

The FLOWSTONE

Vol 26 Issue 8

August 2019



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

CULLMAN GROTTO FLOWSTONE

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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: Tumbling Rock

Photo by: Kuenn Drake

ECHO)))) CHAMBER

Dear grotto leader,

Please see the OTR website for the upcoming Old Timers Reunion, held in Dailey, WV, August 29-September 2, 2019. www.otr.org or on the OTR2019 Facebook page.

If you have any questions about OTR please contact the OTR chair, David "Shack" Shackelford at otr2019@otr.org.

Bob Hoke

OTR Propaganda Department

Bats regurgitate nectar for their babies—a new discovery

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/animals/2019/07/bats-nectar-babies-mothers-feeding/>

By Mary Bates, National Geographic, July 12, 2019

Many animal mothers have evolved unusual ways to feed their offspring, sometimes even sacrificing their own lives.

Any human mom can attest that keeping a baby fed and happy can be a Herculean task. That's why some animal mothers have evolved some truly creative—and sometimes surprising—strategies.

For instance, all mammals produce milk for their babies, but several species also give their offspring food off their plate, so to speak.

Take Pallas' long-tongued bat (*Glossophaga soricina*), a Central and South American bat that visits flowers to feed on nectar, just like a hummingbird. As scientists recently reported in a new study, these moms, [in addition to milk, feed their pups regurgitated nectar](#). Baby bats lick at their mothers' mouths and their moms oblige by vomiting up a sweet

meal for them. It's the first evidence for mouth-to-mouth feeding in nectar bats.

Co-author [Andreas Rose](#), an ecologist at Germany's University of Ulm, says the finding raises some intriguing questions.

"Is it less energy demanding for mothers to directly feed nectar to their pups instead of producing milk?" Rose says by email.

It's also possible the behavior has non-nutritional benefits for bat babies, such as transferring gut microbes or helping them learn the social processes around eating.



To the batcave, Grottos! Bat Research Opportunities

For those interested, there are two organizations anyone can join or follow. Alabama Bat Working Group and Southeastern Bat Diversity Group. They sometimes post volunteer opportunities on their facebook page or website.

Southeastern Bat Diversity Group

<https://sbdn.org/shop/2019-abwg-bat-bltz-registration/>
<https://www.facebook.com/The-Southeastern-Bat-Diversity-Network-140445222788652/>

<https://www.outdooralabama.com/no-ngo-wildlife-program/alabama-bat-monitoring-and-conservation>

Alabama Bat Working Group

<https://alabamabatwg.wordpress.com>
<https://www.facebook.com/Alabama-Bat-Working-Group-108453115859843/>

TAG Calendar

August 5

Grotto Meeting - This month's cave trip will be discussed at the meeting.

August 17

Grotto Trip to Cagles

2020 NSS Convention: Elkins, WV
July 27 - 31, 2020



Worth Another Read - Classic Article
from The Flowstone Archives

12 million and 72

By Harold Calvert

From the September 1999 Flowstone

"Is it too late to back out?" I asked as I reached the changeover spot to rig into the main rope.

"No," was the reply from the top of the ridge above me. After stopping to gain a little courage, I talked myself into proceeding. I had gone this distance and much farther in the past, but that was different. It was underground, not in the clouds.

It was hard to change over with my nails and teeth sunk into this rock, and as I began to start my rappel, I thought to myselfthis is not

too bad.....I can do this.....it could be okay, but then it happened. With the last foothold passing by, I loosened the rack to start a free rappel. But as I passed into the free drop I was violently spun half round. OH ****!!!!!! I WILL SURELY DIE!!!!!!

After letting my pants drain a bit, and waiting to stop swinging, I decided to open my eyes and assess the situation. I WILL DEFINITELY DIE NOW!!!!!!

Okay, so that was a bad idea. Maybe I am close to the bottom now, lets look down. You know you are up too high when the buzzards are circling below you waiting for you to get there. "IS IT TOO LATE TO BACK OUT NOW???"

As I start moving again, suddenly I come to a stop. A metallic squeaky grinding stop. Then a pop..... pop..... squeak.....pop. NOT GOOD!!!! "PATRICK!!!"

"What?"

"WHAT'S WRONG WITH THIS ROPE!!!"

"Oh, it's just old, this is probably its last trip. We'll retire it after this trip," he replied.

"NOW YOU TELL ME!"

On the rest of the rappel, I kept my eyes closed because of the round and a half spin back and forth. OKAY, it was as good an excuse as any! Finally reaching the bottom, Wesley asked me how it was.

"Terrible. How was yours?"

"I am looking for the trail out of here," he said nervously.

"I will help you find it!"

Then Jeff said it was a long trail around, and its getting dark fast. Wesley said, "Yeah, and I been hearing critters down here too. We'll stay here and wait." Finally I got on

rope to get out of there and away from Wesley's critters that I had began hearing also. It had gotten dark, and the last I saw of Wesley, he had got a big stick and headed for higher ground.

Maybe this would be better in the dark, I thought. Then it started again. Squeak..... pop.....squeak..... every time I would stop. So I climbed..... and climbed.... and climbed...and inspected every inch of that rope. I was concentrating so hard on climbing that I didn't notice I was at the top until the rope pad hit me in the head. I LOVE THAT ROPE PAD!!!!

And I can brag and say, "Yep, been there, done that." And, by the way, there are 12 million and 72 red stripes on our rope. I know, I saw every one.



Tumbling Rock with Yellow Hammer

by Kuenn Drake NSS36723

On several occasions I have regaled my work associates with caving trips and Covation pictures. Many were impressed with the variety and fantastic places we've been and seen. Occasionally a few of them would ask, "So when are you going to take us caving?"

Feeling the pressure, I gave in last

month and I told him I'm ready to take them caving for whoever wants to go. "I'm not going to take you on a baby trip", says I. Wanting to give them a good experience with variety I decided on taking them to Tumbling Rock. Thinking a trip back to the Christmas Tree would be about all they would want. Visiting all the historic places, Elephants Feet, Signature Alley, Totem Gallery and the Topless dome on the way. We had 15 in all on the trip work associates and family members and friends Ages from 10 to 63. Everybody seemed to have a good time, although it was a challenge for a few. We spent about 6 1/2 hours in the cave.

Just passed the Wildcat Breakdown we stop for a rest and snack. I asked the group how they were feeling. I said, "If this was a video game and you were giving me your health meter what would it be on a scale of 0 to 10." I got numbers of eights and nine's and a couple of tens, and so knowing that we were about to go through a rough section dropping back down into the stream passage I felt like they were good for more.

We reached our goal and everyone was ready to get out and chow down. I was impressed that some said they were ready to go again, while others were one and done, and yet others said they would get back to me later.

I asked the normal question as we were changing clothes in the parking area. You know the one, how much money would it take to get you to go right now back into the cave and do what we did again? Answers range from there's not enough money to \$500-\$2000. One even said, "get me something to eat and drink and I'm ready to go now."

It was a fun time! What makes Tumbling Rock rate so high is taking new people there and letting them experience our underground wonderland.

And it never gets old for me, either!



Still need submissions for a 25th Anniversary T-shirt design.

New Business:
No new business.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:13 p.m. with a program on Wonder Cave following the adjournment.



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

July 1, 2019

The regular monthly meeting of the Cullman Grotto of the National Speleological Society was called to order on Monday, July 1, 2019, at 7:38 p.m. by Harold Calvert, Chairman. 8 were present.

The minutes from the June 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 please!

Announcements:

TAG is October 10-13.

Bridge Day is October 19th.

Old Business:

The celebration of the 25th Anniversary of the Cullman Grotto was very good with 45 in attendance.



Hambrick Cave, August 2, 2019
Photos by Scott Murphy



More pics from Tumbling Rock