

The Southeastern Caver

Newsletter of the Southeast Regional Association of Grottos



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Brian Roebuck - Editor



Julie Schenck Brown in Cave Spring Pit Entrance (photo by Blaine Grindle)

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John Hoffelt

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Anne Elmore

Photo by Lynn Roebuck

A Note from the Chair

This past year has been a very unsettled one with the discussions and gradual closings of caves due to the White Nose Syndrome. As the situation closes in on our TAG caves, we find ourselves in a dilemma in which we don't have an exact answer. Cavers have stayed strong throughout this in lessening our impact, mainly through decontamination procedures. I commend those who are adamant in doing their part in being responsible cavers, whether it be in research, donations, taking a break in caving, or promoting the decon in their clothes and gear in hopes we can make a difference. We are all working to find a solution before we lose our mosquito-eating friends to extinction.

SERA continues to keep a strong bond no matter what life throws at us. Cave events come and go and are still great weekends to be a part of in common friendships.

As always, I want to thank SKTF for all their ongoing efforts to clean up the world, one hole at a time. I truly believe we can make a difference.

Thank you for allowing me to be your Chairman this year, and I look forward to great things to come.

Anne Elmore
Chairman, SERA 2009
Cookeville, Tennessee

SERA Winter Business Meeting 2009

SERA Winter Business Meeting 2009 - Hosted by the East Tennessee Grotto - March 7th 2009 Oak Ridge Civic Center Oak Ridge, TN

The East Tennessee Grotto (ETG) hosted the 2009 SERA Winter Business Meeting on March 7, 2009 at the Oak Ridge Civic Center in Oak Ridge, Anderson County, Tennessee. Robert Packett led ETG in sponsoring a well-organized and well-planned meeting with excellent accommodations.

Registration and Salon set-up began at 0830 hours (hrs). At 0900 hrs, SERA Chairman John Attaway called the meeting to order and introduced the host grotto. Robert Packett made some introductory remarks, including information about the Civic Center, lunch plans, and cave trip plans.

Brent Aulenbach introduced the SERA Map Salon. This event represented the 15th annual salon. Brent displayed five maps; two for show, three for competition. Lynn Roebuck introduced the Fine Arts Salon. Both Brent and Lynn requested more entries next year.

Brian Roebuck reported on the SERA Newsletter, *The Southeastern Caver*, and he brought a box of copies. Brian requested more articles and described available material as "sparse."

John Attaway provided the Chairman's report: A good year for SERA; however, John noted that we now face bat diseases (White Nose Syndrome) and that the 2008 SERA-VAR was hot and poorly attended.

Anne Elmore provided the Vice-Chairman Report: No activity as Vice Chairman; however, Anne noted that more grottos other than the Sewanee Mountain Grotto should be represented at the executive table. Anne also tooted the SERA Karst Task Force (SKTF) clean-up effort on Coal Bank Road (near Blue Spring Cave, White County, Tennessee), which Anne led; the clean-up recovered 14 tons of solid waste.

John Hoffelt provided the Secretary Report. On March 4, 2009, the NSS notified SERA that the Clayton County Cavers grotto (No. 000285) in Georgia was deactivated. The NSS received no response from the grotto after repeated contact attempts, and the grotto did not file a 2008 Internal Organization Report. No one spoke for the Clayton County Cavers at the 2009 SERA Winter Business Meeting.

John Hoffelt read the minutes of the 2008 SERA Winter Business Meeting. Jim Wilbanks prepared the minutes, and the minutes are posted on the SERA Website. The Clock Tower Grotto (Georgia) noted one correction regarding their clean-up of Parkers Cave, not Talley Cave. The minutes were approved as amended; John will contact Brent Allen, SERA Webmaster regarding the necessary change.

John Hoffelt next provided the Treasurer Report. The balance forward provided by Jim Wilbanks in June 2008 was \$739.32. SERA generated no income due to a monetary loss by the 2008 SERA Cave Carnival. More discussion on this topic follows.

SERA incurred \$273.83 in expenses for the webspace, administrative items (ledger, checks), and awards. John reported the balance as \$465.66.

ED Note: At the 2009 SERA Winter Business Meeting, the award committees did not select 3 awards, and Brian Roebuck provided a debit of \$32.93 for *The Southeastern Caver*. On March 16, 2009, John Hoffelt produced a revised balance of \$582.73.

Maureen Handler provided the SERA Karst Task Force (SKTF) Report. The SKTF was very busy in 2008. They helped the Sewanee Mountain Grotto in April with cleaning up the Russell Cave Watershed (Alabama and Tennessee) along Orme Mountain Road. In November and again in February (2009), they cleaned up in the Blue Spring Watershed (Tennessee) along Coal Bank Road. The Blue Spring effort produced a one-day record of 9 tons of scrap metal, and the combined total for November and February was 13.8 tons. This netted the SKTF \$33 from recycling the metal.

The SKTF held 3 board meetings through the year. They are developing a DVD concerning karst watershed protection. When funded, 4 editions of the DVD will be produced for different age groups, and the DVD will be distributed for free.

The SKTF operated a booth at the TAG Fall Cave-In, and they plan to do so again and at the SERA Cave Carnival in 2009. The next board meeting is at Maureen's house on March 29, 2009.

Continuing with reports, John Attaway called for a report of the 2008 Summer Cave Carnival from the Mountain Empire Grotto (MEG). No one responded for the MEG. John Hoffelt reported that according to the Appalachian Karst Conservancy, MEG lost money on the Cave Carnival. Mudpuppy (Peter Michaud – Sewanee Mountain Grotto) moved that SERA adopt the policy of forgiving the \$1.50 per participant tax if the host grotto loses money on the event. This motion was tabled until the afternoon discussion.

Jody Bailey (Nashville Grotto) provided a report on the upcoming 2009 SERA Cave Carnival to be held May 28 – 31, 2009 at The Little River Camp on the Mountain (the TAG Fall Cave-In site) in Georgia. Jody reported that circumstances led the grotto to the TAG site because of financial issues. Jody announced that the theme for the Cave Carnival would be Carnivál, and the event would include a Mardis Crawl Parade. Also, various fun games and events would be held with fabulous prizes at stake. John Hoffelt had T-shirts for sale to support the cave carnival and for the ICS-NSS convention in Texas.

Mudpuppy reported on plans for the 2010 SERA Summer Cave Carnival, to be held June 16-20, 2010, at a private camp (where Thunder on the Mountain – a motorcycle rally – is held) near Monteagle, Tennessee.

Under "Old Business", Mark Joop (Southeastern Cave Conservancy) provided an update on the Summer Cave Carnival Enhancement Committee. Only 4 surveys were returned to Mark. Based on the low response, Mark moved to dissolve the committee, but to keep the information on the SERA website updated for hosting grottos to reference. Michael Gilbert (Central Alabama Grotto) objected saying he wanted to keep the committee to provide guidance and suggestions to improve the carnival. Chris Kerr (Smoky Mountain Grotto) concurred stipulating encouragement for smaller grottos to host. Maureen Handler (SKTF) suggested using a SERA officer as a carnival liaison to the host grotto. Mark Joop moved, Jim Wilbanks (Chattanooga Grotto) seconded, that the enhancement committee be dissolved and a new committee form. The issue was tabled until the afternoon session.

Chrys Hulbert (Nashville Grotto) presented information on the White Nose Syndrome (WNS) affecting bats in the eastern US. The disease is spreading and headed to Tennessee. There were several questions following the presentation, including the role of show caves, whether they would close or provide public awareness information. It was noted that no show caves visited knew about WNS, nor did they provide any information. A suggestion was made to update the SERA website with information. Also, a call was made for SERA to send a letter to the NSS Show Caves Liaison to encourage show caves to educate the show cave owners and operators and to encourage public education at the show caves.

- Action Items:
- Update SERA Website with WNS information
 - Write letter to NSS Show Caves Liaison

Chrys passed a bat bowl for contributions to the NSS WNS Rapid Response Fund (a dedicated fund to support WNS research). The collection brought \$45.00 for the fund.

Beginning the "New Business" segment of the meeting, John Attaway introduced the SERA Award Committees. Two members of the Larry S. Adams Landowner Appreciation Award were not present, so John appointed Mudpuppy and Jim Wilbanks to fill those award seats. John also called for Meritorious Award nominations.

Before breaking for lunch, Cheryl Pratt (East Tennessee Grotto) announced the clean-up at Conner Creek Cave on Sunday. Lunch break began at 11:30 a.m.

The afternoon session began at 1:00 p.m. John Hoffelt called the organizational roll. The following organizations and representatives were in attendance:

Central Alabama Grotto – Nathan Gatlin
Chattanooga Grotto – Jim Wilbanks
Clock Tower Grotto – Brad Barker
Dogwood City Grotto – Bill Stringfellow
East Tennessee Grotto – Cheryl Pratt
Georgia Speleological Survey – Nancy Aulenbach
Huntsville Grotto – Avis Moni
Nashville Grotto – Jody Bailey
Sewanee Mountain Grotto -- Mudpuppy
Smoky Mountain Grotto – Chris Kerr
Southport Chronic Cavers – Lynn Roebuck
Spencer Mountain Grotto – Anne Elmore
Tennessee Cave Survey – Gerald Moni
Southeastern Cave Conservancy – Mark Joop

The organization representatives (listed above) provided the following organizational reports:

CAG – Reports a good year – continue to work the Talladega race event; 11 people attended a grotto trip to Yellowstone National Park; November 6-8, 2008 co-host with Birmingham Grotto the NSS Board of Governors Meeting in Birmingham, Alabama

Chattanooga – Now meeting at the Chattanooga Nature Center; there, they rappel off the building and clean windows/building; bought a new projection system; Jerry Wallace is Chairman; 50-60 members

Clock Tower – Grotto goes caving a lot; cleaned-up Talley Cave, coordinated with the SKTF, and tracked over \$10,000 worth of Volunteer Value Time; they are teaching new cavers how to survey caves; on behalf of the Pigeon Mountain Grotto, Clock Tower reported working with Georgia Department of Natural Resources with the anticipated result of opening several new caves for visitation

DCG – Cleaned-up the roadside around Sues Market; proceeds from the TAG Fall Cave-In resulted in donations of over \$9,000 to various caving organizations and causes (this totals to about \$130,000 given since 1996), Christine Bowdee is Chairman this year, they meet at the REI Store with about 60 people per meeting and a total of 130 members

ETG – Meetings are held at the Oak Ridge Civic Center, grotto cleaned-up Grassy Cove Saltpeter Cave, surveyed in Cumberland Gap Cave, cleaned-up and surveyed Toilet Bowl Cave, they hosted the NSS Board of Governors Meeting, they help lead tours of Cherokee Caverns, they checked Poplar Creek Cave for rock art and fossils, and they monitored Berry Cave for ash impacts from TVA's Kingston Steam Plant coal ash spill

GSS – Resurvey of Fricks Cave and finding new passage, Fricks now closed, GSS jackets for sale

Huntsville – Attendance at meetings is about 60 people, the grotto is very educational to new cavers, the grotto hosts a horizontal and a vertical cave trip at a set time/weekend each month

Nashville – Many new faces in the grotto, about 35 people attend meetings, meetings are now the 3rd Thursday of the month, grotto is busy planning the 2009 SERA Summer Cave Carnival, manned an Earthday Booth in 2008 with about 5,000 people attending, the Spencer Sewage Treatment Plant saga is (somewhat) complete – the infiltration ponds are online, and the Agreed Order is vacated with all requirements fulfilled – the ponds already had a dropout occur, and the resolution is 7 years behind schedule due in part to 3rd-party intervention from the local district State Representative sending the agreed remedy to the State Court of Appeals where the agreed remedy was struck down.

Sewanee – They meet the 2nd Saturday of the month at members houses. The meeting day consists of a cave trip, then dinner with a theme, the actual business meeting, and ends with a program. Typically, 20 – 25 people attend. Members published an article in the NSS News; surveyed 8 caves, with several on-going projects. The grotto hosted 2 clean-ups in the Russell Cave Watershed – one with the SKTF; also helped with the Blue Spring Watershed Clean-up and Horseshoe Bend Cave clean-up and assisted SMG with Grassy Cove clean-up. The grotto continues to recycle aluminum at SERA Summer Cave Carnival and TAG Fall Cave-In. PupFest 6 is planned for Labor Day Weekend; expecting 120 people; it is a free event, bring food to share and items for auction. The grotto is also planning to host a Pre-Camp for the International Congress of Speleology, and they will host the 2010 SERA Cave Carnival.

SMG – Less than 10 people show up for the meetings. Sevierville new cavers re-found Robinson Caves No. 1 and 2; they supplied the data to TCS, but there are landowner issues with the caves. The owner of Cuyler Cave died, but the cave

is open again, contact Chris Kerr. Jan Simak is now president at UT. The grotto Post Office Box (82917) may be cut. New stuff found in Fentress County; grotto maintains communications with the Gurnts. Led clean-up at Grassy Cove Cave; held vertical training, and dye traced Meads Quarry Cave.

Southport – Grotto goes caving a lot. Meetings are the 1st Saturday of the month, consisting of a meeting (at roving locations) and then a cave trip. Several cave surveys are underway, and the grotto hosts a cave clean-up every year.

Spencer – Hosted clean-up of Blue Spring Watershed with SKTF; Loni Carr did a lot of work for the clean-up. New passage found in Blue Spring Cave. Grotto has t-shirts. Cumberland Caverns is under new ownership, and hosts bluegrass concerts in the cave on Saturdays (ED: delayed broadcast statewide on radio network). On behalf of Upper Cumberland Grotto, reported on rock hounds coming to meeting, and grotto took them caving.

TCS – Tennessee has about 9,300 caves. 210 caves >1mile (mostly by mapping short known caves that are longer than thought). Ken Oeser mapped Jackson Cave to about 4,000 feet; then Jason and Chrissy Richards dove the sump, and connected to another entrance, and the cave is over 2 miles long, now. The spring meeting will be April 4 at Sewanee, and 90 new caves turn-in this year.

SCCi – Made 2 acquisitions: Stewart Springs (AL) and Fern (AL); although, Fern is not signed, yet. Conservancy is still paying on properties and saving money for Fern. Several caves are closed due to White Nose Syndrome. The annual meeting will be at Stewart Springs on May 16.

Carrying-forward discussion issues from the morning session, Mudpuppy's motion to establish SERA policy to waive the SERA tax from the Summer Cave Carnival if the event is a net financial loss is withdrawn and dies for lack of a second. Chrys Hulbert motions, Mudpuppy seconds, for SERA to write a letter to MEG requesting a report and information regarding the event (focusing on lessons learned, what was right, what was wrong) and to forgive the tax as a result of the financial loss. The motion carries unanimously.

Maureen motions and Mudpuppy seconds to assign the task to the SERA Vice Chair to be liaison to the host organization to help ensure a successful event, support the efforts of smaller grottos, and implement findings and recommendations of the Enhancement Survey Committee. The Vice Chair would ask for volunteers to assist in this effort, and this new "committee" would establish a CUP-like (ED: an SKTF term) document that the potential host grotto would be required to fill-out.

After discussion, this motion is withdrawn, but John Attaway appoints Michael Gilbert and Nathan Gatlin to form a SERA Summer Cave Carnival Support Group to consolidate the Joop (2008) and Dougherty (1991) SERA Cave Carnival Surveys and establish a CUP-like document (ED: application?) that the potential host must complete. A question remains open whether the application must be approved, and by whom, in order to host the cave carnival.

Maureen (again) motions and Nancy Aulenbach seconds that the SERA Chairman (ED: annually?) appoint a liaison to the host grotto for implementation of the Cave Carnival application. This motion carries with 2 opposed.

John Attaway again calls for meritorious service awards; there are none. John then calls for nominations for SERA Vice Chairman. Michael Gilbert is nominated, he accepts, and is unanimously elected. John Hoffelt agrees to carry on with Secretary-Treasurer duties and is unanimously elected.

The SERA award committees met in private. The Map and Fine Arts Salon judging was finalized.

Jim Whidby led a tour of Cherokee Caverns for those not judging.

The evening banquet consisted of pulled-pork bar-b-que and fixin's from a local restaurant, and ETG brought homemade desserts. After dinner, award recipients were announced. Brent Aulenbach announced the map salon:

Julie Schenck Brown	Merit Award	Bo's Cave, Alabama, AJK-4273
Tom Moltz	Merit Award	Pettijohns Cave: Nervous Breakdown Room, Georgia, GWK-29
Julie Schenck Brown	Best of Show	Horseshoe Bend Pit, Tennessee, TMN-170

Lynn Roebuck announced the Fine Arts Salon:

Jim Whidby won all the award categories

John Attaway announced the SERA awards:

David McRae and the Birmingham Grotto received the Alex Harris Conservation Award

No recipients were selected for the other SERA awards.

Larry Matthews presented the evening program: "Historic Caves of Knoxville and the Great Smoky Mountains." The presentation consisted of the photos and stories from Larry's book of the same name.

This concluded the 2009 SERA Winter Business Meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,

John Hoffelt
Secretary-Treasurer
April 9, 2009

Sewanee Mountain Grotto: 2009 Survey Projects

By: Julie E. Schenck Brown, NSS 30493

Introduction

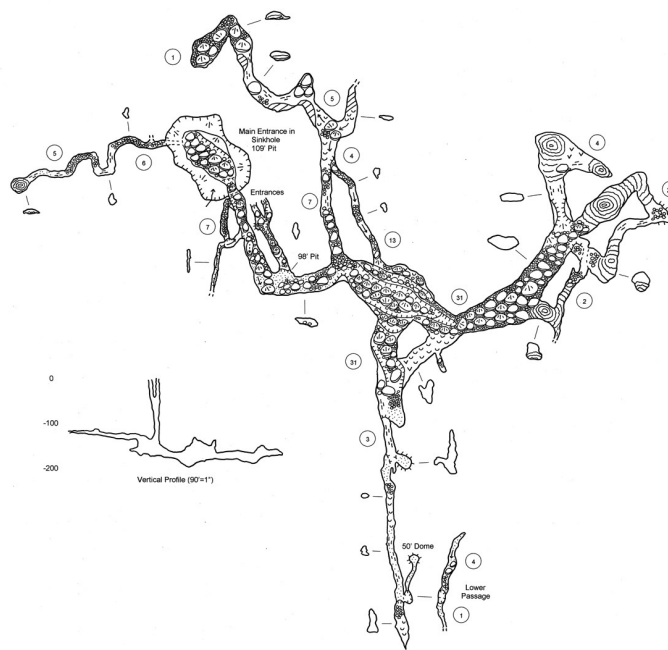
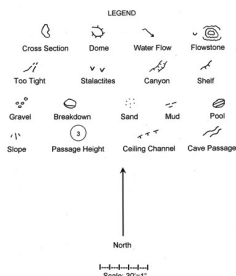
Since the completion of the survey at Horseshoe Bend Pit last year, Sewanee Mountain Grotto continues to be active in survey projects throughout Tennessee and Alabama. SMG survey projects are completed by members known as the Psycho Survey Bitches and Our Entourage of Manly Men. Anyone is welcome to join us on a survey project and no previous experience is needed. In fact, our own Jason "Junior" Hardy learned how to sketch and keep book this year, producing his first map. This article provides a brief summary of grotto survey projects in 2009.

Hytop Drop, Tennessee

This is an outstanding cave to visit in the winter as the open air entrance has a gorgeous waterfall rimmed by giant ice stalactites. When these ice stals break lose into the pit or there is much rain in the forecast it can be unsettling. Marion O. Smith discovered this cave in 1974 and only estimated 800 feet of cave passage. But over the course of four survey trips, Hazard Bryant, Bambi Dunlap (Bam Bitch), Anne Grindle (Skinny Bitch), Blaine Grindle, Mudpuppy, Junior, Julie Usselton (Graceful Bitch) and I surveyed 2091 feet of beautifully decorated passage. We even took three out of town guests (Trevor Doherty, Colin Campbell, Bryan Campbell) on a survey trip and taught them how to survey.

Hytop Drop
Franklin County, TN
TFR 49
Length: 2,091 Feet
Cave Depth: 171 Feet
Grade 5 Survey
January-March, 2009
Sewanee Mountain Grotto, NSS

Julie Schenck Brown
Hazard Bryant
Bambi Dunlap
Jason Hardy
Peter "Mudpuppy" Michaud
Anne Grindle
Blaine Grindle
Julie Usselton
Trevor Doherty
Colin Campbell
Bryan Campbell



Cave Springs Pit, Tennessee

After finishing the survey at Hytop Drop, Blaine and I both noticed a surface depression and walked toward it. I asked Graceful Bitch and Blaine if they wouldn't mind waiting on me while I bounced it with a tape/ instruments for a quick survey. Blaine and Graceful Bitch cleared the dead trees and rigged, while I sketched. It was drippy and we could all hear water. The pit taped roughly at 47 feet. As I entered the darkness, I realized the cave was a sizeable room that would need an actual

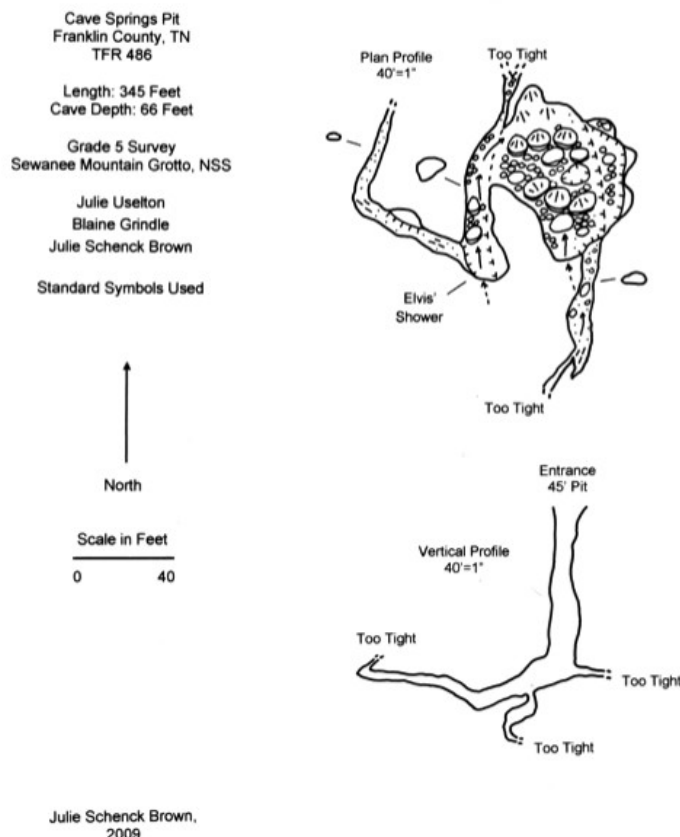
survey. The water rolled through an 8 x 10 foot conduit that was at least 50 feet away. I walked 20 feet away from the rope

and knew we would have to survey this find together. I couldn't scoop while my friends waited on the surface. I climbed back up the rope and told them of our discovery. The cave is in the Pennington Formation, so I promised it would qualify, but didn't expect anything too long. Anne Grindle would ask me later why I didn't scoop the cave to see what it does stating she thought it was not worth the drive if the cave didn't go very far. Well, I like to survey as you go and wanted to share the discovery with my friends who waited so patiently on the surface for me. I also do not like to turn in new caves without a map.

On Tuesday, March 10th, Blaine, Graceful Bitch and I returned to survey our new find. We had a great time surveying not knowing what we would find. The room which I initially thought was 30 feet in diameter was more like 60+ feet in diameter. We found a side lead which ran along the mountain's edge before terminating in a wet crawl. We also located the lower level where the water drains through a sloped crawl way that I dug open. The water fell 12-15 feet down a shaft where we emerged and got slightly wet. Graceful Bitch pushed hard on every lead, but they were all too tight, although a bat did scoop us. We decided this lead was, "someone else's problem..."

Back in the main room, we started towards the water flow in the big conduit. We were excited, but as it turned the corner there was a 6 foot waterfall with a low lead at the top. Graceful Bitch and I flailed and flailed as Blaine tried to photo document our buffoonery. The limestone was so rotten it crumbled everywhere. Graceful Bitch then came up with a clever idea to stack rock below the water fall. There was also a large hole where we both almost fell. Sadly, Blaine's camera fogged up so he only has his memory. After stacking the rocks and more buffoonery, I was up the climb (that's the "G" rated version, sorry you all missed the actual climb!) Graceful Bitch and Blaine came up next and we were all cold and wet. The cave passage only required three more survey stations before it got too tight and mud plugged. We climbed down what we now dubbed "Elvis' Shower" and climbed back out to the surface. We enjoyed the 80 degree weather and after 30 minutes the feeling in my feet returned, which was lost in the cold water.

We debated naming the cave "Worth the Drive" as all day long we joked with each other whether it was worth the drive to survey a Pennington Spring Cave. Although the cave has a length of 335 feet and a depth of 66 feet, we all decided it was worth the drive and had a great time. I think I made the right decision to not scoop booty. We did not know what we would find until we pulled tape and had great anticipation and excitement mixed with sheer buffoonery. For me it has always been worth the drive anywhere to spend the day with friends and have fun that is what makes life special.



Keel Mountain, Alabama

Living at the base of Keel Mountain makes it quick and easy to access caves close to the house. In the early spring, Doug Moore and I got Jon Brown to come out of retirement and return to the ridge. We surveyed two caves that Jon had dug open behind our house four years ago. August saw Junior, Deirdra Hahn (Majorette Bitch), Matthew Setchfield (of England) and I begin the survey of Paul's Cave, taping the Cataract at 292.8 feet. Later that month, Junior, Majorette Bitch and I returned with Mudpuppy and Julie Uselton to complete the survey at 1,338 feet. An article describing the survey and our map was published in the *Georgia Underground* for the TAG Fall Cave-In.

Can Do Cave, Tennessee

This cave was chosen as a grotto project to teach Junior to sketch and keep book. As Book Bitch, I was happy to share my knowledge and proud to see Junior enjoying the task of leading his first survey project. Our survey crew consisting of Skinny Bitch, Blaine, Kris Fausnight, Junior and myself surveyed 812 feet of mostly grim passage over

two trips. The real reward in teaching Junior was seeing the beautiful map he produced. I'm proud of how well he did on his first project and as a cartographer.

Martin Springs High Hole, Tennessee

This TAG classic is Junior's second survey project for the grotto. During our first survey, Junior, Hazard and Blaine surveyed the entrance series and passage heading downstream; Skinny Bitch and I surveyed out of the first room into the strolling borehole that finally terminates in breakdown. Anne and I even shot three consecutive 100 foot survey stations. We plan to finish this survey when the water is low. Mrs. Martin's daughter reports that having a finished map of Martin Springs High Hole will be a nice tribute to her mother who loved cavers.

Speegle Tilted Tower, Tennessee

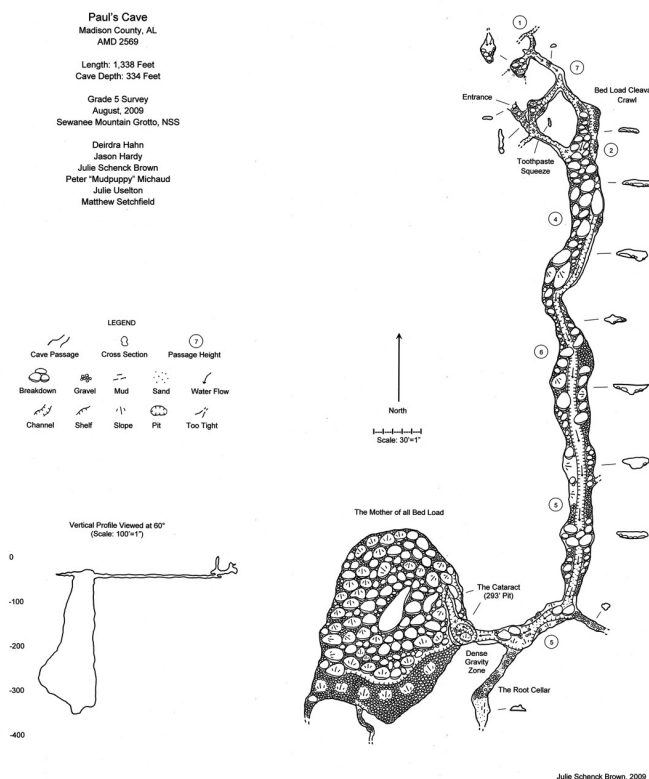
As a tribute to Charlie Smith, the grotto surveyed the day of his memorial service. Joining Skinny Bitch and I were Anne Elmore (Crazy Bitch) and Bill Walter (The Legend). We decided to survey Speegle Tilted Tower, as the original discoverers of this cave, Tom Coker and Teresa Williams had never finished the survey. Maureen Handler (Boss Bitch) was leading a crew to Sawmill Well, but drove our gear to the parking area. As we were unpacking, Tom Coker arrived, walked us right to the cave, helped us rig and promised we would not be disappointed. What an amazing cave! Crazy Bitch did not an outstanding job of survey and photo documentary. We were proud to give her new bitch name, which she says is "just awesome."

Solution Rift, Tennessee

Known as one of TAG's most difficult multi-drop pull downs, our grotto began an effort to finish the survey of this classic cave. Entering from the lower entrance, we crawled ~2,000 feet towards the last drop to access a high lead that enters a large room. Chad Dubuisson bolted a lead with Mudpuppy providing a belay, while Jack Thomson and I surveyed virgin cave. Additional survey trips will continue in 2010, with a field camp tentatively planned for Fourth of July weekend, so out of town cavers can join us for a long weekend of horror.

The Penitentiary, Alabama

Perhaps one of the most scenic pits in the southeast, but rarely visited as the pit is not a hundred footer, this cave was used as a prison during the civil war. The Penitentiary is formed entirely in Sandstone and has several oak trees that are over 100 feet tall growing out of it, as well as gorgeous beds of ferns throughout the bottom. Our survey led by Junior, began in August, while Geary Schindel was visiting TAG. Teresa Williams Benamy also joined us for the survey and located a scary climb down that could potentially lead to more passage. Junior and I returned later in the fall to finish off the survey, locating a contact layer of sandstone and limestone past Teresa's lead, but decided it was not worth our lives to push two leads. We dubbed these leads, "Death Awaits 1" and "Death Awaits 2." Junior did an outstanding job drafting his second map after completing the



survey of this Alabama classic.

Conclusion

Another long list of caves surveyed by the best grotto in TAG and the entire US. Thanks again to all of you for the camaraderie that we all share underground and above. I hope to see you underground soon and hope more SMG members join us on upcoming survey trips.

Blue Spring Cave Update

By: Anne Elmore et al

Blue Spring Cave in Sparta, Tennessee reached the 35-mile mark on December 11, 2009. This has taken a long time reaching this milestone with a lot of dedicated cavers along the way.

Tom Barr's "Caves of Tennessee" Book, last reprint 1995, describes the cave below:

Blue Spring Cave (also known as Bob Hill Cave) consists of a single chamber, low, wide, and well decorated with dripstone. The mouth is 5' high and 8' wide. The single room of the cave is 60' wide, 6' high, and 500' long.

And look where we are today! On July 18, 1989, a group of cavers returned to this small cave and began pushing a very tight low tube-like passage they opened up the day before. The 11' drop into the "new cave" discovery was named the BlueBob Extension.



Bill Walter checks leads in Blue Springs Cave

The keeper of the survey records, Bill Walter, always insists on "survey as you go" trips. Because of this rule, the cave has been treated with respect and guidelines to all those who have participated in surveys. Trails were established in each passage, impact was minimal, and survey was going.

This latest mileage has been very hard to get, taking 2 years to reach the last one, bringing the total to 35 miles. A lot of it came from missed side leads towards the front of the cave, hanging survey places, basically mop-up work. As the team has worked on this, they have found even more mileage yet to be surveyed, and also includes a new section missed years ago now called the Valentine Passage. The cave has more to offer to those willing to set standards and abide by the survey rules.

I'm very honored to be a part of the surveys, including both the 34 and 35-mile survey days. These trips can humble even the most excited cavers. Falling in love with a cave is something I never dreamed of, but when my best friends are a part of this underground gem, it all makes it complete. My thanks go to Lonnie Carr and family for allowing cavers from all over the world to visit this incredible playground.

2009 Survey Chronology

October 9, 2009: "Today Bill Walter and Mike Rogers visited BSC for a day of mapping. First we entered the start of "Joop Loop" (off the B passage, near the ladder) and I sketched 24 stations of dug crawlway that had never been sketched before. We then proceeded to the Cathedral Room area. Bill showed me a side lead off this room where we mapped just over 300 feet of new survey for the cave. There is another 200 feet or so more passage to map in this area. We also found two new leads that need to be checked, and noted another 150 feet or so more passage needing to be mapped. The cave now stands at roughly 34.83 miles - approx. 850 feet to go before reaching 35 miles!" -----*Mike Rogers*

November 15, 2009: "Good news, the mileage continues to grow. This weekend, Mike Rogers, Robert Oaks, Bill Walter, and Anne Elmore surveyed several small areas near the front, still hoping to reach the 35-mile mark. We mapped 771 feet total, with 478 feet of that being new passage, all in nine different side passages. Total length of Blue Spring Cave is 184,422 feet, which comes to: 34 miles and 4902', which is 378' shy of 35 miles long. The cave reached 34 miles in October 2007 and we hope to push it over to 35 by the end of December. 184,422 feet long and 378' To Go." -----*Mike Rogers*

December 11, 2009: "35.0015 Mile Cave. The big 35-mile mark was reached today in Blue Spring Cave. The survey team consisted of: Mike Rogers, Robert Oaks, Bill Walter, and Anne. Bill read the tape making the cave 35.0015 miles long. After mopping up loose ends throughout the cave this year, the "golden station" for the final shot is BVO 6, located in the breakdown en route to the Moonscape. This extra mile has taken 2 years of work to reach.



35 Mile Survey team poses for a celebration photo!

After exiting the awful crawl, we were greeted with lots of Paparazzi to document this event. Congratulations to Lonnie Carr for this monumental milestone and thanks to Mike Rogers for his ongoing dedication and passion in working toward this goal and with BW's persistence and Robert Oaks work, we are looking at mile 36 in the works already."

Editors Blurb

All submissions to "*The Southeastern Caver*" are gladly accepted in the following forms, written text, MS Word, plain text files, jpeg, tiff, scanner size prints (8.5" x 11" max), photo slides (I have a slide scanner), pdf, Adobe Photoshop and Illustrator native, and many others (please contact me if you have any doubt). Please send all submissions, photos, etc to the editor by the last day of January for possible inclusion into the next "*The Southeastern Caver*" electronically to: solow@charter.net (broadband) or via snail mail to the following address:

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Editor: "*The Southeastern Caver*"
94 Magnolia Lane
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Please visit our website at <http://www.caves.org/region/sera/> for the latest information and to view older newsletters etc.

Caving related discussion forums and websites of interest to SERA members can be found here:

http://uscaversforum.org	US Cavers Forum
http://www.caves.org/phpBB2/	NSS Cavers Forum
http://www.hiddenworld.net/tag-net/	TAG – Net
http://www.webwhisper.com/tcs/default.html	Tennessee Cave Survey
http://www.caves.org/survey/fcs/	Florida Cave Survey
http://ourworld.cs.com/alabamacaves/	Alabama Cave Survey
http://www.caves.org/survey/gss/	Georgia Speleological Survey

For all of you cave photographers out there please head on over to Flickr to see some amazing cave photography in various groups such as Cavers, Caves, and Caving Photos (CCCP) located here: <http://www.flickr.com/groups/cavers/> as well as many individual accounts and cave related groups. Search to find more!

Still looking for things to do with your spare time and a fast internet connection? Well then don't forget to check out your caving buddies on Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn and all the other time wasting internet social sites out there!

"Every Caver is some other Caver's weirdo".....Dr Beaner

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