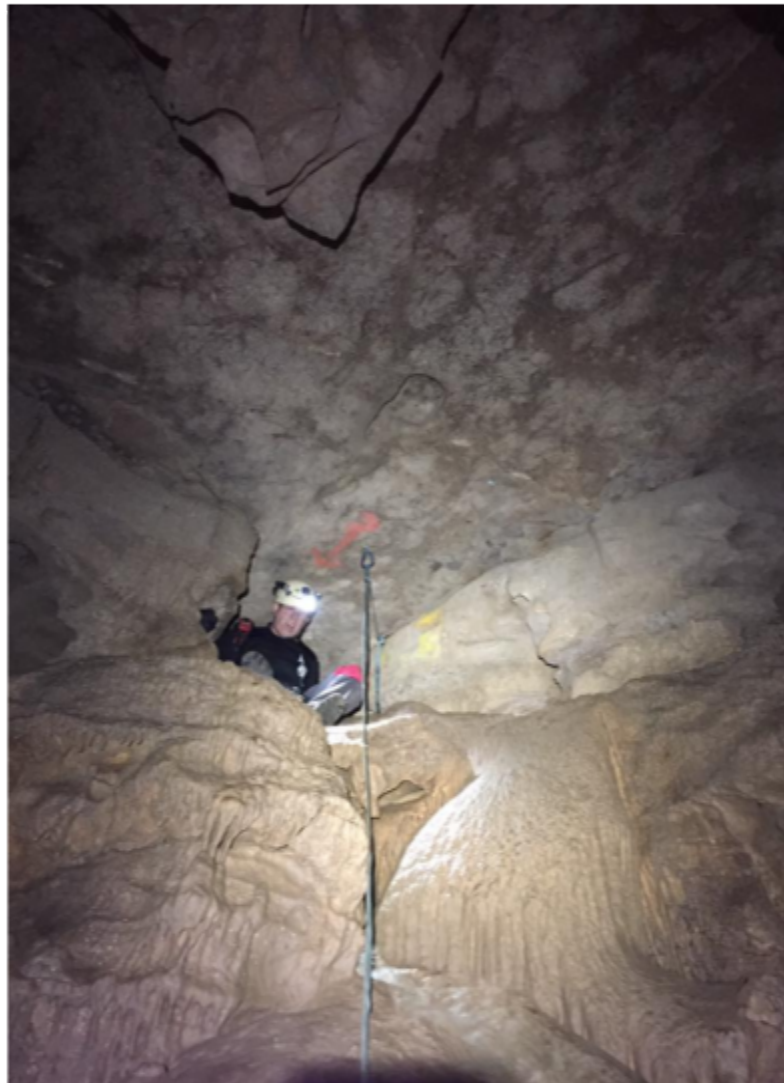


The FLOWSTONE

Vol 25 Issue 11

December 2018



Black Friday 2018

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


CULLMAN GROTTO FLOWSTONE

December 2018
Volume 25 Issue 11



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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: Harold Calvert in Byers Cave on Black Friday 2018

Photo by: Teresa Cline Lingerfelt

ECHO)))) CHAMBER

2018 Dogwood City Grotto Grants Program

By: Andy Zellner (Marietta, Georgia)

With another year's successful Cave-In behind us, the DCG plans to continue our grant program and once again make much of the proceeds available to help fund research and conservation projects, expeditions, conservancies, etc. Though we cannot promise to fulfill all requests, we are soliciting grant proposals from any non-profit caving group, organization or individual, all of which will be given careful consideration.

The deadline for submissions to be received in writing for this year will be Tuesday, December 11th, 2018. If at all possible, please send your request in electronic format (like a Microsoft Word document or PDF file), as that makes it much easier for us to distribute and work with. We don't need you to write a book -- a one or two page proposal is fine.

All we ask in return is that each grant recipient give something back to the Dogwood City Grotto. This would preferably be in the form of an article for our Georgia Underground publication, but could also be a slide show, demonstration, field trip, expedition report, etc.

The older DCG website page with all the details is not available at this very moment, but look for it soon. Feel free to contact me, andyzellner@gmail.com, with any questions in the meantime. Any funding will be voted on and disseminated in late December 2018.

And please pass this along to anyone/group/place you think might be interested. You should get a

confirmation that we received your request in a day or two. The deadline is only a month away, December 11th 2018!



SCCi Science Awards Announcement

By: Robert Handford (Huntsville, Alabama)



The Southeastern Cave Conservancy, Inc. (SCCi), the largest land conservancy in the world solely focused on protecting wild caves, recently announced the award of two grants through its annual Science Award Program. Scientific research is an integral part of SCCi's work. It is essential to conserving cave and karst resources.

"Buying caves to preserve and protect them is a noble endeavor. It is what SCCi is known for." Says Dr. George Veni, Executive Director of the National Cave and Karst Research Institute and President, International Union of Speleology. "But effective preservation and protection is often impossible without good scientific research to identify needs and best management practices. SCCi's Science Awards Program helps assure their caves are sustainably managed, and supports both established and young scientists' focus on much needed cave and karst research."

This year's science award recipients

are:

(1) Drs. Cathy Borer and Angela Poole, of the Department of Biology, Berry College in Rome, Georgia for "Molecular identification of plant roots" to be conducted at Howard's Waterfall Cave Preserve, Georgia. The researchers will develop and test molecular techniques needed to identify plant species of roots that are exposed in cave walls and ceilings. The researchers note that root physiological studies done at the land surface are difficult to conduct without damaging roots and influencing their physiological processes while exposing them for study. However, roots exposed in caves allow for easy access to plant roots for study and most importantly they can be sampled with minimal damage to the root system for analyses. In order to properly study root physiology, the plant species must be identified first. Thus, this study will develop and test molecular techniques to identify the plant species from root samples. The SCCi has awarded \$1,500 to support this important research.

(2) Joe Lamb and Dr. Yong Wang, of the Department of Biological and Environmental Sciences, Alabama A&M University in Huntsville, Alabama, for "Abiotic factors influencing cave use by salamanders in northern Alabama." This study forms part of Joe Lamb's M.S. thesis. The researchers note that cave salamanders have strict environmental tolerances (temperature, humidity), and that their abundance and diversity are an indicator of the health of a cave environment and perhaps the ecosystem health of forest systems surrounding caves. Joe and Dr. Wang will determine salamander abundance, density, and diversity in the near-surface parts of Tumbling Rock Cave Preserve in Alabama. The SCCi has awarded \$1,500

to support this important research.

For more information about our science mission and to inquire about submitting science proposals for next year, please contact SCCi Chief Scientist, Dr. Matthew Niemiller, matthew.niemiller@scci.org



NSS Bat Ball 2018

By Fennigan Spencer (Birmingham, Alabama)



NSS New Year's Eve Party, Member Appreciation Dinner and Fundraiser benefiting the NSS at NSS HQ 6001 Pulaski Pike Huntsville AL 35810

Saturday December 29th, 2018 to noon Wednesday January 2nd, 2019. Grounds and building open for camping from 8:00 AM on Saturday December 29th, 2018 to noon Wednesday January 2nd, 2019. Indoor camping available in case of cold temperatures.

Led wild cave trips vertical, horizontal all weekend, on and off the property. SRT Classes in the rescue shed. Cave art class with Carolina. Vendor and adventure group booths in the ballroom. It's a New Year's Eve event for NSS members and their guests

6 – 8 pm catered New Year's Eve dinner

8 pm – 1 am New Year's Party with DJ, dancing and champagne at midnight

Souvenir cup and T-shirt. Craft libations made by cavers. Toilet facilities available. New and improved caver style showers. Fantastic breakfast, lunch and dinners available in minutes' drive. Saturday and Sunday night entertainment music and movies.

\$40 for adults \$20.00 for children 10 and under.

Online registration only. Registration Deadline December 15th 2018 .

<https://members.caves.org/event/BatBall2018>



Changes Coming to Bryant Mountain Cave

(The following was posted on FaceBook by Bryant Mountain Cave property owner Wes Sims)

Greetings Smoke Rise! I am Wes Sims & I wanted to share with everyone some important happenings here in Smoke Rise. I own Bryant Mountain Cave & the flat stream passage lot off of White Oak Trail at the bottom of the mountain. I had no idea when I purchased what I would do other than help preserve an awesome destination for my children and others. Now I have found my calling and am excited to share that Bryant Mountain Cave is going to get some new life.

We are now hosting wild cave tours and you will see the new "Sims Cave Park" begin to develop. We definitely want to be an active and

positive part of this wonderful community and welcome you to voice your recommendations and concerns.

Our plans are to build out a natural park area with some picnic tables and a covered pavilion or two. There's a lot of history with the old train depot on site as well that we want to remember and develop. A possible dog park area has been discussed also. We will be energizing the cave soon and monitored security will be in place. This will not be a place for undesirables. Inside the cave we will be restoring the large rimstone pools (Possibly largest in the country) and removing the awful graffiti from the walls.

We plan to have a "Smoke Rise Day" a couple of times a year when the cave will be open for residents. I welcome your input and also your stories and knowledge of the area. If anyone has photos or info on any old history of the area please share. We want to share the past of Smoke Rise as well as what's underneath!

(The following is from the Sims Cave Park Faq page. You can find the park page at <https://wildcavetour.com>)

What days are you open?

Our tours are made by reservation only. Go to Reservations tab or you may also call and make reservations directly over the phone (205) 876 -4020.

Are there any restrictions on tour participants?

Yes. Participants need to be in good shape and have the ability to climb and crawl through tight places. Tours are not recommended for visitors with known heart or respiratory problems, poor circulation or difficulty walking long distances or on unlevel surfaces.

Who can take the tour?

Our tours are open for everyone who is physically able. We recommend ages 12 and up although younger have participated. Everyone must sign a waiver and youth under 16 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

How much does the tour cost?

Spelunking Tour (2 Hours): \$60
Wild Cave Adventure Tour (3 Hours): \$75
Extreme Caveman Challenge (3-4 Hours): \$99
Cave tour reservations are non-refundable. Under some circumstances dates and times may be changed with a two weeks notice

How many people are in each tour?

Tours are offered in groups of 6 -12 people. Please call about any special arrangements for smaller or larger groups.

What equipment or gear do I need to bring?

Participants do not need to bring anything with them in order to go on the tour. Helmets and headlamps are provided as well as knee and elbow pads. If you want gloves you may wear them. You may bring your own gear provided that it has been thoroughly cleaned prior to arriving. Through tours will be getting wet so prepare in advance. You may bring a snack if you'd like and water is provided.

What do I need to wear?

Long sleeve pants and closed toe shoes are required on the tours. Some of the tours will require you to be partially submerged in water to exit the cave so dress appropriately. You WILL be getting dirty! It is highly recommended that you bring a change of clothes, a towel, and a bag for dirty clothes if you go on one of the through tours. You'll appreciate having some dry clothes to put on

when you exit.

What can I expect on the tour?

You can expect to see the beautiful world down under first hand. There will be passages you have to squeeze through, crawl through, and slosh through in order to get back out of the cave. You'll have an experience you are unlikely to find anywhere else!

Do I need to sign a waiver?

Yes. You will be required to sign a waiver.



TAG Calendar

December 3

Grotto Meeting

L&N Train Depot, Arnold St 7:30pm

December 8

Grotto Trip

TBA

December 8

Montgomery Grotto Christmas Party

Bo & Jelene Franklin's House 5pm
(Bring side dishes - Optional \$20 Dirty Santa)

December 15

Cullman Grotto Christmas Party

Jeff & Mandi Lynn's House 6pm
(Pot Luck & \$10 Dirty Santa)

December 29-January 2

Bat Ball 2018

NSS Headquarters



Black Friday Trip

By Harold Calvert

Pictures by Teresa Cline Lingerfelt

It is a tradition with the Grotto to do a black Friday trip. This year's trip was to Byers Cave in Georgia. Only Kuenn had done the cave before. Chuck had been in only a short distance. So, this was a new cave for the remaining 12 of us on the trip.



I did not know what to expect. I had heard conflicting reports about the cave. I had heard it was easy, and heard it was difficult. And all horizontal. But Kuenn had instructed us to bring a seat harness and a safety. He said there is a spot that is steep.

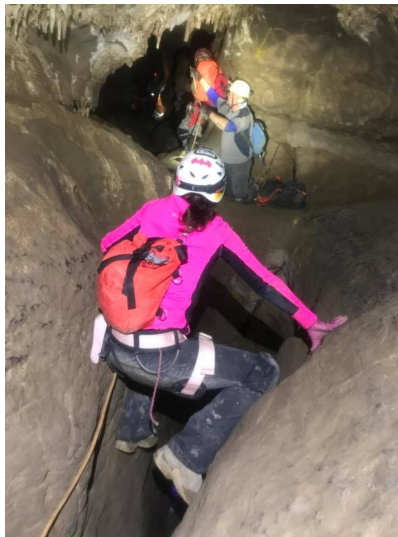
After parking at the SCCI designated area, we were on our way to the cave. It was a long hike, over an hour, but not too difficult. When you arrive at the entrance, there is a bluff that you have to make your way down before entering the cave.

Not far in, we started losing cavers. "I am not into it today, think I will wait here", I was told. One down. The cave starts out narrow and crawly, then quickly turns to canyon passage. In places ropes are needed to traverse deep spots. And

downward steep slopes required a safety and rappelling device. Several more cavers done.



After all the downclimbs there was an area of awkward crawling. Tight and restrictive. More cavers done. This dropped into large passage with many nice formations. The floor was slick and unlevel with lots of breakdown. But the passages got bigger and bigger as we went. We passed by several pits that could have been rigged and dropped if the gear was available. We had dropped off the gear at our last known drop. So we made our way around the pits and continued the trip.



At the turn around point we had cut the participants down to only 7. The rest were strung out through the cave

awaiting our return.

After viewing this area, we decided to head back. The downclimbs were a challenge to some, trying to get back up with only safeties. Myself included. Sometimes it doesn't pay to be short. The taller people seemed to do better in these areas of the cave.



One by one we collected our stationed cavers on the way back out. We arrived back at the entrance just as dark fell. So we got to hike the hour plus back to the car in the dark, and misting rain.

The trip was a good one for me. I had not been caving in quite awhile. A bit challenging in areas, just enough to make it interesting. And, as always, the trip was finished off with a good Mexican meal. Another good black Friday trip in the books. I will feel this one for awhile.



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

November 5, 2018

The regular monthly meeting of the Cullman Grotto of the National Speleological Society was called to order on Monday, November 5, 2018, at 7:40 p.m. by Harold Calvert, Chairman. 7 were present.

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

The treasurer's report was given.

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

After multiple digressions from the grotto business, announcements were made.

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.

The November grotto trip will be to Byers Cave on November 23rd.

Old Business:

Need a new editor for the Flowstone.

New Business:

Harold Calvert does not want the position of grotto chairman next year.

Nominations for 2019 officers will be made at the December meeting.

A discussion was held regarding attendance at grotto meetings.

Trip Reports:

Harold discussed Bridge Day.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

