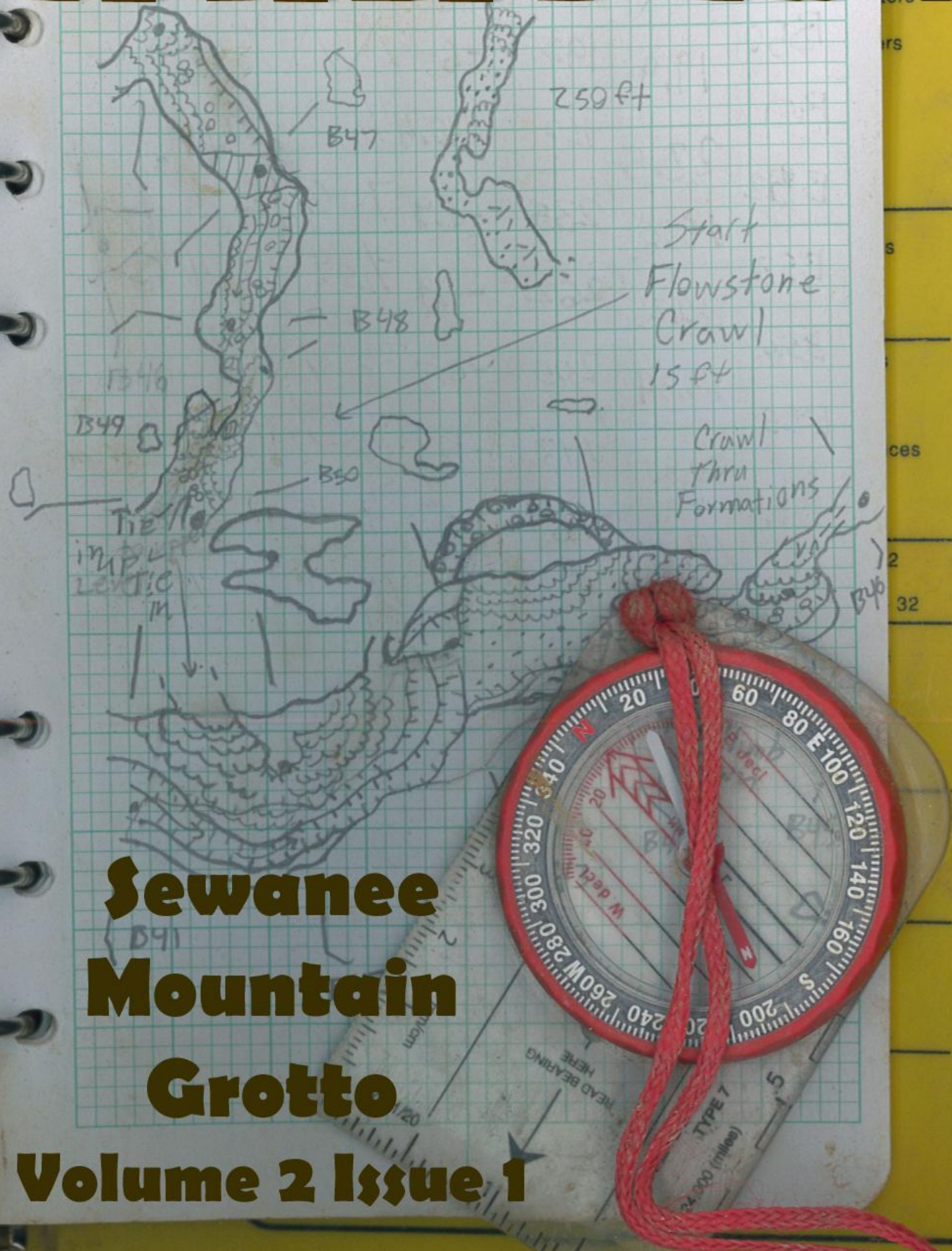


# T.A.G. CAYVEN



**Sewanee  
Mountain  
Grotto**

**Volume 2 Issue 1**

## TAG Caver ~ Volume 2 Issue 1

### **SPRING 2011**

TAG Caver is the official newsletter of the Sewanee Mountain Grotto & is published on a quarterly basis. Sewanee Mountain Grotto is a non-profit internal organization of the National Speleological Society dedicated to the exploration, mapping and conservation of caves. If you are interested in joining the Sewanee Mountain Grotto we invite you to attend one of our monthly grotto meetings. Meetings are held the second Saturday of each month at various locations in the heart of TAG. A typical meeting starts with a potluck dinner at 6pm CST, followed by the meeting at 7pm. On occasion we also have special presentations following our meetings. Annual dues are \$10 per person and are due in January. Please email [sewaneemountaingrotto@caves.org](mailto:sewaneemountaingrotto@caves.org) or one of our editors for more information on the location of our next meeting. You may also visit our website at <http://www.caves.org/grotto/sewaneemountaingrotto/>

#### **2011 Sewanee Mtn Grotto Officers:**

Chairperson: Jason Hardy  
Vice Chair & Programs: Peter Michaud  
Treasurer: Blaine Grindle  
Secretary: Bambi Dunlap  
Member at large: Maureen Handler  
Conservation chair: Maureen Handler  
Webmaster: Will Urbanski  
Trip leader: \_\_\_\_

#### **TAG Caver Editors:**

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Email articles and photos for submissions to one of our editors. Content may include articles/photos from non members as well as other caving regions. Statements and opinions expressed in the TAG Caver do not necessarily reflect the policies or beliefs of the Sewanee Mountain Grotto or the NSS.



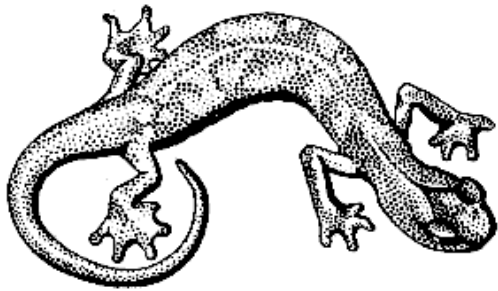
Inside this Issue:  
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SMG 2010 Survey  
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UK  
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Little River Canyon  
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Preserve  
Blaine G. Trip  
Report

*Front & Back Covers: Sketches & Notes by Jason Hardy on the new Sewanee Mountain Grotto Survey Paper. The paper was designed by Angela Morgan. Thank you Angela for your hard work on designing and ordering the paper. Thank you to SMG for purchasing it.*

# Calendar of Upcoming Events



March 12<sup>th</sup> – SMG Meeting at Andy Zellner's house in Doran Cove, AL near Russell Cave. Potluck Dinner 6pm, followed by meeting at 7pm. **Andy will give a presentation on his Peru adventures following the meeting!**

March 31<sup>st</sup> – April 3<sup>rd</sup> – Weaselfest 2011 (AKA Florida Cave Cavort), Williston, Florida. Camping, Cave trips, canoe trips, and more... Registration \$13.50. Visit [www.weaselfest2011.blogspot.com](http://www.weaselfest2011.blogspot.com) for info.

April 9<sup>th</sup> – **2<sup>nd</sup> Cleanup at sinkhole near Big Room Cave. Meet at 10am at site.**

SMG Meeting at Peter "Mudpuppy" Michaud's on the mountain in Sewanee, TN. Potluck dinner 6pm, followed by meeting at 7pm. **Pup will be giving a presentation on Mines & Gate Building out West...!**

May 14<sup>th</sup> – SMG Meeting at Maureen's Campground. Potluck dinner 6pm, followed by meeting at 7pm.

May 26-30 – 40<sup>th</sup> annual Kentucky Speleofest hosted by the Louisville Grotto at the Lonestar Preserve in Bonnieville, KY. Go to <http://louisville.caves.org/speleofest.html> for more information.

July 18<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> – NSS Convention in Glenwood Springs, Colorado. Visit <http://nss2011.org/> for more info.

## Connect with the Grotto

If you're new to the Grotto, here are a few ways you can get to know other members:



Join us on a Grotto Trip, Survey Trip or a Cleanup.



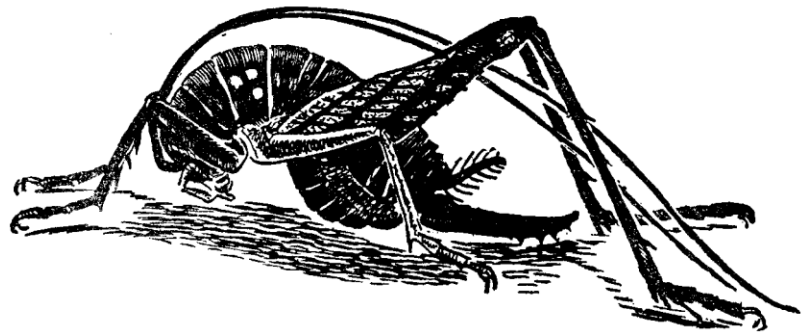
Sewanee Mountain Remailer

After you have joined the grotto, join our mailing list to keep up to date with cave trips and meetings.

Go to: [http://sports.groups.yahoo.com/group/sewanee\\_mountain\\_grotto/](http://sports.groups.yahoo.com/group/sewanee_mountain_grotto/) and click join. Please provide your real name so we'll know who you are.

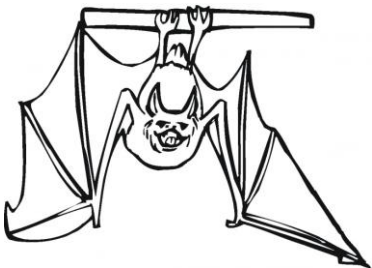


Facebook – Join our official unofficial Facebook Page to meet other area cavers and plan trips. Search for Sewanee Mountain Grotto under groups.



## Support the Grotto

The Grotto still has Guidebooks, Stickers and T-shirts remaining from the SERA 2010 event. The stickers are the new Logo for the Sewanee Mountain Grotto and are \$1 each. In T-shirts we have Large & XXL available for \$15 each. Guidebooks are \$10 each. Please contact Kelly Smallwood ([rowland7840@bellsouth.net](mailto:rowland7840@bellsouth.net)) to purchase.





## THE TAG SCOOP

\*Welcome new SMG members: Mae Fle, Angie Reim & John McMacken.

\*Membership dues are due. You can pay at the next meeting or you can send them in via snail mail. If you are mailing your dues please send a check payable to Senawee Mountain Grotto, 482 Wild Heart Lane, Senawee, TN 37375. Make sure you include your contact information (name, address, phone number & email address) & your NSS Number. Annual Dues are \$10 per person. You have until the end of March before you are removed from the Yahoo group.

\*\*The first EC meeting of 2011 was held on February 20<sup>th</sup>. Look for the second one to be sometime in April, May or June...

\*\*\*Planning on attending the 2011 Convention in Colorado? Check out the web site [www.nss2011.org](http://www.nss2011.org) for more information. Other grotto members are planning on attending as well so there are possibilities for car pooling.

## The Munchie Corner

### Fig & Date Bread

\*This bread will give you high energy and protein. It's a great snack that can even be frozen.

\*1 cup chopped pitted dates, 1 cup chopped figs  
\*1/4 cup unsalted butter  
\*1-1/2 teaspoons baking soda  
\*1 cup boiling water  
\*1/2 cup white sugar  
\*1/2 cup chopped walnuts (or another nut of your choice)

\*2 eggs  
\*3/4 cup all purpose flour, 3/4 cup whole wheat flour  
\*1/2 teaspoon baking powder  
\*1/2 teaspoon salt  
\*1/3 cup chia seeds, 1/3 cup ground flax seeds (optional)

### Directions

- 1) Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Lightly grease 8x4 inch baking pan.
- 2) In medium bowl, combine dates, figs, butter & baking soda. Pour in the boiling water, stir well and let stand for 15 minutes.
- 3) Beat the sugar, walnuts and eggs into the date mixture. Combine the all purpose flour, whole wheat flour, baking powder, salt, chia seeds & flax seeds; stir into the date mixture until blended. Pour into prepared pan.
- 4) Bake in preheated oven for about 45 minutes, or until toothpick inserted in center of loaf comes out clean. Cool on wire rack. Makes 8 servings.



## SKTF / SMG Big Room Cave Watershed Cleanup

By Anne Grindle

On Feb. 12, 2011 cavers from five states, a local boy scout troop, and community members donned gloves and picks, trash bags and chains to remove trash from a sinkhole in Payne Cove (Grundy county). Two county inmates also assisted the effort. The large group (61 volunteers!) pulled 8.18 tons of trash out of the sinkhole to fill a dumpster! This tonnage does *not* include a large amount of metal which was separated for a local family to take to a recycling center.

Household trash, old washers, water heaters, TVs, and even car parts were removed from the site. The group effort was aided by the SKTF vertical haul system and a tractor. The vertical haul system, made with ropes and pulleys and suspended from trees, was very helpful in lifting heavy poly bags of trash up and out of the hole. The tractor (driven by Steve Holt) was invaluable for transporting bags of trash to the dumpster and to extract some really stuck fencing.

Volunteers worked steadily until lunch, which was provided by Crust Pizza and Sewanee Mountain Grotto. Hot drinks were provided by the SKTF. After lunch, volunteers tackled the trash pile for two more hours. A HUGE thanks to all who came out to help!

This Payne Cove sinkhole was selected because of the close proximity to Big Room Cave and Big Mouth Cave. The trash is most likely polluting the water in those caves, which are part of the Elk River watershed. The sinkhole is not clean yet, but about one third of the years- old trash was lifted out and sent to a local landfill. The owner of the land, Donna Roberts, says that people have dumped there for years because after a big rain, "it flushes itself clean like a toilet." No telling how much trash has been flushed into the Elk in the past 50 years! **A second effort is planned at this site on April 9, 10 am.**



Jason  
Hardy



Anne, Chrissy & Clinton



Lynn



Photos  
By  
Kelly  
Smallwood



Smile!  
Group  
Photo

Cheryl



# Sewanee Mountain Grotto: 2010 Survey Projects

By: Julie E. Schenck Brown, NSS 30493

(Photos by Kelly Smallwood)

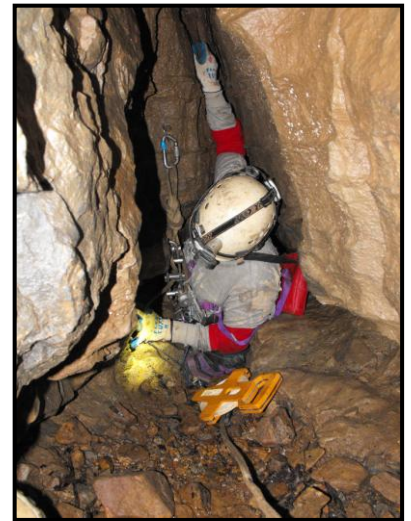
## Introduction

Sewanee Mountain Grotto's Psycho Survey Bitches and Our Entourage of Manly Men continue to be one of the most active survey groups in TAG. Anyone is welcome to join us on a survey project and no previous experience is needed. This past year, we had 30 cavers participate on our survey projects. Julie Schenck Brown (Book Bitch) produced 8 maps and Jason Hardy (Junior) produced 5 maps with the assistance of the grotto; and our ranks have been bolstered by Angela Morgan (QBU-Queen Bitch of the Universe) and Jeff Bartlett joining us as cartographers. This article provides a brief summary of a few of the Sewanee Mountain Grotto survey projects in 2010.

## Hargiss Cove, Tennessee

In 2009, I met a friendly landowner from Hargiss Cove, Tennessee. As his property has a multitude of vertical caves, and he does not allow hunting, I thought this would be an excellent winter project. Our initial survey objectives were Dumbat Caverns, Devil's Fissure and Tres Well; Roots and Crawl Pit had already been surveyed by Ken Oeser and Gerald Moni. These four pits are all along the same bench and within walking distance of each other. Other than that information, the TCS Narratives were rather vague, thus our survey would provide an opportunity to update these as well.

Our initial survey began at Dumbat Caverns, presumed to be a series of blind pits, based on the original TCS narrative. Peter Michaud (Mudpuppy) rigged the entrance pit for him and Junior to begin the survey at the third pit. Kelly Smallwood (Photo Bitch) took photos and prepared to join Teresa Williams (Knot Bitch) and me on a survey team that began at the drip line. Surveying down to the second pit, we really started to have fun as we pondered how the men had made it through this tight crack. When we finally arrived at the bottom of the second pit, Junior was on point and sketching towards pit three; Pup swore we would have to break rock to get him back out. Faithfully, Knot Bitch volunteered to join Junior for the survey of the third pit, while Photo Bitch, Mudpuppy and I finished the remainder of the survey below the second drop. My team exited and waited for Junior and Knot Bitch who eventually returned to the surface, with the errant gloves of some past explorer that Pup had claimed as booty, but managed to drop again!



Returning a few weeks later, we were able to garner additional surveyors to survey Devil's Fissure and Tres Well. Teri Stephens (Happy Bitch) and Mudpuppy, helped me survey Devil's Fissure, while Junior, Nancy Aulenbach (Famous Bitch) and Knot Bitch surveyed Tres Well. Both Nancy and Teri earned Bitch Names on this survey and were proud of their new titles. Our survey of both pits revealed new cave not previously described in the Narratives. Junior's team found a virgin pit that needed to be micro shaved, as even Famous Bitch could not fit. While we waited on Junior and Famous Bitch to return from the horrid entrance of fallen trees and unstable debris, Knot Bitch treated us to canned bread, which we dubbed the "Shape Shifter." We rocked Junior's pack with the Shape Shifter; Later that day, while walking

off the hill a boulder broke lose that came careening down the hill towards Knot Bitch and myself and we both swore Junior had found the Shape Shifter and launched it at us.

The next week, I accompanied Junior as he hauled his new Hilti Hammer drill up the mountain to micro shave the virgin pit that his crew had found. At last we were successful in bottoming the pit and calling End of Survey in Tres Well. I climbed out first and while I was off brewing a cup of coffee, I saw and heard a massive explosion of hillside debris that mobilized into the pit. I ran towards the entrance fearing it had killed Junior. Miraculously he was able to get out of the way, but was apologetic that my rope may be cut. To hell with the rope, I was just relieved he was not seriously injured or killed and we were both pleased to call EOS in an area of clear cut and briar patches, known as "This Thing." We could not imagine what this area would be like in the summer, and caution anyone visiting these caves of the hill slope erosion that has contributed to surface instability at the cave entrances.

### Mark Hughes Wet Dream Cave, Alabama



This cave was located and dug open by Junior and myself during the weekend of the 2010 SERA Winter Business Meeting. After we dug open the entrance, the cave was blowing so much air that we were hopeful it would break the contact and go deeper than a nearby cave, The Penitentiary. We knew our survey crew (Mudpuppy and Photo Bitch) were "taking one for the team" sitting inside at a meeting while we ridge walked, so we decided to save the lead for them, but shot a video tape of the air movement. The following week, Jason and I were joined by Mudpuppy, Photo Bitch and Julie Usleton (Graceful Bitch) to survey the cave. The cave has a 16 foot climb-down at the entrance which requires a hand line. With Pup's encouragement, I explored the cave solo to ensure it qualified. This required me to climb an exposed 15 foot climb-up to access the rest of the

cave. Later with our survey crew in the cave, we rigged the climb-up and Junior bottomed a second pit, which is 16 feet deep; beyond this area a tall canyon passage eventually became too tight, even with digging efforts by Photo Bitch. While surveying the cave, our crew experienced several breakdown collapses and we were all glad to call End of Survey in this sandstone horror hole.

The cave was named in memory of Mark Hughes, NSS 28261, who was a member of an elite group of TAG surveyors known as The Magnum Cavers. Mark was an incredible caver and surveyor who passed away a few months before the discovery of the cave. We also tied into the joke that Jon Brown made when he stated we "would have wet dreams thinking about that much air."

### Martin Springs High Hole, Tennessee

With a few delays due to winter snow and the closure of deer hunting season, our grotto was able to finish the survey of Martin Springs High Hole in early March. Our first objective was to survey a lead that Andy Zellner and friends had successfully negotiated in the 1990s as Junior was convinced that a survey through this section of the cave would push it over a mile. While Junior and Mudpuppy surveyed through a myriad of breakdown, attempting to negotiate their way through to borehole, Graceful Bitch and I surveyed strolling borehole that we dubbed the "Black Pot Passage." At the end of this passage, our survey ended in the downstream sump that has been dye traced to the resurgence at Martin Spring. This area required me to tread water as I pushed the lead to the bitter end. Later that day, I could not convince Pup to do the same.

Our final survey trip focused on a side lead west of the main breakdown chamber. After negotiating "The Break Through," Junior and Mudpuppy surveyed as a team, while I led a team that included Happy Bitch and Anne Grindle (Skinny Bitch). Also present on the trip was Jon Mnich, who focused on pushing leads in an area filled with horrific breakdown. Later we learned that this area was the connection to the dig Junior had worked on so valiantly. I was pleased to present Junior's map to the daughter of the late Mrs. Martin, who subsequently requested copies for her other siblings.

### Speegle Tilted Tower Cave, Tennessee

I began this survey during the weekend of Charlie Smith's memorial with Tom Coker, Anne Elmore (Crazy Bitch), Skinny Bitch and Bill Walter (The Legend). Our initial survey had finished the vertical pit entrance, main chamber and the passage leading to the formation gallery. However, we still needed to finish the passage leading to the horizontal entrance.

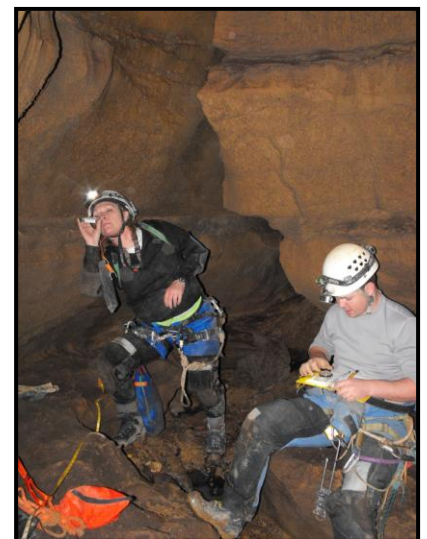
For the second survey, I was joined by Blaine Grindle (Brew Master), Mudpuppy and Graceful Bitch. Pup decided to enter the horizontal entrance and meet us at the recoverable survey station, while the rest of us entered the tight vertical entrance. After it took us a few minutes to locate our recoverable station, Pup joked we would finish the survey by One O'clock. Not getting in a hurry, we took our time surveying through the sinuous crawl leading to the horizontal entrance. We named this passage, Coker's Crack, in honor of Tom Coker who discovered this cave and was instrumental in our survey. Tom was excited to receive my map for a cave that was surveyed in Charlie's memory.

### Dixie Drop, Alabama

Early in 2010, Jon Brown conducted a series of ridge walks on Keel Mountain, Alabama. Jon found an opening that was the size of a baseball and proceeded to dig it open, but was almost swallowed as the entrance collapsed. Jon then called me from the ridge to verify the coordinates as not existing on the Alabama Cave Survey, and to tell me there was a new pit on Keel Mountain that I needed to qualify. A few months later, after Jon had dug open the pit, Junior decided to return to a known cave on Keel Mountain to enlarge an opening marked as "?" on Bill Torode's map. He then proceeded to ridge walk and re-discovered the pit that Jon had dug open. Returning to my house, where Photo Bitch and I were working on *the 2010 SERA Guidebook*, Junior convinced us to return to the ridge and visit this new discovery. While we normally survey as you go, Junior, Photo Bitch and I decided to bounce the entrance pit and make sure it qualified. We then discovered a second pit, and knew we had a grotto survey project. I recognized this unknown pit as the dig that almost swallowed Jon Brown and suggested the name Dixie Drop.

Our first survey was on April 10, 2010 and included Junior, Photo Bitch, Graceful Bitch and myself. Junior worked on setting bolts at the second pit, while the Bitches surveyed towards him. The entrance pit was taped at 74 feet, while the second pit was taped at 67 feet. At the bottom of the second pit, we observed small helictite bushes and going passage. Our survey was shortened by the grotto meeting, but we knew this the beginning of a great project.

The next day, Junior and Mudpuppy continued to survey into a myriad of horror, while Photo Bitch, Graceful Bitch and I surveyed strolling virgin borehole, making such comments that, "surveying virgin cave is so

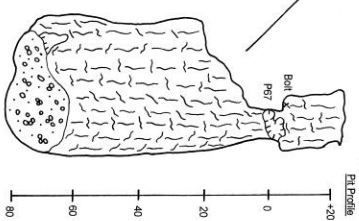
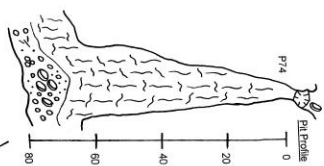
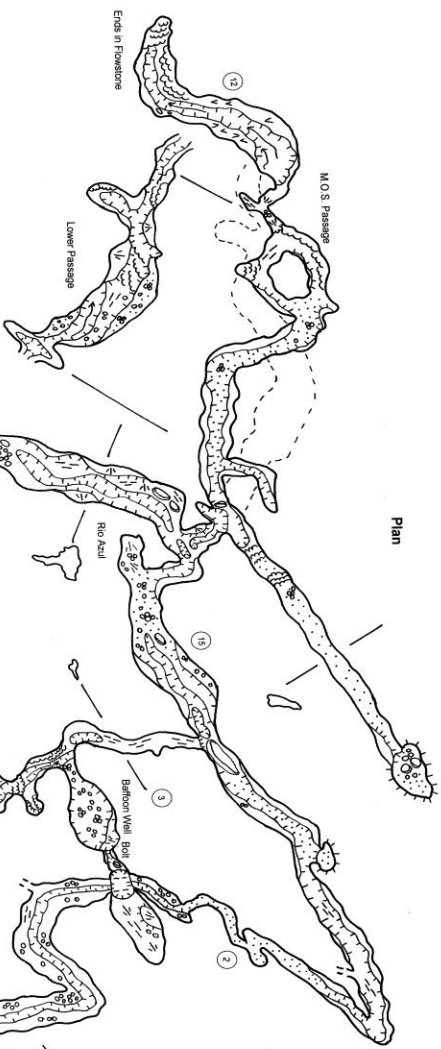


# **Dixie Drop** Madison County, AL ACS: 4353

Total Horizontal Extent: 2,776 Feet  
Total Vertical Extent: 169 Feet

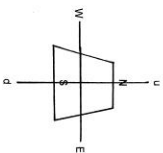
Grade 5 Survey  
Sewanee Mountain Grotto, NSS  
April 10, 2010-April 18, 2010

Jason Hardy  
Kelly Smallwood  
Julie Schenck Brown  
Peter "Madpuppy" Michaud  
Julie Uselson  
Marion O. Smith  
Andy Zeiner

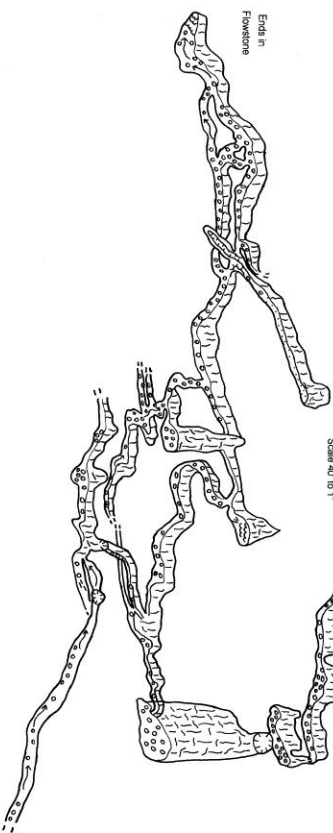


## **Vertical Perspective**

View Angle: 0 degrees  
Vertical Incline: 20 degrees above horizontal



Scale 40' to 1"



## **LEGEND**

- Cross Section
- Small Breakdown
- Big Breakdown
- Ceiling Ledge
- Slope Too Tight
- Passage Height
- Flowing Water
- Cobble Sand
- Floor Ledge
- Fowstone
- Mud
- Standing Water

# Speegle Tilted Tower Cave

Marion County, TN

TMN 461

Total Horizontal Length: 360 Feet  
Total Vertical Extent: 104 Feet

Grade 5 Survey

July 11, 2009; March 13, 2010

Sewanee Mountain Grotto, NSS

Tom Coker

Anne Elmore

Anne Grindle

Blaine Grindle















Peter "Mudpuppy" Michaud

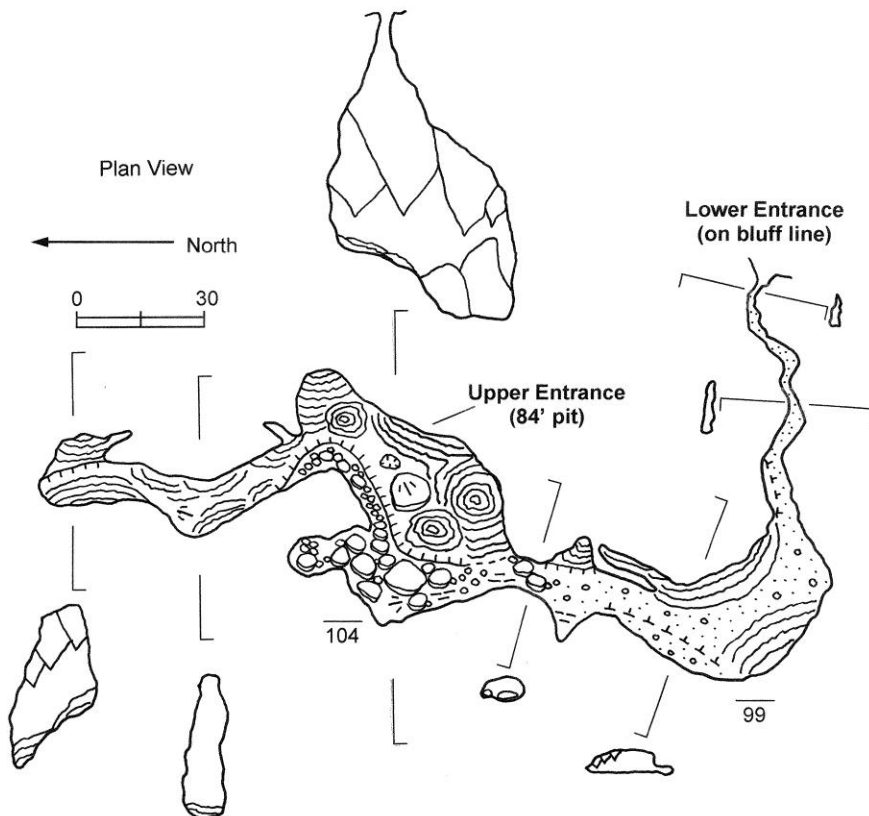
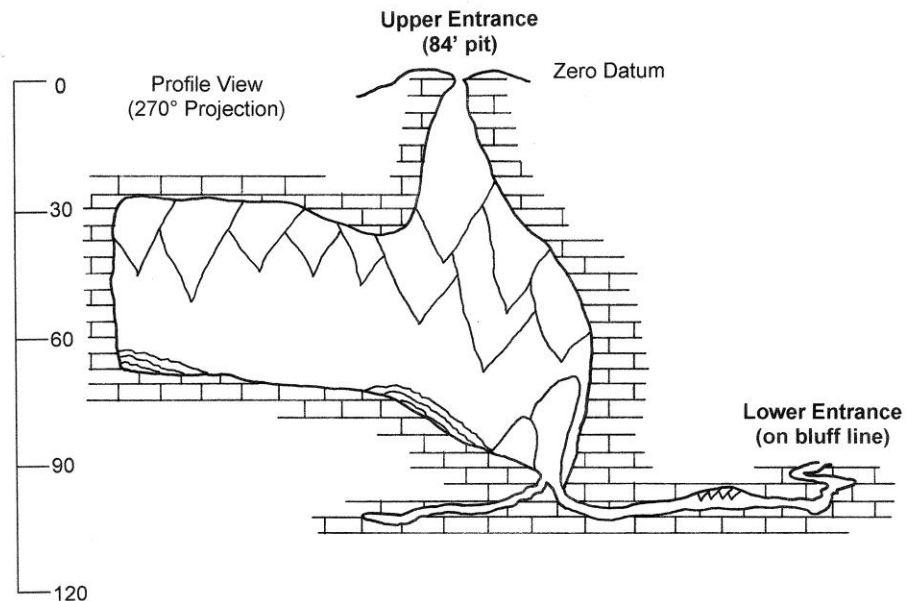
Julie Schenck Brown

Julie Usselton

Bill Walter

## LEGEND

-  Bedrock
-  Breakdown
-  Ceiling Ledges
-  Cross Section
-  99 Depth below datum
-  Dripstone
-  Flowstone
-  Gravel
-  Mud
-  Passage Walls
-  Pit
-  Sand
-  Shelf
-  Slope



difficult" and "I hope the Men don't join us too soon." At the end of the day, my team discovered another pit and set a cairn with flagging tape for The Entourage to locate us. We had fun hiding from the Men and scaring them both into near cardiac arrest. We pondered what waited below the pit and heard their tales of Horror as we gleefully explained our day of strolling borehole.

The next weekend, on April 17<sup>th</sup>, Andy Zellner, Marion O. Smith (The Old Goat), Junior and I continued the survey below the unexplored pit. We had a remarkable day of survey and knew we needed to break the contact layer for the cave to go deep. Unfortunately, our survey led us to a low air space below a flowstone area that appeared impenetrable. Our survey eventually connected back into the flagged cairn that the Bitches had set the week before for Our Entourage of Manly Men. Slowly the survey was coming to an end. Based on Jon Brown's calamity at the entrance while digging open the cave, the Old Goat suggested the entrance pit be called "Jon Brown Did Well" and expressed delight at being included on the survey of virgin cave.

The next day, Junior and I returned to mop up a few side leads, including an in-feeder near the entrance pit and a low stream crawl past a pit that he and Pup had surveyed. The low level lead alternated from a belly crawl in water to hands and knees crawling in water to where it became too tight. As I was on point, I kept telling Junior, "it gets better..." even when it returned to horror, hence the name of the passage. The cave was surveyed to a total length of 2,776 feet and a vertical extent of 189 feet. Regardless of who discovered the cave, the important fact rests with the recognition of the Sewanee Mountain Grotto for surveying another virgin cave and Junior producing a nice map of another hidden gem.

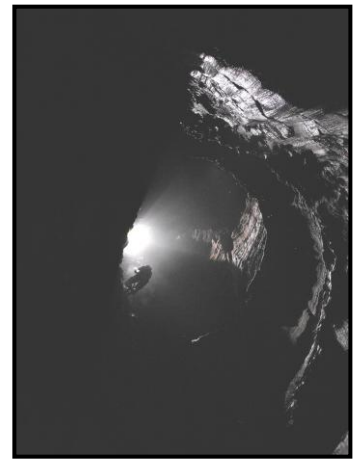
### Solution Rift, Tennessee



Sewanee Mountain Grotto members worked diligently to finish the survey of Solution Rift in 2010. Our final survey trip occurred on September 11th and was dubbed "The Legends Trip" as we celebrated the completion of the survey with three of the original Solution Rift surveyors, including Dan Twilley, Gerald Moni, and Marion O. Smith; also invited on this trip was Avis Moni as all are TAG legends. Our objective was to tie-in from our recoverable station set at the concrete dam and survey to the drip line of the lower entrance. Dan Twilley triumphantly called End of Survey for our grotto, which is 30+ years after the trips where Dan, Marion Smith, Gerald Moni, Jim Smith, Jill Dorman, Stella Twilley, Brad Neff, Susan Neff, Will Chamberlain, ET Davis, Buddy Lane and Sandy Montgomery connected the upper and lower entrances of TAG's most challenging pull down trip and began their survey. At the conclusion of our survey, we made a champagne

toast to the efforts of everyone who has explored and surveyed this cave. Marion suggested the name "Champagne Conclusion" for this section of the survey, which aptly described our celebration. TAG now has another mile long cave (Length: 5,350 feet; Vertical Extent: 429 feet) thanks to the efforts of Sewanee Mountain Grotto.

My sincere appreciation to the following surveyors whose dedication assured the completion of the survey: Nancy Aulenbach (Famous Bitch), Adam Byrd (Rico Suave), Chad Dubuisson, Mike Doughty, Kris Fausnight, Mike Green, Anne Grindle (Skinny Bitch), Blaine Grindle (Brew Master), Jason Hardy (Junior), Angela Morgan (QBU), Peter Michaud (Mudpuppy), Avis Moni (Testosterone Bitch), Gerald



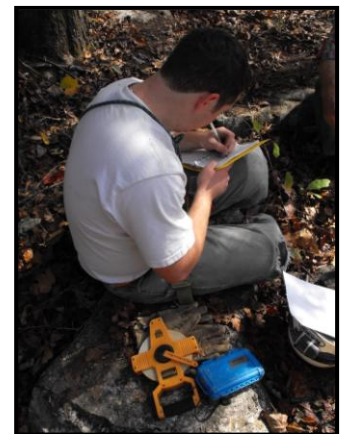
Moni, Mark Ostrander (Warthog), Kelly Smallwood (Photo Bitch), Amy Smith, Teri Stephens (Happy Bitch), Jack Thomison, Dan Twilley, Julie Uelton (Graceful Bitch), Teresa Williams (Knot Bitch) and Andy Zellner. Additional recognition goes to the Dogwood City Grotto who graciously funded a grant to purchase two survey instruments and Keson survey tapes for our survey. Thanks also to the Sewanee Mountain Grotto for providing a grant to Chad Dubuisson to re-bolt the cave; and to Inner Mountain Outfitters for their continued support. I am very proud of our grotto and what we have accomplished! I have enjoyed drafting the map, which is being dedicated to the late Charlie Smith, who graciously allowed us to visit his caves for so many years; a tradition that continues with his adult children, Leanne and LeRoy.

### **Louis & Mark Cave, Tennessee**

We began the survey in April 2009 and found a second drop at the end of the day, deciding to return in the dry season. Our return was delayed as the survey of Solution Rift dominated most of our time in 2010. In September, Junior, Photo Bitch and I finally returned to finish the survey. We had to dig out the second pit and I had to wear an emergency poncho thinking the drop would be dry, as we were back in drought conditions. The dripping of the water on my cheap poncho as we dug open this 26-foot pit inspired the name "Chinese Water Torture." Junior micro-shaved another area, which I was able to penetrate, but it was just a lower level of the main room obscured by breakdown. Thus, after exhausting all leads we called End of Survey. I was pleased to present my cave map to Louis Ross and Mark Butler, who were co-discoverers of this cave and also assisted with the grotto survey.

### **Swell Well, Tennessee**

Although Swell Well is a closed cave, Junior and Photo Bitch met the landowner and were able to gain access for a survey project. Until the survey, the cave had been on the TAG 100+ foot pit list. However, as chronicled in the article by Kelly Smallwood, "One Less 100 footer in Tennessee," published in the *TAG Caver*, Volume 1, Number 2, the entrance pit was taped at 96 feet. Despite the reclassification of this pit, it was great to have the opportunity to survey it and meet the kind acquaintance of the landowner, Mr. Chuck Young who still considers his caves closed, but appreciated Junior's map and photos from our very own Photo Bitch.



### **Bible Springs Cave, Tennessee**

After the grotto finished the survey of Solution Rift, I was thinking of well known TAG caves that still need a map. My attention was drawn to Bible Springs Cave as it is near Charlie Smith's farm, does not have a bad walk and is a horizontal cave that may allow more members to be involved in a grotto survey. Similar to other caves in the area, a survey was begun back in the 1980s, but no map was ever produced. Wm Shrewsbury even led Jon Brown on a re-con survey project back in the 1990s, but the survey was never resurrected.

Our grotto began the survey of Bible Springs cave from zero datum. We even had a new surveyor join us, Ginger Bankston (Spice Bitch), who is very familiar with the cave. My team, which included Photo















# **Louis & Mark Cave** **Marion County, TN** **TMN 470**

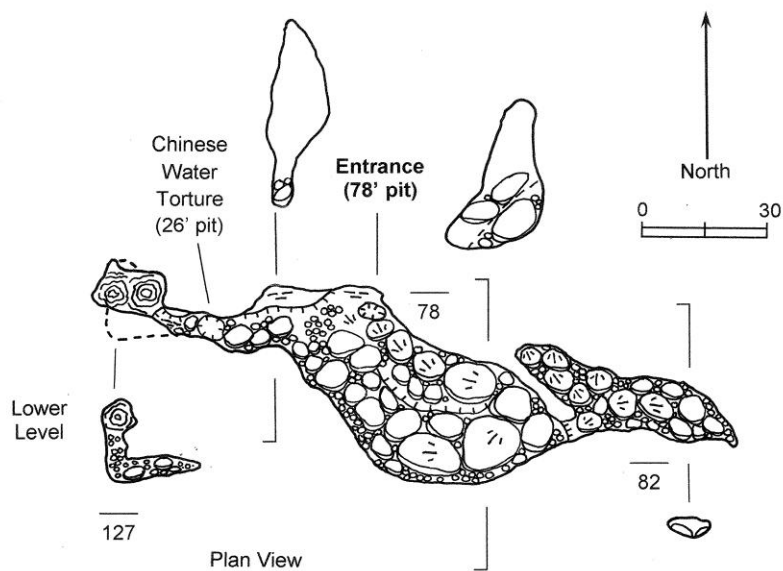
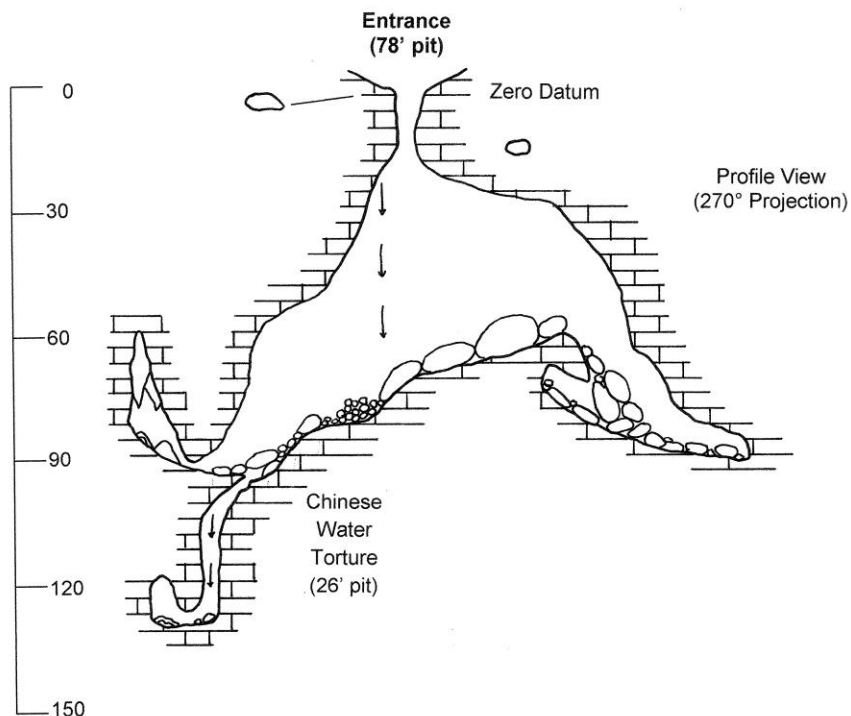
Total Horizontal Length: 350 Feet  
 Total Vertical Extent: 127 Feet

Grade 5 Survey  
 April 26, 2009; September 25, 2010  
 Sewanee Mountain Grotto, NSS

Mark Butler  
 Jason Hardy  
 Maureen Handler  
 Paul Lundberg  
 Peter "Mudpuppy" Michaud  
 Louis Ross  
 Julie Schenck Brown  
 Kelly Smallwood

## **LEGEND**

-  Bedrock
-  Breakdown
-  Cross Section
-  78 Depth below datum
-  Dripstone
-  Flowstone
-  Gravel
-  Mud
-  Underlying Passage
-  Passage Walls
-  Pit
-  Shelf
-  Slope
-  Water



Bitch and Graceful Bitch, began the survey at the drip line. Junior's team, which included QBU and Spice Bitch, headed into the cave to set a recoverable station. As we tied into his survey, we learned that QBU pushed a small side lead that appeared to be going cave. She was kind to give my team that lead as she joined Junior and Spice Bitch through a very muddy loop area. It was a remarkable day of survey and we were all frozen upon our return to the vehicles. I'll never forget Graceful Bitch standing there in her frozen clothes, taking time to clean the grotto's new survey instruments before changing into warm, dry clothes; she was focused on keeping the grotto's gear in top shape.

During our second survey trip, the teams included: Book Bitch, Happy Bitch, Graceful Bitch on a team; Jeff Bartlett and Famous Bitch on a team; and Junior, Photo Bitch and Skinny Bitch on a team. Both Jeff and Junior's team turned around in going passage and we have surveyed the cave to a total length of 3055 feet and a vertical extent of 56 feet. There are no hanging surveys at this time, thanks to everyone's hard work. We still have cave to survey in the spring/ summer when the conditions will be more suitable for pushing leads and Pup can join us!

### Doodlebug-Blowing Cave System, Alabama



This survey project, which is being led by Junior, began on a cold December day high above the valley floor at the entrance to Doodlebug Hole. Junior led a team on Saturday that included Famous Bitch and Photo Bitch; their focus was to begin the survey at the drip line and survey the massive entrance shaft, which actually consists of a series of vertical pits. Andy Zellner entered the cave first to begin rigging the re-belays, while John Stembler (Rocco) and I followed with plans to set a recoverable station below the entrance shaft and begin to survey downstream towards the Blowing Cave entrance. Later in the day after my team set a recoverable station near a climb-down area, we were surprised that Junior's team had not leap-frogged our survey. Retreating back towards the entrance shaft, we encountered Junior's team and learned of their survey into virgin passage, which was still going. Deciding to route, Andy Zellner and I had left gear at the entrance of Doodlebug Hole and climbed back out the pit series, while Rocco agreed to lead the others out through the Blowing Cave entrance.

The next day, Junior and I returned to continue the survey of the entrance pit series with Jim Nichols who was visiting from Alaska, as well as Mark Dickinson a Georgia caver I had recruited to the ranks of the Manly Men. Our objective to survey the virgin leads off the entrance shaft was completed and we were successful in tying in the survey to the recoverable station my team had set the day before. Thus, we would no longer have to hike the ~500 foot elevation gain to Doodlebug Hole. Mark enjoyed his first survey trip and his Entourage name was granted by Graceful Bitch and me during a later trip.

### Conclusion

Many of the maps produced from the caves that were surveyed in 2010 by Sewanee Mountain Grotto will be entered into competition by the cartographers. In addition to the SERA Regional Map Salon, which is traditionally held at the SERA Winter Business Meeting, our maps will also be entered into

competition at the 2011 NSS Convention in Glenwood Springs, Colorado. As cartographers, we want to show other cavers what our grotto is capable of producing as a team.

Although not technically a cave survey, I have to mention how well our grotto teams did during the survey course that was designed by Photo Bitch, Graceful Bitch, Happy Bitch and I for the 2010 SERA Cave Carnival. It was not an easy course, but The Psycho Survey Bitches had a team that included QBU and Knot Bitch, while the Entourage of Manly Men had a team that included Junior and Mudpuppy. I am proud to report that despite the many obstacles, such as magnetic zones, stations set 15+ feet in the air and obstructed by tree limbs, both teams had exactly the same closure error of .31%, which is absolutely amazing if you knew how difficult the course was we had established. Their scores are truly a reflection of their accurate survey skills.

The purchase of new grotto survey instruments in 2010, will also ensure the accuracy of all grotto surveys, as well as improve the quality. In the past, we were limited by ~100 foot survey shots, but actually had 120 foot and 148 foot survey shots, after the purchase of the new Leica Distos. As QBU joked, we will have to draw straws to see who gets to run the new instruments. I know I sure have enjoyed the improved accuracy, especially on LRVDs and splay shots of large rooms.

My sincere appreciation for everyone's assistance with the grotto survey projects; we have a fun time and the grotto should be proud of what we accomplish during our survey projects. I hope more grotto members will join us on grotto survey projects in the New Year. Remember no survey experience is needed, as we are always happy to teach new surveyors; who knows you may even get a coveted "Bitch Name" or "Entourage Nick Name."



# Underground in the UK

Text & Photos by Amy Hinkle

I started my journey on the Internet! The UK cavers have their own forum on [www.ukcaving.com](http://www.ukcaving.com). One post on there and quickly I had many replies on where to go and contacts made and places to stay.

I soon ended up in Mendip which is about a 1.5 hour train ride from London. The cavers there are lovely, and remind me social/personality wise of TAG cavers. I stayed at the Wessex club's caving hut, which is basically a place for cavers to hang out and is heated, hot water for showers, full cooking facilities, and bunk rooms. Bring-your-own-everything but much more comfortable than camping and it gave a very community sense to caving as we all hung out together! Also it designed for cavers – wash area for dirty gear with showers for dirty cavers, and a drying room! This is a standard hut in the UK. We definitely need to import this into the states especially in areas like TAG.

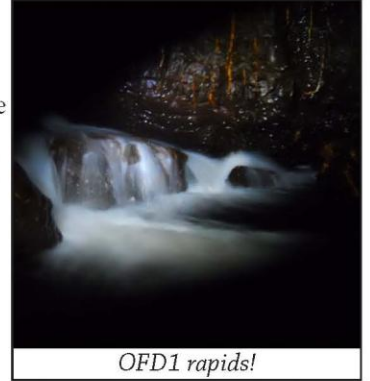
Another fun part of the caving community here are the pubs. In the areas where these huts are, there are often caver pubs – usually owned and run by cavers themselves. I went to the one in Mendip – the Hunter's Lodge aka “The Center of the Universe” – all three nights I was there. They say all cavers pass through it at some point in their life. :)

Enough with the community, let's get underground! Les Williams was kind enough to organize the trips that I went on. He is an awesome person and amazing caver. We didn't call him a buttered cat for no reason! (Confused by the phrase? I was too – but it makes sense – buttered toast if dropped lands butter side down, a cat always lands feet first. So a buttered cat levitates!) Also on the trips were others – Hat Stand, Ferret, and Gnome to name a few. Oh yes, another tradition over here – caver nicknames. Most of them go by it, sometimes exclusively. There is usually a story behind the name.

Back to the caves! The first day we went to Ogof Ffynnon Ddu (OFD - virtual tour <http://ogof.net/>), a huge system in South Wales. There are three parts, OFD1, 2, & 3 (the Welsh are awesome with their names!) which over the years they found the connections. Later, OFD 1.5 was added, which is a dry route from OFD1 to OFD2 – originally only known to connect with

sumps that needed diving to get through.

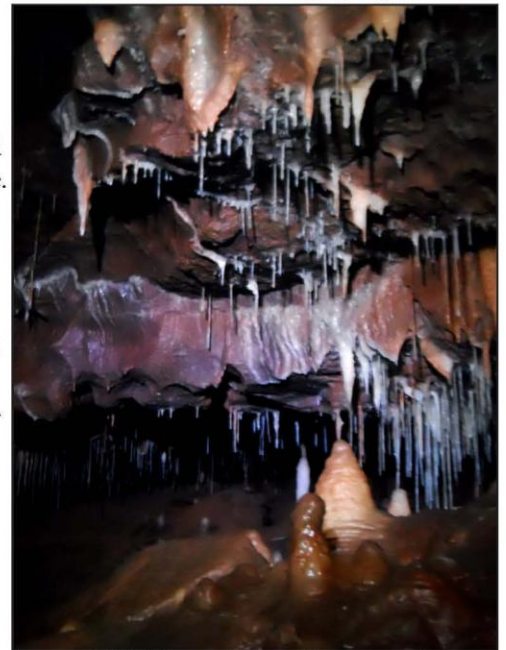
We went on the OFD1 round trip. It's the very wet section of the cave. You go in at the bottom of the system and work your way up the “stream” which I would call more like “rapid-ish small river”. In fact the day we went if the water had been a bit higher (it was up to our knees in low parts, and fast!), Les wouldn't have done that route as it would have been too dangerous to be washed away. Even as it was, the current was strong enough and the water deep enough I slipped a couple times. There are a few deep pots on the way that have metal bars to go across like a balance beam,



OFD1 rapids!

bracing yourself with your hands on the walls. The water levels were so high the bars were submerged on this trip. If you fall in, you're treated to a cold water swim! The cold and wetness is why they use an undersuit (poly fleece) an oversuit (water-proof) and their footwear of choice are Wellies, which look like galoshes but have great traction and often steel toes. Me? They all thought I was “hard” (i.e. tough) to be using my normal gear.

After getting up the streamway and going around for a bit, you hit breakdown - that looks like you can't get past. Actually, you can, and this boulder choke is the start of OFD 1.5. We, however, stopped here and took a break while playing on a boulder that worked like a seesaw. On the loop back, we took a different route, found when the cave flooded trapping people inside. Hence, it's called the Flood Escape Route (like I said, Welsh are great with names!). To go this way though you get to see a room full of various pretties. Then...the dreaded TRAVERSE!



OFD1: Lots of pretty formations!

Even getting to the traverse is tricky – there is basically a slide down for about 10 feet that drops into a very deep hole so you have to be sure to control your slide and miss that, and continue the rest of the slide after the hole. There are lines to hook into so you don't plummet to death, thank God! Now you are finally at the traverse, hook in to the wire cable line and work your way along about an 80 foot long ledge



OFD1: Climbing down into the streamway

only about 2 feet wide, sloped and slick, above the streamway below which is about a 50 foot drop down! Les brought an extra belt and cowstails for me, which I was VERY thankful for. He of course, being a buttered cat and all, did it without.

Then it's easy going for a while, until you hit an area you have to squeezey blind climb back down to the stream about 20 feet. After that, the rest of the cave seems easy and you eventually meet

back up with the same path you came in on close to the entrance. That, in a nutshell, is the OFD1 round trip. Walk back to the car, change into dry clothes, and head over to the Hunter's Lodge for a drink and some food.

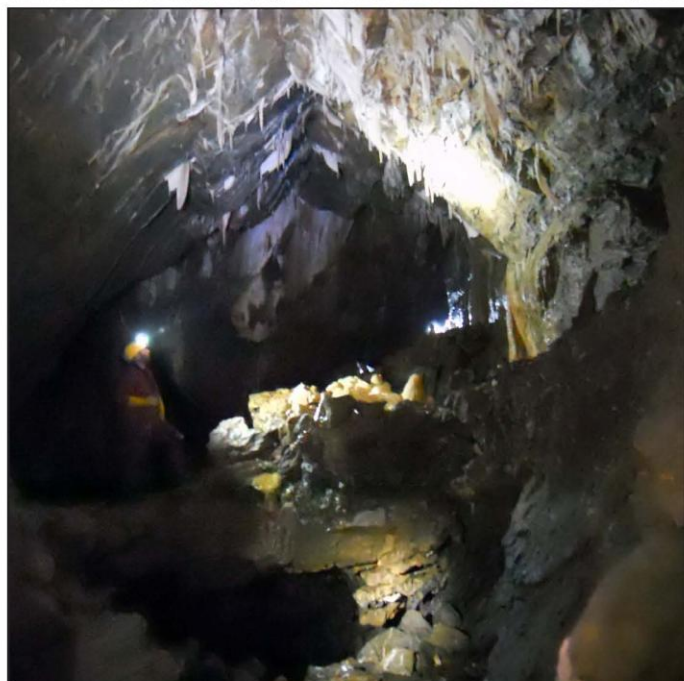
On Sunday, Les took me to GB Cave, and our group was roughly the same as the day before in OFD. I must take a moment to say they were all wonderful. The climbing and confidence and skill needed to do these caves I encountered with them were much more than I've had exposure to yet in the states. Les, Hat Stand, and Gnome in particular were very encouraging and helpful with technique advice.

Right, so, Sunday at GB Cave. It has one of the largest rooms in the UK - to give an idea, a measly Apex wouldn't touch the opposite wall! A lot of cavers here had Scurions and once you see some of these caves you understand why! GB also has a lot of nice formations, stalagmites, stalactites, helictites, soda straws, curtains, flowstone, columns...yup just about everything!

We did a loop trip, stayed on the upper route and then climbed down to the stream. Next, the waterfall! About 30 feet or so, and



OFD1: Back down to the stream



GB: Entrance into the huge room, lots of formations and a bridge, walk across for the top route or walk underneath for the bottom route



GB: Huge room - two Scurions plus my Corona, and still this is all you can see. The person is on the right wall, the darkness goes much deeper.

you freeclimb it. The climb actually isn't that technically difficult, you can get up about halfway on the side of it out of the water and it's not that steep. However, then it gets tricky, as you



GB: Some various pretties

have to cross through the falls about 20 feet up - and there are good holds but you can't see them as you have water pouring down on top of you. Time for belay again! Although, I ended up not needing it at all and Les was right as always - it was a lot easier than it looks. That was another great thing about him - he was always spot on with difficulty level and what was needed gear-wise.

So, got up the falls and then it was some breakdown climbing ("bouldering" in British English) and a walk out. Changed by the roadside to dry clothes in the freezing air - there was frost on the ground and it was dark already - and went to where else? Yup, Hunter's Lodge!

Since it was Sunday most went home. After all, they had to work and go back to the daily grind, including Les. So for Monday I had another trip planned with Burt. I had yet to meet Burt but from the forum he seemed like a cool frood who knew where his towel was. It was just the two of us so he set up a call-out, giving us four hours to be in Swildon's Hole. Now, Swildons is a classic Mendip trip I am told, a baptism, a right of passage, sort of cave to do. You are not truly a Mendip caver until you have done it. This cave proved to be harder for me than even OFD, but Burt luckily was just as nice, helpful, and prepared as Les had been and I knew it would be a fun trip! Originally we were going to do the short round, but didn't have quite enough time so we did the trip to Sump 1 and back.

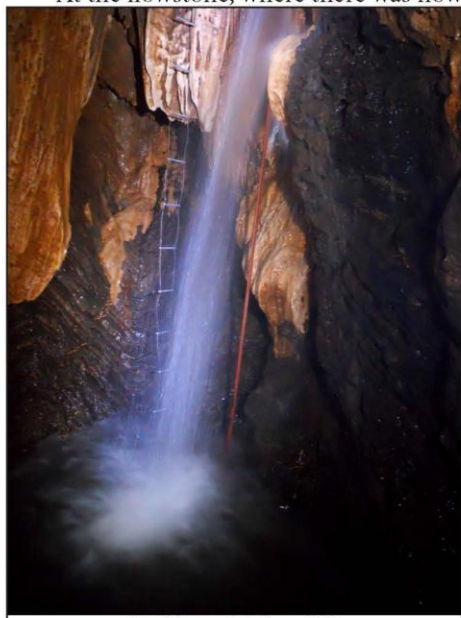


*Swildons: working my way down the crevice*

sticks out in my head is an area that you have to straddle - pushing your back against one side and feet out in front of you to the other scooting your way across about 20 feet across and 15 feet down. If you go down too fast, well, you'll just get stuck! After you get down you're in the stream and there are pots that form at the base of some waterfalls ranging 5-8 feet. There were multiple levels of climbing like this. The pots you can jump into off the falls - if you know which ones are deep enough like the Twin Pots.

The second main obstacle is the 20 foot falls. You need a ladder for this climb. We continued on until we reached Sump 1. Sump 1 you can freedive, it's about 4-5 feet long and about 2 feet high, there is a line to follow through it. Not hard! We headed back out though. Going back up the ladder was effort - it rested against the flowstone at the top so you couldn't get at the rungs, and I ended up having a lot of problems between that and the fact that the rungs were too far apart for me - I could only get one foot and hand on it at a time. At the flowstone, where there was nowhere else for me to grab,

my arms went totally limp with the struggle which let me tell you is the scariest thing I've experienced - I couldn't make them work at all. Yay for being on belay and Burt got a 2:1 pulley rigged on it to help haul me up the last few feet. It took about a half hour for me to get sensation back to the point I could use them. My spirits were still high though and Burt and I were laughing and joking the whole way out. In fact,



*Swildons: 20 foot falls*

The start of Swildons is small and crawlly with some climbing. There are some areas with formations but not to the extent that OFD or GB had. The first obstacle that



*Swildons: 8 foot falls*

I fell into a pot! I thought we were at a deep one and I asked, "Hey, this is a deep one, right?" and Burt replied "Nah you can step into it!" I took a step and Fomph! right in I fell. I looked up and there was Burt with a Cheshire Cat grin on his laughing face! According to tradition, falling into the Double Pots in Swildons makes you a "Truly baptized son of Mendip". So there you have it. I'm a real Mendip caver now. :)

The next stop on the caving bit of my UK trip was to a limestone mine outside of Edinburgh. I lack any photos from this, and honestly after Mendip I was bored doing a straight walk and if you see 10 feet of the mine you've seen the whole mine.

So off to the Yorkshire Dales. The Dales has the best vertical caving in the UK. However, I had very little vertical training, and I warned them of this ahead of time. I was promptly picked up by Terry from the Bradford Pothole Club at the train station, quickly arrived at Brackenbottom (club hut, aka "The Dump") As I quickly got my stuff together I noticed there was vertical gear on the floor. I

enquired what it was for, and learned it was for me! Ohshit. I reiterated my lack of training and noted additionally I am not familiar at all with their system for vertical either. I was assured it was an easy 15ft drop. But, on the long hike up the mountain to the entrance of Heron Pot I learn it's two drops, of about 25 & 40 feet. The start of the first is a bit tricky - a boulder to get around and a squeeze (in fact, on this trip one guy broke his rib here getting caught up on the boulder).



*Heron Pot: watery crawl under flowstone*

I put my foot down and refused to do it despite their encouraging to just do it! I did the horizontal part of the cave which is squeeze walking and crawling in the water for the most part, going down towards that first drop and then turning around and going back out.

The Dales part of the trip was very unorganized (I think there was communication disconnect within the BPC) and it ended up I had no-one around for the rest of my stay there and hence no more caving. Luckily, One Amp was kind and got me in touch with Joe who eventually picked me up to stay at his place and we went to another caver's place - Steph's - for dinner and hanging out. Hopefully next time I can cave more with them.

Overall, UK cavers are awesome and accommodating and very friendly and hilariously funny! I highly recommend the UK!

For more photos check out [www.flickr.com/sunguramy](http://www.flickr.com/sunguramy)

## Stepping Into the Darkness

By Karen Murphy

It is intimidating looking into the darkness, as you sit on the edge gazing in. For the expected quickly turns into the unexpected.

Physically.....

You have to be prepared...but you never can be fully ready for the experience. No matter how much you exercise and strengthen your body, it will never be completely ready for what you are about to endure. You WILL pay the price for this trip. You will stumble. You will fall. You will come out battered, bruised and beaten. Your muscles will scream at you. Scrapes, gashes and cuts will be an accessory for the coming weeks.

Mentally....

You have no choice....you have to be on top of your game. Every move of the hand must be considered, as well as every step of the foot.... as you pass into the darkness.

There is absolutely no room for error. In fact, the mental intensity overwhelms all other thoughts.

That is one of the appeals of the venturing into the darkness. Nothing can be brought into this place. Every problem, every stressor, every other person in the world must disappear for the time being. That is the necessity of these trips.....a mental cleansing. A chance to wipe the slate clean, for the day.....a forced release of anything that hinders pure concentration.

The Darkness.....

It is nothing like you have ever experienced. A darkness that could only be matched by what you would see if you could see with your physical eyes after death.

Even the blind may have a more complete sense of vision than this darkness. For with them, their other senses compensate, to a degree, so there is some sense of direction. They can feel the warmth of the sun on their skin to know night from day, but there is no sense of time here. No sun to warm the skin.

The Silence.....

You are entombed in the darkness.

There is no sound.

A deaf person could hear more, for they can sense the vibrations of the surrounding environment. There are no vibrations here. Nothing moves, at least, you hope and you pray that nothing moves.

If you sit still enough.....you can hear your own heart beat....silence.

## The Smell.....

It is a heavenly scent. Breathe it in it will be a smell that you do not encounter anywhere except for in the darkness. It is the kind of smell that saturates the memory, until the time comes for it to be experienced again.

## The Feel.....

It is hard.

Rough, to the touch.

There is nothing soft about the darkness.

No warm places to keep hypothermia from setting in.

No soft places to rest your body during the journey.

Sometimes, it reaches out and scrapes you...bruises you...if you let your guard down. Your mental awareness is your only protection from the feeling of the darkness.

## The Trip Through....

You will climb.

You will crawl on your knees, your stomach, at times unable to use your legs...because there is just not enough room to draw them up into a crawling position....so you walk on your elbows, dragging your legs behind you.

Sometimes you resort to slithering.

Sometimes you resort to crawling on your side, because your knees and elbows have become intolerably painful.

You spend most of your time, bent over, in attempts to keep your feet in the right place.

You will be squeezed and contorted into positions you thought your body could not make.

If you are lucky, the darkness will afford you a walk, it may be a short walk, but you take it with gratitude...for walking upright is rare and your body is grateful.

....but the journey is worth it.

You make the best of friends here. And you keep them close by, because their life may depend on you. Your life may depend on them.

You will never make this journey alone. You will always have a team. Someone will always have your back. Someone will always have food, water and clothing that they will be willing to share if you are ill prepared, because when you step into the darkness with these people....you operate as one. You drink from the same cup as a complete stranger. You will never, ever be alone. Never left behind. Never invisible. If one person falls short....the team/friends/family of the darkness all suffer together.

There will be no suffering, for this is our fun! This is how we have chosen to spend our day. Slipping into the underworld....a place for the brave of heart. A place for those with a sense of unyielding adventure. One of the last, great, minimally explored places to seek adventure, in a hed environment.



## Noteworthy Waterfall Hike in TAG By Kelly Smallwood

Little River Canyon National Preserve  
Fort Payne, Alabama  
Number of Waterfalls = 3  
Easy to Moderate Hikes

*Little River Falls (Photo by Kelly Smallwood)*



*Rappelling at Weaver (Photo by Darien Dopp)*

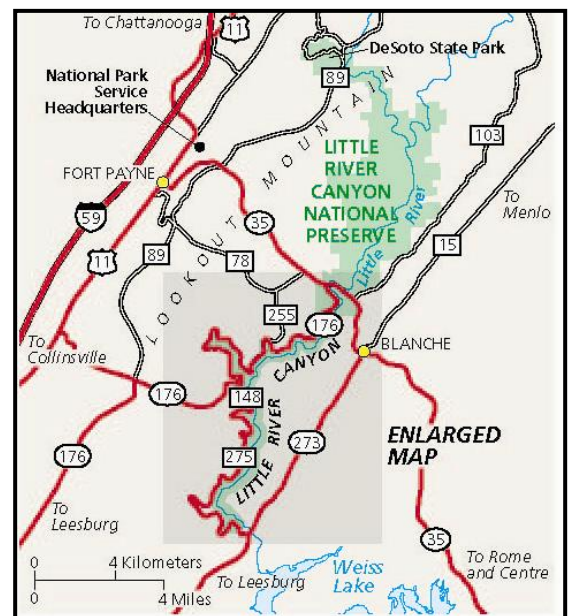
Little River is very unique, not only because it is an extraordinary natural feature in Alabama but because it forms and flows for almost all of its entire length on the top of Lookout Mountain. Over eons of time, Little River has carved out one of the South's deepest canyons as it winds its way from headwaters in Georgia, losing approx 1,250 feet of elevation along the way, to its end at Weiss Lake in Alabama. The river forms an extensive canyon and gorge system that is up to 600 feet deep, has massive sandstone bluffs and large rock outcroppings. It is also considered as one of the South's cleanest waterways.

For centuries Little River and its canyon have provided resources as well as a place of enjoyment for those who visit. Legend has it that even a minor Civil War skirmish occurred near the rim of the canyon. It is here that the river plunges off the Cumberland Plateau creating a spectacular waterfall in the winter months and a nice place to cool off for locals during the summer.

In 1969, the Alabama Legislature designated the section south of the SR-35 bridge to the rim of the canyon as a State Wild & Scenic River. In 1991, the Alabama Environmental Management Commission designated it as an Outstanding National Resource Water and then later in 1992 nearly 14,000 acres surrounding the river were designated as a National Preserve. This was established to protect and preserve the natural, scenic, recreational and cultural resources of the area and to provide for public enjoyment of those resources for many generations to come.

All kinds of enthusiasts enjoy Little River Canyon. The preserve offers hiking, kayaking, rock climbing, rappelling, bird watching and sightseeing. Everyone who visits the canyon enjoys its natural beauty. Access to Little River Canyon National Preserve is off of SR-35 near Fort Payne, Alabama. From I-59, exit #222 and follow US-11 to SR-35 up to the top of Lookout Mountain. Once at the top follow SR-35 for about 5 miles until you reach the canyon day use areas on your right.

Little River Canyon Rim Parkway, also known as State Route 176, forms a 22-mile scenic drive following the 16-mile long Little River Canyon National Preserve. It is along this route that you will find many of the canyon overlooks and hiking trails. Along this road you will also be able to see two of the three major waterfalls that Little River boasts. The waterfalls are: DeSoto Falls, Little River Falls and Grace's High Falls. You can find



Desoto Falls by traveling CR-89 north off of SR-35, pass Desoto Falls State Park and continue on 89 until you reach CR-614. Turn right and go to the end. DeSoto State Park is operated by the Alabama State Park System and is located within the preserve boundaries. Here you can go swimming in the river, have a picnic, enjoy the waterfall or even rappel. If you are interested in rappelling here please make sure you stop by the State park office and pick up a permit (free of charge and is good for a few months). The park also offers a lodge, restaurant, several campgrounds, and other facilities.

Little River Falls is the first overlook along 176. You can also view the waterfall by using the day use parking area on the East side of the bridge at SR-35. Grace's High Falls is the 6<sup>th</sup> overlook along the route and it plunges into Bear Creek which leads to the canyon. It is highly seasonal, and is Alabama's highest waterfall at 133 feet.



At the 7<sup>th</sup> overlook, Eberhart Point, you will find the most convenient point for descents to the bottom of the Canyon. From here you will follow a short but steep eroded path. This path is the remnants of a vehicle access way which was constructed during the course of a ski-lift and amusement park project which the State of Alabama permitted a private Fort Payne businessmen to undertake in the late Sixties. The project was abandoned although visitors may still see associated debris in Pine Tree Hole, at the bottom of the canyon. Once at the bottom you will also find a few deep pools of water that would be perfect for a hot summer day. You can hike upstream to see superb views of the canyon and even hike over to Bear Creek for a view of Grace's High Falls in the winter. If you head downstream you will encounter an unmaintained but fairly well-defined trail which proceeds approximately eight miles to the canyon mouth. During the wet season, the

river is popular with whitewater enthusiasts who are willing to carry their vessels down to Pine Tree Hole. Please note, camping is not currently permitted in the Canyon.

The 8<sup>th</sup> overlook, Weaver, is the final before the road continues to the Canyon Mouth Park. You will not find a sign or a trail leading to this overlook as it is non-developed. While it is not the only place you are allowed to rock climb and rappel in the canyon, rock climbers and cavers prefer this area because it is the highest climbing point in the canyon at approx 180 feet. There are also bolts for rigging ropes at this overlook. No permit is required to rappel or rock climb in the canyon however please note the installation or replacement of any permanent climbing hardware is prohibited without a permit from the National Park Service. The NPS also asks that you pad any trees you use.



*Cavers Rappelling at Weaver Overlook  
(Photo by Darien Dopp)*

## Holiday Cards for TAG Landowners

By: Julie E. Schenck Brown, NSS 30493

Landowners are the special people who allow us to pursue our passion, exploring and documenting caves. As we share our passion for discovery with landowners, a special bond of friendship is developed. In many cases, it can be considered a true privilege to know landowners as they share memories about their past discoveries and we share information about our current projects.

In order to thank TAG landowners for their kindness, generosity and friendship, the Sewanee Mountain Grotto mails holiday cards in the month of December. During the 2010 Holiday season, a card featuring a photo from Kelly Smallwood was used on the grotto cards. The photo displayed a delicate formation that looks like a hummingbird and had the caption, "Thank-you for your kindness to cavers, The Sewanee Mountain Grotto." Cards were sent to:

The family of Charlie Smith who own multiple caves in Fiery Gizzard Cove, Tennessee  
Landowner of Snake's Well Complex, Tennessee; daughter of the late Mrs. Martin who owned Martin Springs High Hole and other area caves  
Landowners of Green's Well, Alabama  
Landowners of Blue Spring Cave, Tennessee  
Landowners that allow parking to access the Penitentiary Pit, Alabama  
Landowner of Monteagle Saltpeter Cave, Tennessee  
Landowner of Water Works Cave, Tennessee  
Landowner of DePriest Branch Cave, Tennessee  
Landowner of McBride Cave, Alabama  
Landowner of Lynch Pit, Tennessee  
Landowner of Paul's Cave, Alabama (closed cave)  
Landowner of Trout Cave, Tennessee  
Landowner of Rebel Cave, Tennessee (closed cave)  
Landowner of the Doodlebug Hole-Blowing Cave System, Alabama  
Landowner in Sequatchie Valley, Tennessee  
Landowner of Scottsboro Mountain, Alabama, who allows cavers to camp for free  
Landowner of Swell Well, Tennessee and other nearby pits (closed caves)  
Management of Cumberland Caverns; allow the grotto to schedule wild cave tours

This list is only but a fraction of the landowners that we have the honor of knowing and I hope it continues to grow with each passing year. Cards are sent to any TAG cave landowner with a complete mailing address; whether or not the cave is open. In addition, the grotto received a holiday card from Mr. Jack Lynch, owner of Lynch Pit, who has been a long time friend to our grotto. It is featured below for all grotto members to enjoy.



*Merry Christmas*

The angel said unto them,  
"Fear not: for, behold, I bring  
you good tidings of great joy."  
LUKE 2:10 KJV

*At Christmas and always,  
praying your heart and home  
will be filled with all the joy  
that knowing JESUS brings.*

*Wishing a happy holiday to  
all of you -  
Jack Lynch*

*Above: Christmas Card from Jack Lynch to the Grotto  
Below: Card from the SKTF for our donation in 2010*



Thank you for your  
contribution to SKTF.  
Your generous gift  
will be well used for  
the purpose of  
cleaning karst land  
and caves.  
Thank you,  
SKTF

3952 S.W. 97th Dr.  
Gainesville, FL 32608

Dec. 15, 2010

Ms. Kelly Smallwood  
P.O. Box 107  
Lithia Springs, GA 30122-0000

Dear Kelly:

I don't think we have ever met, but I feel I know you quite well from the emails that preceded the final copy of the TAG CAVER. We received the copies yesterday and have made distribution of them already.


We well remember when Caving was the main focus of Will's spare time. He was living in the right area at the right time. We most vividly recall the time he was in the cave trapped by water. Somehow we were told of his location and predicament. We were in Atlanta at the time but I called to notify the sheriff of the locale of this cave. Will was terribly upset when he found out our concern!

Please accept the enclosure for postage or whatever.

I am sending you a small token of our appreciation for your efforts to put this TAG issue together with the remembrances of Will and his caving days.

If you are ever down this way, down I-75, we are not far from an interchange, and good eating places, so plan to stop and break bread with us.

Sincerely,



George and Annette Chamberlin  
(352/332-5177)  
geewcee@bellsouth.net

\*The above letter was received from the Chamberlin family after Kelly sent them copies of our newsletter that included the tribute to their son, Will Chamberlin. Enclosed with the letter was a check for \$25. Kelly donated the \$25 to the Sewanee Mountain Grotto in Will's memory at the January meeting.



## Help Protect Neversink! New Policies at the Neversink Preserve

by Alan Cressler

(Picture of Andy Zellner taken By Teresa Williams Benamy)

The Southeastern Cave Conservancy purchased Neversink in 1995 and it has since become a favorite destination for cavers and outdoor enthusiasts. It's difficult to say how many people have visited Neversink since the SCCi purchased the property, but over the last fifteen years, increased visitation has negatively impacted the pit. Several trees on the east side of the pit, once used as rig points, have died and fallen in the pit. There is bare ground in the high-use areas; soil washes into the pit during rain events because there is no stabilizing vegetation. New rigging areas have developed in the last few years, further impacting vegetation around the pit.

The caving community really cares about the health of Neversink. To address some of the problems at Neversink, the SCCi board adopted a modified management plan in January 2011. There are some changes that will mildly affect the caving community but will hopefully aid in the rehabilitation of this beautiful feature

The Neversink management team is going to ask the caving community for help. Scheduled work days will begin in early 2011. We will plant native vegetation and trees in the bare ground areas and continue trail maintenance. Invasive plants need to be removed near the parking area.

The biggest change is regarding rigging. Trees will no longer be used for rigging. This activity is killing them. Instead, two permanent rig areas have been established. Each permanent rigging area consists of two bolts. This is where the caving community will have to adjust. If the two rig areas are in use, the next party must wait until one of the rig areas is not in use, or return at a later time. The rig areas are first come, first serve. If the rig areas are in use, you may NOT rig to a tree.

In the near future, we will install signs around sensitive areas or areas we're trying to revegetate to indicate areas where you should not walk. Hopefully this will allow newly planted vegetation to re-establish. If you would like to review the new management plan it is posted on the Neversink Preserve page at <http://scci.org/Preserves/neversink/neversink.html>.

If You have any questions or comments, you can contact the property management team, Alan Cressler and Jim Hall, at [neversink@scci.org](mailto:neversink@scci.org). Thank you all in advance for your help in preserving and protecting this beautiful pit! You can visit [www.scci.org](http://www.scci.org) for more information about how to join the SCCI and their preserves.

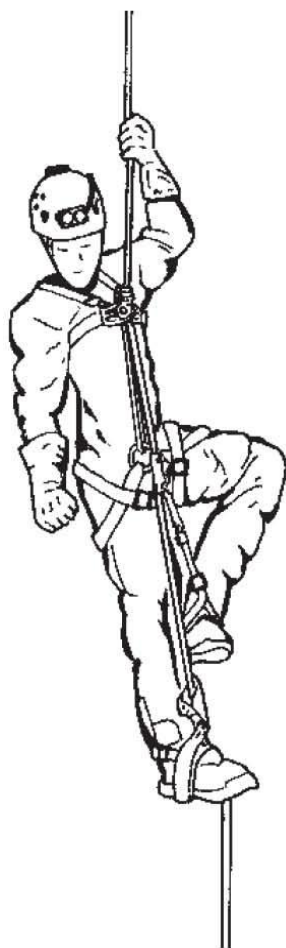
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website and  
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## Trip report to Main Well: A combination of SMG, DCG, and Nashville Grottoes By Blaine Grindle

Anne and Blaine Grindle, Brent and Nancy Aulenbach, Doug Strait, Paul Aughey, Benjy Von Cramon, and Stephen Collins July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2006. Doug has had a long standing invitation from Anne to come up and do Main Well since it is very pretty, nearby and he has never done that cave. Doug emailed us saying that Nancy had put together a trip to Thundermaker; but had run into access issues, so he was seeing if they would like to do Main Well instead. So right away our trip had grown from 3 to 8! We gathered Sat morn on our back porch to put together ropes and plan our trip. John Attaway generously let us park at his house.

Down the mountain and into the cave. As we bunched up at the second drop (I got there last of course), I heard the famous last words from Doug "ok Blaine and Anne go ahead and guide us through the cave". Yikes!, I replied that you pretty much just follow the stream and I would bring up the rear since I usually wind up there anyway. As we were bunched up at the third drop, Doug casually wondered how many times Anne and I had been to the cave (since Anne had invited him to visit said cave he believed we went there all the time)! I said that Anne had been twice and I once! Ah the buffoonery begins! Here we are in charge of the trip and Anne had never been past the third drop and I past the fourth!! The word panic comes to mind; but then I remembered that Brent and Nancy had visited the cave only 13 years ago. So off we went armed with some directions that Andy Zellner had emailed Doug, we set off to bottom the cave. No wonder Doug was suspicious when I couldn't describe the fifth drop except to say that I had heard it was a bit drippy!

At the bottom of the fourth drop we split up into two groups; one to rig the 90 footer, the other to climb the flowstone slope down the other side through the passage to the bottom (true bottom) of the cave. All that is except Paul. No one seemed to know where Paul was, except that he had the rope for the 90 footer. So Brent, Nancy and Stephen set off for the 90 and the rest of us climbed the flowstone. As we approached the fixed rope at the end of the passage past the flowstone climb, Anne said she would wait at the bottom of the fourth drop and look for fossils. I ascended the rope to tell Doug and Benjy about Anne and my plan to go back and wait with her, except I never caught up with them until after the 60 footer, as they rigged the 50? foot pit to get off at a ledge 35' down. The way on was to proceed around the ledge to a 13' handline that was so muddy we had to rappel it! So down the handline and into the passage, regroup with

Paul, down some more climbs and a good bit of passage. At this point we decided to turn around (Doug and I) so that our plan of each group getting to do both bottom trips would not hit any snags. We met up with the other group at the 35' ledge point. As I was climbing the rope my foot ascender jammed so bad from the mud that I couldn't free it. So I change over to the rack only to hear the plink, plink of my brake bars dropping off the rack and into the bottom of the pit! The horror! The locking nut on my rack is gone, nothing to hold the bars on my rack except my muddy hand (yep I lost that glove somewhere). OK refocus rappel down climb up, get out of the way of everybody else and do it all again. Back at the bottom of the fourth drop we discover that the other group didn't get to do the 90' pit because Paul (remember we couldn't locate Paul) had the rope pad and there was a definite rub point and since it was a 10mm rope they wisely passed. Well Paul had caught us back at the top of the 60' pit and he and Doug set off to do the 90' pit. I decided not to since I was down to 4 bars and no way to keep them on the rack anyway. So off to find Anne and avoid any log jams, Benjy ahead of me and Doug and Paul still somewhere behind (they caught up at the third drop) and Brent, Nancy and Stephen volunteered to derig on their way out. So I found Anne at the bottom of the second drop but where was Benjy? We decided he must be ahead since Anne had been in a side passage.

On to the bottom of the entrance drop Anne climbing out 1st and here comes Benjy, Doug and Paul. Go figure. There is plenty of cave in this one to poke around in whether you want to or not! Everybody out to wait on the last three with all the ropes, finally, just before dark here they come. I volunteer to wait for them to come on up since my rope is rigged for the entrance drop. We get the pleasure of walking out in the dark. As we near the top of the mountain, we see that John and the welcoming committee including Pup have turned on every light in his house to guide us up. Oh Joy! Brent displaying his razor wit shouts out "Hey, can you shine us a light over here"! As we change clothes and have a cold one (thanks Pup) Doug asks Nancy "well you said you wanted a real caving trip. Did you get it?" Nancy sums it up with "Oh yeah this was a real caving trip!"

Blaine.

# TOP TEN REASONS TO KNOW YOU HAVE BEEN WORKING IN THE DESERT TOO LONG

(AKA the Mojave Shuffle)

By Mudpuppy

#10, If ever in doubt, see number 1.

#9, You always wonder if it can get any hotter, windier or colder.

#8, Loose count of the number of times you got poked by a cactus or any other desert plant. The same goes for cuts, bruises and the occasional smashed finger.

#7, Go thru a dozen pairs of gloves in seven months.

#6, You get knocked into a cactus from the rotor wash of a helicopter.

#5, Your job box gets launched down a 600 foot deep ravine by the same rotor wash as before.

#4, You could care less as your stomach feels like it is up in your throat as the helicopter loses ground effect coming over a ridge top.

#3, You almost get killed by a huge rock and the state of California wants to use the video for safety training.

#2, You handle the same piece of steel at least 8 times before it is finally cut and welded into place.

#1, Work harder, not smarter!

Seriously, it was a great crew. We worked under some extreme conditions. Up to 110 degrees, down to 15 degrees and the wind, relentless. Like a blow torch in the heat and stinging cold in the winter. Many hours of driving every day over rough terrain, many times changing flats because of it. At the April Grotto meeting I will have a power point of some of our adventures.

P.S. It good to be home!



PAGE 4 OF

DATE 2/19/11

SKETCHER J. Hardy

STATION	SEWANEE MOUNTAIN GROTTO			←	→	↑	↓	NOTES
	DISTANCE	AZIMUTH	VERTICAL					
B41		FS 75	FS +4	X	X	X	X	on other Page
	19.65	BS 255	BS -4	10	10/20	2	0/4	Cairn on ledge
B42		FS 53	FS -2.3					
	25.1	BS 33	BS +2.3	0/3	8/14	3	7	on Left Ledge
B43		FS 88	FS -0.7					
	22.42	BS 268	BS +0.7	5/12	3	0/4	2.5	on Formation in crawl
B44		FS 76	FS -13.8					
	24.06	BS 256	BS +13.8	2	P	2.5	0/1	on the ground in flowstone
B45		FS 55	FS +2.7					
	16.4	BS 235	BS -2.7	0.5	5	0/2	4	on white flowstone
B46		FS 145	FS -0.7					
	20.95	BS 325	BS +0.7	3	2	6	3	On Flowstone
B47		FS 194	FS -1.1					
	24.4	BS 14	BS +1.1	0.4	5	0.5/1.5	0/1.3	Small Rock on Left Ledge
B48		FS 144	FS +7.5					
	12.35	BS 324	BS -7.5	1.5	1.5	0/2	3	On Formation on ceiling
B49		FS 210	FS -2.3					
	33.05	BS 30	BS +2.3					
B50		FS	FS					
		BS	BS					
		FS	FS					
		BS	BS					
		FS	FS					
		BS	BS					
		FS	FS					
		BS	BS					
		FS	FS					
		BS	BS					
Shut up and survey!								