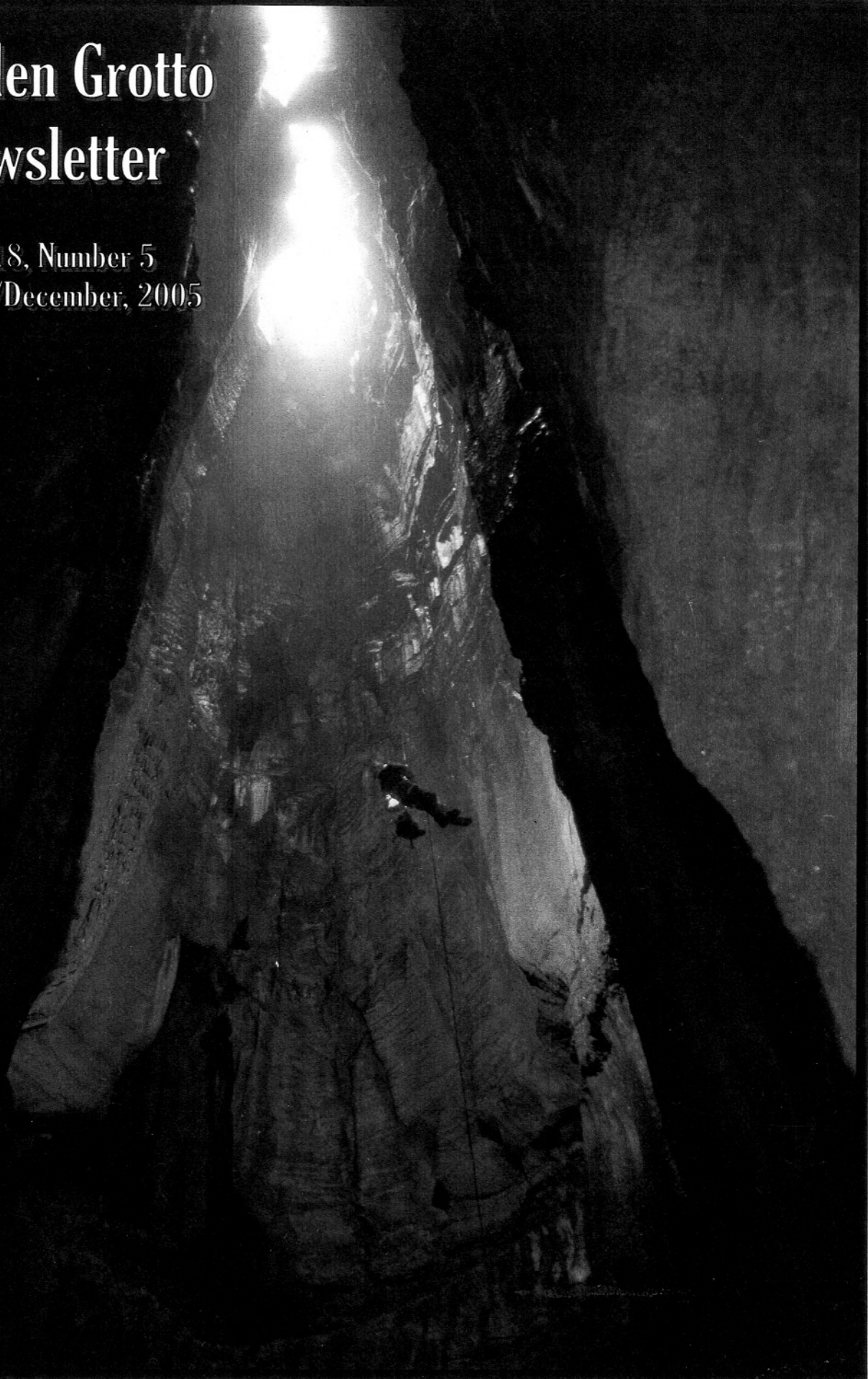


# Gadsden Grotto Newsletter

Volume 18, Number 5  
November/December, 2005



## Gadsden Grotto of the National Speleological Society

P.O. Box 2092  
Gadsden, AL 35903

Website:  
<http://www.caves.org/grotto/gadسدengrotto>

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Jim Loftin

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Mark Medlen

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### From the Guest Editor:

Kelly Keener has been the Gadsden Grotto Newsletter Editor for the past over 2 years and has done an excellent job of pulling a newsletter out of very few things written by anyone other than she. Having to write most of each newsletter takes it toll on the editor. What we need is for everyone who goes caving write about it once a month or copy your log entry to the editor. Or start a research project, a scientific paper or just send pictures to the editor. If you're not caving, why not? Make it a priority once in a while. Be a contributor to the success of the grotto and of the newsletter!

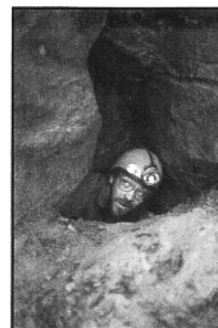
Am I taking over the editorship? Kelly's computer recently crashed and burned and she was getting a little burned out anyway; so, she asked me to do the next newsletter. I enjoy working on the computer, doing photographs and doing graphic design; but, it does take a lot of time plus you have to write a lot. But here goes! If anyone has any suggestions, please let me know. Submit them with an article. I hope you enjoy my first ever newsletter. Be a part of the next newsletter!

## Gadsden Grotto Newsletter

The Gadsden Grotto Newsletter is printed dependent upon submissions and is included in grotto membership for \$10.00 due each May.

Guest Editor:

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Jim Loftin in Seven  
Heroes Cave  
by Robert Crumley

## Gadsden Grotto Meetings

2nd Tuesday of every month at 6:30 P.M.

At the East Gadsden Community Center

Across Highway 431 from Goodyear plant parking lot

(256) 549-4673

Gadsden, Alabama

Cover: South Pittsburg Pit by Jim Loftin with David Teal on rope and flash. This 160' pit with its 2,200' of surveyed passage along with the 10 acres above it has become the most recent purchase by the Southeastern Cave Conservancy. 10 more buffer acres will be donated next year by the seller. The purchase required a \$10,000 down-payment and has been financed by a 10-year, \$40,000 mortgage. Donations to support the purchase and help pay off the mortgage are needed. "Buy a Piece of the Pit" for \$20 or more and be recognized with a certificate of honorary ownership of a piece of the cave, pit, or preserve. Donors will also receive an SCCi South Pittsburg Pit T-shirt. Contributions may be made by check or credit card, and may be mailed to SCCi, PO Box PO Box 71857, Chattanooga TN 37407-0857.

The pit has been closed to regular visitation for over a year, and visitors should be alert for loose rocks, debris, and other hazards when visiting the cave. Recently, a large tree located opposite the road fell across the pit. Caution is advised if a rope is rigged on that side of the pit, since the area at the lip of the pit was disturbed when the tree fell. The property manager for the South Pittsburg Pit Preserve is David Crisp. He can be contacted at [southpittsburg@scci.org](mailto:southpittsburg@scci.org). Membership applications and information about the SCCi and its activities are available at their web site, [www.scci.org](http://www.scci.org).

## Caving in Calhoun County

By: Alan Cressler (Atlanta, Georgia)

Friday afternoon Andy Porter and I drove to Mark Medlen and Kelly Kenner's house near Glencoe, Alabama. Saturday morning we traveled to Green Valley Cave in Calhoun County [Etowah County]. I last visited this cave after the ACS meeting two days after I had carpal tunnel surgery. On that trip I did more cave than I should have considering I was basically one handed. The cave is located in a geologically complex area and developed in Chickamauga Limestone. Passage development follows the dip of the beds. This a fantastic cave with just about every kind of passage there is. There are pits but we free climbed around them. The lowest point of the cave is about 150 ft below the entrance. It is a large clear sump pool with two inflowing streams. We also toured a significant portion of the cave not shown on the map. Our next adventure was paddling inflatable kayaks about one mile upstream on Big Canoe Creek in St. Clair County to a complex of small caves that were mostly of interest to me. Mark and I spent about an hour in the longest one. I collected sufficient data and we left.

Sunday morning the four of us visited Cedar Mountain Cave in Calhoun County. This cave consists of a large room and a 40 ft high meandering canyon that is fun to climb around in. We also determined it had been extensively mined for saltpeter sediment. Only Kelly and I did the next one, Maxwellborn Cave. It consist of mostly crawl passage for 50 feet to a sit up pocket with a few formations. The last tight spot ripped the small ball off of Kelly's belly-button ring. I did find the ball.

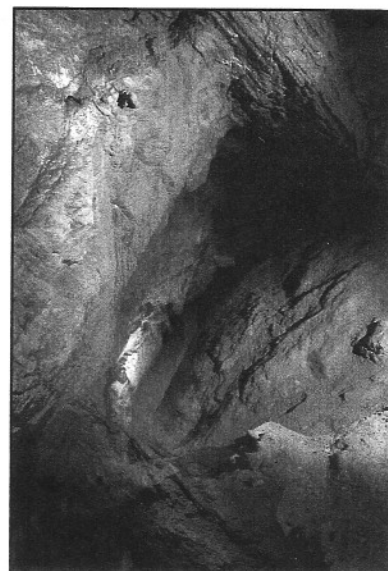
Next was Daugette No. I Cave. This cave also is also geologically interesting. Looks like the entrance is formed in the Rome Formation which is non-carbonate. Most of the lower cave is developed in the Conasauga Limestone or a limestone member of the Rome Formation. There are numerous climb downs that lead to a very large room that has a dipping flat ceiling. Although vandalized, there are some very nice white anthodites in several places. This type of anthodite is uncommon in area caves and should be protected.

Only I toured to the bottom of the cave which is 130 ft below the entrance. What a "hog waller". I was in knee deep mud at the sump. We all toured the several hundred feet of passage off the big room. Some one had strung several hundred feet of electric wire and extension cords from the entrance to the big room. They were powering a large street light in the room, I assume with a



Mark Medlen in Daugette #1 entrance with Oak leafed Hydrangea in bloom.

By Jim Loftin



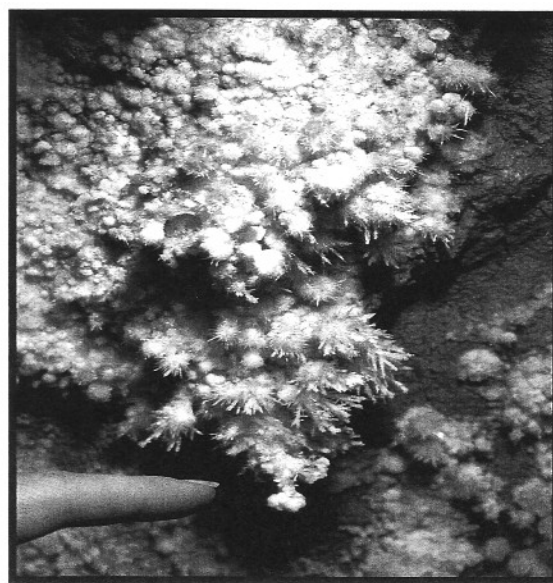
Mike Davis at the sump in Daugette I.

By Jim Loftin

generator on the surface. We hauled all the junk out of the cave including a full length lawn chair. I guess we removed four medium size packs full of junk out of the cave.

Our last cave was Daugette No. 2 Cave. It is located at the contact of the Rome Formation and the Conasauga Limestone. A wet weather stream bed enters the entrance. A mostly walking passage continues for several hundred feet to a 40 ft long belly crawl. Beyond the crawl is a series of large room and a small stream. The cave end in mud banks. The lower level can flood to the ceiling. We finished the day and Andy and I headed back to Atlanta.

10-03-05



Aragonite crystals in Daugette #1 Cave

By Jim Loftin



## Snakes and TV Shows

By: Robert Crumley (Fort Payne, Alabama)

robertc@playcore.com

All the talk about snakes in pits reminds me of "The Old Rockeater" and his dislike for any kind of snake. During our prime caving days I would make sure that Jerry would have intimate contact with any snake that we happened to come across. Lots of times Jerry carried a snake out of a pit, in his pack, saving the snake's life, and didn't even realize he was carrying the snake. Of course I received a lot of death threats in those days.

I remember a particular trip to Snakes, Dinky's and Grahams pits on a summer Saturday. Jerry and I had bounced Snakes and Dinky's and were in Grahams. Jerry rigged in for the climb and stopped about 15 feet off the floor to wait for me, for a tandem ascent. As I reached for the rope I spotted a rather large Rattlesnake coiled up beside the coil of rope lying on the floor. I don't know how Jerry kept from being bitten. The snake was in full "ready" mode. I shouted up at Jerry and ask him why he didn't tell me about the rattler. He said "what rattler" and I proceeded to show him. After a lot of profanity, from Jerry not the snake, I pulled the rope away from the snake and proceeded to rig in. What happened next will dispel the myth that a snake will not eat a salamander. As our lights stayed focused on the coiled snake a hapless salamander moved across the floor and strayed into the snake's domain. Quick as lightning the snake struck and devoured the spotted creature, the salamander not Jerry. Just another day of TAG caving.

Oh, BTW the TV show portion of this piece. I posted a video clip a few months back on a CNN special we did on "Caving in the Southeast". I received a lot of feedback from cavers who enjoyed the clip. I have a few more clips from my archive that I will be posting in the next few days. The first one is from the old CBS short lived series "High Risk" with host Wayne Rogers from M\*A\*S\*H fame. The video shows Smokey and crew in Sinkhole and Mystery Falls circa late 80's early 90's.

You can go here and check out the videos as they are posted.

<http://canyonoutdoors.com/cave>

<http://canyonoutdoors.com/video/cnn.zip>

[http://canyonoutdoors.com/video/high\\_risk.zip](http://canyonoutdoors.com/video/high_risk.zip)

The videos are fairly large so it helps to have a fast connection. Sign the logbook while you're there.

11-01-05

I just uploaded 2 more video clips to my website. Emily's rescue in Lechuguilla from the Code 13 tv show and the Rescue 911 rescue in Moses Tomb from the early 90's Go here:

<http://canyonoutdoors.com/cave> for Code 13- Lechuguilla and a low res Rescue 911

<http://fortpayne.net/r911med.mpg> for a higher res Rescue 911 clip. 215 MB so have a good connection.

Coming soon: "Top of the Morning" Cave trip with Birmingham Grotto and a 1993 Canyoning trip in France during a PMI/Petzl Dealer camp, with myself, Buddy Lane, Hank Moon, Steve Hudson, Paul Petzl et al.

11-03-05



Mushrooms in the bottom of South Pittsburg Pit won Jim Loftin his 1st honorable mention in the 1988 NSS Photo Salon.

## Every Man's Dream

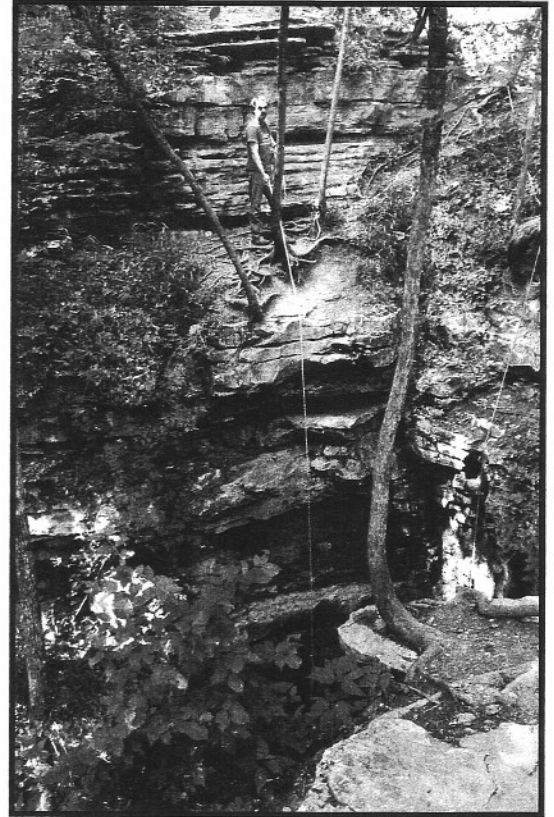
By: Kelly A. Keener

As he penetrates through her tight virgin crack,  
 She can hear his heart beating... faster and faster as he...  
 Squirms...moans...yearns... As he gently slips through her  
 Wet...slippity...druppity innards, so irresistible.  
 To him... her body is a wonderland... a playground.

Much of risqué and excitement to be found. As her shape closes in...  
 He thrusts himself inside of her, deeper and deeper until he...  
 Grunts so hard, she can feel his... body nerves twitching.  
 He slides his elongated self into her... pristine wet... dilated hole.  
 So hard... that her juices saturated him from head to toe.

He lets out a sound that she has never heard before  
 It was the sound of satisfaction... thoughts of true purity.  
 Every Man's Dream... It was Mother Earth's Womb once again.

When life gets you down go visit her sometime.  
 She's never complaining, if it's sunny or raining.  
 When ever you go to see her, she will always welcome you.  
 No matter what mood she's in. May the force and gravity be with you.



The Sinkhole in Tennessee before its closure.  
 See Notes below

## Notes

- Merry Christmas and Happy 2006!!!
- January 10, 2006, Tuesday 6:30 PM- Grotto meeting at the East Gadsden Community Center
- January 14, 2006, Saturday- Tumbling Rock Cave Trip with the Gadsden Boy Scouts Troop 58. Everyone welcome.
- February 14, 2006, Tuesday 6:30 PM- Grotto meeting at the East Gadsden Community Center
- February 18, 2006, Saturday- SERA Winter Business Meeting at Otey Hall next to the College of the South in Sewanee, TN. The banquet will follow that evening. Free camping 12 miles away with 2 saunas and one hot tub and a campfire available Friday Feb. 17 thru Sunday Feb. 19. A SERA Karst Task Force Cave Cleanup will also take place Sunday. Hosted by Central Alabama Grotto.
- Gary Stewart will not be able to work for the rest of the year due to a back injury. He is not able to walk or drive. Drop him a line and wish him well.
- Bangor Cave is for sale as part of a 1000 acre tract. See Scott Parvin for more info.
- Espey Cave in Cannon County, Middle TN, a 6 mile long cave is for sale on a 34 acre family tract for \$123,950. If interested, contact Kaye Flatt at 615-758-3411 or f42986@tds.net
- Vulcan Materials Quarry on Pigeon Mountain is closing and the land will go back to the state of Georgia. It will not close just yet and will continue to operate for quite some time. It will not get bigger but will furnish the huge amount of stone required at the nearby widening of Highway 27. A huge thanks to all who have helped this happen!
- The Sinkhole is still closed. The ownership of the land surrounding the Sinkhole, which includes several caves, has changed since the time of the closure. The new

continued on Page 7

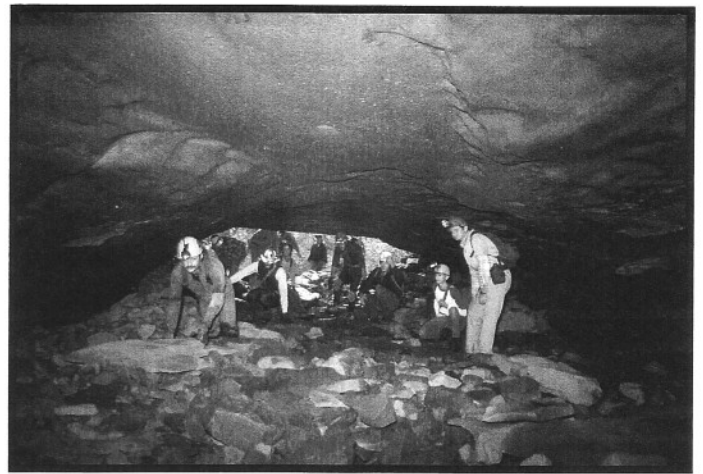
## Limrock Blowing Cave Trip 11-20-05

by Jim Loftin

The grotto trip this month was to Limrock Blowing Cave. All the new people were invited and I thought more were going to show up. I was planning on car-pooling with 3 or maybe 4 others as I started the chain of events of picking up with me picking up Michael Pearson first. Then we met Selena Morton and drove her car to meet Michael Ray in Leesburg. Where's David? Another no show. We thought we were not going to get to Western Sizzlin in time to eat before the meeting time at 9:00 A.M. so we got food at Jack's in Collinsville. This was another case of poor thinking, after the bumpy starts on the telephone with Mark Medlen and Kelly Keener. They were smart and went on to Western Sizzlin without eating and had plenty of time to eat there. It did not take our anticipated time of an hour and a half to go from Leesburg to Scottsboro, as we arrived well before 9:00 in time to eat the breakfast buffet for practically the same cost as our Jack's breakfast. Oh well, buffoonery still lives!

When we got out of Michael's truck at the restaurant, it felt about 20 degrees colder than it felt in Gadsden even though it was sunny. Wow! Becky Noah, Richard Wooten, and their dancing friend Tammy from Trussville showed up. This was Tammy's first wild cave trip and Selena's 2<sup>nd</sup> one. No word from anyone else so we left for the cave at quarter after.

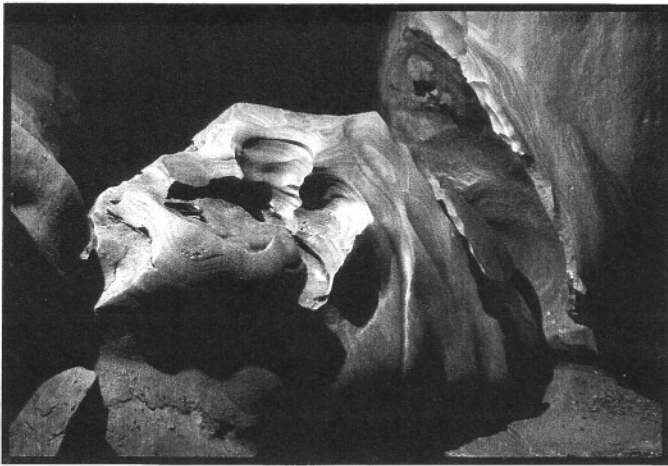
This was my 1<sup>st</sup> visit to Limrock since the SCCi bought it as we drove past the house we used to always get permission from. Now then where was that new parking area that supposed to be there. There it is with a sign board and a steep bank going down to it. Need a 4WD to get out of there looks like. It was chilly there in the woods, too. We suited up, went to the entrance and took several "before" pictures of the group of 9 at the entrance. As we entered the cave, there was no warm cave air and neither did it warm up as we went further in. The cave was sucking and in the winter time that means cold air. We looked at the little side passage to the left and kept on trucking down the borehole. A little water here and there until we got to the wading spot. Then it was "go back to the side passage" or "plunge in here and get our legs wet and water inside our boots." Michael Ray went around the water and tried to view down the passage. "Oh well, let's just go for it." So I plunged in. I was glad I wore my heavy-weight polypros, cave suit, and rubber boots! We



Limrock Blowing entrance during a grotto trip in December 1983. Far left: David Teal; Middle: Bobby Whorton, Susan Teal, and others; Far Right: Mark and Doug Medlen. By Jim Loftin

watched for underwater cave life as we carefully splashed through the water. When we got to the register, the cave had warmed up some but not nearly as much as usual in most caves. We were trying to follow Bill Torode's map of the 3 mile long cave on an 8 ½ "x 11" piece of paper which makes for a very generalized map especially when Torode's small version was drawn with very detail. The side passage that contains the 50' dome that Kelly bought through the SCCi did not seem as long as the map indicated; as we could not find this dome. We saw the 8' waterfall and the 16' waterfall even though there was not much water in this one. It was particularly nice around the bottom with interesting calcite built up and with 5 nice sized blind crayfish in the pool of water. After trying to shoot some pictures, Michael Ray and I moved on. We caught up with the group as they were settling on a dry flat spot for lunch. Oh boy, lunch! After lunch and pictures, we headed on in towards the breakdown. Michael Ray and I were the only ones looking for a way through; as the others hung back. We did not know the right route and it seemed not too easy to navigate through or around. We turned around and headed out.

This time we were going to turn at the register and go back out through the dry passage. This way was nothing like the map. I was bringing up the rear of the group as Mark was leading the way out. The tail end, Michael, Selena, and I, veered off from the group when they turned on the sidewalk part of the map and we viewed a pretty waterfall area. This wasn't on the map either. We caught back up with the group, as we went a different way than they went. Not on the map either. The whole group stopped along the way and viewed a



Dissolving calcite shot in September 1991 by Jim Loftin.

special area where large drapes and flowstone were being eroded instead of being further deposited on. There were bowls dissolved and rings from the layers of calcite exposed making it look wood-like. What struck me the most about this area I had photographed years ago was how much mud had been smeared around and for what reason? It made no sense why people had to wipe their muddy hands and gloves on this area. We need to go back in there with brushes and water bottles and clean it. It would be a lot easier to clean than spray paint. There's nothing we can do about the stomped all over rimstones in one of large side passages. Check my picture of this area taken in November 1983. Nothing like that now! This is what happens when caves that are particularly easy to get to get a lot of visitation.

Another interesting thing going on in the cave that we noticed were these areas in the mud bank along the stream that were glowing like there was some kind of



Rim stone dam passage. By Jim Loftin. Shot during the grotto trip 22 years ago. During the 11-05 grotto trip, this passage was dry and very tromped all over.

fungus there but not quiet. We looked harder, trying to focus our lights on these spots. They weren't growths, but they were dry crusty areas of mud in the midst of water saturated mud. How weird! Light and dark! Much of the cave is actually saturated, even the rocks. Then when you see a dry area, it doesn't look right.

Well, we tromped on out and had to wade in some areas in not so deep water. But, boy, was that water cold! As we got closer to the entrance, these still pools of water in the trail were getting colder and colder. We took an "after" picture at the entrance and everyone changed clothes at the vehicles.

Some of us pigged out at the Chinese seafood buffet in Scottsboro before we all headed back to where we had come from. JL

## Notes continued from Page 5

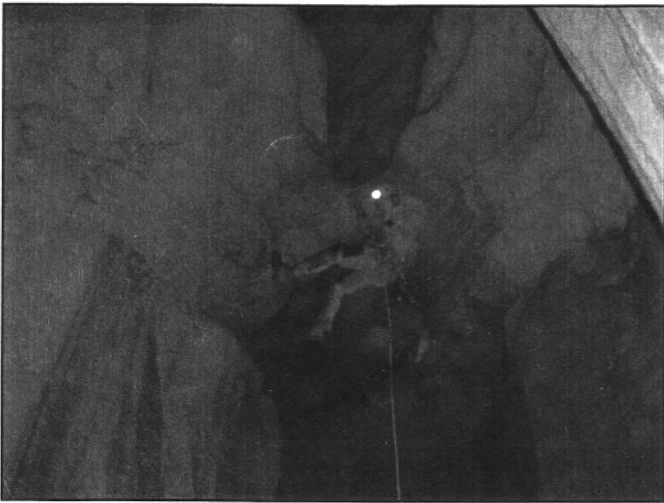
- owner is caver friendly, but does require permission to be on or cross his property. He will NOT give permission to visit the Sinkhole since he does NOT own it. The landowner (a caver) of the Sinkhole doesn't live in the area and is difficult to contact. His original intention was to let the area around the pit heal, which it has done. Maybe it will take just the right ambassador to get the pit open again.
- Due to recent reportedly massive formation breakage in Graves Cave, Birmingham Grotto is discussing gating this popular roadside horizontal cave in Blount County. This seemed to have occurred around October this year with what looked like someone had taken a sledge hammer to a formation area. For anyone who might know who did this, there could be a cash reward. Contact Jim Loftin.
- As of this printing the Gadsden Grotto members include:

Joe Brothers	Anthony Cline
Ray Cline	Michael Davis
Beth Dunn	Kelly Keener
Jim Loftin	Mark Medlen
Selena Morton	Becky Noah
Ralph Nunn	John Padula
Michael Pearson	Michael Ray
Gary Stewart	David Teal
Susan Teal	Bobby Whorton
Richard Wooten	





Becky Noah descending the 80' entrance by Mark Medlen



Jim Loftin descending off the natural bridge at the 2nd drop in Thunderhole  
By Michael Pearson

## Return to Thunderhole

During TAG, Mark Medlen, Jim Loftin, Mike Pearson and I decided to bottom Thunderhole. A few weeks before this, Mark, Jim, Kelly Kenner, Richard Wooten, Becky Noah, and I were only able to bottom two of the five drops that Thunderhole has to offer. On this adventure, Mike and I purchased a 160 foot PMI rope to have enough ropes to complete all the drops, so we thought. After a nice straight up the mountain hike, we donned our caving attire and after talking for a min or two we realized we were still one rope short to bottom the cave. We made it to the fourth drop, the water fall drop. Mark rigged the drop using the new rope. Mike was about exhausted from not caving in a long time so he stayed on top as I descended down. Mark followed me and then I climbed back up almost blinded by the water. I noticed a mark on the rope where the rock was rubbing it and we quickly put a rope pad on it before Jim drop the pit. Well, next trip we will "bottom" the cave. Great time... Great friends... 11-1-05

Michael A. Davis  
NSS 52178

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