

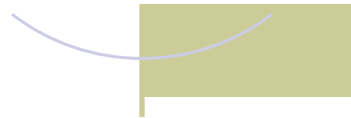


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Gadsden Grotto Newsletter



Cave Find On Cheaha Mountain

Nick Medlen, Mark's brother and their cousin Jeff went to Cheaha State Park to camp and hike. As they hiked a **little over 2000'ft. in elevation**, they discovered an entrance to a cave, and they decided to go in while they were there and explore it. They went in and explored it some and also had to use **rope in one area. They didn't** want to go any further being by themselves so they headed back out .

10 years later... Nick told Mark about his lead which made us want to go explore this new cave find and go beyond where they left off.

On a very cold Sunday morning, Mark & I, and Jim and Nick went to check out this cave we thought would never exist. No limestone, mostly

quartz rock. The mountain tops were all capped with snow which made everything look bright. We climbed straight up the mountain a little way and we had to stop and take a break before we had to climb a steeper elevation. We got to the entrance with ice cycles hanging off the edge. My feet kept slipping due to the steepness of mountain .There was barely enough room for 3 people much less 4. Mark went in the cave first and slipped through a very tight crack in the wall, which can easily be **called a " Filter "**. **Jim struggled** and grunted and could hardly fit so he decided to let me go ahead in front of him. He saw me breeze through it, and he decided to plunge through and make his way to

the other side. Nick was chiseling to make room for him to fit , being 10 years since he found this unique cave. Jim, Mark, and I went on and explored beyond where Nick and Jeff left off. There was a **pit, and we didn't have rope.** We turned back around and left. (that usually happens.

We find a pit and don't have rope.) I hope next time we go to explore the cave, we can chisel enough room for Nick to fit through the narrow passage.

Kelly Keener

Story continues on page 3



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Birthday Trip To Stumble Well

On my birthday, January 18th, Me & Mark, Mike Davis, and Jim went to Stumble Well . It was a gorgeous day the sun was shining bright, and there was about a **1/2" in. of snow on the** ground. It was hard to see the trail but Mark had his GPS with him to guide us to the cave.

Mark rigged the rope and went in first. We had to swing over to the passage on the left which has more to explore. The passage across from it to the right which you also have to swing over , goes

to a dead end. We went down the passage to explore , and then decided to bottom the pit. Down at the bottom is a beautiful flowstone that hangs along the side of the pit. It was 4:00 p.m. and we **didn't want to walk back to** our truck in the snow, and in the dark so we climbed back up and got our gear together and started walking . The ground was frozen and my **feet were too. I didn't really** notice how cold it was, the snow was pretty and I was surrounded by beauty, and a great day of caving.

We decided to go eat Mexican food and drink margaritas to celebrate my Birthday.

I got to ice my cake and eat it too...

Kelly Keener



Top: Mike Davis, Kelly Keener, and Jim Ioftin.

Bottom: Mark Medlen

On my Birthday

January 18, 2003



Spirit Well

Today Jim Loftin and I went and dug open a hole that I found while ridge walking last weekend, when I found the hole I was not sure if it was dig-able. It seemed very small but sounded hopeful when a rock was thrown in. When we arrived at the parking area I discovered that I forgot the GPS but I figured I could find it without it. We hiked up the hill with hammer, shovel, boltgear, 220 rope and Jims Mutt digging tool. We located the hole and Jim tossed in a couple rocks and started digging. The Mutt made short work of the upper area, and soon it looked like a real ENT. We rigged a short piece of the rope down the hole and I slid in and removed more dirt and loose rock from the lip area. Still

kind tight but I'm able climb down past the lip area while safetyed in and hang out over the pit and get a good view, looks like we need most of the rope down the hole so I climb out and we re rig the drop. With all the rope down the hole I climb back down, rig in and head on down the pit it starts out against the wall but then turns to freefall, very nice long flowstone drapes hang from the sides of the pit and we had to be careful not kick and break them. I reached the bottom of the first drop and then noticed a second drop while trying to find a good place to get out of the fall zone. Jim came down and we looked around then Jim went down the next drop. He called back that it was a dead-end and came back up. I

went down just to see the bottom. We was unable to find any going passages, but the pit is very pretty a lot of flowstone and many large horn coral fossils. We both climbed out and Jim measured the pit by hand strokes. The first drop turned out to be 110' with a total depth of 135' or so. We'll go back and get a taped measurement and install a hanger to help preserve the drapes when hunting season is over.
Cave Soft

Mark Medlen

Continued Story of Cheaha Mountain

(L)- Mark and Jim observing the different color contrasts of these walls. Mark had a very hard time placing an

anchor into the wall to drop the 1st pit. There is one more pit following this one. (R)- Mark pointing at the shiny,

Silver-gray colored clay that is embedded into the wall. The grey stripe is soft and glittery.



Spirit Well



If you have pictures, articles, or any other subjects related to caving,

Please send to...

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Kelly Keener in Spirit Well

What Does A Bat Look Like?

