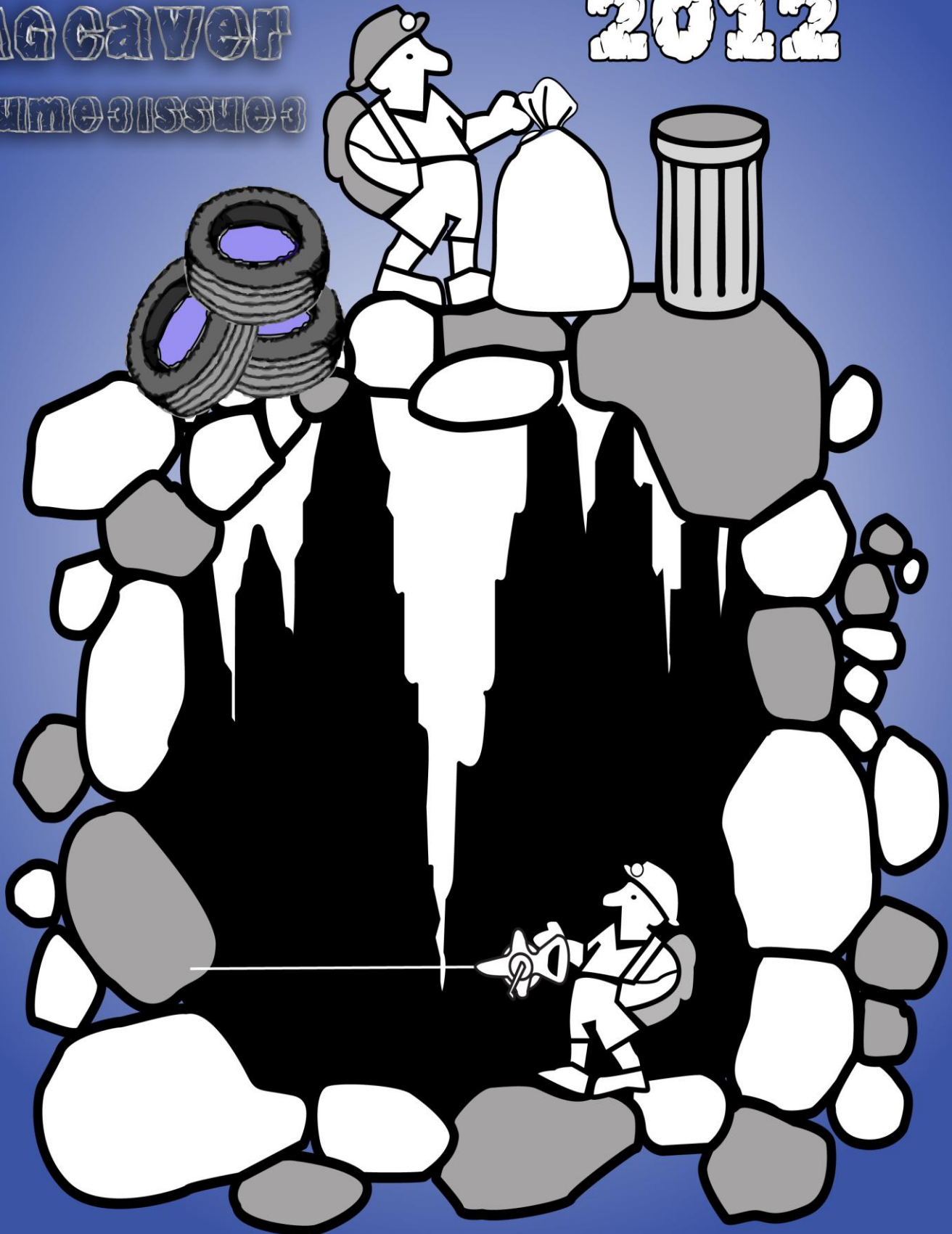


CAVEFEST

2012

TAGCAVER

VOLUME 3 ISSUE 3



SEWANEE MOUNTAIN GROTTO

TAG Caver ~ Volume 3 Issue 3

FALL 2012 – SPECIAL ISSUE

SEWANEE MOUNTAIN CAVE FEST

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 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/>

2012 Sewanee Mtn Grotto Officers:

Chairperson: Jason Hardy
Vice Chair & Programs: Maureen Handler
Treasurer: Blaine Grindle
Secretary: Kelly Smallwood
Member at Large: Bambi Dunlap
Conservation Chair: Maureen Handler
Webmaster: Tina O'Hailey
Trip Coordinator: _____

TAG Caver Editors:

Kelly Smallwood
Rowland7840@bellsouth.net
Jason Hardy
wmjhardy@yahoo.com

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



Calendar of Events
Schedule of Events
Welcome to Cave
Fest
Who We Are
TAG Brewery

Thank you to our
Vendors
100+ Footers of
Marion County

Front Cover:

Sewanee Mountain Cave Fest 2012

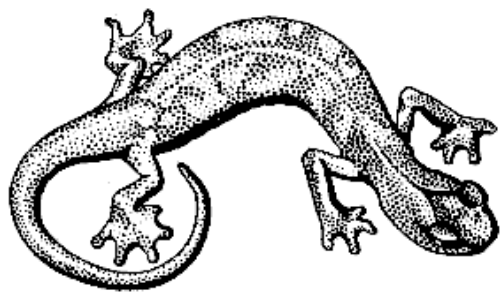
Design by Marissa Lasso

Back Cover:

Recycle a can, Save a Cave

Design by Kelly Smallwood

Calendar of Upcoming Events



September 8th – SMG Meeting at Maureen's Campground. 485 Wild Heart Lane, Sewanee, TN 37375. Potluck dinner 6pm, followed by meeting at 7pm.

October 4th – 7th – 35th annual TAG Fall Cave In. Pre registration ends September 1st. Cost is \$37 at the door. Visit <http://tagfallcavein.org/> for more info. Online registration is open..!

October 13th – SMG meeting at John McMacken's cabin on the mountain (next door to John Attaway). Potluck dinner 6pm, followed by meeting at 7pm.

November 10th – SMG meeting at Blaine & Anne Grindle's. Potluck dinner 6pm, followed by meeting at 7pm.

December 8th – SMG meeting at Maureen Handler's house on the mountain. Potluck dinner 6pm followed by meeting at 7pm. Dirty Santa to follow the meeting. Gift limit \$10.

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.



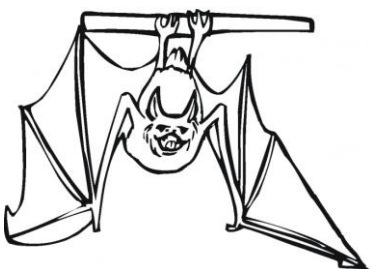
Sewanee Mountain Remailer

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/ 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 ~ Grotto Merchandise

The Grotto has Baseball Hats for \$15, 14oz mugs for \$5 and 3' patches for \$5. All items have our grotto logo on them. Please contact Kelly Smallwood at rowland7840@bellsouth.net to purchase any of these items.



THE TAG SCOOP

Thank you to everyone who has come out to support our annual fundraising event, Sewanee Mountain Cave Fest!

*You can download an updated Membership List from the Yahoo Group.

*Membership dues are \$10. 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 Sewanee Mountain Grotto, 482 Wild Heart Lane, Sewanee, TN 37375. Make sure you include your contact information (name, address, phone number & email address) & your NSS number.



Schedule of Events



Friday

All Day – Caving!!

Dark 30 – Popcorn & a Movie

“Sanctum”, Campfire
& Beer



Saturday

All Day – Caving!

6:00PM – Canoe Trip to Nickajack
Cave to see the Bat Flight

Dark 30 – Music, Campfire, & Beer

Sunday

All Day – Caving!!

5:00 PM – Potluck Dinner

7:00PM – AUCTION!





Welcome to CAVEFEST!!!

We hope you all enjoy the best FREE PARTY in TAG and the only TAG party for Labor Day Weekend! Enjoy yourself with the activities going on: Caving, Paddling, Bat Flight, Caving, Band, Sauna, BBQ, Caving, Auction, Beer, Hot Tub, Caving!!! You get the idea. Enjoy your stay and make yourselves at home. Please respect the neighbors and treat the property like you would want yours treated.

The History of Cave Fest

I moved to the mountain in August 2002 and had the first labor day weekend party 2 weeks later. In the summer of 2003, Mud Puppy came to live on the mountain to help me build my house. He asked if he could have a labor day weekend party up there. Sure!! We're always up for another party. PupFest 1 was a success. PupFest 2 and 3 followed in the coming years. In 2004, the Sewanee Mountain Grotto reactivated and in 2005 we decided to do a BBQ and auction to raise money for conservation. Since there were no big parties in TAG, we decided to do the event at PupFest, since it had a good following.

In 2006, SMG took over the whole event, planning cave trips, music, BBQ and the auction. In 2007, we added frosty adult beverages. From its beginning with about 40 people, the event had grown to about 100 people. In 2008, we had our first T-shirts professionally printed. PupFest 6 shirts are still seen regularly at caving events. Through it all, we were able to keep the event free for all participants. This had been a goal from the start. We wanted the best party in TAG for Labor Day weekend and nothing is better than a free party.

The event continued to grow. We have added a band on Saturday night, home brewed beer in addition to the 'store bought', and a yard sale, all to add to the fund raiser. The grotto has been able to donate thousands of dollars for cave conservation over the last 5 years due to our fund raising efforts. PupFest 9, held in 2011, had about 150 participants and we had a record year of fundraising.

As all things progress and grow, PupFest has involved into the Sewanee Mountain CaveFEST!! The event is still free and we hope to keep it that way as we look to the future. Have a Great Time!

Maureen Handler
CaveFest Chair

Things to remember this weekend:

- 10 MPH speed limit on the property at all times!
- Keep Campsites free of TRASH
- Recycle all glass, plastic (no caps) and aluminum in bins provided
- Watch for snakes and spiders around wood piles and rock outcroppings
- Field showers available near the Sauna



The Sewanee Mountain Grotto

Who We Are

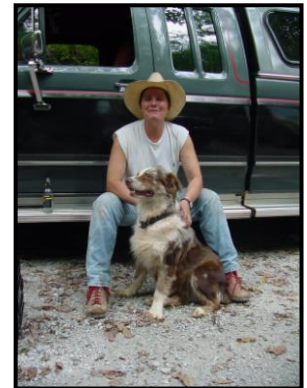
The Sewanee Mountain Grotto was reformed back in 2004. Since then it has grown to include members from Tennessee, Georgia, Alabama, North Carolina, Kentucky, Indiana, Minnesota, Oklahoma, Missouri, Florida, and even the United Kingdom. Below are a few accounts on who we are and how we came to find and love the Sewanee Mountain Grotto.



Leslie Lytle - I met Anne and Blaine at a peace vigil in Sewanee, and we ended up talking about caving—imagine that? Up to then, I'd had only one caving experience, Wet Cave, with my son's high school outing club, nearly ten years before. It was quite an adventure, though, beginning with chest high water and the long scary crawl which one teenager and I nearly chickened out on, but decide to go with the people who seemed to know what they were doing. We made it to the waterfall, where the leader had never been before, and I got a photo of an albino crawdad! I was psyched to go again, and at 2008 Pupfest, Anne and Blaine took me to Hermit.

Unfortunately, Whitenose and shoulder dislocations (four over the next six months—unrelated to caving), sapped my enthusiasm for a spell, but by Pupfest 2009 I was charged to go again—Crownover Saltpeter—and I also did a vertical clinic with Maureen that summer. Spring of 2010 I did my first vertical cave—Yellow Jacket—and in December, with Anne's help, bought bits and pieces of vertical gear. Now I am a real PIA begging people to take me along anytime I hear about a trip. See, folks, this is what happens when you take someone underground. Beware!

Maureen Handler - In 1981, I transferred to Virginia Tech to continue my engineering degree. A student in one of my classes told me about the cave club. She said it was almost all guys and they loved to party. I had just turned 20 and thought that sounded like lots of fun. I went to my first cave club meeting in October. That weekend the club had a vertical training session that I attended. It was a great group of people and I had a blast. Two weeks later, I went into my first cave, which was Starnes Cave in Giles County Virginia. I was immediately hooked. That spring, I came on my first trip to TAG and my first TAG pit was the sinkhole in Marion County. The next day, we bounced Cagles Chasm and I absolutely fell in love with TAG. In June 1982, I joined a group of VA TECh cavers and went to Ellison's Cave. At that point, I knew that one day I would live in TAG.



In 1988, I had the opportunity to move to Chattanooga. Now I could go pitting on weekends. I could bounce Mystery after work, we could go bounce Fantastic on the full moon. I was living in caver heaven. In 2002, I bought my 'paradise' property on Jump Off Mountain, near Sewanee and began building a house. Mudpuppy moved up to help with the house and he threw the 2nd Labor Day weekend party on the mountain, calling it PupFest. Blaine & Anne Grindle came to the party and fell in love with the area. They ended up buying the property across the street from me. Then Glenn & Martha Mills came up and bought property to the north of me. Myrna Attaway was coming up to visit on a regular basis. She asked if she could have a small family reunion on the property. Her dad John, her brother Steve and her sister-in-law Nancy all came up for a week. John was looking for a place to retire and ended up buying property down the street. Harold & Cindy Geick came up for a few visits and decided to look for property up there as well.

Now we had a group of long time cavers all hanging together on the mountain. Glenn & Martha and Blaine & Anne Grindle were building their houses, so we all met and decided to re-activate the Sewanee Mountain Grotto. In December 2004, we all met at Charlie Smith's in Fiery Gizzard Cove and began the planning for the Grotto. In early 2005, the Grotto was re-activated with the NSS. From there, the Grotto has focused on conservation and

surveying. We have been instrumental in the Russell Cave Watershed, the Wet Cave Watershed, the Horseshoe Bend Cave Watershed and the Big Room Cave watershed restoration projects. In addition, we have been involved in the survey of over 40 caves with cave maps produced for all of these caves.

Kelly Smallwood - I started caving in 2003. My first horizontal cave was Hurricane and my first pit was Cagles Chasm. It wasn't until 2009, after my divorce that I first became interested in joining a grotto. Because I was living near Atlanta, I initially joined the Dogwood City Grotto. A few months later I found the Sewanee Mountain Grotto by attending their annual fundraising event, Pupfest. It was there that I also met Jason Hardy for the first time. I was so impressed by the SMG that I came to their next meeting in October of 2009 and I haven't missed a meeting since. Last year I moved to Jasper, TN and I am presently the editor for the SMG Newsletter, *TAG Caver* and Secretary for the grotto. I have also recently taken on the NSS News Underground Update, Editor for the NSS Members Manual and am the 2012 Chair of the Southeastern Region of Cavers. One of my favorite things about caving is project caving. I started surveying with the grotto as soon as I joined and have helped on numerous projects. I also make it a personal goal to attend several of the cleanups each year. Several of my photos have graced the cover of the NSS News and I have received ribbons at the NSS Convention.



Mark Ostrander - I started caving in 2005 when I found out that the NSS convention was coming to Huntsville (where I live). I was looking for something new in life. An old college friend, Meredith Hall, who is a caver, was coming down for it and she encouraged me to get in touch with the convention and the local grotto. I did and that started me caving. I came to join the SMG after coming over to help on a couple of SKTF clean-ups, particularly the Russell Cave Watershed and Horseshoe Bend efforts. I really liked the conservation ethic and found the people to be really

friendly and welcoming. I had become friends with Tina O'Hailey and she was a member. I think the first trip I went on with the SMG was a trip Pup led to Horseshoe Cave that Tina told me about. Joining the SMG led to an interest in surveying, for which the SMG is renowned.

Anne Grindle - After never having been in any cave (even a commercial cave), I was asked if I wanted to go caving. My fiancé was a caver and I really went just to be nice. Wow! I was totally intrigued and wanted more. Soon I joined the NSS. But my fiancé was not a member of any grotto...he just went caving with two buddies. We caved for 15 years and went to local and national caver events. Wanting to be closer to the caves, we bought land in Sewanee Tennessee. As other cavers bought land nearby, several cavers wanted to form a grotto. So we reactivated the Sewanee Mountain Grotto, and our first meeting was held at Charlie Smith's house. It has been fun to be part of a grotto....my first!



John McMacken - I started caving in Florida back in 2001. The caves there are a balmy 72F, but most of the larger ones are completely underwater. So, I got my cave diving certification and started exploring. Many of the divers there were members of the NSS Cave Diving Section, but few were affiliated with a grotto. I quickly learned that much of caving depended on personal relationships; if people did not trust you, they would not tell you where the good caving was! After six years of fun, I found that I had simply lost my nerve for being in an underwater cave. Four acquaintances had died, I got bent (decompression sickness) and it wasn't fun anymore. I had heard of the "dry" caves (a misnomer) in TAG and as I had moved a bit closer to them in North Carolina, I decided to give it a try. I was told that serious TAG cavers knew how to scramble up and down rope,

so to pick up that skill, and to start making some contacts, I took the NSS Basic Vertical course. There was no grotto in NC close to where I lived. On the course, I met Kelly Smallwood, among other fun people, and caved with them from time to time. After a while, Kelly started sending me nagging invitations to come to the Sewanee Mountain Grotto meetings. I didn't really see the point as I only got over to TAG once a month and not always on the weekend of the grotto meeting. She was persistent however and I eventually went to a few meetings. I found a really fun bunch of very accomplished cavers. What stood out in my mind was their commitment to cave survey and conservation combined with a willingness to teach newbies like myself how it was done. Members were encouraged to get involved. Oh, and they were very generous with their beer. So, for \$10 a year I ceased being a "feral caver" and joined up. I know it sounds rather corny, but the SMG is one of the few places that I feel like I really fit in.



Lynn Buffkin - I think I have enjoyed visiting caves all my life. I have traveled around the world a good bit in my life and always made it a point to visit a commercial cave while I was there. I remember many times looking around and wondering what it was like for the explorers that first discovered it - always wanting to sneak off trail and experience it first hand. However, it wasn't until a life changing event occurred in 2008 that I decided to go on my first wild cave trip to Raccoon Mountain and Mammoth Cave. I loved it and was immediately hooked and wanted to go again. A few months later, I joined the Atlanta Outdoor Club and joined them on several caving trips to Tumbling Rock, Steward Spring and Sitton's Cave. In fact, I think one of the first caving trips I went on with them was the SERA/VAR Carnival in Bristol, TN in 2008. What a shock to the system that was, but I loved it. We visited both Morley and Thompson Cave that weekend. A trip that certainly changed my life in so many wonderful ways. Soon after, I heard about the NSS and grottos. I did a quick internet search and found the Dogwood City Grotto and joined in June 2008. I met so many wonderful people, including Kelly Smallwood. We immediately became great friends and started caving together. About two years later in 2010, Kelly brought me to a Sewanee Mountain Grotto meeting at Mudpuppy's house. I joined that evening and have remained an active member ever since. The biggest thing that attracted to me to the Sewanee Mountain Grotto was how laid back and informal they all are. Everyone truly likes each other and enjoys hanging out, eating fantastic homemade goodies and talking about the days caving activities while planning new trips. I am proud to be a member of such a great grotto. Thanks Kelly for lighting the way.

Blaine Grindle - I began caving in high school when my science teacher took our class to a cave in Kingston GA (Kingston Saltpeter Cave). It was great and I and some friends on that trip began to cave together in that cave and also caves at Cloudland Canyon. Fast forward to our move to Sewanee TN to build a house and cave in the area. We located this fine area due to attending the first ever Pupfest at Maureen Handler's. Well several other cavers were living in the same area and we all decided it would be great to reform the Sewanee Mountain Grotto; so we did and it has been great! "B"



Tina O'Hailey - Why do I cave? It reminds me to live, maybe. How did I get started? It started with a bouncy ball, a dead beaver and a hole in the ground. Many years ago a humorous set of circumstances caused me and my family to stumble upon a fissure in the ground. My daughter had stolen a small bouncy ball from my son. I told her to give it back. Since I did not indicate HOW to give it back - she threw it at him. It sailed past him and off our bluff. Being me - I handed everyone a rope and said, "Fine. Let's go get it." We hasty rappelled down to find the ball. (The bluff is not a shear drop - but a steep decline.) We descended as a family unit and never found the ball. We stopped at a ledge because we found, instead, a dead beaver. While marveling at the distance the beaver had traveled so far, we looked up and saw a hole in the side of the mountain.

It was only about fifteen feet back before it forked and became small enough for just my dog. In hind sight, it is not a cave but a place where the rock has pulled away from the mountain. But then, to me, it was something new. I instantly started searching my hiking trail books and found listings of other caves that I could go see. My family, always up for a hike, tirelessly hiked down to see Buggytop Cave. (Note, we weren't so tirelessly on the 2 mile hike back up.) It was there that it started. My kids and I stood inside the impressive entrance and oogled at all we saw. With flashlight in hand we peered as far as we could see. We could see a climb up over large rocks that went to another entrance we had hiked too earlier that day. We stood there. And stood there. And stood there. I was paralyzed by the fact that I knew nothing.

I scanned the semi darkness into an alien world. I did not know if you could climb the rocks that were piled high on top of one another. I knew from my trail book that there was a mile of cave. Where was it? Where did it go? Where did one go to find the cave? I felt that it was in front of me to the right. I stepped into the water and inched further and further; wishing I could see further. It had to go that way. But I didn't know. I couldn't see. I didn't know how to read the cave. What were the rules? What was safe, what wasn't? What about all the bats above us – I didn't want to disturb them. I turned to my left and looked at a muddy hill and wondered if there was a little hole up there. We had seen a ranger walking out with a handful of smiling tourist he had led on a tour. They had muddy rears and knees. Where did they go in there? It was difficult to turn around, to leave. I needed to know more.

Before the end of the week I had a book on caving in my hands. Before long I had found SMG and the adventure began. When I'm not caving; I'm miserable. There - in those dark depths, I found quiet and an all encompassing peace and ever the beckoning passage that causes me to wonder: "Where does it go?"



Martha Mills - I got started caving when I met a guy named David Bryant aka Hazzard at a bar way back in 1993. A month or so later (January 1994) I ended up one Sunday afternoon rappelling and climbing a bluff in Blount County. A month or so after that (February 1994) I bounced my first pit, Graham's. The next day I did my first horizontal cave, Tumbling Rock and then I was hooked. I became a member of Birmingham grotto and after several terms as Secretary and two terms as Chair I tried my hand in NSS politics and was elected to a term as a director of the NSS (2003-2006). In 2003 I married Glenn Mills and we

started looking for property to build a home in the Sewanee/Monteagle area. We soon found a property that backed up to the Franklin State Forest. Several other cavers had built or were building houses in the area and we decided to form a grotto. I was at the initial meeting at Charlie Smith's place in Fiery Gizzard Cove (2005) when we decided to form a grotto and started the process to reactivate the Sewanee Mountain Grotto. I was the first grotto Treasurer and also served a couple of terms as Secretary. While a member of SMG I have served terms as Vice Chair and then Chair of SERA. Right now, I'm not very active in grotto functions because I work full time as a nurse in Winchester TN and work every other weekend. Many of the meetings fall on the weekends I work. On my off weekends I often go to Birmingham to visit my aging mother and my kids and grandkids. I don't often attend meetings and other functions. However, I do enjoy keeping up with what is going on in the grotto.



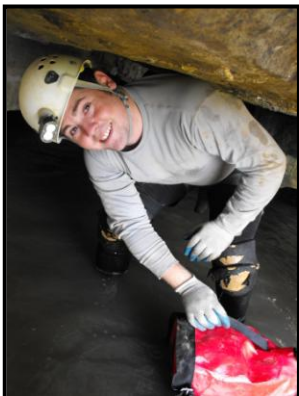
Bambi Dunlap - I started caving in 1969.....wow, that seems like a whole nother lifetime ago. I had a boyfriend who asked me to go "caving" with him the following weekend. He was a freshman in college and I was a sophomore in high school. Of course, I had to ask what caving was, and it sounded exciting and adventurous. We went caving that weekend and looking back on it, I realized how lucky we were to have not had any problems on that trip. No helmet or helmet mounted light, just a flashlight, no extra batteries, or back-up light, no gloves, tennis shoes, blue jeans and a t-shirt and flannel shirt. Part way thru the trip I dropped my flashlight and the batteries fell out in the stream. I thought I was doomed, the first hint that I was not prepared for the environment that I (we) were challenging. Waded into water up to my chin, before realizing that the sump exit (sometimes open) was sumped that day.....so back we went from where we had started.....What a challenge and reward it was for a 15 year old girl to enjoy.

About 15 years later, after marriage and having a couple of kids I got involved with a group of "educated" cavers involved with the CIG (Central Indiana Grotto) and became a regular participant in the sport. I have Scott Fee to thank for my introduction to vertical caving in 1987, a year after I attended my first regional caving event in Indiana known as Indiana Cave Capers. I enjoyed my involvement with the group and held many positions within the grotto.....including secretary, member at-large, vice-chair, trip coordinator, and program coordinator. I cannot count how many times I was the "registration witch" head of registration at our annual Cave Capers event.

After almost 20 years of caving in TAG.....I (we) Thumper and Bambi were invited down to stay at Mudpuppy's house for our usual TAG weekend trip from Indiana. What fun we had, and a real bed to sleep in.....I, as many, felt the warm welcome of not just Pup, but everyone in the neighborhood. Thumper and I attended our first SMG (Sewanee Mountain Grotto) meeting early in 2004, I believe, when Glen and Martha Mills were hosting at their yet-to-be completed home. What a group, I instantly felt a part of something larger and better than I had ever felt with these cavers. It's like finding family you never knew you had. Almost like I had lived here in a previous life, and it was wonderful.

In 2006 I made the move to TN and in the spring of 2007 I moved from Ooltewah to Sewanee.....where I have put down my roots. I don't miss the 1,000 mile weekend trips to TAG.....now I have plenty of caving in my own backyard.....how lucky is that?

Still lovin' the cavin' and still get the crave to cave, just not as often. Looking for a vertically inclined gal, give me a ring.....Let's Go Caving!!!!!!



Jason Hardy - I started caving while living in Murfreesboro and attending MTSU. I went to my first SERA Summer Cave Carnival in 2005 where I met a few Chicago cavers who invited me to attend the NSS Convention a few months following. It was at the NSS Convention that I also began vertical caving. The Chicago cavers took me to my first pit, Natural Well in Alabama. Later that afternoon they then took me to do Surprise Pit inside Fern Cave. Following convention I went to the post camp which was being hosted by Maureen at her property in Sewanee. It was here that I met the Sewanee Mountain Grotto members and have been a member ever since. I also began surveying and participating in clean ups with the grotto. I am presently the chair.



The Campbells (Jim, Rachel, Kaya & Tao) - My husband and I used to be avid hikers/ waterfall seekers. We used to plan nearly every weekend to be up in northeast GA hiking around for waterfalls. We studied our Waterfalls of GA book, Hiking trails of the southeast and, eventually, started getting a little bored with it. That is when Jim, one day at work, started researching other outdoor ideas. He came across some interesting information on, none other than Ellison's Cave up on Pigeon Mountain. Looking back now, I do rather cringe thinking that, even at a beyond Novice level, this cave was the first cave that was so easily found just in exploring other outdoor options online.

When Jim approached me on trying something new and mentioned caving, I was reminded of a trip I took in high school, flashlights and no helmets, late at night sneaking behind a water tower to experience my first ever caving trip. Getting spit out at the end (literally following a piece of twine through the cave), covered in mud was so exhilarating, as I recalled that rush I said, "Let's do it". Luckily for us, we were not very good at finding cave entrances back in 2001. After hiking that entire trail, we did not find Ellison's (and I was rather hot and cranky) so we gave up. Over the next few weeks, Jim continued to do more research online, trying to find more information on caving in GA. The bug had clearly been caught and, I will admit, it eventually led us to Petty Johns. And, for a while there, we were the true Petty Johns 'masters'. We were going to find cave in there that no one had touched...we were determined!

After just a short time, Jim stumbled across a Canadian who decided to fiber optically take us under his wing. He was coming down to GA in a few weeks and set up a plan to meet at Sue's Market and teach us how to rappel. We met Iain and Rob out front and took the trek up to what would very quickly become my absolute favorite playground, Fox Mountain. After a fairly brief but detailed lesson on a tree while Rob rigged, Jim and I got to drop Cemetery Pit and explore what, in my opinion, was the most beautiful piece of landscape I had ever seen. We saw (almost) the whole mapped cave and headed out into a thunderstorm. Climbing that rope while lightning struck above was really the least of my nerves, but I did it. I made it. And when we got back to the vehicles, soaking wet, we were in love. Little did we know at that time that someone else, someone we hadn't even imagined yet, was there with us. A few weeks later, we would learn that we were expecting our first child, who would eventually grow to be pretty darn good at guessing how much rope is in a jar!

After having both our kids, we kind of fell out of the caving scene for a while, only really getting back in hard core in 2009-2010. One day, in 2010, there was a DCG trip to Bluff River Cave and I stayed home with the kids while Jim headed out. There he met two cavers who would end up being some of our dearest friends and, none other than the one and only Kelly Smallwood. For months I would hear about this Kelly Smallwood, see her amazing photos and read her stories. Shortly after the announcement of the SCCi getting access to Jacob's Mountain, there would be a DCG trip to Jacob's and we signed up. This would finally be when I would get to meet Kelly and Jason. There was a trip to Paint Rock River scheduled and I, the amazing wife I am, stayed back to watch the babies while Jim headed off with the crew. I don't think they were even out of the cave before the boys developed a bond like you wouldn't believe. And, just like he had told me, I was immediately smitten by Ms. Kelly. Shortly after that we attended our first SMG meeting, hosted by Jason and Kelly, were welcomed by some of the most amazing people we have been fortunate enough to meet, learning more and more about caving every day and have been addicted ever since. Eventually, I finally got to go caving with both Kelly and Jason (and Dakota as well 😊)



Jeff Cody - My caving career began back in October of 1981 right after high school. Several of my high school friends used to go caving and took me for the first time at age 18. After my first trip to Buckners we went to Sullivans and several other popular Indiana caves. About one year later we went to Sloans Valley and several well known caves in eastern Kentucky and around Mammoth Cave. About that time I joined The NSS in 1983 and started to go to several regional events like Cave Capers and Speleofest . Went to my first NSS Convention in 1985 at Frankfurt Kentucky. In 1986 I became one of the first members (#14) of The Indiana Karst Conservancy and had since served as a board member and patron for both Shaft and Buddha Caves. Around the same time myself and several of my friends from my hometown of Franklin , Indiana started The Mid- Hoosier Grotto that kept its charter with The NSS for over a decade. I served in many leadership positions there as well. I have written several articles that have been published in several caving publications dating back to the mid 80s. I began vertical caving in 1985 and went to TAG for the first time to rappel at the 1989 NSS Convention. Since that time I have dropped most of the TAG classics and many less known pits and also have done Golandrinass and Bridge Day. I have also helped map a few caves and have organized and helped on many clean up trips around Indiana. In my 30 plus years of caving I have caved in Indiana, Kentucky , Tennessee, Alabama, Georgia, Illinois, Missouri, Hawaii, Florida and Mexico (twice) and even have been underground in Europe. I currently live in Indianapolis and a member of The SCCI and The Sewanee Mountain Grotto, glad to be associated with a great group of cavers. Jeff Cody NSS 23961.

TAG Brewery



The TAG Brewery consists of Master Brewer Blaine Grindle, Jason Hardy, and Jim Campbell. Blaine began home brewing more than 20 years ago and had already been providing brew for the Sewanee Mountain Grotto annual fundraising event for several years. While Jason had always enjoyed partaking in drinking the home brew, he did not have the opportunity to start brewing himself until he moved to Whiteside, TN in 2010. Shortly after his move, Jason began purchasing and borrowing all the supplies he would need to get started. Since Anne & Blaine were going to be celebrating bringing in the New Year at Jason's place, it was decided that no other day would be better for Blaine to teach Jason than that of a new year.

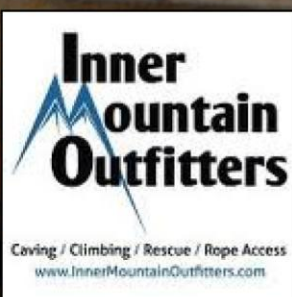


About 6 months later, fellow grotto member Jim Campbell was also interested in making his own brew. After caving one weekend with Jason, Jim hung around on a Sunday afternoon to see how it was all done. Very excited, he went home and began acquiring all the equipment he would need as well. To help keep their brew chilled at events, a few months later Jason assembled a draft box that consisted of a cooler, copper tubing, and old ascenders as the tap handles. The draft box has been to several events and is well received by fellow cavers.

Since the guys started brewing together they have not only brewed beer for the annual SMG fundraising event, but they have also provided the beer for the National Speleological Society Board of Governors meeting in the Spring of 2012 and for the Southeastern Cave Conservancy annual membership meeting. Some of the popular brews that the guys have made are: Exit Fever Stout, Pumpkin Passage Ale, Big Borehole Barley Wine, Carbide Assist IPA, & Pack Rockin Irish Red.



Thank you to all the vendors who support the
Sewanee Mountain Grotto!



RUBY FALLS



100+ Footers of Marion County, Tennessee

When you are visiting any TAG caves, please remember that the majority of them are privately owned. We are fortunate to have some of the best landowners in the country, so please be respectful of their rights as a land/cave owner. Make an effort to stop and let the landowner know your plans and respect their wishes. Most welcome the opportunity to meet cavers who have traveled to visit their cave. **Also note that not all of the caves in the list below are open for visitation.** The list is provided solely as reference on the 100 foot plus pits in Marion County, TN. If you are unsure of the status of a cave, please check with cave information for any specifics. Do your research and make sure you are not going to trespass or upset any landowners in the area. If you arrive at any cave and see a “cast of thousands” please visit another cave.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Pit Depth</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Pit Depth</u>
Jackpot	190'	Marks Pit	131'
Clod Hole	188'	Rhonda Well	123'
Cagle Chasm	184'	Kelly Chasm	122'
Tres Well	175'	Ravens Den Pit	121'
Solution Rift	172'	Sugarcamp Hollow	119'
Fiery Top Drop	166'	Martin Springs High	
Larsons Well	161'	Hole	117'
Mirror Image Well	161'	Parker Pit	113'
South Pittsburg Pit	160'	Storm Chasm	112'
Sawmill Well	155'	Battle Creek Horror	
The Sinkhole	155'	Hole	111'
Deer Bone Pit	150'	Wildman Cove	
Ellis Pit	150'	Cave	111'
Go Hole	145'	Harrison Turnpike	
Rock Buster Well	143'	Pit	111'
Spasm Chasm	140'	Ho Hole	111'
Possum Well	133'	Currys Chasm	106'
Just Got Lucky Pit	132'	Five Falls Pit	109'
Tourmalet	132'	Lost Mule Pit	103'

Pictures by Elliot Stahl

JACKPOT MN311



Jackpot is directly above the last house in Jumpoff Cove, 800 feet west of a major blue-line gully, 5000 feet southwest of Martin Springs, and 100 feet east of a logging road. The pit is on the very tip of a flat area.

E1 opens as a slope leading directly into the main pit. E2 is a small hole leading directly into the pit. The pit is 190 feet deep, with no leads at the bottom. A parallel pit has not been done due to its tightness. Thirty feet from the bottom, a side passage goes 40 feet to a 42-foot pit. A stream passage at the bottom goes 200 feet and gets too tight. No airflow. (Gerald Moni, 1981)

CLOD HOLE MN224

Located on the west side of Battle Creek, 600 vertical feet above the valley floor, and 3800 feet northwest of the confluence of Battle Creek and Hargiss Cove Creek. Clod Hole is 40 feet right (west) of Will Well (MN211). Will Well is 60 feet right (west) of Rhonda Well (MN209).

What started to be a 70-foot dudhole turned out to be a 188-foot drop with a side pit that made the total depth 208 feet. Marion O. Smith, Gerald Moni and G. Will Chamberlin found the pit which is located 40 feet Will Well. The pit entrance is 4.5 feet in diameter.

The pit was first rigged with 100 feet of rope. Marion descended and immediately yelled that he was out of rope. Upon returning to the surface we put all of the 240-foot rope into the pit. Gerald descended to the bottom. Will went in second to measure the pit with Marion on the surface. At -100 feet Marion dropped the end of the tape and then Will lowered the tape to Gerald. The pit measured 188 feet deep. Will then continued his rappel. At about 30 feet above the floor Will went into a crack which yielded another pit. This second pit was measured at 39 feet to give a total depth of the pit at 208 feet. We then yelled for Marion to come down. With all three at the bottom we decided to climb out. Will, then Gerald, then Marion ascended Clod Hole. (G. Will Chamberlin, 1978; Gerald Moni, 2009)



CAGLE CHASM MN5



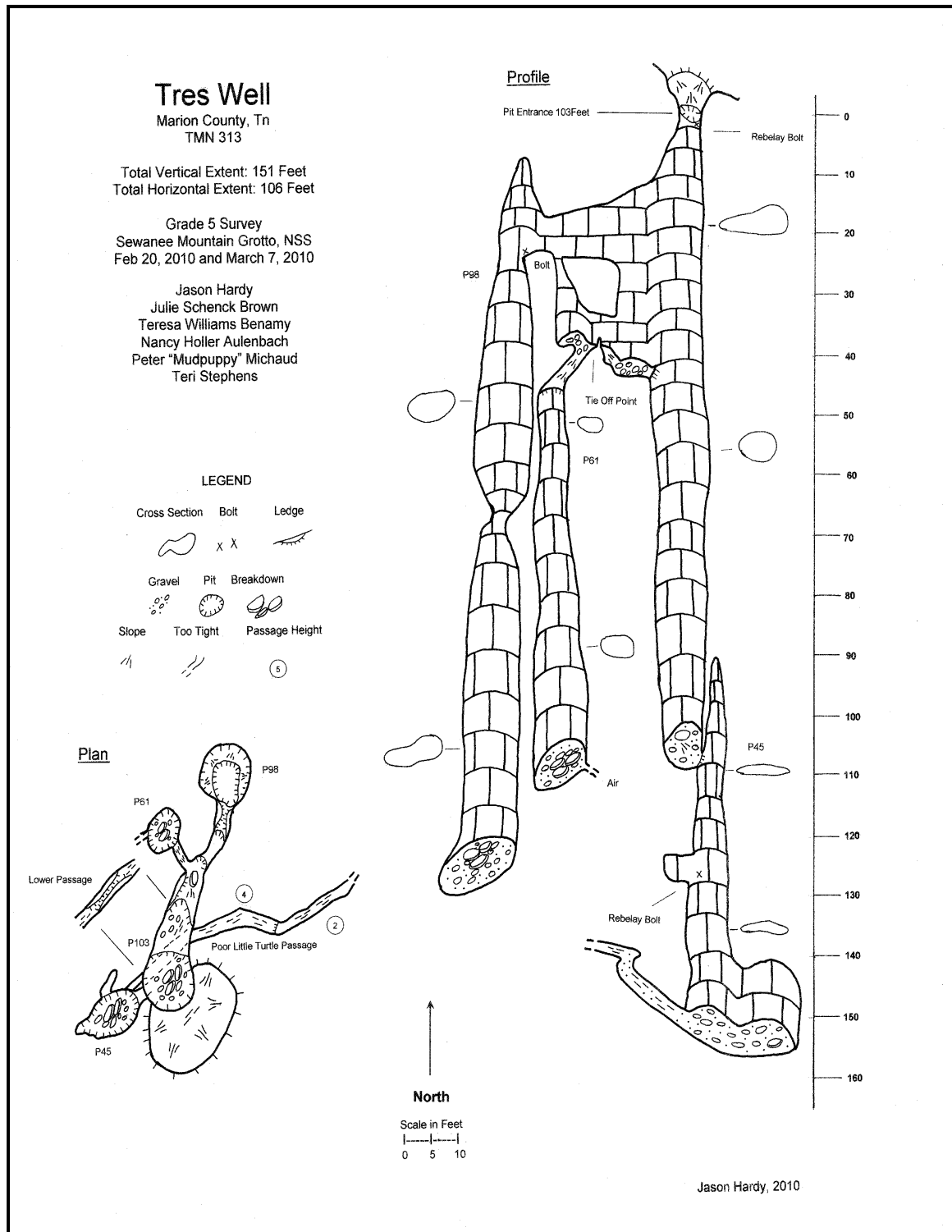
The entrance to Cagle Chasm is 15 feet wide and 20 feet long. The shortest pit which can be rigged is 184 feet. The pit is 50 feet in diameter at the bottom. A talus slope leads into a large room from which a 20-foot pit into a passage leads for 50 feet into a second large chamber. It is also possible to climb along a ledge at the bottom of the entrance shaft and come out near the top of this second large chamber.

A crawl to the west at the base of the entrance shaft leads into a huge chamber 100 feet in diameter and 150 feet high. A waterfall in the center of the room falls into calcite pools. The chamber can also be entered by a window 60 feet above the floor which connects to the entrance crawl.

Two pits near the main shaft also connect to this complex. One, (Jeepside Pit) 200 feet northeast of the main shaft, consists of a 15-foot pit followed by a 95-foot pit through a 40-foot-wide shaft. The total pit depth is 110 feet. A passage leads several hundred feet to a 30-foot climb to a short passage which ends at the bottom of an 80-foot shaft opening to the surface (Shallow Pit). A crawl from the passages connecting the two shorter pits opens into the side of the main pit approximately 100 feet above the floor. (Ron Zawislak in Matthews, 1971)

TRES WELL MN313

Located in Hargiss Cove, below Hendrick Point. Tres Well is a 175-foot pit. (Buddy Lane, 1981)



SOLUTION RIFT MN42

Solution Rift is on the north side of Fiery Gizzard Cove on Speegle Point, 0.9 miles north and slightly east of Comfort. The stream that flows out of Speegle Saltpeter Cave (MN46) flows into the entrance of Solution Rift.

The entrance is 5 feet wide and 10 feet high. Twenty feet inside, the water pours into a tight pit. By straddling over the top of this wet pit, a two-step (24-foot and 18-foot) dry set of bypass pits are encountered, followed by 150 feet of narrow, twisting, down-stepping passage to a wet 30-foot pit. A short ways downstream from this is a nasty 300-foot crawl, part of which was dug out and is very greasy and muddy and is partly in the main stream. Then there is 800 feet of hands/knees crawls, stooping, and walking passage with some formations to a wet 23-foot pit. Below this are the "Brrr Tubes", half-filled zigzagging water crawls, which get tight 25 feet from the next pit, 167-foot deep Confederate Well. This constriction in the crawl will flood during heavy rain and will trap anyone on the downstream side. At the edge of Confederate Well is a decorated, 15-foot high balcony. The pit is free-fall and 20+ feet in diameter. Halfway down the water hits the climber. Fifty feet beyond the bottom of Confederate Well is a wet 31-foot pit. A short way beyond this is a 12-foot climbdown to short cascades to a sump pool. By not doing the 12-foot climbdown and continuing on that level above it (doing a step-across), a bypass is gained. This leads to another 12-foot climbdown, plus short climbs and a wet 30-foot pit. Below this pit is 2000 feet of passage which gets worse the further in one gets, including low airspaces, crawls, jagged limestone and a false chert floor. Finally a low, wide pool 75 feet long is reached. At the end is a man-made dam 3.5 feet high (now smashed open). One hundred feet farther is the lower spring entrance at the valley floor. Stygobitic blind crayfish (*Cambarus hamulatus*) inhabit the lower cave stream

The cave was noted by Barr and Ron Zawislak in their publications, though early exploration efforts were all half-hearted. On December 1, 1979, Jim H. Smith, Jill Dorman, Gerald Moni and Marion O. Smith reached the top of the wet 23-foot pit. Jim and Gerald did most of the digging to get through. On December 15, 1979, Jim Smith, Marion O. Smith, Dan and Stella Twilley pushed down the 23-foot pit, and both Smiths got as far as the top of the 36-foot pit (both Twilleys had trouble trying to pass two knots in Confederate Well and never got to its bottom). On December 16, 1979 Jim Smith and Marion O. Smith and Brad Neff pushed the cave to the low, wide pool.

Technically, the connection of the spring entrance to the rest of the cave was accomplished by Buddy Lane and Sandy Montgomery on July 20 when they, without knowing it, overlapped the December penetration. On August 2, 1980, Gerald Moni, Marion O. Smith and G. Will Chamberlin made the first through-trip out the spring entrance.

The pit depths are 24, 18, 30, 23, 167, 31, and 36 feet, The ropes needed are 60, 40, 30, 190, 40, and 40 feet. For a pulldown 3 ropes are needed, 100, 190, and 190 feet. There are 2 bolts. (Marion O. Smith, 1979; Gerald Moni, 1986)

FIERY TOP DROP MN274

Fiery Top Drop is on the south side of Fiery Gizzard Cove, 4000 feet northeast of the first bridge across the main creek.

The 6- by 8-foot opening leads to an offset 166-foot pit. A crawl 5 feet off the floor goes 25 feet and gets too tight. Found February 3, 1980 by Ron Lewis and descended the same day by Gerald Moni, Ron Lewis, and Dave Bradford. (Gerald Moni & Marion O. Smith, 1980)



LARSONS WELL MN495



The cave is located 4300 feet northwest of the Orme Depot, 650 feet northwest of Mr. Lawson's house and is on the north slope of Payne Cove. The entrance is in a small sink on the Pennington bench slightly above the Pennington-Bangor contact.

The entrance is 6 feet long and at one spot 2 feet wide. The 161-foot pit is mostly freefall after 20 feet in a 40-foot diameter shaft. At the bottom, a walking passage leads to a 39-foot pit. The water pours out of a small hole on the left wall. At the bottom, 150 feet of narrow canyon passage leads to climbdowns of 4, 7, and 8 feet into a large room. The horizontal passage is along the Hartselle Formation. There is a 25-foot pit below some breakdown which does not have to be done. There is a 15-foot climbdown reached by climbing down into the breakdown on the other side of the pit. The

climbdown reaches a large room with massive breakdown. A 15-foot climbdown leads to a too-tight crack at the bottom, where the water goes. Some passage was explored in the upper breakdown room. One hands and knees passage has a weasel or mink skeleton in it. Larsons Well extends 130 feet below the valley floor. (Alan Cressler, 1994)

MIRROR IMAGE WELL MN497

The cave is located on the north slope of Bethel Creek Cove, 4000 feet east of Kirby-Smith Point in a major streambed. In wet weather a large waterfall is just left (west) of the entrance. Follow the logging road up the cove to a split. Go right (uphill) 100 feet vertically. Then go left 400 feet to entrance.

The 25-foot wide by 10-foot high shelter-like entrance goes back 75 feet mainly as a hands and knees crawl to the top of the 161-foot pit. Thirty feet before the bottom the pit subdivides. The obvious way, straight down, is not the way to go. Go left and offset, that leads to the bottom. From there follow the water drain 75 feet, often jagged and meandering crawl (at the first meander stay dry and high, at the second meander go low and wet), to a tight, offset 34-foot pit. From the bottom it is only 70 feet downstream to the sump at a breakdown crawl. Upstream is walking and stoop for 100 feet before it turns into a crawl in water. This passage leads to a high dome maybe 200 feet high. (Gerald Moni & Marion O. Smith, 1995)

SOUTH PITTSBURG PIT MN44

Located 2000 feet east of Lodge Point, on the mountain overlooking the community of South Pittsburg. The cave is owned by the Southeastern Cave Conservancy.

The entrance, which is 30 feet by 10 feet, is in a sinkhole 75 feet in diameter. The pit drops for 160 feet through the center of a large room more than 100 feet long. A 60-foot breakdown slope leads to the floor of the room. Two obvious leads at the bottom quickly dead end, but a third passage leads to a difficult 20-foot climb. From the top of this climb a couple of thousand feet of complex passages and dome pits are developed. Tennessee cave salamanders (*Gyrinophilus palleucus palleucus*) were observe in a large pool below a waterfall at the end of the cave. (Richard Bilbrey in Matthews, 1971)



SAWMILL WELL MN38



Located in Speegle Cove on the inside of a sharp cutback in an old mining road, 600 feet northeast of a prominent spring and 1.45 miles northwest of the Pine Set School.

The entrance to Sawmill Well is 20 feet in diameter and narrows to 10 feet in diameter after a semi-vertical drop of 10 feet. The pit consists of a 155-foot drop against the wall. A ledge is developed 80 feet above the floor of the pit. The pit is very beautiful and impressive. It is 30 feet in diameter and is highly fluted. Sawmill Well was discovered in August 1966 by Kirk Holland and Bob Bradley. (Kirk Holland in Matthews, 1971)

At the bottom of the main pit, a body-tight crawl leads 30 feet to a little bit larger passage for at least another 100 feet. Along the way, two 80-foot domes are encountered. The passage ends in a too-tight bedding plane crawl. (Andy Zellner, 1998)

THE SINKHOLE MN121

Located on the north side of Kelly Cove, about halfway to the back of the cove. The pit has a large stream flowing into it year-round.

The very impressive pit is L-shaped, 60-70 feet long and 25-30 feet long with a large stream flowing in. The deepest side of the pit gives a 155-foot freefall drop. At the bottom, the water goes through a large pile of logs and debris, then the passage gets too tight to follow. In the opposite direction, the passage goes up a slope for 100 feet or so, then drops back down the other side to a junction with another smaller stream, which can be followed upstream for a few hundred feet before it becomes too tight. A few other short side passages are present. The exploration of the cave was described by Ed Yarbrough in the Nashville *Speleonews* (June 1975), pp. 77-78. (Marion O. Smith, Buddy Lane, 1975)

DEER BONE PIT MN10

Located on the north slope of Jumpoff Cove, 1.7 miles west and slightly south of Martin Springs.

The entrance is 5 feet wide and 12 feet long. The pit is 150 feet deep with a ledge 35 feet above the floor. (Rick Moses in Matthews, 1971)

ELLIS PIT MN93

Ellis Pit is on the west side of Battle Creek, below and east of Fishtrap Point, and 1320 meters south of Jackson Point. Walk up the center hollow behind the Ellis farmhouse. Ellis Pit is near the top of a steep "bluff", 45 meters south of the ravine, and 25 meters above it.

The entrance to Ellis Pit is an opening 5.5 meters by 4.5 meters. Above the uphill side of the entrance is a short bluff 7 meters high. Rigged on the lower, downhill side the pit provides a total drop of 46 meters, composed of alternate steep slope, nearly vertical, vertical and freefall sections. The pit is well decorated by flowstone formations, and 12 meters below the entrance from a sloping ledge in an apparently large walking passage (not checked) can be seen gray flowstone and stalagmites, rather attractive. Vertical, sloping, and again vertical portions of the pitch drop from the entrance to the bottom of this sloping ledge. A second short slope puts one near the top of a dome-pit canyon 25 meters high, 3.5 to 4.5 meters wide, and 9 meters long. A nearly vertical section is followed by a final freefall of 15 meters to the floor. Six meters to the south down a slope from the

landing is the base of a waterfall and pool. Four meters to the north is a smaller dome pit canyon continuation 2 to 5 meters wide and 9 to 15 meters high, explored for 20 meters. Down a rock talus slope a flowstone slope leads up to a 3-meter climb. Eight meters beyond this climb, a narrow fissure can be seen at the top of a difficult 4-meter climb. (John Smyre, 1974)

GO HOLE MN253

Located on the north side of Gaines Cove, 4000 feet northwest of the last house in Gaines Cove. A logging road directly above the Bangor contact turns downhill next to a dry streambed. Go Hole is in the dry creekbed at the contact.

Go Hole has a large 30-foot by 20-foot pit entrance. Rig on the west side of the pit for the best and deepest drop. The entrance drop is 145 feet deep. After following a passage for 200 feet, climb up 20 feet and go through a crawl to another 19-foot pit. At the bottom a 25-foot climbdown leads to nothing. A side lead blows air, but is too small.

A second entrance (5 feet wide by 6 feet long) goes 15 feet down a pit, under a land bridge, to a boulder strewn slope into the main pit. (Gerald Moni, 1978)

ROCK BUSTER WELL MN556

Rock Buster Well is located 2800 feet northeast of MLB 145, in a sink on the west slope of Big Fiery Gizzard Creek. The pit is 3200 feet west-southwest of Pyburn Place. The pit location is remote.

The entrance is a 7-foot chimney through a 3- by 3-foot opening to a slope. About 12 feet is lost to the edge of a 18-foot pit. A chimney across the top of the pit leads to a 1-foot thick partition to a 143-foot pit. A 200-foot rope is needed to rig from the surface. The pit is against the wall for 60 feet to a 6- by 6-foot ledge. The next 80 feet is shear to a 10-foot diameter room. A small lead 1 foot wide and 6 inches high has airflow but is hopeless. About 30 feet off the floor is a passage that leads to a pair of domes. Ten feet above the passage is an alcove which leads to a dome. The main shaft is partitioned and the other end of the pit is not obtainable without technical gear. (James H. Smith, 1998)

SPASM CHASM MN271

Located on the north side of Fiery Gizzard Cove in Anderson Cove, 2000 northeast of Cedar Ridge. E1 is on the southwest side of a major streambed (sink). E2 is in the large sink, along with E3.

E1 is a pit with a 10-foot by 5-foot opening. The pit is 140 feet deep, but contains 4 to 6 ledges and corkscrews around. A 100-foot crawl leads to a junction with a stream which comes from E2. E3 starts as a crawl in the sink, and after 50 feet connects with the 140-foot pit. E2 starts in the sink (50+ feet in diameter) as a stairstep, wet 33-foot pit. Forty feet of horizontal passage leads to a 10-foot enlarged climbdown on the right, which leads to 75 feet of wet passage to a stairstep, 25-foot pit (which can almost all be freeclimbed, but for the last 7 feet. Best to climb over the top of the drop and rig an awkward 25-foot drop). Seventy five feet more canyon passage and a 10-foot climbdown to a small room leads to a 20-foot pit. Then 400 feet of crawl leads to the junction with E1 on the right.

The next 300 feet starts as crawling, but soon becomes walking passage 10 feet wide. A 25-foot pit leads to some rooms and a tight crawl going through the Hartselle Formation. The next pit (26 feet) is 125 feet past the 25-foot pit. The last three pits are 27 feet, 45 feet and 55 feet deep with 1000 feet of walking passage. At the bottom of

the cave, an incoming stream can be followed for 100 feet to a large dome. This water may come from Lost Fools Pit (TMN 329). Downstream is mostly crawl for several hundred feet until it becomes too tight. There is strong air movement at the end.

The cave was found by Jim Smith and Jill Dorman who bounced the 140-foot pit on December 2, 1979. E2 was first entered on January 1, 1980 by Danny Dible, Marion O. Smith, Dave Black and Gerald Moni. Dible and Smith made a tight squeeze down the 10-foot “climb” and explored down the next two pits to the top of the fourth pit. On January 5, 1980 Brad Neff, Buddy Lane and Gerald Moni enlarged the 10-foot climbdown and on January 12, 1980 Neff, Lane, Moni, Marion O. Smith and Dan and Stella Twilley descended the fourth pit and stopped at the tight crack which goes through the Hartselle Formation.

A few years later Jim Smith, Marion O. Smith and Gerald Moni descended the 140-foot pit, connected it with the rest of the cave, found the hole through the Hartselle and stopped at the top of the 26-foot pit. The next day they bottomed the cave.

The pit depths from E1 are 140, 25, 26, 27, 45, and 55 feet. The pit depths from E2 are 33, 25, 20, 25, 26, 27, 45, and 55 feet. (Maron O. Smith, 1980; Gerald Moni, 1982)



POSSUM WELL MN159

Possum Well is located on the left (north) side of Kelly Cove, 7 or 8 miles north of South Pittsburg, in a rock outcrop between two ravines.

The pit is clean, freefall and open-air with an oval, 10-foot by 25-foot bottom and a 3-foot by 5-foot opening at the surface. The pit is 133 feet deep. (David Durham, 1977)

JUST GOT LUCKY PIT MN492

The cave is located 1500 feet northeast of Orme. The cave is 75 feet left (southwest of Luckys Revenge (MN496)), 75 feet northwest and 30 feet vertically above the road that goes up the mountain from Orme.

Entrance 1 is a pit that is 1.5 feet wide and 3 feet long. The pit depth is 132 feet. The pit begins sloppy but bells out. After a ledge 60-70 feet down, the pit becomes a sheer wall drop. The bottom is a sizable room. Upslope on the right 10 feet is a too-tight crack. Entrance 2 is 1.5 feet wide and 2 feet long. (Alan Cressler, 1995)

TOURMALET MN612

Located on the northeast slope of Ellidge Point, 4000 feet northwest of the confluence of Big Fiery Gizzard Creek and Little Gizzard Creek. There is a plugged sinkhole directly above the pit.

The dug entrance is 4 feet wide by 3 feet high, sloping down to a body-sized crouch-down and crawl-in, horizontal dig. The belly crawl to the lip is 30 feet. There is not much room to get on rope, so one has to be both creative and careful at the lip. There is a bolt set in the ceiling of the crawl, 8 feet back from the lip. A 200-foot rope is needed to rig the 132-foot pit (backup the rigging to a tree on the surface). At the bottom of the pit there is a narrow climbdown to a small room 15 feet below the floor of the pit. Airflow and rocks continues to move down a too-tight crack at the lowest level of the cave. (Harold Geick, 2004)

MARKS PIT MN50



Marks Pit is located on the north side of Sweden Cove, 1.5 miles due east of benchmark RAS 84. The entrance is in a 6-foot-deep ravine, 100 feet east of the large sink containing Crackpot (MN82).

An entrance 4 feet high and three feet wide drops immediately into a pit 131 feet deep. The freefall drop is very impressive – the afternoon sun casts a spot beam overhead while rappelling and hits the opposite wall. If conditions are right a round rainbow can be seen looking down the sunbeam while standing at the lip of the pit. A waterfall can be heard, but its presence does not affect the climb. An

account of Marks Pit appeared in the Nashville *Speleonews* (May 1971), p. 25. (Mark Wolinsky, 1971)

RHONDA WELL MN209

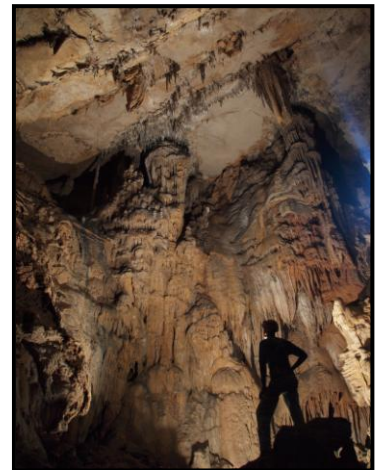
Located on the west side of Battle Creek, 600 vertical feet above the valley floor, and 3800 feet northwest of the confluence of Battle Creek and Hargiss Cove Creek. Clod Hole (MN224) is 40 feet right (west) of Will Well (MN211). Will Well is 60 feet right (west) of Rhonda Well. From Logging Camp Cave (MN19), walk north to the pit.

The cave mostly consists of a 123-foot pit. The 4-foot deep climbdown entrance goes to a crawl then the pit. Found by Dennis Gabor on a ridgewalk with G. Will Chamberlin, Dave Durham and Rick Buice. It was descended and mapped by Rick Buice and G. Will Chamberlin. (Rick Buice, 1978; Gerald Moni, 2009)

KELLY CHASM MN459

Kelly Chasm is located 1500 feet southwest of The Sinkhole (MN121), 50 feet above the valley floor and directly across from a white mobile home with a sign saying "Caution, Mad Dog and Crazy Man".

The pit entrance is a 2-foot by 2-foot hole that slopes down 3 feet to a lip. The drop can be rigged with a 180-foot rope. The drop is 122 feet, all freefall. The pit is 35 feet in diameter for 35 feet, then bells out to 60 feet wide before narrowing to a 10-foot by 15-foot hole. Below this hole is 43 more feet of pit that bells out to 25 feet by 15 feet with a low, muddy crawl at the bottom that has not been pushed. Twenty feet up from the bottom is a 15-foot by 8-foot-wide passage that could be reached by a technical aid climb. By climbing back up the first 43 feet of the rope, you can get off rope on a ledge, climb up into a large room and walk out a large horizontal entrance. The walk-in entrance is 70 feet to the east of and 18 feet below the pit entrance. The cave contains considerable flowstone and has very significant airflow. (Hal Love, 1991)



RAVENS DEN PIT MN32



Located 4500 feet east-southeast of Raven Den Point, 1000 feet southwest of the center of the prominent sink southeast of Ravens Den Point, on the north side of Mitchell Cove and near the mouth of the cove.

The entrance is 30 feet long and 12 feet wide. The pit is 121 feet deep, freefall to the floor. A spring at the north side falls into a parallel pit. Two other pits open nearby. These pits join together as Ravens Den Twin Pits (MN103). Both entrances are downhill from Ravens Den Pit. These are also known as the Moscow Subway Pits. (Edward M. Yarbrough in Matthews, 1971; Gerald Moni, 1986)

SUGARCAMP HOLLOW PIT MN561

Located on the southwest slope of Sugarcamp Hollow, 800 feet northwest of the confluence of Little Gizzard Creek and Sugarcamp Hollow. The entrance is at the Pennington-Bangor contact in a shallow sink on the point.

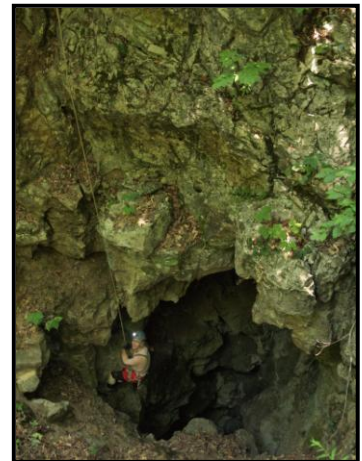
The entrance is 3 feet by 2 feet. A slope leads to the top of a 119-foot pit. The pit drops 89 feet to a small sloping ledge and finally to a 30-foot free-drop to the floor. No leads. (James H. Smith, 1999)

MARTIN SPRINGS HIGH HOLE MN22

Martin Springs High Hole is 1800 feet north-northeast of Martin Springs, east of the mouth of Cave Cove, and 250 yards north of a major blue-line creek.

The pit is located in a 30-foot sink. You rig the low side (a bluff) which gives a 117-foot pit drop. You climb down 100 feet into a large room to a right stoop passage which leads to the stream which drains Cave Cove and finally comes out at Martin Springs. Downstream 400 feet, the cave ends in a sump.

Upstream the passage goes to a breakdown area after several hundred feet. Beyond the breakdown pile and past a 30-foot-long low airspace, a 30-foot-wide, 20-foot-high passage goes upstream as walking passage for 500 feet to an upstream sump. A right passage (10 feet wide, 4 feet above water, 2 feet below) goes 120 feet to a room. An infeeder went into a 100-foot by 80-foot by 30-foot room with a giant sand dune in the middle. This room was once part of the stream passage, but is now separated by a wall of mud. The infeeder continues to a crawl which was not checked. (Gerald Moni, 1983; Chris Kelly, 1997)



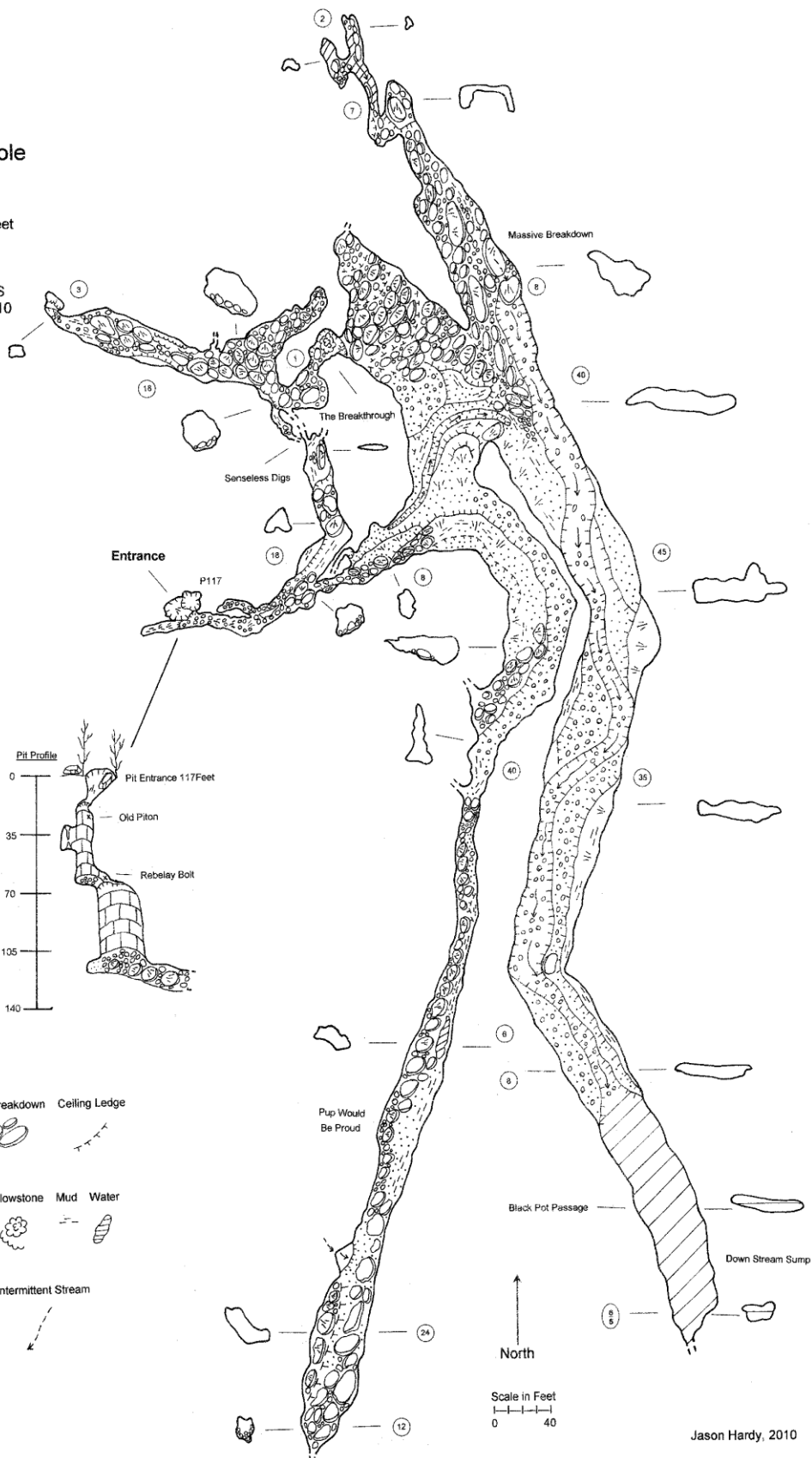
Martin Springs High Hole

Marion County, TN
TMN 22

Total Horizontal Extent: 2,869 Feet
Total Vertical Extent: 201 Feet

Grade 5 Survey
Sewanee Mountain Grotto, NSS
February 21, 2009- March 6, 2010

Julie Schenck Brown
Jason Hardy
Peter "Mudpuppy" Michaud
Anne Grindle
Blaine Grindle
Julie Useton
C.D. "Hazard" Bryant
Teri Stephens
Jon Mnich



Jason Hardy, 2010

PARKER PIT MN128



Parker Pit is in Sweden Cove, to the left (south) of Rose Cove. It is 5 miles north-northwest of Orme and 3 miles west of the Marion-Franklin county line. From the base of the mountain in Rose Cove, follow the streambed up the mountain to 1100-foot elevation, where the mountain starts leveling off. Go left (south) up a streambed. The pit is in the middle of the streambed and is obvious if you get anywhere near it.

The pit opening is 20 to 30 feet long and 10 to 15 feet wide, a pretty clear drop most of the way. The pit is 113 feet deep. At the bottom, the floor slopes down one way and rises the other way. The lower section ends after 40 feet. The upper section leads to a large room with a narrow crack leading off from it, which has been pushed a ways. The cave was discovered on a Chattanooga Grotto trip in January or February of 1973. (Ray Lewis, 1975)

STORM CHASM MN432

Storm Chasm is on the east side of Cave Cove, 5500 feet north-northeast of Martin Springs, 20 feet south of blue-line gully and 90 feet north of Tight As Well (MN435).

The entrance is 2 feet long and 1 foot wide. Twelve feet vertically below, 10 feet offset from the entrance is a 112-foot offset pit. At the bottom it slopes down 5 feet more. Crawl 5 feet over breakdown and pop up into a breakdown chamber 40 feet wide. Climb up another 6 to 8 feet and go across a slab to a second “drop”, which does not need rope, of 15 feet. The bottom is a dud, but may be 5 feet lower than anything else physically reached. The cave was found and dug open by Marion O. Smith on November 5, 1988. Pat Anthony entered and waited in an alcove above the pit. Marion O. Smith was the only one to descend it. (Marion O. Smith, 1988)

BATTLE CREEK HORROR HOLE MN4

Located 1.5 miles south of Martin Springs and 600 feet south of a large prominent sinkhole on the west wall of the valley of Battle Creek.

The entrance is 4 feet in diameter and drops for 60 feet to a short canyon passage which extends north for 100 feet. Halfway down the entrance shaft it is possible to enter an elongated dome to the south of the entrance pit. The pit is 111 feet deep.

A small pit is located 500 feet south of the Battle Creek Horror Hole. It is 40 feet deep and has no leads. (Ron Zawislak in Matthews, 1971)

WILDMAN COVE CAVE MN76

Located on the western slope of Wildman Cove next to a small creekbed that drains into the upper end of a large sink, 1.5 miles northwest of Russell Cave. The sink also contains Wildman Cove Pits Nr1 (MN77) and Nr2 (MN78).

The 2-foot by 2-foot entrance drops 111 feet down a small offset shaft. A stream passage leads down through several small sections to a very impressive formation room. (Gerald Moni, 1972; 1979 *SERA Guidebook*)

HARRISON TURNPIKE PIT MN94

Located on the west side of Battle Creek, on the east side of Fishtrap Point. The entrance is a vertical drop at the bottom of the 15-foot-deep sinkhole. The high side of the pit is 111 feet deep. The low side is against the wall for its entire depth of 98 feet. There is a major ledge at –35 feet, and a minor ledge at –60 feet. A second, smaller entrance intersects the lower chamber of the pit at the –60-foot level. The room at the bottom of the entrance is 50 to 75 feet long and 15 to 20 feet wide. A stoop/crawl bears southeast for 100 feet to a 30-foot climbdown. A small stream follows the passage and empties into the lower level. An upper level goes several hundred feet and near the end is a blind 35-foot pit.

A short crawl bears west from the base of the drop. This passage leads to a 35-foot dome, then a 25-foot blind pit. The passage continues for a couple of hundred feet past the top of the pit.

Mr. Ellis had previously descended to the first ledge of the entrance pit. Probably first bottomed by David Stidham. (David Stidham, 1974; Gerald Moni, 2002)

HO HOLE MN263

Ho Hole is 2 miles up Gaines Cove on the north side, in a smaller cove, in a major ravine on the west side of the smaller cove, and 4400 feet southeast of “The Narrows”.

E1 is a 20-foot by 15-foot pit opening 20 feet from the edge of a bluff. It drops 51 feet to a ledge, then 60 more feet to the bottom, with a small ledge 24 feet off the floor. The pit has three more openings which come out of the bluff face. From the first ledge, a parallel 30-foot pit leads to several small, unchecked leads.

At the bottom of the main pit, one passage goes 40 feet and ends. The second passage is a 60-foot crawl to a 15-foot pit. At the bottom is a 200-foot narrow crack which finally leads to a 10-foot climbdown into another crawl which is 300 feet long. Most of this passage was horrible. The crawl finally ended, but there was very strong airflow. (Mike Wilburn, 1979; Gerald Moni, 1988)

CURRYS CHASM MN398

Currys Chasm is located on the west side of Battle Creek, just below a cliff face, within a major streambed, in an old logging road.

The entrance is 7 feet long and 3 feet wide. A stream flows into the entrance, down an 8-foot climbdown. Fifteen feet of passage leads to a 67-foot pit. The pit has two bolts and is under a waterfall. A 200-foot-long, tight stream crawl leads to a series of domes and a 12-foot pit. This pit also has two bolts. Fifteen feet farther is a 106-foot pit, and 25 more feet of passage leads to the last pit, 27 feet deep. The cave ends in a 30-foot by 20-foot room. A 75-foot side passage was noted at the bottom of the 106-foot pit. A short climbup must be done to get to the 27-foot pit.

The water going in the entrance comes from a spring 25 feet above the road. This water probably flows through Snake Well (MN262). A large spring 1200 feet southeast of the entrance is probably the resurgence of Currys Chasm. (Gerald Moni, Mike Rogers, 1988)

FIVE FALLS PIT MN58



Five Falls Pit is on the north side of Gourneck Hollow, near the head of the hollow, 2.4km west and slightly south of Tar Kiln Point, and 850 meters northeast of the junction of Marion County and Franklin County (Tennessee) and Jackson County (Alabama).

The pit entrance consists of 40-foot, 39-foot and 30-foot (109 feet total) drops, all rigged with a single rope. Five Falls Pit received its name from the series of cascades and domepit showers located at the bottom. About 2000 feet of passage was explored. The cave heads upstream toward the big sink cave (Gourneck Hollow Cave (MN114), and downstream toward a resurgence near the parking area. (David Teal 1972)

In 1994(?), the cave was revisited by Alan Cressler, Shirley Sotona, Andy Porter and others. At the known end of the cave, they climbed 12 feet up a wall and found a low bedding-plane crawl which led for 200 feet, having to be dug out in some places. This crawl intersects a hands/knees canyon, and eventually emerges at a 10-foot climbdowndown into walking passage again.

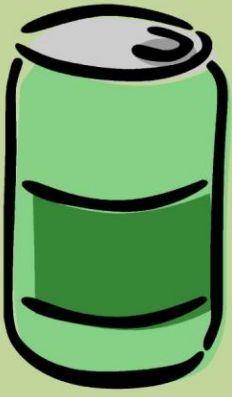
Fifty feet farther, a crawling pop-through spot deposits the caver onto a large ledge overlooking a 30-foot-deep canyon with a major stream at the bottom. This 20-foot-wide ledge can be traversed upstream and downstream for at least 100 feet each way, but the only route down to the level of the water is by climbing down an infedding canyon to the left. At stream level, upstream leads a few hundred feet to a 15-foot waterfall with obvious passage at the top, and downstream leads through a complicated series of climbups and climbdowndowns and breakdown piles for over 1000 feet. The water finally goes into a pile of breakdown with no obvious way on. One chamber towards the end of the cave is 20 feet tall and 70 feet in diameter, with several impressive columns and totem poles in the middle of the room. The cave was by no means completely explored. (Andy Zellner, 1998)

LOST MULE PIT MN144

Lost Mule Pit is on the south side of Jumpoff Cove, 5200 feet west-southwest of Martin Springs, and 7000 feet north-northeast of "The Narrows".

The 8-foot by 5-foot entrance drops 103 feet to a large room 124 feet long. The pit and cave has many flowstone formations. The pit was named for the remains of a mule found at the bottom which had been dragged into the pit by the log it was dragging. (Lin Guy, 1977; Gerald Moni, 1984)





Recycle An Aluminum Can, Save A Cave



The Sewanee Mountain Grotto first started recycling cans at caving events to raise funds for the conservation of caves. You can find our recycle containers at the SERA Summer Cave Carnivals, the TAG Fall Cave In and our annual event Sewanee Mountain Cave Fest. For every can you recycle we turn it into cash for the conservation of caves. Please take the time to sort the recyclables in your campground. We provide containers for both Aluminum and Plastic.

