

Gadsden Grotto

NEWSLETTER

Volume 14 • Number 3

P. O. Box 2092



October 2000

Gadsden, AL 35903



CATHEDRAL CAVERNS

By: Derick Mitchell

Yes, the pathways are concrete and they have lights everywhere, the place is ready for the tourist to see the cave prettys. Today (7/22/00) the Gadsden and Cullman Grottos visited this tourist stop of the future and along with a mixed group of other Alabama citizens got a sneak peek. The Cullman group had planned this for a while and extended a invitation to Gadsden to join the fun so we did. We left our gear in our cave mobiles and followed the other tourist on a nice two hour trip into one of the best caves I have ever seen. I visited the cave when I was a kid but I did not remember anything. Today I got to see great formations in a beautiful cave that I will remember.



Inside This Issue

- ▶ Cathedral Caverns1
- ▶ Members List2
- ▶ Cathedral Caverns
 for the Novice3
- ▶ Cave Poem3
- ▶ Trip to Neversink4
- ▶ Scooping4
- ▶ 7 Room Rock5
- ▶ Scottsboro Pit5
- ▶ Beans Pit6
- ▶ ACS Meeting7
- ▶ Web Sites7
- ▶ Wedding Announcement7



From the
Chairman / Editor
Michael A. Ray

Several months have passed since the last newsletter. I appreciate your patience. Several things have happened in my life this year that have distracted me from my grotto duties. Hopefully we will get back in the pits of things (cave pits that is).

A special thanks goes to the Cullman Grotto. They have been very helpful and supportive to the Gadsden Grotto. They have attended many of our meetings (more so than some of our own members even). Their help in getting us into Cathedral Caverns rewarded all of us with a great trip.

The Gadsden Grotto's growth for this year has not be in numbers but in stability. I believe that if we can show the caving community that we are a stable grotto with professional attributes and real projects, then we will gain their respect and membership in the future.

Want to know more?

Come to the
Gadsden Grotto

Meeting at the
Gadsden Public Library

254 College Street
When: 2nd Tuesday
of every Month

Gadsden Grotto Newsletter is published on a semi-regular basis by the Gadsden Grotto of the National Speleological Society (NSS) as its official newsletter. All material submitted for publication is subject to editing for clarity, grammatical considerations, and to meet space limitations. Any opinions expressed herein are those of the author(s) named and do not necessarily represent the views of the Gadsden Grotto or the NSS. Unsigned material may be attributed to the editors. Reprint permission provided that both the author and the source are credited. The Gadsden Grotto Newsletter is distributed free of charge to Gadsden Grotto members and in exchange for the publications of organizations with similar interests. All materials for publication should be submitted to Michael A. Ray at

Cathedral Caverns contended from front page

You can debate the need for tourist caves, but if you go see this cave you will come away singing the praises of the State of Alabama. The only questions I ask was why the cave is not open to the public and has the Good Governor seen the cave? The Governor has seen the cave but there is more construction to do, the state is dragging their feet on the next phase of construction.

I plan to email our Governor and POLITELY encourage him to finish this state project. I hope that you will do the same. Please be polite and thank him for finishing this project that acknowledges the importance of caves. The email address of the State of Alabama: [alaweb.asc.edu/](mailto:alaweb.asc.edu) The Alabama email address is the site you need to go to, then click on the Governor, then click on email us.

Derick

Current Membership

Joe Brothers
Rebecca Buckner
Anthony Cline
Alan Harper
James Jumper
Kelly Keener
Jim Loftin
Mark Medlen
Derick Mitchell
Ralph Nunn
John Padula
Jude Powers
Ian Rains
Michael Ray
Gary Stewart
David Teal
Susan Teal
Bobby Whorton
Bryant Cynde

If you are a member and not on this list, please let the editor know about this over site. This is the reason you are not receiving your newsletter which also means that you will not see this notice.



Trip Reports

Cathedral Caverns

a Novice View

by Cynde Bryant

For the ones who could not make it for the tour of Cathedral Caverns on 7/22/2000-- it was a something I will never forget. For a new comer, I thoroughly enjoyed myself. Cathedral Caverns is something that I would have liked to have shared with my friends who are not aware of what they were missing. The beauty of this cave can not be explained with words. What great fun we had. We would like to extend special thanks to Ranger Dan (a fellow caver) for spending extra time with the Gadsden Grotto and letting us in on secret places that were not open to the others that were present for the tour. We only hope that these secrets can be shared with the public and opened as a state park.



Cave Poem

Deep in a mountain are the Earth's beautiful creations.

Salamanders, bats, cave crickets, and underground formations.

You twist and turn and push with all of your might.

Trying to go through that passage that's too tight.

You grunt and squirm very hard to make your self fit.

You say to yourself, "a lead is somewhere, I better not quit!"

Here is a passage. I'm going through it.

Hey, we need more rope, Here is at least a 100'ft. pit.

Then someone goes to fetch the rope.

With no doubt on their mind that it wasn't a joke.

We dropped the pit. This baby is sweet.

We measured going down, "It's 300'ft.

As I climb out of the cave with a grin from ear to ear.

I said "Next time I will bring a longer rope and more gear."

Written By: Kelly Keener----(NSS#-48045)

Check our temporary
web site at
personalpages.tds.net/~mray9

Trip to Neversink

by Mark Medlin

On Sat Aug. 12 Kelly and I meet with David Teal, Jim Loftin, Gary Stewart and John Padula and his wife and his parents. They wanted to see what cavers do so we took them to Neversink.

When we arrived at the pit there were cavers from Georgia already in the pit so we rigged the other side of the tree. Every one did the pit and Jim took some pictures.

As we headed back down the mountain we ran into Myrnia Attaway and two others as they went up to do the pit. I also searched for Walk by well but I must have walked by it again, maybe Ill find it next time

were unfolded and the GPS was on so off we went for some caving fun. Glenn led the way and in a short time we were in the woods headed for a classic pit. Just around the turn and then we have to park and walk Glenn tells us, with the tyro lean going we should have the woods to our self, wrong! At first glance you would have thought that we were at Tag or Sera, cars from Alabama, Georgia and Tennessee with bat stickers every where. We parked and started our walk and as we talked we could hear the sound of a hammer on rock. We laughed and let out a loud SCOOP for our new best friends. After we bounced our pit we were joined by a nice caver dog who knew she was among friends. Walking back to the trucks we thought about how we would feel if some cavers blundered up on our dig.



No, we did not scoop and no, we will not scoop your dig. Honor is not better than virgin cave but we know how you feel and we hope that you would not scoop us.

Flame me and call us stupid, but we have talked about how we would feel if we got scooped on our current project. When the dig is on its 007/secret agent time but once it is on the survey you want the caving world to know. We will wait but we will be glad to bring

the ATV's, generator and rotary hammer if you can't make it with traditional tools.

Derick



Scooping

By: Derick Mitchell (Attalla, Alabama)

Saturday morning we all got together at Huntsville's tyrolean and after visiting and playing we went caving. The plan was to go do some older classic pits and have fun. No shovels, hammers, picks, and no riggewalking just bouncing for fun. Topos



7 Room Rock

August 8 2000

By: Kelly Keener NSS# 48045

On Sat ,August 4 Mark, Sadie, and I took my nephew Adam (17) to meet David at 7 Room Rock Adam and Sadie both wanted to learn how to rappel so Mark and David taught them. Adam rappelled down and walked back up the rocks and wanted to do it again. He then learned to do the Texas and the Mitchell System and he ascended very well. Adam is a quick learner any way. We asked Sadie if she would like to try rapelling (She Already learned how to ascended Texas and also had used the rope walker up a tree at our house) She decided to give it a try. Well she got on rope, and and went down, and walked back up to rappel again. She repelled the first time by walking over the lip of the cliff, and it frightened her some, but the second time that she rappelled down she tried getting on her knees, and she felt a lot safer then. When we went over to the highest cliff, she felt that she wasn't quite ready for that one yet, but she said that she was wanting to try the next time we go back. Adam rappelled down the highest cliff and ascended back up a couple more times before we left. As we were leaving Adam asked if we go do a bigger drop some where tomorrow? We decided to do Scottsboro Pit. Stay tuned for the next episode."Scottsboro Pit" Same Bat Time...Same bat Page...

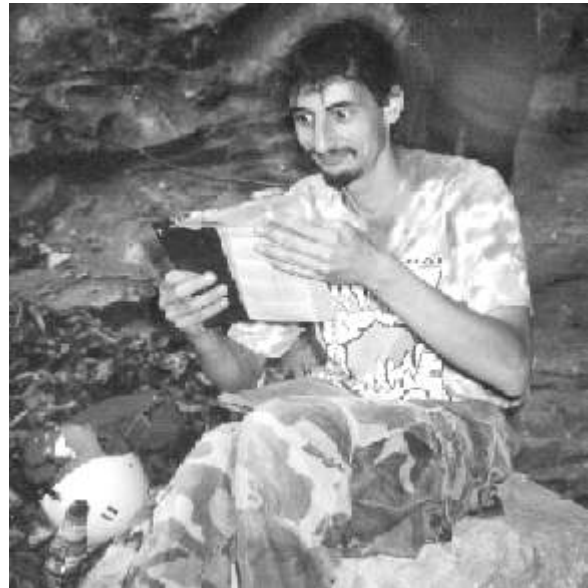


Scottsboro Pit

By: Kelly Keener NSS# 48045

Me and Mark took my nephew Adam to drop Scottsboro Pit. Mark went down first and then Adam. This was his very first pit that he has ever done. He did a wonderful job both rapeling down and ascending up. Then I went down and came up, then Mark came up last. I gathered up some things to get ready

to take to the car, and during that time, Mark had found another pit close by. I came back and followed Mark and Adam to the pit and Mark dropped it first then Adam. The pit might be virgin, we don't know. Any way the Pit was about 25'ft.down and then it went into about 25'ft of passage. Mark and Adam ascended back up and we finished gathering up our things and then left to go eat at Tripple R, but was closed. We ended up eating at Ryans in Fort Payne.



Mark Medlin eating at Jesse Elliot Cave on the Grotto Trip for new and novice members at which no new members or novice cavers attended.

Is it just me or has anyone else noticed that all pictures of Mark or of him eating?

Got News?

We need your trip reports, book reviews, technical cave information, first aid topics. Send your articles by mail or e-mail. E-mail attachments must be in ASCII (or plain text format). Send photographs or sketches for the article when possible.

TO: **Michael A. Ray**

12725 Co. Rd. 31

Centre, AL 35960

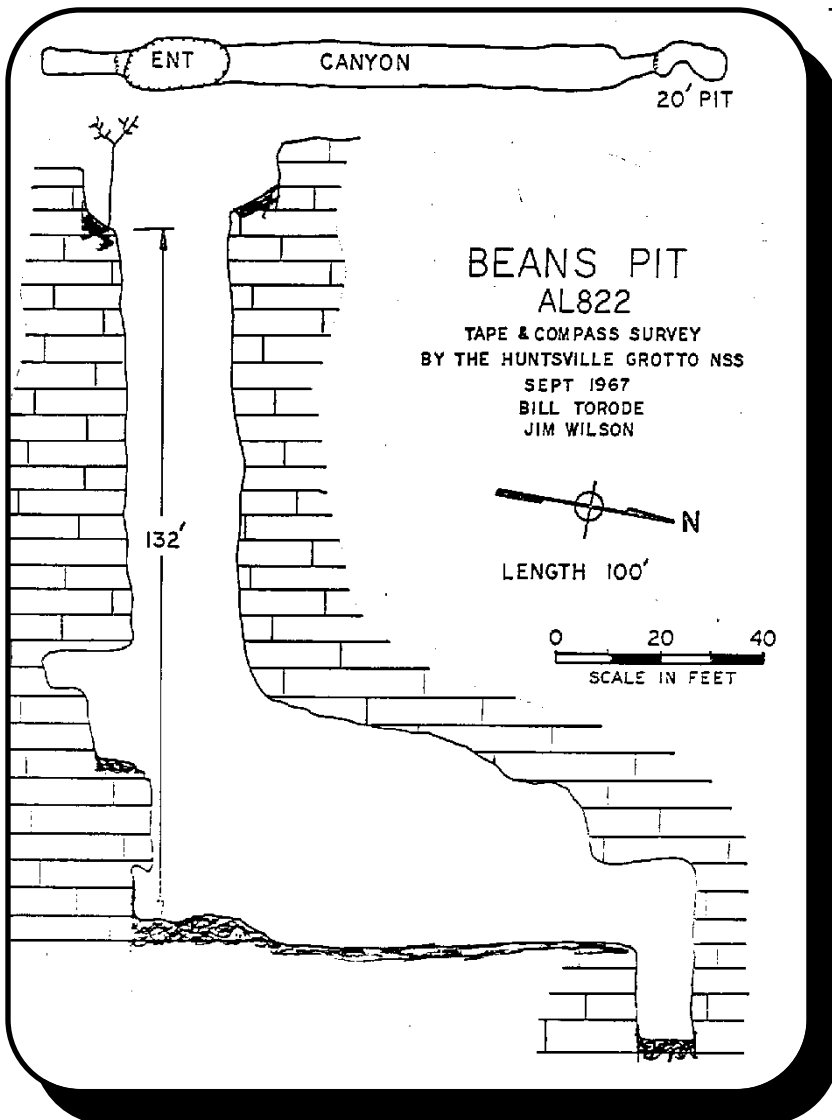
E-mail: mray9@tds.net

Beans Pit

By: Derick Mitchell

Saturday morning, 8/26/00, Glenn Ledbetter and I went to Hytop, Al. in search of AJK822, Beans Pit. The pit is on the Hytop topo but you are almost on the Estill Fork topo before you find the pit. We enjoyed the drive and made all the typical statements about needing to spend more time in the area. We parked and headed up the mountain, got on the right bench level, and found several sinks and karst features but no pit. I put a lot of trust in Glenn and

tend to run on auto pilot when in search of our objective. I can find caves on my own but why spoil Glenn's fun, he is usually the lead man and I look at all the sidebar stuff. I was still confident in Glenn's ability to find the pit, but I was beginning to look at this trip as more of a ridge walk than pit bouncing trip. BO, pit, I found it. Yes, it was up hill from where I was and it took two bows before I found Glenn. Beans Pit is about 20 feet across and the first pitch is 132 feet deep with one small ledge near the bottom. The pit reminded us both of Trenton Well, but not as deep. There are several LARGE death rocks that look as if they might slide into the pit at any minute.



The kind of slab rocks that have been that way forever and never will move, but what if? The cave continues for an overall depth of 160 feet and because of its shape, looked deeper than it is.

We packed our gear and headed down the mountain. We kept thinking that the area looked as if very few people were traveling the trails on the mountain. The rough roads and cut back trails are unpassable in a jeep or four wheeler. About half way down the mountain Glenn spotted orange tape right by the trail. The new dig was just big enough for a thin person to slide through. The depth might be forty feet and there are several more digs in progress in the area. I guess the mountain is seeing more caving than we thought. When we got to the road we had to walk about half a mile to the truck. We had a nice walk by the creek and a good trip. This pit will probably be a return trip for the grotto. When we return we will park a little farther down the road.



Cave News

ACS meeting

By: Tom Moss

About 80 ACS members got together today at the Gadsden Public Library in Gadsden, AL for the annual Alabama Cave Survey meeting. Many thanks are due to the Gadsden Grotto, which arranged for a nice meeting place, and provided refreshments too.

We had a record year --211 new caves. There were also 46 new maps, none of which were drawn by Bill Torode! The Ridgewalkin' Fool award for the most new caves went to Jerry Reeves again this year, with 2nd place going to Bob Dodson.



Elections were held. David Howell was elected to the board. Chris Hudson was re-elected. Andy Porter gave a demonstration of his soft copy of the ACS mapbook. Andy has scanned in all 2000-odd maps!

Andy Zellner presented a proposal for ACS narrative files. Everyone agreed that these should be similar to the TCS narrative files, but without any cave location information.

Since some continued organization of the historical files is necessary before narrative files could be created, this was tabled and will be discussed by the ACS board.

Several members discussed survey and exploration projects. Bill Torode displayed some of his recent maps and told us about his projects. Myrna Attaway talked about the situation with Anderson Cave. Alan Cressler told us about the recent finds in Meeks Spring Cave.

Jim Smith presented the program --a show on exploration of Montague Cave, and a show on recent explorations in the high mountains of Peru.

Martha Hendrix and Bob Dodson volunteered the Birmingham Grotto to host next years' meeting. Some members adjourned to go caving, others to the Mexican restaurant.

T. Moss, ACS



Cave Web Sites

TAG Closed Cave List

www.dcg-nss.org/ccl.html

Nice cave pictures

www.goodearthgraphics.com/virtcave.html



Wedding Announcement

Rebecca Buckner and Derick Mitchell announce their wedding plans for Friday night, November 3rd at 6:30 p.m. Family and friends are invited, no gifts requested, only your Blessings and Best Wishes

Gadsden Grotto
P. O. Box 2092
Gadsden, AL 35903

Calendar of Events

- Oct. 10 - Gadsden Grotto Meeting
- Nov 3 - Rebecca & Derick Wedding
- 14 - Gadsden Grotto Meeting
- 18 - Grotto Cave Trip
- Dec. 12 - Gadsden Grotto Meeting

