

The FLOWSTONE

Vol 26 Issue 1

January 2019



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

CULLMAN GROTTO FLOWSTONE

January 2019


Volume 26 Issue 1



Inside This Issue

- 2 Echo Chamber
TAG Calendar
- 3 Tumbling Rock Trip
to Christmas Tree
and Inner Sanctum

Neversink,
December 30,
- 5 Minutes

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.

Official Grotto Address

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

Newsletter Exchange

The Flowstone
Lisa Huff

cgrottonewsletter@gmail.com



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

Front Cover: Teresa Cline Lingerfelt using carabiner wrap rappel in Byer's Cave

Photo by: Scott Murphy

ECHO)))) CHAMBER

A great post on Tag-Net Digest #7648 about the exploration, mapping, and discovery of Ellisons Cave :

Allen Padgett (Lafayette, Georgia)

TRIP REPORT

ELLISONS CAVE January 11, 1969

We spent the night before sleeping in Mr. Hicks hay barn, after everyone got geared up we hiked across the pastures to the spring at the base of the mountain then bushwacked up the mountain to the newly opened "Dug Entrance." We passed gear through the last 30 or so feet of the "agony passage" until we reached the "Ecstasy" walking passage and headed downstream to the "Warm Up Pit." When we arrived there we spent some time 'gardening' the upper slope of the pit. Loose rocks were tossed and we actually dug the gooey mud away best we could with a small shovel. Down the pit.

We moved thru the "Rectum" the "Nuisance Drop" and the "Keyhole" Then a quick crawl brought us to where the water flows out into the big pit. Following the right wall there is a narrow ledge around the pit edge leading about 20 feet to the "Balcony." The rope is rigged here to give a free 510 ft drop somewhat away from the waterfall. While rappelling down the wind developed by the water moves the waterfall all over the pit. You can hear it coming and suddenly you are soaking wet. Quick to the bottom to stay as dry as possible and off rope. The view, the sound, the experience is a never forgotten moment. I was signature # 44 in the register.

Richard Schreiber and I head out down TAG hall then to the nearby

stream junction. At this point we pull out the survey equipment and survey downstream in virgin passage. We had ill fitting borrowed wet suit tops but wore blue jeans below. We surveyed until we reached a sump that day. Teeth chattering we get back to the stream junction and actually make some hot soup on a small stove. It saved us.

Back to the big pit. Three knot Prusik systems were the only way to climb. Wet and cold I made the 510 foot trip in 56 minutes. The much shorter 120 foot Warm Up Pit took 30 minutes, fatigue was setting in. And besides the rope was a muddy mess and required a triple wrap top Prusik knot to make any progress.

When we finally made the entrance after a 16 1/2 hour trip it was cold, single digit cold and we were exhausted, wet and yet excited. Down the mountain, trying to remember the direction in the dark to the barn, there was no beaten trail. Finally back at the barn, my food was frozen solid. Just let me sleep, into the hay barn, bad news. During the day the calves had gotten into the hay room, they walked across many sleeping bags to my brand new "only used one night" expensive down sleeping bag. The vengeful calf then proceeded to pee and poop on my bag. It was now frozen solid! Richard had an extra summer bag so I climbed into it in his car front seat. Ate some unfrozen fruit cake and tried to sleep.

Sometime after daylight we are all in need of food and headed to Lafayette to the Surrey restaurant which had a Sunday 'all you could eat' buffet. Several plates later the manager came over and informed us "that was ALL we could eat".

A new huge pit, virgin cave, cow poop, the Surrey, what a memory. 50 years later to the day it feels like

yesterday. Friends of a lifetime and sadly several are gone already. Ellisons cave is a special place and I was so fortunate to be a part of the original exploration and mapping crew. To put the first footprints in so much of it is truly a gift from God. The wonder of exploration still exist underground.

With me that day were Richard Schreiber, Charlie Stone, Charlie Warren, Benny Sanford, David Stidham, Diane Cousineau, Dan Daugherty Jr., Della McGuffin, Susan Newell, Malcolm Storey, Tom Schmitt.



TAG Calendar

January 14
Grotto Meeting

January 19
Montgomery Grotto Trip
Limrock Blowing Cave
(Prepare for water...potentially lots of it.)



group headed back to King's Shower. Nathan graciously blocked

of the Topless Dome.

**Tumbling Rock Trip to Christmas Tree and Inner Sanctum,
December 23, 2018**

By Chuck & daughter Elle Tice, Harold Calvert, Jeremy Weremeichik, Regina Jenkins, Scott Murphy, Terri Leonard, and Nathan Williams

Photos by Scott Murphy

On the trip were Chuck and Elle Tice, Harold Calvert, Jeremy Weremeichik, Regina Jenkins, Scott Murphy, Terri Leonard, Teresa Lingerfelt, Chris Woody, Mike, Lisa and Jake Huff, and Nathan Williams.

We met at the Scottsboro McDs for a quick bite to eat and pit stop. We had a great conversation about grammar with Chris, a 7th grade English teacher. And while we're on the subject of grammar, if any of you guys happen to see a grammatical or spelling errors in this newsletter, it was planted there to make Chris' eye twitch. I swear.

On this overcast day, we loaded into the vehicles and headed for Tumbling Rock. After gearing up, we entered the initial cold air of the cave. Jake led the group all the way to the King's Shower. We stopped and watched a group from Chattanooga, TN come down through the hole. Yes, the water was flowing! The groups merged and headed to the Christmas Tree. Nathan plugged in the magical battery and lit up the tree for a wonderful sight. He said about 15 people took close to two hours to put up the decorations. Ask Elle how the decorations got to the top of the tree (formation).

After taking lots of pictures, our



the flow of water so people could go into the hole without getting soaked. Regina, Scott, and Terri watched the packs of those who ventured up to see the Topless Dome. When asked how it was, Nathan said it was uneventful and Jeremy said all made it out alive. There was a light show and Pink Floyd music at the viewing

When everyone was down, there was talk about continuing to the Inner Sanctum. Terri, Regina, and Scott decided to head out of the cave with Nathan. The Inner Sanctum is one of the larger rooms in the cave. To get there takes a little more work than the first part of the cave. Everyone was safe and enjoyed it greatly. The group then exited the cave and found it cold and wet outside. Proves it is better to stay in a cave, as stated by Chuck.

Nathan took a shower instead of doing the usual clean up by wet wipes. We said good-bye to Teresa & Chris and then to Mike, Lisa, & Jake since they were unable to stay longer.

The rest of us headed to Jefferson's to eat and tell stories. Terri Leonard, who's been a member of the Montgomery Grotto for almost as long as there has been a Montgomery Grotto, recalled back in the day, when trip reports were completed by the entire caving group, on napkins over a good meal. As newly appointed newsletter editor of the Montgomery Grotto, she resurrected this great tradition over burgers, oysters, and wings.

A good time was had by all-in the cave and reliving all the good parts over dinner with friends.



Neversink, December 30, 2018

By Mike Huff
Photos by Mike Huff and Teresa Cline Lingerfelt

On Sunday, Dec 30th, members of the Montgomery and Cullman Grottos made a wonderful trip to Neversink Cave in North Alabama. Participants

included Teresa Cline Lingerfelt, her son, Gavin, Chris Woody, Harold Calvert and Zach Brooks from Cullman Grotto, and Bo Franklin and Mike Huff from the Montgomery Grotto. Nathan Williams also came over from Tumbling Rock to join us and take pictures.

We met at the McD's for breakfast before heading up to the pit. Everything was going quite well till we started getting the gear together for the trek up the mountain and realized there had been a misunderstanding, and Zach didn't have a helmet. Hmmmm...we all mused that we had one we would gladly loan him, if only we were back at home to get it! Luckily, Nathan had some stuff back at his place, so Nathan, Bo, and Zach went back to Tumbling Rock to grab it.

Meanwhile, the remaining members finished loading gear and headed up the trail to the pit. We hadn't gone 50 feet into the woods when we noticed a large boar ahead of us, just off the path. She didn't look mean, quite friendly, actually, for a large wild boar, but I kept a lookout for a good tree to climb until she was out of sight.



The hike up was as steep as ever, but all the earlier rain made for slippery conditions. Interestingly, the rain made the ground really soft, which allowed us to see many wildlife tracks, including several that appeared to have been made by a very large cat. It's nice to have something to look at to take your mind off the slog to the top.

We finally made it to the top of the pit. Neversink is a gorgeous 162 ft. open air pit. The initial approach down into the mouth to rappel is a little sketchy-slippery and steep--almost like an antlion trap. The rappel begins on a ledge within the pit, where it is about 40 ft in diameter. The damp walls are covered in beautiful ferns, and are home to glow worms visible on a night drop. With all the rain that we've been having, there was a nice waterfall.

About the time Harold and Chris finished up the rigging, Bo, Nathan, and Zach reached the top. We asked them if they saw the boar on the trail. They hadn't, but did see one being chased across the field by a very excited dog.

Now that the rope was rigged and everyone had gear, it was time to get serious. All that was left was to put the rope pads down and get to having fun. "Does anyone have any rope pads?" Doah! Somehow, everybody forgot rope pads! So in what has now practically become a tradition for our grotto, Bo graciously made the trek back to the car to look for pads. In the meantime, the rest of us talked about the weather and other various pleasantries until Bo returned.

His return didn't bring much in the way of hope as he couldn't find any pads. He did, however, find a tiny little doggie sleeping bag that he figured would work well enough. With rope protection in place, we could finally begin our fun! Well, almost. The foot straps on the rope

walker Bo brought didn't fit Zach's feet! Well, they'd come too far to quit now, so Bo again graciously gave his gear to Zach so he could make his virgin drop into Neversink.

With new equipment in hand, Zach went on to do his first drop, followed by a tandem climb under the watchful eye of Harold. At the same time, Gavin took his turn and dropped into the pit like a champ, another first for the group!

With a successful drop under his belt, Zach passed the gear back to Bo so he could get a drop in. We watched Bo slip out of site of the lip and into the drop, still talking. Turns out, tiny little doggie sleeping bags do not make the best rope pads. It and Bo wrestled during his rappel. What can I say? Bo won. Chris brought it back up from the bottom tied around his neck like a cape.





By now the sun was bringing our day to an end, so we pulled ropes, gathered gear and proceeded down the mountain, tired but happy. All in all a great day.



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

December 3, 2018

The regular monthly meeting of the Cullman Grotto of the National Speleological Society was called to order on Monday, December 3, 2018, at 7:38 p.m. by Harold Calvert, Chairman. Nine were present.

The minutes from the November meeting were read. Motion was made by Harold Calvert to accept the minutes as read and seconded by Arlon Baker. The motion was approved.

The treasurer's report was given.

The editor needs submissions for the Flowstone.

Announcements:

Cullman Grotto Christmas party will be held at Jeff and Mandy Lynn's at December 15th at 6:00 p.m.

The Montgomery Grotto Christmas party will be held on December 8th at Bo and Jelene Franklin's.

Old Business:

Need a new editor for the Flowstone.

(OP-ED The old one is worn-slap-out... obviously from editing the voluminous trip reports or is that spinning gold from straw?!)

New Business:

Nominations for 2019 officers:

Chairman: Harold Calvert

Vice-chair: Scott Murphy

Treasurer: Tracy Calvert

Secretary: Evon Fowler

(Déjà Vu - part 2)

A motion was made by Kuenn Drake and seconded by Tracy Calvert to make monthly assignments of grotto duties.

Trip Reports:

A trip report was given on Byers Cave.

The meeting adjourned at 8:38 p.m.