



# GADSDEN GROTO NEWSLETTER

Spring 2011



## Grotto Cave Trip March 2011

See page 5-6 for details

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# Gadsden Grotto

## Executive Committee

- Chairman: Anthony Cline
- 1<sup>st</sup> Vice Chairman of Programs and Projects: Jim Loftin
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Chairman of Public Relations: David Teal
- Secretary/Treasurer: Samantha Johnson
- Newsletter Editor: Michael Ray
- Web Page Design: Michael Ray

## Newsletter

The Gadsden Grotto *Newsletter* is published on a semi-regular basis by the Gadsden Grotto (GG) 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.

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The Gadsden *Grotto Newsletter* is distributed free of charge to GG members and in exchange for publications of organizations with similar interests.

All original materials submitted for publication will be returned to sender. Electronic materials will not be returned. Digital photographs need not be greater in size than 800 pixels wide.

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## Web Page

<http://www.caves.org/grotto/gadsgrotto/index.html>

# 2011 Executive Committee



## Chairman:

David Teal

Duties: Preside at Regular Meetings, Called Meetings, and Executive Committee Meetings.



## Vice-Chairman - Programs and Projects: Michael Ray

Duties: Perform the duties of the Chairman in his/her absence, plan programs for Regular Meetings, and fund raising projects.



## Vice-Chairman - Public Relations: Becky Wooten

Duties: Keep in contact with Gadsden Grotto members and other grottos, notify them of special trips, caving events, and of called meetings.



## Secretary / Treasurer: Samantha Johnson

Duties: Keep an accurate record of the Executive Committee Meetings, Regular Grotto Meetings and financial status of the Grotto.

## Summary of Minutes

of the May Gadsden Grotto Meeting  
by Samantha Johnson

Grotto elections took place last night at the monthly meeting. Our Chairman is David Teal, Vice Chair Public Relations-Becky Wooten, Vice Chair Programs and Projects - Michael Ray, and Secretary - Samantha Johnson.

We will discuss the idea of getting our grotto logo made into stickers and/or magnets for our vehicles at the next meeting. I will let everyone know when we will be taking orders.





## OFF ROPE

### Gary Robert Stewart

Age: 54

NSS#: 38126

September 11, 1956 – May 15, 2011



Funeral Service was held Thursday, May 19, 2011 at the Guntersville Memorial Chapel with graveside service at Rainbow Memorial Gardens with military burial. At the funeral service I gave a testimonial to Gary's life and is summarized as follows.

Many of you here may not know me. That brings up the question of how many others did Gary help that we do not know about. I came to know Gary through cave exploring. The Anniston Museum

was building a cave exhibit where I was a curator. We contacted the Gadsden Grotto cave exploring group and part of the National Speleological Society to help with the research and building of the exhibit and Gary was part of the grotto.

We had many great adventures together while exploring caves. One story I have told many times about Gary's cell phone and I will tell here again to give you another side of Gary. We were mapping a cave which we consider "wet". As we sat in waist deep water I noticed that Gary had his cell phone on his belt. Well knowing Gary was always up on the latest technology I said "Hey Gary, I didn't know they made waterproof cell phones". He looked down at his phone and said "Oh s\*#%, no Michael... they don't". So one cell phone went down the drink. Then about a year later a group of us was hiking across the mountain to a pit. We took a break and I noticed Gary's cell phone holster empty. I said "Hey Gary, I see you remembered to leave your cell phone in the truck". Gary looked down, hung his head and said " Oh s\*#%, no Michael I didn't". Another cell phone bites the dust. Well several months later another caver found the phone on the mountain and was discussing it on TAG net. Many weeks later, around a campfire I mentioned this to Gary. Seems every caver in TAG knew his phone was found... except Gary.

What was remarkable to me about Gary is that no matter how bad a situation was, Gary would always chuckle... in that Gary sort of way. It has been said that we often go through hard times so that we can later guide someone else through their tough time because we have been there. Call it fate, universal good or as Gary would say... just dumb luck, but I call it a God thing that Gary happened to be out of work and recovering from his hip replacement just when I fell into my pit in life. While he was still in a bad way, Gary

had the heart to throw me a rope and give me a belay with words of encouragement telling me to keep climbing. Then when Gary got back on his feet he would call me to come help him for a little pay on the weekends around his home because his hip hurt so much. I needed the money to get back on my feet. Later it occurred to me that he did not really need my help. Gary was just finding an excuse to help me. During those work weekends he told me to learn to say "no" to others and would grumble about all those asking for money or help fixing a car or home. Yet I noticed that Gary himself never said no to anyone.

You can look up the definition of friend in the dictionary. Or read about "Christ-like" in the Bible. All I needed to do was look at Gary.

And so today, on behalf of the National Speleological Society, we retire NSS number 38126 for Gary has made his final climb up the rope. And now we can imagine him looking down now and with that "Gary chuckle" and slightly one-sided crooked smile of his, shout to us still below... OFF ROPE!



## In the News Cave Rescue

### HUNTSVILLE CAVE RESCUE UNIT PLAYS BIG ROLE IN RESCUE

Tuesday, May 31, 2011

A Huntsville cave diver is recovering after falling twenty feet underground. 51-year-old Dirk Siron was carried out of Sinking Cove Cave in Sherwood, Tennessee on a stretcher and flown to a nearby hospital. He was about 2,000 feet underground when the accident happened. He suffered broken bones, a shattered pelvis, and a broken arm in two places.

The Huntsville Cave Rescue Unit and the Hemsli High Angle Rough Terrain Team played a pivotal role in the difficult rescue. Cave Rescue Unit team leader Brian Bailey said they first tried to blast and hammer a way out.

"We couldn't open up the passage in the bottom big enough to get him through with his injuries So we had to go to our second plan, which was to evac him out all seven drops out the upper entrance of the cave. The way they came in," said Bailey.

"It was a long and tedious process with a of rigging, as you can imagine with having to rig seven different drops and bring an injured patient up, it took a lot of time. Once we got him on top, we also had to evac him off the mountain. You can't land a helicopter up there, so we did have to evac him off the mountain. We had about 15 to 20 people sloping with a rope all the way down off the mountain, down the rough terrain and the trails. We were very proud to get him off the mountain and to the helicopter," continued Bailey.

Bailey added that caving can be dangerous even for the

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most experienced caver.

"The gentleman who had the accident was probably twenty year veteran caver. It just goes to show that it can happen to the best of us," Bailey said.

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Source: <http://www.waff.com/story/14769334/huntsville-cave-rescue-unit-plays-big-role-in-rescue>



## The Central Indiana Grotto

invites cavers to join us for the

### 58th Annual Cave Capers, August 12-14

at Camp Rivervale, near Mitchell, Indiana. Camp Rivervale is centrally located to a large number of vertical and horizontal caves, so plan to get down and dirty (and then decontaminating).

Registration opens at noon Friday (*please don't arrive before noon*). The campground has lots of shade for comfortable tent camping. Friday night, socialize and enjoy the sounds a riverside open acoustic jam. Bring your guitars (can be electric) and other instruments.



In an attempt to resolve vendor problems due to a series of circumstances last year, we have invited back Inner Mountain Outfitters to be our featured Cave Vendor. They have made a firm commitment to come, please give them a friendly welcome.

Saturday morning, the camp will be serving breakfast (for a fee, and Sunday too!), and we will offer volunteer-led trips and "go on your own with directions" excursions to some of Indiana's finest caves. For non-cavers, there is nearby Spring Mill State Park, hiking on the Hoosier National Forest, Bluesprings Caverns, and historic Mitchell and Bedford.

Saturday evening will feature an on-site, professionally catered meal for the banquet (Fried Chicken, (or veggie lasagna option), mashed potatoes, green beans, chocolate cake, beverage). Our entertainment for the evening will start off with the first round of door prizes, followed by our speaker, Indiana native Dale

Chase, who now lives on Vancouver Island, Canada. Dale will present techniques from the origins of vertical caving in the 60's, and will also present pictures from exciting cave discoveries being made on Vancouver Island. Following the presentation will be the grand finale drawing for the door prizes.

**Other details...** Quiet camping and party camping areas will be clearly defined. The campground has a very nice swimming pool that will be available at no extra cost this year; pool hours will be posted at registration. RVs are welcome, but there are no hook-ups or electricity. This is a church camp, so please no fireworks, no unapproved public address systems, no mini bikes or ATV's, and **please be discrete with your adult beverages**. Sorry, NO PETS this year (camp rules). You may also register online on our web site using a credit or debit card via Pay Pal at [www.cavecapers.com](http://www.cavecapers.com)



## Medical Information

### Heat Exhaustion and Heat Stroke Symptoms

#### Heat exhaustion symptoms

- Often pale with cool, moist skin
- Sweating profusely
- Muscle cramps or pains
- Feels faint or dizzy
- May complain of headache, weakness, thirst, and nausea
- Core (rectal) temperature elevated-usually more than 100°F-and the pulse rate increased

#### Heat stroke symptoms

- Unconscious or has a markedly abnormal mental status (dizziness, confusion, hallucinations, or coma)
- Flushed, hot, and dry skin (although it may be moist initially from previous sweating or from attempts to cool the person with water)
- May have slightly elevated blood pressure at first that falls later
- May be hyperventilating
- Rectal (core) temperature of 105°F or more



# Trip Reports

## **Grotto Trip - Guffy Cave**

by - David Teal

Most of the grotto trips for the last few months have been planned and cancelled due to bad weather or lack of leadership. A trip was planned at the end of March to the Guffy Cave System. This cave was chosen because of easy access in bad weather.

The last Saturday in March of 2011 found me to be the first to arrive at the scheduled meeting place, Jack's in Attalla, AL. Slowly everybody began to trickle in, eat breakfast and pack into all the vehicles. Attending this cave trip was new comer Michael Elston, Steve, Samantha and Brett Johnson, Anthony Cline, Marion Dodd, Becky Wooten, Ann Armstrong, Michael Ray, Mark Medlin, Kristen Erby and David Teal. (see front cover photograph)

The weather for today was bad thunderstorms and possible tornadoes. We left Jack's in a steady drizzle which rapidly turned into a crashing rain by the time we reached the "Y" (near Guntersville). We met Mark and Kristen at the cave and the rain had turned to a steady sprinkle. Steve had picked up the key from Dan Harbin the previous day.

At 9:30 a.m. the gate was unlocked and we all filtered into the cave and down the ladder. I was



Pictured left to right: Ann Armstrong, Becky Wooten, Kristen Erby, Samantha Johnson

using a new light that was profiled in the January 2011 National Speleological Society News, the Coastal LED Lenser H7. The light put out 172 lumens and was very bright. Everyone proceeded to the breakdown prior to the big ball room. Brett proceeded to the front of me, but missed the climb up. As Marion and I climbed up into the big room



LED Lenser H7

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we noticed no one else behind us. Finally we were joined by Brett. After about ten minutes, the others had still not joined us. So I sent Brett back down the little climb to pick up the rest of the crew. Almost 15 to 20 minutes later we were all together again and we proceeded on to the big junction. We toured the formation area that had been vandalized by Jason the kid who lived across the way from the cave.

The group became split up again when Kristen announced she was sick and her and Mark was going to leave the cave. Eventually the group regrouped and toured the borehole passage, the spires of Guffy, the little waterfall, Little India, the un-

natural bridge and stopping for lunch at the art room. Here I discovered that someone had rocked my pack! No one would admit

who the perp was, but I think it was Marion or Michael! Afterward we gathered our packs and toured some other areas of the cave.

Making it back to the big junction, we heard tales of Brett's experience of skipping school and we slowly motivated our way out of the cave with Marion making his exit of a new entrance somebody had dug open. After pictures were taken, we returned to the cars and everyone changed cloths. The group split up, some going to Limrock to see if it was flooded and some going to eat and some going home.



Marion, David, Kristen

We spent six to seven hours in the cave and a good time was had by all.



David Teal

# Grotto Reunion 2011

By Michael Ray

The Gadsden Grotto celebrated its 2011 reunion at Moses Tomb over the May 20<sup>th</sup> weekend. Several members arrived on Friday to establish camp and coordinate arrivals. The real truth, however, is that we wanted to get there early to pick the best camp sites under the guise of being good leaders.

Celebrating our annual grotto anniversary has been a long time tradition. However, this weekend also served to celebrate the life and caving of Gary Stewart. We had just buried our good friend the day before. So we planned time to remember Gary with stories around the camp fire.

I packed my little Kia Sportage to the max. I had also layered the floor with firewood. Last year we found firewood scares and spent a lot of time hand sawing downed trees. David Teal and I joined up at the I-59 exit to Crossville to caravan to the camp site. When we arrived at the Moses Tomb camping area we found the place decimated by tornado. Trees were down everywhere. I felt foolish to have packed firewood when there was plenty everywhere. Gene Reeves' car was already at the site and he was up on the mountain looking for the pit. He called David on his cell phone and said he was

spending more time climbing on top of downed trees than he did walking on the ground. He had lost the trail completely due to the destruction. From the valley the mountain side looked like a giant lawn mower had run across the side of the mountain and then over the top. The camp site was a wreck. Yet the school bus was in good shape with only one tree leaning on it. The area will take years to recover.



Gene Reeves

David and I set up our tents and started to worry about Gene up on the mountain. It had been several hours since we had heard from him. We decided we would give him until sunset before we mounted a rescue. Of course the fact that it would be a whole lot cooler at that time of day to climb the mountain had nothing to do with our rescue plans. It was only prudent to give the young man lea way to explore the mountain and not rush in on his fun. About that time he emerged from the woods pale and thirsty. He never found the pit in all the debris. He also showed signs of heat stroke. See "Heat Exhaustion and Heat Stroke Symptoms" article in this issue for more information on the subject.

Anthony Cline arrived a little later to the camp. Anthony and I decided to set up a practice rope climb area for the

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## Trip Reports continued....

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new cavers that had planned to come to the reunion. It was difficult to find a tree still standing that was tall enough to hang a pulling and rope. After we hung the rope, Jerry Reeves stopped in to visit. After dark the Wooten clan joined the group with their truck campers fully loaded with Jacuzzi and swimming pool. Tommy, Richard and Becky made up the clan and promised not to start any feuds.

We began making various caving plans for a diversified group of new and experienced cavers. Gene suggested Howard's Waterfall for the new non-vertical trained members. Jerry tried to discourage us due to the litter near the entrance. However, the cave was listed as a possible. The second cave option for those with limited climbing experience was Rusty's Cave. This would make an interesting



Tommy Wooten  
@ Guffy entrance

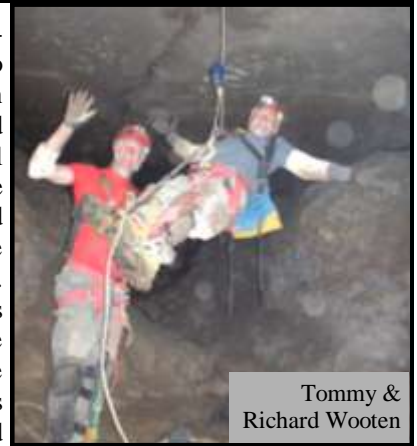
story if we visited both caves due to the history of Rusty connected with both caves. Moses Tomb was obviously out. No one wanted to fight their way through the devastation in the heat.

Selena Morton arrived Saturday morning and we waited to hear from other grotto members before making our final caving plans. As the morning drew on, we learned that there was a slim chance that anyone else would arrive. I learned that few in our camp had visited Rusty's Cave and decided it was a

must see as a classic. Jerry Reeves had arrived for another visit and said he would walk with us up the trail. It had been 15 years or more since I had been up the trail and was grateful for the guide. Many things had changed since I last travel up to Rusty's. And as I recalled in an uninteresting story to the others that the last time I was here was to bring my South Carolina Interstate Grotto here. The ironic humor lost of everyone except myself was that when I arrived with my SC group at the parking spot there stood Jerry Reeves. So now we return many years later with the ole Rock Eater there again. Several stayed at the campsite to greet other grotto members in case they arrived late as if the heat and long hike would not deter them if it were not for their deep sense of duty to the late arrivals (none of which came).

We soon found that the tornado had hit this area also. We tried to stay on the trail as much as possible so as to find the

cave. It was near impossible. We had to divert around fallen trees constantly and then pick up the trail again. After more than an hour of hard hiking, we had to give up on seeing the trail. Jerry pulled out his GPS and took off. We later heard his cave yell and headed his way. He had found the entrance among



Tommy &  
Richard Wooten

downed trees all around. Our once restful and shaded cave entrance area was now in direct hot sunlight.

Two other cavers from DCG already had a rope rigged and so we waited until they were out before rigging our rope. Jerry was going to wait at the pit entrance for us to return and Gene, Becky, Richard, Tommy and myself headed down the short drop. Gene was showing signs of exhaustion again from yesterday's workout and today's hard hike in the heat. The coolness of the cave was a welcome relief. I had forgotten how beautiful the cave was and enjoyed my tour immensely. Later, back at camp, I was chastised for not showing the group the famous "bird finger hand". I had completely forgotten about the formation. Gene was very exhausted and was showing some of the signs of heat exhaustion. He decided to head out and down the mountain while he still could. The rest of us continued

to explore the cave and take some pictures until our agreed upon exit time of 3:30pm. When we got out of the cave we found a note from Jerry that he was taking Gene down the mountain without waiting on us due to his condition. We de-rigged the rope and headed down the mountain in a wide curve around the trail and the devastation. I am sure a new trail will need to be established.

We arrived at the vehicles and found Gene in good condition. Mainly due to the fact that Jerry took him to get something to eat. We headed back to camp, got cleaned up, drank gallons of liquids and began cooking dinner. We soon turned to medicinal pain

relief drinks. Around the camp fire that evening, David related the story of Gary Stewart's find of Bluff River Cave. We broke camp the next morning and headed home.

A good time was had by all.



Richard, Becky & Tommy Wooten and Michael Ray



# 2021 GROTTO REUNION



Selena Morton, Becky & Richard Wooten, Anthony Cline, Tommy Wooten, Michael Ray, David Teal

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