



# GADSDEN GROTTA NEWSLETTER

March 2010

## Weaver Cave CLEANUP



Photo by Scott Fee  
SKTF Weaver Cleanup  
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/caverscott/sets/72157623250425499/>

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# GADSDEN GROTTO

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Jim Loftin
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## 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.

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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>

## From the Chairman

I'd like to say a quick thank you to everyone for all they've done to help the grotto this year.

In particular, I owe special thanks to Becky Wooten and Selena Morten for their help with arranging the SERA Winter Business Meeting and to Jim Loftin for all his efforts arranging the cleanups at Lady Cave and Weaver Cave.

Thank you all

*Anthony Cline*



## Gadsden Grotto Executive Board 2009 - 2010



### Grotto Chairman

Anthony Cline  
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### 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Chairman: Public Relations

David Teal



### Secretary / Treasurer

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## About the Cover

The Gadsden Grotto helped SKTF facilitate the cleanup of Weaver Cave in Calhoun County. The SERA Karst Task Force, Inc. (SKTF) is a non-profit resource organization dedicated to karst conservation and the clean up of cave and karst features through the education of both the public and caving communities. Visit their web site at <http://sktffi.org>



## MINUTES OF THE GROTTO MEETING

February 6th, 2010

By: Samantha Johnson

The February Grotto meeting was held during a break at the 2010 SERA Winter Business meeting at Guntersville Lodge. Anthony Cline, Steve Johnson, Vonda Johnson, Samantha Johnson, Brett Johnson, Bobby Whorton, Becky & Richard Wooten, Jim Loftin, Melanie Butler, Michael Ray, David Teal, & Selena Morton were in attendance. The guest for the night's meeting was Marion Smith.

Our grotto hosted the 2010 SERA Winter Business meeting at Guntersville State Park Lodge. Guest speaker for the night at the after meeting banquet was Marion Smith who kept all intrigued by telling about all of his amazing accomplishments in caving. All in all it was a great event.

At the last grotto meeting a trip to Cemetery pit was planned but unfortunately was canceled due to weather. So the trip was rescheduled to February 27, 2010. Also discussed was a trip to Rusty's cave for those who do not wish to drop Cemetery pit. Planned to meet at Jack's on Noccalula Mountain at 8 A.M. and to leave at 8:30 A.M. or anyone wishing to go on to Sue's Market in Rising Fawn could meet at 10 A.M.

The meeting was adjourned shortly before the banquet.



[www.innermountainoutfitters.net](http://www.innermountainoutfitters.net)

## IN THE NEWS

By: Selena Morton



### The Mega Crystals of Naica Mine

From: <http://news.discovery.com/earth/naica-big-pics.html>

About 900 feet below the surface, there is a chamber filled with gypsum. It's the same stuff that goes in the drywall in your house, only in Naica it spent half a million years par-boiling in a chamber filled with magma-heated water.

Suddenly miners showed up and started pumping the mineral-rich broth out to get at valuable silver and lead deposits nearby. The result is a cavern filled with crystals 36 feet long and weighing in at up to 55 tons, easily the largest in the world.

Last Fall, adventurer and filmmaker George Kourounis traveled to Naica to see the incredible "Crystal Cave of Giants" for himself. Though there's little risk of eruption from the nearby magma chamber, the cave itself is still deadly hot – over 120 Fahrenheit with about 90 percent humidity. People are only allowed in without cooling suits for a few minutes at a time.

"When we first arrived at the Naica mine, Manuel and his crew took us inside without wearing the special cooling suits. This was in order to get us used to what REAL heat is like. There is a steel door protecting the cave and as soon as you pass through it, the temperature hits you like a truck.

But as soon as you get your first glimpse of the incredible crystals, you want to keep going deeper. We were inside for only 14 minutes, which was pushing the danger limits without cooling suits. When we exited, the staging area was a "cool" 41 Celsius. My heart was pounding and I was completely soaked in sweat, my shirts, pants, socks & boots... Everything. All we could do was sit, drink and rest."

Cooling suits – vests of frozen gel packs surrounded by insulation, plus a backpack that supplies the wearer with chilled air to breathe – allow people to remain in the mine for close to an hour. Kourounis and his crew took the opportunity to snap these incredible images as well as shoot some video.



# TRIP REPORTS

## Mole Rat Cave

**Steve & Samantha  
Johnson**

After the “big” snow we had in January my dad & I decided to go ridge walking to check for possible digs, where hopefully the snow would be melted around a hole. Starting out at our previous digs right around Johnsons Well we covered as much ground as possible checking for hole’s and any signs of airflow. After not finding anything dad settled down into one of our old digs. I continued to walk the ridge, after a few minutes I found something that looked rather interesting. All of the snow was melted around this one area on the ground which led us to believe there was some type of airflow. So after moving rocks out of the way dad found a small hole that was blowing air and started to dig. I proceeded to check out the surrounding area, as I was moving



rocks I found a hole no bigger than a golf ball that appeared to go somewhere or least connect into what dad was digging on. After dad dug open his entrance to only discover it was clogged, but yet he could



see passage and what appeared to be a pit. So a few days later we dug open the second entrance and were pleased to find a tight but passable 20 ft. pit. Once at the bottom of this pit there are many formations of pure calcite. The floor then slopes down and to the right then drops off into a 40 ft pit. The 40 ft. pit appeared to be a blind pit at first but after some digging and squeezing through a tight crack, we discovered a 60 ft. dome. Within the 60 ft. dome we can see virgin passage and are currently working on making the hole wider to be able to assess the passage. But until we get the hole open we can only dream about what will be on the other side...



### **Johnson's Well**

When the leaves started falling my dad (Steve), little brother (Brett), & myself (Samantha) started



our annual ridge walking of Colvin Mountain just a few miles from our home. The first day of walking was very good we found two holes in which we started to dig on. The first one turned out to be a small cave not quiet 50 ft. But our second hole showed to be a whole lot more promising. On the initial rock drop test we got 2 to 3 seconds on each drop which meant it was a pit. So we began digging. After digging on the front side of the hole we found that the entrance would be too small even for the smallest person to fit in. So we didn't give up. Day after day we hiked up to our dig and kept on moving rock and dirt to be able to open up the pit in which knew was below. Then finally on the first Sunday of November we were able to hook a come along to the last rock that kept us out of the pit. After a phone call to Mark & Kristine they both joined us on the mountain to check out our find. Mark was the first one to go down to check

it out then dad & Brett. They reported of huge formations all the way down to the bottom of the pit. So the next weekend Jim, Melanie, Anthony, Mark, & Kristine joined us up on the mountain once again to drop the pit. Jim dropped the pit with the end of the measuring tape in tow we all watched in surprise as the numbers kept on getting higher and higher. Then after a few seconds we heard a faint "On Station" with that we had the first dept of our pit. 92.8 feet deep, this in turn beats out Stardriver which for many years held

the post as the deepest pit in Etowah County. Our pit now holds the title of deepest. After much debate and thought we decided on Johnsons Well (AL4325). Now on to the next one!



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