

GADSDEN GROTTO NEWSLETTER

VOL.15 NO.10

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“LET’S CLIMB OUT OF HERE, AND GO TO THE “BIG ONE !!!”

THE NATIONAL SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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Membership Fees: \$10.00 yearly per person to join. Each Member receives a monthly subscription of the Gadsden Grotto Newsletter.

Gadsden Grotto Patches:

\$7.00 each per member
\$10.00 each per non-member

Gadsden Grotto Meetings:

Rainbow City Recreation Center
4412 Rainbow Drive
Rainbow City, Alabama 35906

When:

Every 2nd Tuesday of each month

Time:

6:30p.m.

For more info. Contact President, Jim Loftin.

E-mail: jimloftin@juno.com

Front Cover: David teal on rope in an unknown cave on green creek mountain.

Inside this cave was a hibernating rat snake and a bat. Photo by (Kelly a. keener)

Back Cover: Troy Tyler on a novice trip in daughette Cave. Photo by (kelly A. Keener)

SEND YOUR ARTICLES,

OR PHOTOS TO...

K_KEENER@BELLSOUTH.NET

OR TO...

KELLY A. KEENER

P.O. BOX 252

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A Word From The Editor:

I Want to apologize for the misprint on the back cover of the last Gadsden Grotto Newsletter, and for not publishing any newsletters for the past few of months. Due to the lack of participation articles/photos etc. provided, I've decided to try and put this newsletter together by myself... so I'll do my best to write a summary of all our caving events that we've done within the past few months. Thank you Jim Loftin for sending me an article for this newsletter, and thanks everyone for your patience for this newsletter being put together.

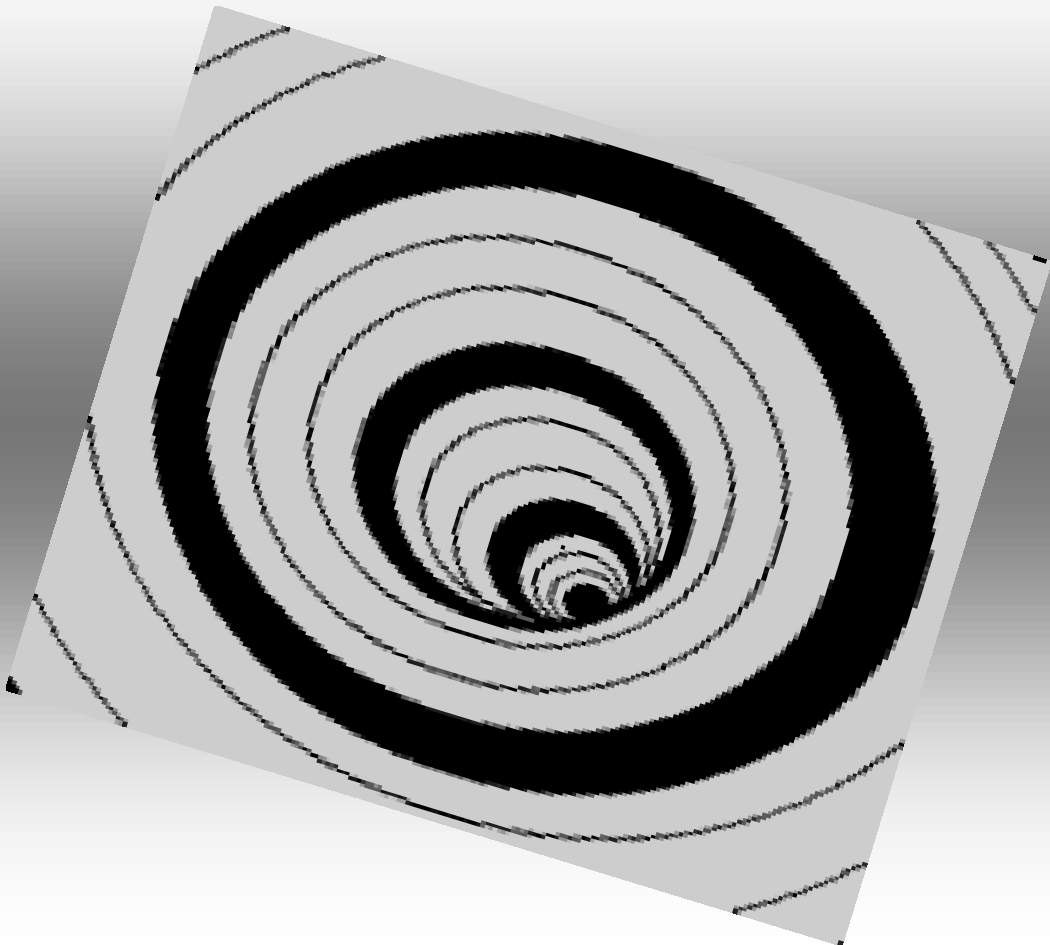
Kelly A. Keener - Editor



All unsigned material may be attributed to the Editor. Statements and opinions expressed in the GGN do not necessarily reflect the policies of the Gadsden Grotto or the National Speleological Society.



*T.A.G. On The Mountain!!!
Comming Here Soon!!!*



K. Keener

Details for the New TAG Fall Cave-In Site

The dates for the Cave-In are from Thursday, October 7th thru Sunday, October 10th.

The new site is located in Georgia on a beautiful, secluded, and private area atop Lookout Mountain.

Pre-Registration ends on September 1st. Consider pre-registering to save \$10 per person and avoiding the on-site registration lines.

Registration opens at noon on Thursday of the event. NO ADVANCED CAMPING WILL BE AVAILABLE. However, nearby accommodations are available at Cloudland Canyon State Park (GA) and DeSoto State Park (AL). Cloudland Reservations: 800-864-7275 DeSoto Reservations: 800-252-7275

All camping is available on a first-come, first-served basis.

All campsites are primitive and located in shaded, wooded areas.

RV hook-ups are not available. However, Cloudland Canyon State Park (GA) and DeSoto State Park (AL) are nearby with full facilities. Cloudland Reservations: 800-864-7275 DeSoto Reservations:- 800-252-7275

- Group fire rings are permitted (properly contained in a rock ring).
- City water will be readily available at several water stations on site.
- Port-o-lets will be located at many, many locations throughout the property. No flush toilets are available.
- Hot showers are available at a new, permanent shower facility. The portable sauna showers used in the past will also be available for use.
- The hot tub/sauna area is new and improved.
- Vendor Village is expanded and features a shaded common area and central bonfire.
- Main roads are graveled and hard packed for easy driving.
- No landline phones are available on site. However, cell phone service may be available depending on the provider.
- Dogs, bombs, and generators are not permitted.
- A nearby convenience store (approximately 4 miles away) offers beer, gas, ice, etc. and features a small restaurant.
- The Cave-In is now in the Eastern Time Zone.
- More information and a downloadable registration form are available at www.tagfallcavein.org.

Branden Johnson Chair - Dogwood City Grotto ®

Devil's Well ASC 816 Survey Trip **August 14, 2004**

Devil's Well ASC 816 Survey Trip August 14, 2004 Mark Medlen, Kelly Keener, Jim Loftin Camped at the quarry on Chandler Mountain Friday the 13th. The road and field were really grown up with no 4 wheeler tracks. Record lows were set at 52 Friday night and at 57 Saturday night as was recorded in Anniston. 2nd nice and cool weekend in a row. Wow, strange for August, but I'll take it! Saturday morning we made our way to the cave, Devil's Well, actually, the lower Blowhole entrance of Devil's Well. The other end of the field was really grown up, too. We thought we could walk along the creek to the entrance but after Mark investigated it he reported there was no way. So it was back to the upper parking spot and the trail through the kudzu into the woods. Well guess what? There was no trail anymore. We could barely see our old flags and had to machete tunnels through the briar and kudzu infested jungle for 100 feet before we broke out into the woods. It was an easy walk from there. The blowhole entrance sure felt good when we got there seeing as how it was the middle of the day at the time and plenty warmed up. It was worthy of its name and we were feeling grateful for its reputation. It's a small hole that the original explorers had to pull rocks out of to get in. Mark wondered if Indians had tried to cover up the entrance because of the cave being a possible burial cave. The entrance is straight down for 15', too small to fall and just big enough for one person, preferably not too big. Your body fills the biggest part of the crack. It's hard to see where to put your feet as your eyes get dust and leaves blowing in them in the stout breeze coming up from below. Then you hit the bottom and all the heavier dirt and leaves land on top of you. Then it's down the slope and into the main passage. You look around and imagine what the Indians were thinking when they had their burial there. There have been human bones found in the waterfall room and brought out and dated to the Woodland Period. All are gone now except a piece of a femur. Mark sent Alan Kressler a digital shot of the bone and Alan had an anthropologist identify it as a femur. The cave's modern name is ironic if this Indian burial was an intentional burial. Or, it might have been an original explorer that went in from the upper entrance and got into trouble. There are no (cedar) trees in there. Maybe he used a fiber rope and it's all gone by now. We'll never know in this lifetime. There are some pretty formations along this part of the cave with some sizable clusters of flowstone, stalagmites, stalactites and soda straws. There's an immediate duck under and crawl through that opens up into more borehole passage. Close by is the side passage that needed surveying and was our objective for the day. Mark and Mike Davis had previously checked this passage for at least 1000' and no end, although it was getting lower. There is a stream flowing out of this passage but the stream meanders in and out of this dry small borehole type passage sometimes requiring wading or tricky avoidance of the water. As the ceiling gets lower there's more fossils showing in the ceiling with some being under water. There's some large horn coral and other large clustered coral called *Acrocyathus*, or better known as *Lithostrotionella*. There are some sizable clusters hanging from the ceiling. The Audubon Field Guide to N. American Fossils date these to the Mississippian Age, 225- 250 million years ago. No where in the guidebook does it refer to "horn corals." The closest looking cone-shaped coral in there was *Heterophrentis*. It dates to the Lower and Middle Devonian Age, 370- 400 million years ago. They did seem to occur lower down in the limestone. I wonder if we underestimate the true age of Alabama caves at just a few hundred thousand years old? Some of the survey points had to be made from globs of mud and stuck to the side of the bedrock. Many of these globs got shaped into human characteristics, which would provide a good point and base. The ceiling had been progressively getting lower and lower. We decided to end the day's survey at the squatting-sized passage to continue later when we are dressed for wetter surveying. Animal life was strangely vacant in the water. There were many heliomyzid flies all over the ceiling and walls about 1100' back and one cave salamander. Mark said he saw 2 bats and that is all the life we saw. Not much air flow in this side passage but not dead air either. We had added about 1300' to Mark's survey of the cave, and it was some of the funnest surveying ever gets. We exited the cave about 4 hours after we entered and flagged an easier trail back to the jeep. Grilled some good steaks on the fire that evening and enjoyed the coolest night ever in history for a second night in a row.

Written By: Jim Loftin

Gadsden Grotto Reunion **At Sinking Cove**

Last evening, Jim mark and I, Michael Davis, and his kids , Haley , AJ , and Jacob, all went out to eat some delicious German food. Afterward we went over to Mike's house for a while. I thought to myself... If only I had my tape recorder I could get the kids, Jim, Mike, and Mark to put an article together with out them knowing it but I didn't have it with me so all I could think of was writing it down on all of my credit card receipts that I had so that I did, and ended up getting a good article for Sinking Cove Grotto Reunion Trip. Unfortunately everyone realized that I was writing down every little detail that I could to keep up with what they were saying, and that was the end of that story. Piece by piece, this is what I gathered up for this article. I hope it all comes together. This Article was interviewed by me from 3 great kids, Haley Davis 13, AJ 10, and Jake 5 who went to the Gadsden Grotto Reunion in June at Sinking Cove. I asked them several questions and had them to tell me what they thought about the camping/caving adventure, and this is what they had to say about it.

I asked Haley, her respond was it was really fun that she had a good time. She also stated that she liked sleeping in the tent except when the thunder woke her up in the middle of the night. She talked about how she liked working her way through the climb down entrance of the cave and that the water was very cold. She also mentioned about the pretty formations she saw inside the cave. She thought it was funny when my daughter Sadie went floating down the deep water stream with a mini tube float. she said that she kept getting stuck climbing up out of the entrance.

(Photos By: Kelly A. Keener)



I asked AJ what he thought about the trip he said he liked camping. He also spoke of the water being a bit cold. He was the only one that didn't wake up during the lightning storm. He also remembered a huge rock falling down the mountain after we were out of the cave.

Jake told me a little bit about the camping trip how he like sitting in the porch of the big tent they were sleeping in. He sat in his little chair quietly and played his video games. He liked going into the cave. He rode on his Dad's back while they were in the deep part of the water and he walked through the dry areas of the cave. He also mentioned about the water being cold too.

Sadie 17 who wasn't present during the time of this interview, but I asked her opinion later. Sadie stated that she had a great time camping and going into the cave. She likes wet caves and muddy caves and thought that Sinking Cove was awesome. She also stated that, everyone were chickens for not swimming in the deep water out of the cave with she and her dad Mark. She wants to go back again, and said it was a source of exercise, she was among good friends, who were enjoyable to be around, and even though the water was cold, she enjoyed swimming in it anyway.

Written & Interviewed By: Kelly A. Keener



Gadsden Grotto's 1st TAG Work Weekend With The Dogwood City Grotto

It was Saturday July 17, at 8:00 am Jim Loftin Pulled up in our driveway to get ready to go to the TAG work weekend. When we arrived that morning, the DCG and Birmingham Grotto was there. We signed in and asked the SOB (site operations boss) what we need to do to help out with the volunteer work. He mentioned several things to do, so we decided to clear trees. We picked an area that looked like they were getting ready to clear out, so we started clearing and gathering trees to start a fire. We got the fire going good, and shortly after that, more members of the Birmingham Grotto arrived at the site. Then the DCG came over and the chainsaws started up, weed eaters running and people moving limbs etc. and piled them on the fire. Then the bush hog swept through the area. The site looked nothing like it did when we arrived there that morning. In the field they were spreading grass seed and hay, picking up rocks and small sticks, digging trenches for water drainage pipes, and putting up power boxes. Water pipes were put in at certain areas. The day went great I worked with a lot kind and wonderful cavers. Some I knew and some that I have met for the first time. It was a great thing helping out and being a part of the TAG volunteer group, and I will continue helping out with the DCG as much as I can until everything has been accomplished. It may take several years to get it the way they want it, but so far so good. A lot of yellow jacket nest are all spread out about the area and hopefully the will soon be gone. I heard that several people were stung by those little pests. Above all, we had a great day of fun, and a lot of calories burning.

Written By: Kelly A. Keener

Photos By: Kelly A. Keener



The Field, Before/after clearing, wood burning, and tanks the shower/hot-tub area

Renegade Cavers

Back once again with the renegade cavers,
 down to the bottom with a cool behavior.
 Back once again with the renegade cavers,
 back to the beat of the stones and gravel
 with an ill behavior,
 with an ill behavior,
 with an ill behavior !
 Ohh-ee, Ahh-ee !
 Ohh-Ohh-Ohh-Ohh !
 Ohh-Ohh-Ohh-Ohh !
 OOOuuuccchhhh ! ! ! !
 Push! Push! Push! Push!
 Push! Push! Push! Push!
 Back once again with the renegade cavers,
 wading in the water with a chilled behavior.
 Back once again with the renegade cavers,
 Back with the beat to the power of more passage
 with and ill behavior,
 Cause we have no wet suits !
 We have no wet suits !
 We have no wet suit ! ! ! !
 Ba-Ba-Be-Be!
 Ba-Ba-Be-Be!
 Bbburrr, Bbburrr, Bbburrr, Bbburrr ! ! ! !
 Jump! Jump! Jump! Jump!
 Jump! Jump! Jump! Jump! ! ! !
 Back once again with the renegade cavers,
 climbing to the top of the cool blowing entrance.
 Back once again with the renegade cavers
 Out of the cave with a good behavior !
 With a good behavior !
 With a good behavior
 With a good behavior ! ! ! !

Devil's Well Cave Poem

Photos By: Kelly A. Keener



Poem Lyrics Written By: Kelly A. Keener

These lyrics are to be sung to the song... "Renegade Master" By the song artist Wildchild.

Gadsden Grotto's Second Trip to TAG Work Weekend

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 Friday August 8th, Sadie, Mark and I went with Jim Loftin on a 2nd trip to TAG work weekend. We arrived that afternoon, Daniel a member of the DCG was waiting at the end of the driveway for someone to unlock the gate. We decided to go check to see if the gate was locked, (some times gates look like they're locked) so Jim got out and checked. We went through the gate, parked and set up camp at one of the clearing areas that looked flat. After awhile, Daniel drove up, she saw that we never came back so she figured the gate must have been unlocked. We introduced ourselves, Sadie being close to her age found someone to hang out with. She had a cool little dog with her named Baby Girl she got her to do several neat tricks smart little dog. Sadie and I built a little fire ring while the others gathered rocks for it, and picked up sticks and logs to get the campfire going. More friends of Daniel came up who was also a DCG volunteer. Sadie went then to the field to stargaze. Sadie said that she saw 9-10 shooting stars while sitting there. The sky was really clear, you could see the Milky way, and the wind was really breezy. We had to get up early the next morning to clean up, so we got into our tents and crashed out. I slept like a baby, the breeze felt good blowing into our tent. When we awoke the next morning, we went to Pat's Diner to eat a good wholesome B'fast before we had to start cleaning on the new site. We lucked out because this was the weekend that the Big Yard Sale was happening which stretches across lookout mountain and runs into Ohio. We got back to the work site, the DCG members and "The Pup" with the Seawanee Grotto was already working. On this 2nd clean-up trip, The yellow jackets were really bad. Nests everywhere, Mark got flagging tape to let everyone know where they nests were so we could pour gasoline into them when it got dark. There were several yellow jacket traps spread throughout the site but there were too many colonies to catch all of them. My Puppy was stung while he was weed eating. We're all working together on getting everything cleared off and everything's starting to look fantastic. Sadie worked hard picking up debris. We helped Maureen measure the shower area for the block layers, and used the sling blade to hack down the tall briars and small debris. Mark and Jim were picking up the logs the tree-cutters cut down, and placing limbs in the fire. Just like the yellow jackets, we were "Busy little bees ourselves," and had our own little colony. At the end of the day before we left to go back home, we went to the field and helped Jim Willbanks and among many others sliding electrical wire through conduits have power. The water is already running, the roads are much smoother. Need I say any more? Much was done since the last time we did work weekend. There is no such thing of a word called "procrastination" at TAG on the Mountain. We're hoping to do another volunteer Work Weekend soon. The camp sites are in the making, and DCG needs all the help they can to make this successful in the near future. Thanks to the DCG for keeping up the good ole "TAG TRADITION" and with the help from others, the Birmingham Grotto, and the Gadsden grotto. So far Jim, Mark & I, and Sadie has not been stung by the yellow jackets yet. I'm not going to count my chickens before they hatch.

TAG IS HERE TO STAY!!!

27 Annual Tag Fall Care in here we come!!!

Written By: Kelly A Keener

Caving With Micro Recorders

I have decided that having a micro recorder can be a very useful tool for caving adventures. Not only are they used for school classes, meetings, music, etc., I find them useful for caving trips, and camp outs. It is funny listening to the recordings afterward and especially when we get together and listen to things we say and do during these events. I wanted to experiment to see how good it worked during camping/cave exploration AKA surveying etc., It worked really well. This weekend we camped out, surveyed Devil's Well/Blow Hole. The recording turned out pretty good having it in my lower pocket of my agent orange camo pants. The recording was somewhat scratchy in the cave, and did pretty well at the camp . We were sitting around the fire pit, and I recorded Jim and I beating our bongos to the music That didn't work too well because the drums over- rode the music, but at least I managed to get a good story for my log book and for this article I am writing , for the "Grotto Newsletter!!!" I have decided that this is a GREAT way the come up with news articles. They're good to record minutes at grotto meetings, visiting our caver friends, coming up with questions to get a caving article started. We have made several survey trips to the Devil's Well/Blow Hole Cave and still there more passages yet to be surveyed.

This is my first cave recording for this trip, so here's how the next article goes >>>

"Back Once Again To The Devil's Well / Blow Hole !!!"

On August 12, 2004, we camped out in Steele Al. at the limestone quarry by Devil's Well. Jim Loftin, David & Susan Teal, joined us. Jim, Mark, & I camped there for the weekend. David and Susan had business to take care of so they had to go home. We are doing another survey trip through the cave except we are going in through the dry part which is the Blow Hole entrance. We planned to camp from Friday - Sunday to try and get as much surveying done as we can. We pulled into Mr. Steepleton's driveway and saw that no one was home. He is a very kind man. He told us that when ever he wasn't there, to put a rock on the rail of his porch and he will know that we are either camping or exploring the cave. Jim hopped out of his red Toyota truck,

And place a rock by his door. Jim then opens the gate to the narrow little road that leads us to the camp. The road was all grown up, so we had to drive through the tall tundra. It was hard to see the road but we finally made it to our final destination. This camp spot to us is like our home away from home. (our main camp spot) Jim, Mark & I got the fire going, and sat around the ring the rest of the evening. It was a cool, beautiful starry night, the tree frogs were croaking, and every now and then a bat would flicker by catching bugs. The no see-em's were awful, but it still didn't stop us from having fun. The following morning when we all woke up, we ate a good breakfast and was planning to be in the cave early, but ended up having a late start getting there. Mark and Jim Chopped through the grape smelling kudzu trying to find the trail from the previous trips. It was like hacking down a rain forest. We used survey tape to make the trail all over again. We finally took a water break, but the suicidal eye bombing knats kept diving into our eyes. We hiked on across the ridge to the cave. It felt so good at the entrance because the air was blowing hard and cool. It was hot hiking in the hot sun. It was nearly lunch, so we went on and ate before we entered the cool climb down. It was 1:30pm before we entered the cave. We climbed down the tight vertical entrance about 14'ft. into a room, then crawled through a short passage into borehole passage. There was a passage that went to the left of the main borehole, and there was where we begun to survey. Jim mentioned that a lot of photos could be taken inside that certain area because of how pristine the formations were. We surveyed down the dry passage first then down into the wading passage, where at some places was shin deep. A lot of long shots were taken inside the pristine passage. Jim didn't realize that I was recording the whole exploration and survey. It was neat way to make a news article. We were making jokes about us being recorded inside the cave . Like when we slipped or bumped our knees etc. The sounds of the water trickling in the stream passage sounded tranquil. We waded on down further about 1200 more feet and then we decided to turn around and go back out. We found our way through the kudzu and back to the jeep and to the camp before it got dark. A good steak and Jim's fresh garden salad sure did satisfy our appetites, with his fresh tomato and cucumber. I became tired afterward and tucked in my comfy sleeping bag and slept like a stone. We got up , packed up, made sure all the trash was picked up before we left. So far we surveyed 2800'ft., and yet still going. Not, "The End"

Kelly A. Keener

Gadsden Grotto Minutes

Gadsden Grotto of the National Speleological Society August 10, 2004 ,Jim Loftin called the meeting of the Gadsden Grotto of the NSS to order at 6:30 P.M. Tuesday August 10, 2004 at the Rainbow City Recreation Center. All the members that were present were one, Jim Loftin. No minutes were read, as there was none.

Old Business: The Gadsden Grotto, via Jim, Mark, and Kelly, has worked 2 weekends now at the TAG Fall Cave In site. We've mostly been clearing campsites as they are advancing further back into the woods. For our assistance, we become DCG volunteers with preferences over camping sites by being able to arrive early. [Steve and Sharon Brewer showed up at 6:38 and announced there is a new outdoor store on the square in Jacksonville next to the police station. Mark and Kelly came in at 6:42.] The 450 Mile Long Yard Sale was going on this past work weekend. We stopped at a few sales and found a large pointed chisel for \$1 and the old NGS out of print bulletin "The Caves of Madison County" for \$10. Steve stated it was on the NGS website. Discussion from last meeting: David didn't think 25' deep climb downs or pits with 25' horizontal passage should be put on the ACS. The discussion tonight is that ACS rules say yes, it's ok and with us, too. Others have been turning in such [Glenn Ledbetter.] The ACS book is no longer in JSU's library's Alabama Room, says Steve. Lots of cave locations in the ACS are wrong because of latitude-longitude conversions, David said previously. [He had been an ACS board member.] These need to be field checked and corrected in the ACS- a good topic for the next ACS meeting. New cave turn in's should require a sketch [at least] map with them, said Sharon. Ideally they should all have photographs of their entrances as well. Narrative sections are helpful. Sharon suggested that we tackle this problem a county at a time. She will take on Calhoun County's 28 caves. Jim read some announcements:

1) Tag Fall Cave-In is October 7- 10, 2004. Gates open at 12 noon Thursday Oct. 7. Early arrivals camp elsewhere. Pre-registration closes Sept. 1.

2) Hodag stories are needed for a book.

3) New sewer system for Grant located between Grant and Swearingen. Discharge will go thru John Law hollow Source: Glen Ledbetter.

4) 2005 SERA Cave Carnival will be May 14- 15 at Boy Scout Camp Comer near Mentone. You can arrive as early as Wed. May 11. If you want a banquet, vote for it on the Birmingham Grotto website. Program: Jim showed slides of local caves and of formations in not so local caves and some slides he took in Flowing Stone. Meeting was concluded at 7:55 p.m.

Submitted By : Jim Loftin

Up Coming Events

September 14: Grotto Meeting at the Rainbow City Recreation Center ,Rainbow City Al, at 6:30pm.

September 25-26: Sinking Cove Get Down. (Jim's B'day) Some will be arriving the day before. Call for Jim Loftin more info. 256-237-3060.

October 8-10: TAG FALL CAVE IN at the new site.

October 12: Grotto Meeting at Rainbow Recreation Rainbow City 6:30pm. Grotto fees due in October.

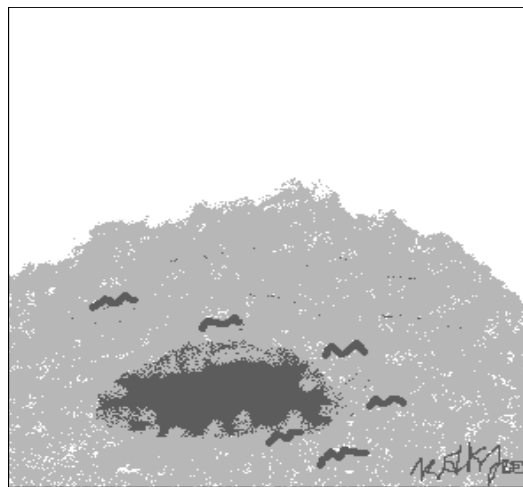
October G.G.G.G : Gadsden Grotto German-food Get together at the Sports Nut Bar & Grill. Great food & beer. Highway 21 N, Jacksonville, Al. Meet at 6pm. Call 256-892-1388 for more details.

David Teal went in for a heart catheter procedure last Friday and they found such blockage that they had to do surgery right away. David had triple bypass surgery done and back at home. He cannot drive or work for 6- 8 weeks. I'm pulling for him and he will need help from his friends to get thru the next few weeks.

Gary is back from Alaska. Welcome back, Gary!

How about the Bell South guys? Are yall back from there too? I'm anxious to hear about both trips.

Jim Loftin,



Gadsden Grotto
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