. This 1.25 mile trail involves a steep 75-story hike into and out of the cavern. For safety, the trail isn't accessible to wheelchairs, strollers, or walkers.

The secondary elevators that are currently not operational are part of two separate elevator systems (in two separate elevator shafts) at Carlsbad Caverns National Park. The primary elevator system was originally installed in 1955 and went out of service in November 2015 when a six-inch motor shaft unexpectedly sheared off. Work to repair and modernize the primary elevators began in December 2017, and is on schedule to be completed by the end of May 2018. The secondary elevators have been providing all park elevator service while the primary elevators are being rebuilt.



Concerts at Three Caves Enjoy a Night of Music at a Truly Unique Outdoor Music Venue

Summer 2018 | Benefiting The Land Trust of North Alabama



Save the Date!

June 16 featuring Atlanta Rhythm Section

For more than 30 years, members of The Atlanta Rhythm Section have entertained audiences all over the world with their hits. The members of Atlanta Rhythm Section originally came together as a session band at Studio One, an Atlanta area studio recording artists like Lynyrd Skynyrd, Al Kooper, Dickey Betts and .38 Special. The band put out 15 albums and were paired with contemporaries Lynyrd Skynyrd as the successors to the Allman Brothers – carrying the mantle of “Southern Rock” in the late 70s. But performing songs that were more musically diverse and having hits that had a softer, pop flavor, they had a sound all their own. Influenced by music coming out of England and sharing the musical stylings of groups likes The Eagles and Fleetwood Mac, the members of ARS were accomplished musicians who constantly tried to evolve – think Steely Dan or Little Feat. With multiple gold and platinum albums to their credit, the band had top hits, “So Into You,” “Imaginary Lover,” “Doraville,” “I’m Not Gonna Let It Bother Me Tonight,” “Champagne Jam,” Angel,” “Do It Or Die” and “Spooky.

Tickets & August Concert Details

Coming Soon!

Parking

There is no parking available at Three Caves.

Parking is at Huntsville Hospital lots at Adams & Lowell Streets. Free shuttle service will begin at 5:30 PM. If you use a ride-share service (Uber/Lyft) or taxi, please have them pull into the Mountain Springs Pool parking lot. That is the designated drop off and pick up location.

Food & Drink

No outside food or drink please. An on-site caterer will provide a menu of dinner options available for purchase. A variety of beer and wine options will be available to purchase at the bar.

Tips & Reminders

Closed toe shoes recommended due to gravel. No pets or small children. No bag chairs or tables. Reserved Seating is provided with your ticket.

If the concert must be cancelled due to inclement weather, ticket purchases will be considered a tax deductible donation to the Land Trust of North Alabama.

Please check back here and our on social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter) for any announcements in the event of a weather cancellation.

The Venue

Three Caves is located within the Land Trust's Monte Sano Nature Preserve - one of the largest urban nature preserves in the US and has become one of the most unique event venues in North Alabama. For the past 12 years, the Concerts at Three Caves series has played host to such award winning entertainers as Delta Rae, Moon Taxi, Tom Braxton and Grammy Award winners, The SteelDrivers, Claire Lynch and the

Legendary Muscle Shoals Review. The "not so secret" 700 seat outdoor venue is a former limestone quarry conveniently located just two miles from downtown Huntsville and gets its name from the three cave openings that accentuate and surround the venue. Three Caves has a storied entertainment history including where the band Kansas filmed their music ballad "Reason to Believe" and scenes from the 1979 post-apocalyptic movie "Ravagers" were shot.

Donated to the Land Trust of North Alabama in 1989, it now offers a truly unique outdoor venue for concerts and events. Events are held in the "bowl" outside the mine's three large openings, which offers a comfortable ~55°F temperature year-round. The stage, surrounded on three sides by limestone rock walls, provides an unforgettable backdrop and a one-of-a-kind experience for concert-goers.

In an interview with national music critic and Huntsville resident Matt Wake, Texas-based, saxophonist Tom Braxton described Concerts at Three Caves as "a unique venue". "The acoustics are great, the audience is up-close-and-personal; I love playing settings like that". "When I went out front while we were sounding checking, I was like, 'Wow, this is like some symphony shell in Australia or something.'" Tom's sentiments are echoed by most every entertainer that has played the venue.

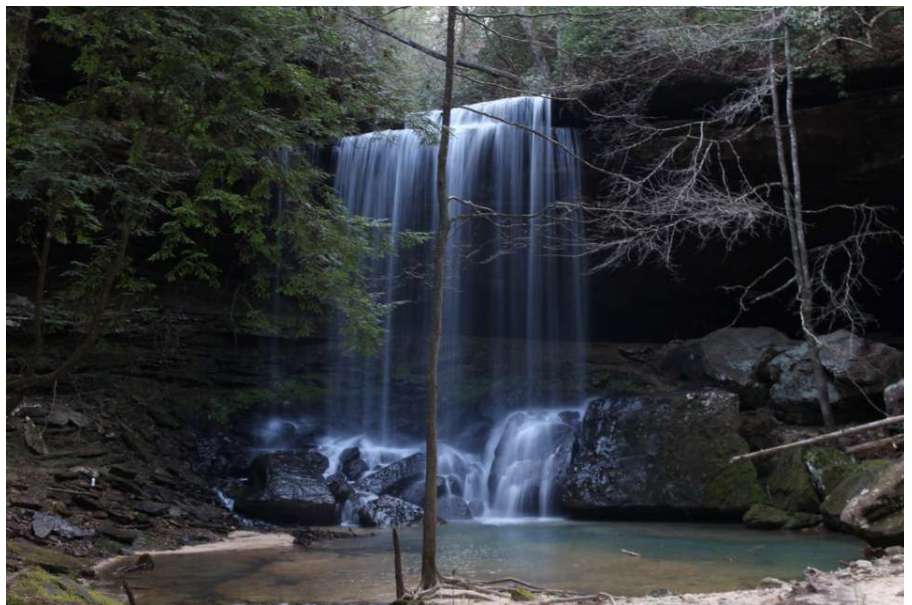
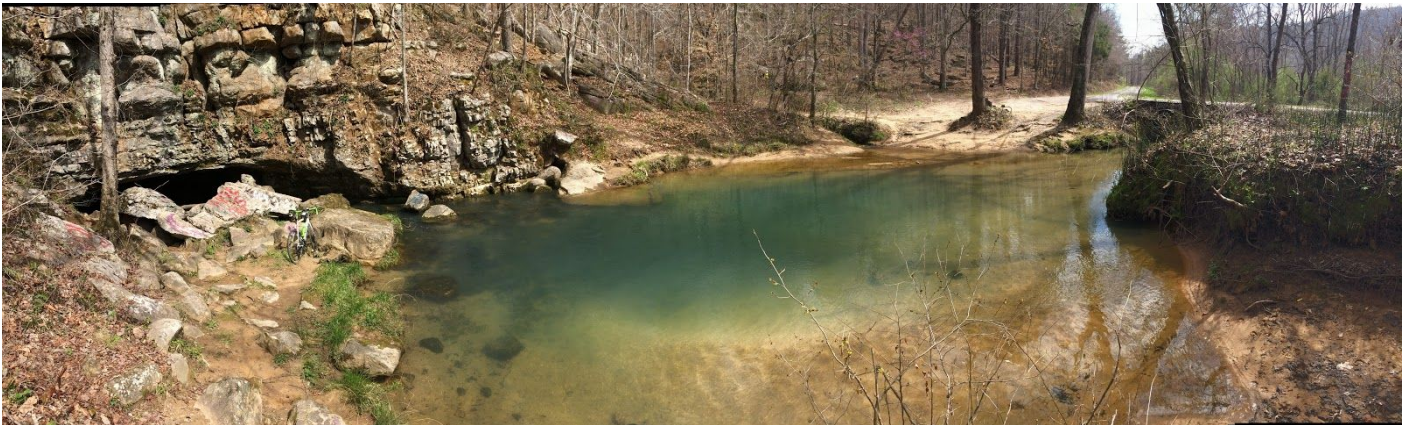
As the sunset sets and the lights begin to accentuate the interior of the three caves and the exterior of the bowl, one gets the true sense that they are in store for a truly magical and very unique musical experience. Proceeds from the events help the Land Trust in furthering their goals of land preservation and conservation in north Alabama.



TAG Calendar
April 2
Grotto Meeting
L&N Train Depot, Arnold St 7:30PM

The Adventures of Scott

Pictures by Scott Murphy (Newsome Sinks, O'Shaughnessy Pit & Beech to Brushy)



dams is encountered. Most of the dams are 2 to 3 feet tall and stretch from wall to wall. They are truly the largest I've seen in a TAG cave. They more closely resembled gang painted, alley walls in a Harlem ghetto than rimstone dams, but they were impressive just the same. At this point the cave divides into an upper and lower level. The upper level continues for another 1000' to a termination room. The lower level goes two ways. Left takes you to the back portions of the cave. Right leads back toward the resurgence entrance. Watch your step though, it's easy to get your feet tangled up in someone's disgarded panties. Smoke Rise Cave, like Hughes, is a great cave to do if you enjoy reading while caving.



PESOS, PEYOTE & PITS

By Victor Bradford

[Editor's Note: When you don't title your articles, you get one of mine.]

Scottie Arrington NSS 36382
 Micah Sims NSS 42671
 Patrick O'Diam NSS 35852
 Victor Bradford NSS 15247

I knew Patrick was planning a trip to Mexico, but I didn't know it was going to be so soon. I don't think he did either, but he got a chance to go and I got invited along with Scottie and Micah and the next thing I knew we were on our way. It wasn't quite that fast, but almost. It is hard for me to pass up a trip to Mexico.

The plan was to leave Cullman early Tuesday afternoon, December 30, arrive in Brownsville, Texas (1100 miles) by 8:30

Wednesday morning, December 31, pick up our insurance (you can't drive in Mexico without Mexican insurance), exchange our money to pesos, cross the border and drive the 350 miles to Valles, Mexico by late Wednesday afternoon where we would be staying at the Hotel Valles. I didn't think it could be done that fast, but by driving 80mph, swapping drivers and not stopping for anything, and I mean anything, we did it. We actually got to Brownsville at 5:00 in the morning and had to wait 3 1/2 hours for the insurance place to open. It finally opened, Patrick got our insurance, we stopped a few blocks before the border and exchanged our money for pesos, crossed the border and headed toward Valles. Everything was going as planned.

Just as the boys were wondering how a deep pit could be in all this flat land. The huge mountains surrounding Victoria began to appear. We stopped just outside of Victoria and filled up with gas and continued on toward Valles. As we crossed a mountain range we stopped and took pictures of what some say is a volcanic plug, then continued on to Valles, arriving in late afternoon. I tried to get my old room, the same one I've had on four previous trips, but could not. Micah and I still got a good room behind my old one.

We got up at 6:00 the next morning, New Years Day, had a quick breakfast at the hotel, and took off for Aquismon about 30 miles away. Aquismon is a small town at the foot of the Sierra Madre mountains where you used to get a permit to do Golondrinas and Guaguas. It is where the new road begins up the mountain to Golondrinas. We picked up a hitch-hiker in Aquismon, who lived somewhere along the road above Golondrinas, and he directed us to the new road which has only been in existence about four years. Like all roads on the mountain it follows a 3,000 year-old trail and is rough as hell. Since Patrick can speak spanish, he and our hitch-hiking friend had a

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conversation on our way up the mountain. Among other things, he said he knew someone on the mountain that had done the pit many years ago with some Americans and he said some snow fell in the Golondrinas area the week before, on Christmas Day.

After six miles and running the chickens, turkeys, cattle, pigs, and two mules out of the road we arrived at the new parking area for the big pit. As we were bidding farewell to our friend, we were surrounded by kids of all ages wanting to carry our gear, for pay of course. After passing out candy and bubble gum, we began to hike to the pit, which would be less than 10 minutes if you didn't have to stop and sign a paper at what we called the caretakers house. This trail is very different from the old one that comes down from the top. It is much shorter and easier. You save alot of time and energy, which makes the pit somewhat easier to do.

Arriving at the pit just beyond the caretakers house and not planning to do the drop, I was in charge of videotaping around the top as the boys rigged and got ready to descend.

Patrick, Scottie and Micah didn't seem to be as impressed as I was the first time I walked up to the edge of Golondrinas almost exactly ten years before. Of course they had not gone over the lip yet. I knew that when they did, it would be a different story. Scottie, with the help of Patrick and Micah, rigged the pit. He rigged to the rock that hangs out over the pit, which made it somewhat easier than the traditional rig point to get on and off rope.

It was somehow decided that Micah would go first, then Scottie. Two little girls that helped carry our gear, stayed at the pit all day. The caretaker and a boy of about 18 were there off and on throughout the day. Before Patrick

went down, he talked with the boy who had an interesting story to tell. He said about six weeks earlier, after training on a short drop, he did Golondrinas with some cavers from San Francisco, climbing tandem under another caver. I thought that was rather remarkable.

With Scottie and Micah on bottom, it was time for Patrick to go down with the camera. After awhile, Scottie and Micah began to climb tandem. While they were climbing, three good looking girls appeared from nowhere. One could speak a little english. They were still there when Scottie and Micah came over the lip, but left before Patrick got up. When he did, we pulled the rope, rounded up the gear, and headed back down the trail, stopping again at the caretaker's house to buy Golondrinas t-shirts. Then it was on to the truck, down the mountain and back to Valles.

...they had not gone over the lip yet, I knew that when they did it would be a different story.

We ate at the steak house that night, as is traditional after doing Golondrinas. I didn't do the pit,

but I ate as big a steak as anyone.

About the boys not being impressed with the pit, if you could have heard the talk as each one came over the lip, the conversation around the table at the steak house, and what each one said to me privately, you would have thought they had gone to the moon and back.

The next morning we headed toward Aquismon, then up the mountain past Golondrinas to where the new road meets the old road. We turned left and headed for the town of Tamapaz. At Tamapaz we hired a man to carry our rope to Cepillo, a 414' pit. This one I planned to do. After a 30 or 40 minute hike we arrived at the pit but there was nothing to rig to. On trips to the pit before in '90 and '91, we rigged to an old stump which is now gone. We finally rigged to a rock some 40 feet away.

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Patrick, Micah and I did the pit. The pit is big and beautiful, but a small lake on one side was almost dry this time. Scottie elected not to do Cepillo because of a bad knee. After derigging, we hiked back to Tamapaz. We bought some big cokes at a store and headed down the mountain toward the town of Xilitla. Patrick wanted to see if he could get some information on another pit called Hoya de Luz. Xilitla is a "must see" if you go caving in Mexico. It is in a beautiful setting with cliffs and mountain peaks all around.

The next morning it was time to start home. We decided to come back a different way through Tampico on the coast. We walked along the beach for awhile and took some pictures, then started toward the border. We finally got across after a three hour delay. We stopped in Brownsville, got some pizza, then back on the road. They said I slept most of the way back, but you know how the boys are. We got back to Cullman early Sunday afternoon, January 4. We all had a great time. I can't wait to go again.



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

March 5, 2018

The regular monthly meeting of the Cullman Grotto of the National Speleological Society was called to order on Monday, March 5, 2018, at 7:35 p.m. by Harold Calvert, Chairman. 8 were present.

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

The treasurer's report was given.

The editor needs submissions for the Flowstone.

Announcements:

SERA will be held from May 3-6.
NCRC will be held from May 12-19 at Camp Skyline.
ACS meeting will be held on March 31st.

Old Business:

No old business.

New Business:

No new business.

A lot of reminiscing about previous caving adventures was done.

Trip reports were given by Harold Calvert on Tumbling Rock and Kuenn Drake on Limrock.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:25 p.m.



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

March 5, 2018

The executive meeting of the Cullman Grotto of the National Speleological Society was called to order on Monday, March 5, 2018, at 7:25 p.m. by Harold Calvert, Chairman.

Mike, Lisa and Jake Huff were approved as new members of the Cullman Grotto.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

