The Southeastern Caver Volume 27 February 2022

Stephens Gap Cave, Jackson Co., Alabama

The Southeastern Caver is the official newsletter of the Southeastern Region Association (SERA) of the National Speleological Society and is published once a year for distribution to SERA member grottoes and the NSS archives. Statements and opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the policies or beliefs of SERA or the National Speleological Society. Reprinting of articles is allowed if proper credit is given to the author and/or photographers represented in this publication. Send correspondence and exchanges to: The Southeastern Caver, c/o Don Hunter, address given below.

2021 SERA Officers:

Chair: Zeke McKee Vice-Chair: Annabelle Dempsey Secretary/Treasurer: Alan Hatcher

The Southeastern Caver Editor:

The editor of the 2023 issue of the Southeastern Caver had not been determined as of press time for this issue. Please send any submissions to one of the SERA officers for inclusion in the next issue.

In this issue:

A few words from the editor, Inside Cover 2021 SERA Map Salon, Inside Cover 2021 Winter Business Meeting Minutes, p. 1 2022 SERA Treasurer's Report, p. 7 Photographer's Spotlight, Chuck Sutherland, p. 8 1812 Names in Brigg's Cave, Tennessee, Marion O. Smith, p. 11 The Exploration and Survey of Chism Chasm, Zeke McKee, p. 14 Heart of Gould Survey Update – 2022, Zeke McKee, p. 18 Remembrance: Adventures with James E. Youmans aka "Iron Man" NSS7004 FE, James H. Smith, p. 22 In Memory of Jim Youmans, Mark Lassiter, p. 28 Remembering Jim Youmans, Teresa Willams Benamy, p. 29 Jim Youmans Photos, Kathy Mackay, p. 30 Eulogy for Stan Olekas, Jim Wilbanks, p. 31 Doug Plemons, In Memorial, Terry Skidmore, Gareth Gould and Kimberly Lughart, p. 33 Cave Photos, Alfred Crabtree, p. 35

Cover: One of the special places in TAG, Stephens Gap Cave. I normally select a caver-centric photo for the cover but for this, my last issue, I thought that this photo by Kelli Lewis Sutherland was a nice way to go out...just the pit bathed in some lovely, soft light.

Back Cover: Noah Yawn captured this wonderful image of Nancy Holler Aulenbach at the shower in Rusty's Cave.

A Few Words From The Editor:

Well, the time to hang up my "The Southeastern Caver" editor hat has finally come. A number of things in my personal life have converged to make the effort to produce a quality newsletter more difficult, among them advancing age, family responsibilities and a real hankering to get out every chance I get to photograph fungi, wildflowers and pollinators. Whenever I'm on a roll, editing and producing the newsletter is actually fun, but I was finding it increasingly more difficult to get on that roll. Even this particular issue is going out much later than I had anticipated and promised. I hope someone who can enthusiastically take on this responsibility and challenge comes along and can get the newsletter back on track and on schedule. It's been an honor to be your editor, and I was proud of each issue I produced but the time has come, as I said earlier, to hang up that hat. So long and happy caving!

Don Hunter

2021 SERA Map Salon

The 27th annual SERA Map Salon was held on Saturday, February 20th, 2021 at the SERA Winter Business Meeting. The meeting was hosted by the East Tennessee Grotto and held virtually on Zoom. Electronic versions of the maps were judged during the week leading up to the meeting. Meeting participants were given a link to download the maps from Dropbox for viewing.

The goal of the map salon is to encourage and improve mapping of SERA caves by:

 (1) providing a venue to improve the visibility of cartographers work in the SERA region,
 (2) giving an opportunity to view other cartographers maps and techniques,
 (3) providing an incentive through healthy competition, and
 (4) providing critiques to improve cartographic skills and techniques.

The salon uses the same judging criteria as the NSS cartography salons and the critiques give the cartographers an opportunity to improve their maps before entering in the NSS Convention Cartography Salon. There was great participation this year with 13 maps entered for competition, representing the work of eight different cartographers with caves from five states: Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, and Tennessee. This is the first salon with an entry from Kentucky since SERA has allowed Kentucky Grottos to join the Region.

Maps were judged in two categories, with seven entries in the short cave category and six in the long cave category. The quality of maps was very impressive, with great detail and several ingenious approaches instituted to address areas with complex multilevel overlapping cave passages. Ten of the thirteen maps received awards.

In the short cave category, two maps received Merit awards for achieving a high level of quality.

These were Rewarded Well, Jackson Co., AL, by Dane Garreau and Guzzle Cave, Knox Co, TN, by Kyle Lassiter. Third Place went to Ryan Hoffman for Crow Flight Cave, Jackson Co., FL. Second Place went to Ryan Hoffman for Field Island Cave, Jackson Co., FL and First Place went to Ryan Hoffman for Chad Cave, Jackson Co., FL.

In the long cave category, two maps received Merit awards. These were Keller Creek Cave, Franklin Co, TN, by Justin Huffman, and Austin Point Cave, Jackson Co, AL, by Jon Zetterberg. Third Place went to Ed Klausner for Gypsy Cave, Dade Co., GA. Best of Show and First Place ties went to Josh Brewer for Cindy Cave, Cumberland Co., KY and to Kyle Lassiter for Gourdneck Cave, Marion Co., TN. These two maps scored very close to each other and showed great competence and effort, so it was decided to award two Best of Shows this year to these deserving maps.

Other map entries included: Tranquillity Cave, Overton Co., TN, by Justin Huffman (long caves category), The Fall of Barcelona Pit Cave, Dade Co., GA, by Elliot Stahl (short caves category), and Kota's Hideout Cave, Dade Co., GA by Elliot Stahl (short caves category).

Congratulations to all the cartographers for your great maps!

Thanks also go to the six judges. Judging the short caves category were Jon Zetterberg, Jay Manneschmidt, and Natalie Pheasant. Judging of the long caves category were Chuck Sutherland, Kelly Smallwood, and Brent Aulenbach.

2021 SERA Winter Business Meeting

The meeting was hosted by the East Tennessee Grotto via Zoom on February 20, 2021. Note: All Times are Eastern Standard Time

The meeting was called to order by the SERA Chair Jon Zetterberg at 10:00 a.m. The Chair also introduced Zeke McKee as the SERA Vice Chair and Alan Hatcher as the Secretary/Treasurer. Mendy Swain of the East Tennessee Grotto (ETG) made Opening Announcements and Welcome Message. In lieu of the typical cost of acquiring a venue, the ETG will be donating ~\$500 to the NSS directly.

Brent Aulenbach introduced the Map Salon. A link to a dropbox was provided that held the maps. (Was since deleted.)

• 13 map entries from 8 cartographers covering 5 different states

• Two Categories: 6 maps in Large Cave; 7 maps in Small Cave

• 6 Total Judges. Results given at the end of the meeting today.

Don Hunter introduced this year's issue of The Southeastern Caver. Vol 26, February 2021.

• Pointed out Chris Higgins photo from Heart of Gould Cave used on the cover.

• Very good response for content this year. Topped out at 50 pages!

• Don briefly reviewed the contents of the newsletter and thanked each contributor.

• Newsletter included a gallery of photos in lieu of Photo Salon being hosted this year.

Executive Reports:

Chair:

• Noted the difficulty surrounding Covid but noted that most grottos are continuing to function during these difficult times.

Vice Chair:

• No report

Secretary / Treasurer:

• Successfully took possession of all SERA materials from John Hoffelt

• Took over Admin of SERA Facebook group. Added several hundred more members. Currently 853 members.

• Restarted TAG-NET as SERA-NET

- o Established using Google Groups
- o Currently 145 Members

 No SPAM has occurred since the group was founded.

- Made contact with most existing SERA I/Os
- Removed 5 grottos from Existing List

■ Central Florida Grotto, Middle Georgia Grotto, Clayton County Cavers, Central Basin Grotto, RAT Grotto

Still working on making contact with other possible defunct grottos

 Established Google Spreadsheets for Tracking Refusal Lists

 Trimmed SERA Cave Carnival List of Organizations That Are Never Likely to Host

- Added possible projection years
- Suggested using SKTF Design from Jerry
- Wallace, below, as a possible fundraiser.



• Presented Treasurer Report (See full report at bottom)

O Projected Possible Low Future Balance SKTF

• The SKTF currently has no leadership role assigned. SERA Chair asked for volunteers to take over the organization going forward.

• Maureen Handler has all of the materials and can help anyone get started as SKTF Chair.

• SKTF participated in a Savage Cove cleanup back in March

Julianne Ramsey gave a report on the cleanup.
Grundy County Mayor's office provided dumpsters.

• Indoor camping provided at the Grundy County Community Center.

Alan Hatcher added, as Chair of the Nashville
 Grotto, that Conservation Chair

Caralynn Strand was organizing another date to do more cleanup at the site.

SERA Activities Report:

• Secretary read the minutes from the 2020 Winter Business Meeting

• 2022 WBM is scheduled to be hosted by the GSS

• Brent Aulenbach and Nancy Aulenbach provided an update.

 GSS Chair Brent Garner is looking for an interesting location for the meeting.

o May fall back to Bank of Lafayette.

• 2023 WBM invitation was issued to Green River Grotto. Huntsville Grotto would be next.

• 2020 Summer Cave Carnival was hosted by the Upper Cumberland Grotto

o Megan Atkinson gave the report.

Held over Halloween. ~55 attendees. 20+
 Volunteers. Co-Chaired by Megan and
 Rose Morgan.

 Raised approximately \$1300, much of it from the secondary publication of the

guide produced by Chuck Sutherland.

o Jay Manneschmidt requested a copy of the guidebook for the SERA website.

o The Chair thanked the Upper Cumberland Grotto for hosting under difficult circumstances.

• 2021 Summer Cave Carnival

 Central Alabama Grotto has declined to host due to Covid based attendance concerns.

 The Chair stated that if a group of individuals wanted to put on a smaller Carnival that would be fine, but under the circumstances

it is also fine if it doesn't happen.

• Alan Hatcher stated they may host a "Simple SERA" at Caver's Paradise.

• 2022 Summer Cave Carnival

Rebecca McNabb from the Chattanooga
 Grotto indicated they were moving

Grotto indicated they were moving

forward with plans to host the Carnival in 2022 unless CAG would like to.

 Alan Hatcher mentioned that Michael Gilbert and CAG might be willing to take

over the 2023 Cave Carnival.

• Michael spoke about the difficulties even trying to find a location due to Covid.

• Rebecca said they would be flexible.

• Alan stated that Clock Tower Grotto might consider doing it in 2023.

o Greg Whittaker stated that CTG didn't feel comfortable doing it by themselves but they might want to co-host it with another smaller grotto.

 Michael made more comments about the current state of things regarding hosting carnivals and events.

Web Site Report

• Jay Manneschmidt stated that he was leaving for a bit but would like to make sure he gets all of the award winners so he can print up the certificates and send them to the Secretary or Chair for distribution.

• Jay reiterated that he needs all of the information in a timely manner in order to get everything updated.

• Cleanup on the website has been ongoing. Some work to do still, but feels that it has been pretty successful.

• Alan noted that he has been sending corrections to Jay and that Jay has been handling them in a very timely fashion. Chair called for a 12 minute break and to reconvene at 11 a.m.

Old Business:

- No old business was brought up.
- New Business
- Blue Grass Grotto joining SERA

• Placing SERA Archives in filing cabinet at NSS Headquarters

SERA Awards Discussion

- Chair explained the process for this year.
- All awards were decided before the meeting.
- All five awards will be given.
- Francis McKenny Award Committee
- O Chuck Sutherland
- O Kyle Lassiter
- o Rebecca McNabb
- Richard Schreiber Award Committee
- o Gerald Moni
- o Bill DeVan
- o Jeff Patton
- Larry S. Adams Landowner Award Committee
- o Hali Steinmann
- Michael Gilbert
- o Warren Wyatt

- Alexis Harris Conservation Award Committee
- o Greg Whittaker
- o Kelly McNamara
- Megan Atikinson
- Avis Moni Hospitality Award Committee
- o Jay Manneschmidt
- o Annabelle Dempsey
- o Natalie Pheasant

Organization Roll Call and Reports:

- Alabama Cave Survey Not Present
- o Jon reported they did not meet this year.
- Athens Speleological Survey Not Present o Jon reported as Defunct
- Augusta Cave Masters Not Present
- o Jon reported as Defunct
- Birmingham Grotto Shay Howell
- o Working on gating caves near Huntsville
- Working on protecting caves near a quarry project
- Central Alabama Grotto Jason Stacy

Week long trip out West last year with 8 people

- o Especially enjoyed Monument Valley
- Charlotte Cave Club Not Present
- Chattanooga Grotto Rebecca McNabb

o Have not met in the last year. May start meeting again soon.

- Clayton County Cavers Not Present
- Clocktower Grotto Greg Whittaker
- o Maintained monthly Zoom meetings
- o Most members individually active
- Crescent City Cavers Joseph
- o Grotto restarted two years ago
- o Covid has hurt activities
- Have done a few trips to TAG
- o Currently 8 to 10 members
- Cullman Grotto Not Present

o Secretary reported he has had contact with them this year

Cullman Grotto and Montgomery Grotto are
 "Sister Grottos" and do a lot of

activities together.

 Dogwood City Grotto - Bill Stringfellow
 O Have not been able to meet at REI but have been using Zoom

O Having grotto campouts every other month

- o TAG Fall Cave-In Canceled
- Still sold a T-shirt to fund grant program
- East Tennessee Grotto Mendy Swain
- Using Zoom for Meetings which has opened up a wider variety of presenters
- o Individual members are still actively caving
- Extended all 2020 memberships into 2021
- Flint River Grotto Ryan Hoffman
- Held their annual Cave Crawl just before Covid
- hit. ~150 people attended.
- No Cave Crawl this year.
- Some trips being led.
- Project in Florida Caverns State Park
- O Discovered third longest dry cave in Florida.
- Flittermouse Grotto Not Present
- Secretary reported them as active
- Florida Speleological Society Not Present
- Probably defunct.

Ryan gave a brief report about a new Florida
 Survey Organization

- Gadsden Grotto Not Present
- Secretary reported some contact made.
- Georgia Speleological Society Brent Aulenbach and Jon Zetterberg
- o Chose not to meet this year
- Received almost double digit in cave submissions
- Some ridgewalking and exploration
- No publication in 2020. Will be held for next bulletin.

• Anyone who paid for 2020 will be credited for 2021.

- Green River Grotto Barry Adams
- Not as active due to Covid
- Doing some cartography projects
- o Online presentations
- Huntsville Grotto Not Present
- o Secretary reported as Active

Having meetings including Super Meeting with DCG

- Jackson County Grotto Not Present
- Secretary reported as Active
- Montgomery County Grotto Not Present
- Nashville Grotto Jim Minie and Alan Hatcher
- o Online Meetings consistently every month
- All new officers this year
- o About 95 members
- o Some personal cave trips with social

distancing as much as possible

 Created Vertical and Cartography Sections within the Grotto

Sections created to support small group activities

o Conservation Chair is Caralynn Strand

 Have created badges that can be earned for activities like vertical and

conservation

o Introduced the Nashville Domain, which is a50 mile radius around the REI

 Redone our website and automated trips and membership management

o www.nashvillegrotto.org

• Pigeon Mountain Grotto - Not Present

- Possibly Defunct
- River City Grotto Not Present
- o Possibly Defunct

• Sewanee Mountain Grotto - Hali Steinmann

Hosting meetings in homes of members

Super Meeting in March with the DCG
 Decided in June to meet outside as much as possible

■ June - Wonder Cave

- July Nickajack Cave Bat Float
- CaveFest canceled this year due to Covid

May try a more casual CaveFest in 2022

November Did a Workday at NSS HQ

O December Christmas Party at The Caverns

 Kyle Lassiter continued to publish newsletter and map of Gourdneck Cave

 Donations made to NSS, SCCi, CaveSim, and the rescue squads

- Six Ridges Grotto Not Present
- Possibly Defunct

• Smoky Mountain Grotto - Jay Manneschmidt • Have not been meeting

- o Hope to start meeting again in 2021
- Want to continue surveying Zarathustra Cave

• South Carolina Interstate Grotto - Not Present

 Jon reported they are still around but not very active

- Spencer Mountain Grotto Julianne Ramsey o Small grotto with older members like Marion Smith and Bill Walter
- Suspended in person meetings

• Met outside starting in July but stopped later in the year

o Tried one Zoom meeting but will likely not continue

September - Grotto picnic at Cumberland
 Caverns

 Some work going on in and around Nunley Mountain Cave

- Tampa Bay Area Grotto Not Present
- o Secretary reported no recent contact
- Team Posiedon Not Present
- Possibly Defunct
- Tennessee Cave Survey Gerald Moni

o 596 new caves reported in 2020, mostly by Justin Hoffman

0 61 new caves reported so far this year

o 11, 352 caves now in Tennessee - 247 over a mile long

Using Lidar to find new caves

 Have not decided about resuming in person meetings

- Triangle Troglodytes Not Present
- o Possibly Defunct
- Upper Cumberland Grotto Rose Morgan
- Have not been as active

 Usually meet at TN Tech but only met twice there this year

- o Zoom didn't work out well
- Moved meetings to outside venues

 Roughly 4 or 5 cave trips, some campouts, kayaking

Waived membership fees this year

SCCI - Bill Stringfellow

 Closed on Cyclops Cave in Virginia. 7 mile cave.

- O Purchased Balcony Sink Cave in TAG
- Working on two more acquisitions
- o Please become a Sustaining Member

 Mayapple Cave and Mulepen Cave donated by John Attaway

 Alan Hatcher announced a \$5000 donation last year to SCCi from the Nashville Grotto

Chair called for Lunch Break until 12:45 pm

New Business:

Blue Grass Grotto has requested to join SERA
Kevin Zachary, Bob Roth, and Steve Vaughn on call to represent

• Based out of Lexington, KY

o Chartered in 1962

• Approximately 50 members with about a dozen coming to meetings

 Tend to concentrate on Biology efforts and short cave trips

Bob is Librarian for the NSS along with Bill
 Torode

Bob co-manages the Wells Preserve for the NSS

 Catherine Bishop just produced a large book about James Cave that is

available at the NSS HQ

- No discussion offered on Application
- No Objections from Member Organizations
- Blue Grass Grotto is now part of SERA

SERA Secretary would like to store the SERA Archives within the NSS Headquarters

• Alan offered to purchase a small filing cabinet to place within HQ

• Might be put in same closet with ACS files

• Alan would also like to put award plaques somewhere at NSS HQ

• Alan made a motion to allow the Secretary to place the SERA Records at the NSS HQ

Mendy Swain Seconded

• Mendy asked about what age of records would be placed

• Current ledger would not be put there.

• Many of the current records like Minutes are electronic these days

• Jon showed the Chair packet that gets passed to new Chair and would not be archived

• No Objections from Member Organizations

Motion Passed

Meritorious Service Award:

• Alan Hatcher nominated Don Hunter for his work on the excellent newsletter this year and in the past. Mendy Swain seconded.

• No objections and award was given to Don.

Elections:

Vice-Chair Zeke McKee moves up to Chair for 2022

Alan Hatcher agreed to run again as Secretary / Treasurer. Gerald Moni nominated. No other nominations and Alan was elected to a second term.

Alan Hatcher nominated Hali Steinmann to serve as Vice Chair, who declined. Alan Hatcher nominated Annabelle Dempsey to serve as Vice Chair. Gerald Moni seconded. Annabelle Dempsey was selected as SERA Vice Chair for 2022.

Map Salon Awards - Brent Aulenbach 27th Annual SERA Map Salon Judges for Short Maps

- Jay Manneschmidt
- Jon Zetterberg
- Natalie Pheasant
- Judges for Long Maps
- Kelly Smallwood
- Chuck Sutherland
- Brent Aulenbach

First year with a Kentucky map in the Salon. Short Caves Awards

Merit - "Rewarded Well" - Dane Garreau Merit - "Guzzle Cave" - Kyle Lassiter Third Place - "Crow Flight Cave" - Ryan Hoffman Second Place - "Field Island Cave" - Ryan Hoffman

First Place - "Chad Cave" - Ryan Hoffman Long Caves Awards

Merit - "Kelly Creek Cave" - Justin Huffman Merit - "Austin Point Cave" - Jon Zetterberg Third Place - "Gypsy Cave" - Ed Klausner First Place - Tie - "Cindy Cave" - Josh Brewer First Place - Tie - "Gourdneck Cave" - Kyle Lassiter

SERA Awards:

Francis McKinney Award - Jeff Patton Richard Schreiber Award - Justin Huffman Alexis Harris Conservation Award - Mike Moser Larry S. Adams Landowner Appreciation Award -Tommy Griffin and Melinda Sutton-Griffin Avis Moni Hospitality Award - Homero Rivas II SERA Meritorious Service Award - Don Hunter

Outgoing Chair Jon Zetterberg thanked

everyone for everything they did in a very difficult year and adjourned the meeting. Josh Brewer invited everyone to attend the Nashville Grotto Cartography Section "Survey Talk", happening every other Tuesday online.

SERA Treasurer's Report:

Beginning Balance: \$367.46 (Handover from John Hoffelt on 12/31/2020) Income Upper Cumberland Grotto: \$102.50 on 2/3/2021 (2020 SERA CC Tax) Alan Hatcher: \$50.00 (SERA Award Offset Donation) Anonymous: \$50.00 (SERA Award Offset Donation) Expenditures 2021 SERA Cash Awards: \$100.00

Notes:

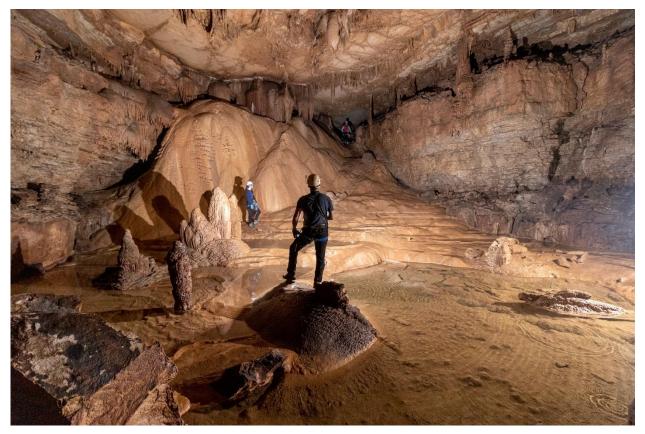
Three of the award participants declined to accept the cash award. Alan Hatcher and a donor who wishes to remain anonymous covered the other two award amounts totaling \$100, so no money was spent during the last fiscal year. There was also no SERA Cave Carnival in 2021 so no income was generated from that. I do anticipate spending a small amount to have the plaques engraved with the 2021 and 2022 winners but will cover that myself as a donation to SERA.



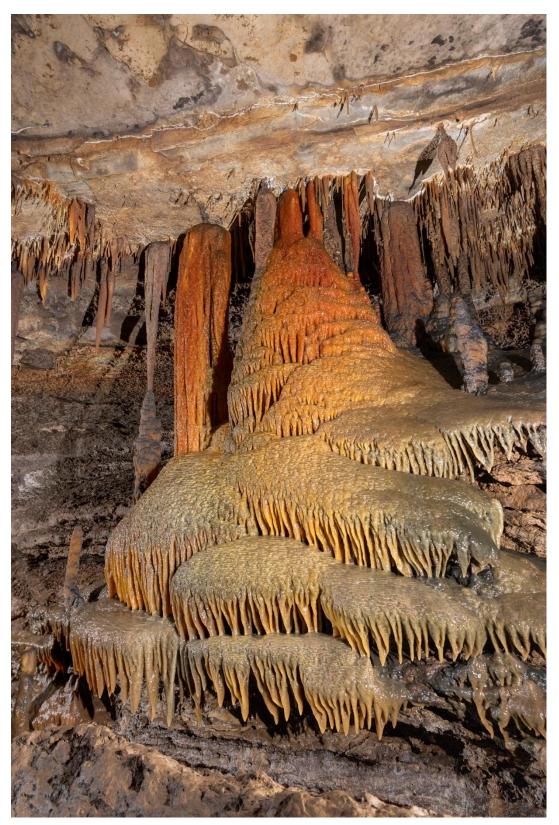
Soda Straw, Blue Spring Cave, White County, TN. Photo by Chuck Sutherland

Photographer Spotlight: Chuck Sutherland

Chuck Sutherland has been engaged in cave photography for as long as I've known him and, I'm sure, for many years before that time. It's just one of his many talents that he graciously shares with the caving community. In my position as newsletter editor, I have constantly, as most editors do, struggled to find content to fill the pages of each issue and Chuck has always been generous with his photography, encouraging me to browse his Flickr account and take whatever I needed, whether it be for a major spotlight on his work or for just an image to fill a couple of otherwise blank column inches on one of the pages. I thought it would be appropriate for my last issue of The Southeastern Caver to include a few of Chuck's photos of from a couple of middle Tennessee caves. Enjoy these images and again, thanks, Chuck for being so generous with your work.



Ashley Williams and Warren Wyatt, Secret Cave, Albert and Ethel Ogden Nature Preserve, Putnam Co., TN



The Phoenix, Blowhole Cave, Cannon Co., TN



Justin Huffman, Gypsum, Hellhole Sink Cave, White Co., TN



Kelli Lewis Sutherland, Secret Cave, Albert and Ethel Ogden Nature Preserve, Putnam Co., TN



The Rotunda Room, Camp's Gulf Cave, Van Buren Co., TN

1812 Names in Briggs Cave, Tennessee

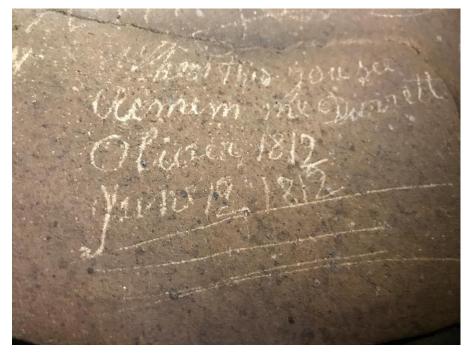
Marion O Smith

Briggs Cave, WH85, was surveyed April 24, 2004, by Robert Oakes and Jack Thomison. A short distance inside is a 43-foot pit, which, if descended on its right side, allows a person to access a passage some 25 feet below, and off of it is a 300-ish foot crawl. Near the end, in a four by four foot enlargement, is inscribed "when this you see Remem me Durrett Oliver June 12 1812." Also, there is "1812"

1787

²⁵ and an August 20, 1812 date with another name, "WM E A_____"

Durrett Oliver (June 15, 1787-April 15, 1847) was a son of Douglas Oliver, Sr. (1753-1843), a Virginia Revolutionary War veteran, and his first wife, Mildred "Milly" Carnelle {1753-1793). Durrett came with his father and family to what became Anderson County, Tennessee, when he was about ten. His father became the namesake of the community of Oliver Springs. Not much is known about Durrett. He was married twice, first January 18, 1806, to Elizabeth Stephens, by whom he had two boys and two girls, then November 2, 1811, to Matilda Lea 1792-1883), who gave him seven girls and four boys. In 1808 he was an ensign in a light infantry company of



Signature of Durrett Oliver, June 12, 1812, Briggs Cave

the 31st militia regiment (Bledsoe County), and in 1812 he was a sergeant in Captain Richard Marshall's company of "drafted militia". He perhaps lived in North Carolina, Randolph County, Illinois, and other places, but by 1840 he was in Grant County, Wisconsin Territory, where on May 1, 1845, he acquired 43 acres in Township 3 North, Range 3 West, section 4.

Sources

Findagrave #97994028 (Douglas Oliver, Sr.); Ancestry.com (Durrett Oliver); Virgil D. White, <u>Genealogical Abstracts of Revolutionary War Pension Files</u> (4 vols., Waynesboto, Tenn, 1990-1992), 3:2536; Lucy W. Bates and Helen C. Marsh, <u>Roster of Soldiers and Patriots of the American Revolution</u> <u>Buried in Tennessee</u> (Johnson City, Tenn, 1979), 134; Pollyanna Creekmore, <u>Early East Tennessee</u> <u>Taxpayers</u> (Easley, S.C., 1980), 2, 13; Mary B. D. Moore, <u>Record of Commissions of Officers in the</u> <u>Tennessee Militia, 1790-1811</u>, Vol. 1 (Nashville, 1992), 388; 1840 census, Wisconsin Territory, Western Division, Grant 43; U.S. General Land Office Records, 1776-2015, certificate 5647.

Additional Information from Zeke McKee NSS 67250

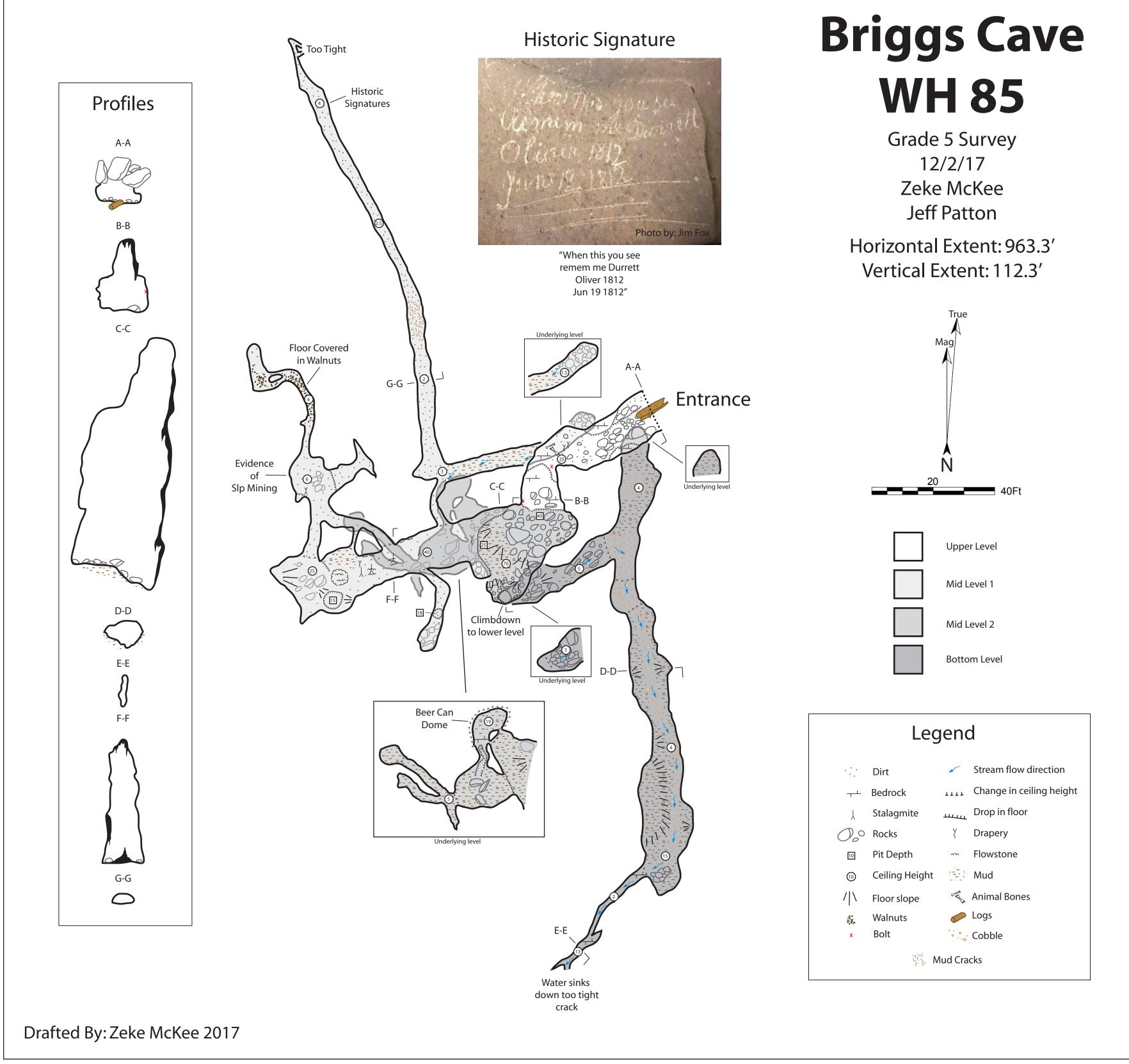
As is far too often the case, the survey efforts in Briggs cave in 2004 never led to a completed map. After a push trip to the bottom of the cave, May 29, 2017, which determined the route on to be even too small for a pants-less goat, it was decided to resurvey in the near future. On December 2, 2017, Jeff Patton and Zeke McKee performed a survey and subsequently produced a map of the cave. During the resurvey, some evidence of limited saltpeter operations were found on the same level as the signatures, hinting at the reason for the 1812 explorations into the cave.

More research into **Durrett Oliver has** determined that he resided in the community of New Diggings, Wisconsin, settling on the Fever River. When the Winnebago War broke out, many settlers moved to Galena, but those who remained were able to shelter themselves in a stockade, 40-square yards in size and containing two block houses, which was erected under the direction of Durrett. By 1840 a schoolhouse had also been erected on the Oliver Farm.

Source: Western Historical Company, <u>History of La</u> <u>Fayette County, Wisconsin</u>, (Chicago, 1881) 563-67



Marion O. Smith climbs the entrance pit, Briggs Cave. Photo by Jim Fox



The Exploration and Survey of Chisum Chasm

By Zeke McKee

Chisum Chasm was first visited by members of the TCS on Sunday July 15, 1990, after a local man, with the last name Robert, told them of a virgin pit. Marion O Smith, Hal Love, and Joe Douglas soon made their way up the side of an outlying portion of Goulden Mountain north of Sparta, TN. On their way, the trio encountered a small cemetery containing the grave of Revolutionary War Veteran, Elijah Chisum. Hal was the first to find the pit, a four by six-foot entrance in the bottom of a steeply sloping twenty-five-foot diameter, hillside sinkhole. The 114-foot, offset entrance pit was first negotiated by Marion, then Hal, and finally Joe. At the bottom of the pit the cavers found themselves looking over a large breakdown slope which was negotiated to the top of a 28-foot pit. Only Marion descended the blind pit, the cavers noticed a window on the other side into another room but it would require some technical ropework to reach it. Upon exiting the cave, it was decided to name it after the soldier buried down the hill.

On Saturday December 2, 1992, the cave was visited by a large group, led by Alan Cressler, who were later planning to attend the annual Cumberland Caverns Christmas Party. This group made it no farther than the original crew, but sparked the curiosity of Cressler, who returned on January 17, 1993 with Andy Porter, Heath Many, and Gerald Moni with the plan to attempt the traverse through the window. Andy was the first to cross through the window by rappelling off a ledge where Heath had placed a bolt. At the level of the window, a narrow ledge was formed on which Andy was able to pull himself across and then rig a J rappel for the others to follow. The cavers found themselves in a wide canyon, over 50 feet tall and extending north and south in front of them. Across from the window was a tall dome with a small waterfall originating at the top. The south end of the passage quickly terminated, as did the bottom of the dome. Northward, the canyon extended up a large sand hill, beyond a small pit (which is avoidable by downclimbing under a boulder) and finally over the largest portion of the chasm, which is floored in massive breakdown with huge boulders suspended overhead in a narrower portion of the passage. Eventually the passage ended in a massive boulder choke.

The cavers, on their way back, noticed overhead, above the boulder choke, the passage seemed to continue. Retreating back to the level of the pit, Cressler was able to perform a traverse along crumbly ledges and over the large boulders suspended mid passage, eventually climbing down onto the top of the choke that had nearly stopped exploration. Ahead, the breakdown on the floor of the passage became covered in a unique light and dark color resembling spots on Holstein cattle. The cavers named this the "Cow Room". To the right of the Cow Room was a heavily decorated dome with a too tight drain; to the left of the Cow Room the passage continued as a narrow canyon. A sketchy climbup, which Gerald did not attempt, led on for Alan, Andy and Heath. Gerald headed toward the entrance and found a climb down bypass through the boulder choke to avoid the traverse. The trio, continuing into the cave, commenced down the canyon before emerging in a beautiful formation room, then on through a crawl to more formations, eventually reaching the end of the cave at breakdown and formation chokes. One other extension was explored before the cavers exited the cave. At the bottom of the entrance drop, a small crawlway leads to decorated passages that end in flowstone, and in one direction a 42-foot pit drops into the main canyon near the waterfall dome.

These trips mostly concluded the exploration of Chisum Chasm and the cave only saw a handful of recreational visits and photography trips for nearly 30 years. However, on January 18, 2019, Jim Fox, Chris Higgins, Calla Goins and Zeke McKee descended upon the cave to begin the survey. Most of the entrance area and the formation extension to the pit into the main canyon were all mapped on this date. Also, a tour to the formation room and much photography took place on this occasion. Over the following year six survey trips, involving ten surveyors, mapped the cave to a length of 2947 feet and a depth of 209 feet. The cave mostly trends north-south and appears to be two braided trunks, one a large canyon taller than wide, intertwined with a wider and lower passage that can be seen in places such as the Formation Room, the Cow Room, and again off the base of the entrance pit. With the exception of a few pockets and an area found at the top of an aid climb, the entire cave appeared to have been explored between 1990 and 1993.

During the survey, some bolting was performed in the cave. On February 2, 2019, Jim Fox executed an aid climb of the formation dome to the right at the Cow Room. This pinched at the top but appeared to have passage on the other side. Jim climbed acrobatically, even perhaps upside down at one point. With a little direction from Robert Oakes, he seemed to have sorted it out, because at the top, beyond a squeeze, was a beautiful formation room sporting cave pearls and an 80' high dome. Unfortunately, the passage (Fox's Fabulous Formations) terminated quickly but was later surveyed and then the rope was pulled. Lee White, Jesse Houser, and Josh Schultz descended upon the cave with Jim on February 23 to bolt an alpine style entrance to negate rope rub, though I think this date may be the only occasion anyone has taken the time to rig it that way. They also re-bolted the J rappel and a rope up the Moni bypass, which was de-rigged after the survey, as well. Jim Fox returned to the cave on three other occasions (not including survey days) to bolt climb the waterfall dome just inside the main canyon. With belays by MOS, Chris McMichael, and Zeke McKee, Jim was able to climb to a height of 116' from which it was determined the passage at the top would be too tight for humans. On October 18, 2019, the last bolt placed was approximately 6' from the top of the dome which was named "The Lee Dome", in honor of Lee White, who was originally expected to complete the climb.



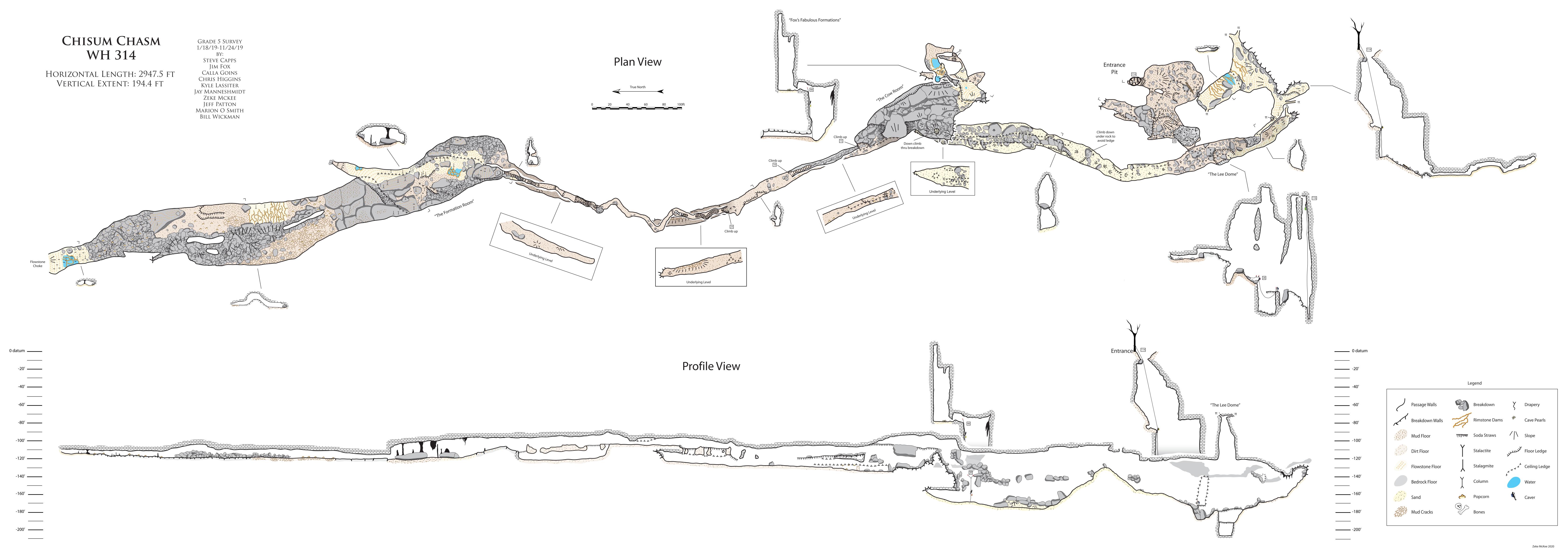
Jesse Houser and Lee White re-bolting the J rappel Photo by Jim Fox

It appears as if the cave has given up most of its secrets, though one may always find some obscure crawl through breakdown that could lead on. Also, there are a few bolt leads left in the cave for a dedicated climber, though none seem over-appealing. Chisum Chasm is privately owned and was accessed with permission. The cave is home to delicate formations, biology, and important cultural artifacts. It should *only* be accessed with permission and with the utmost care when traversing the passages.

Sources: Cressler, Alan (1993). Chisum Chasm, The Unexpected Continues. *Georgia Underground*, Vol 30 (No. 1); Marion O Smith, personal communication



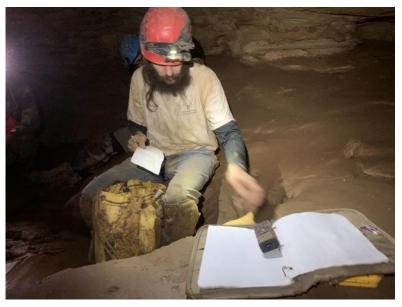
After a long day of survey in Chism Chasm. Photo by Jim Fox



Heart of Gould Cave - 2022 Update Zeke McKee NSS 67250

At the end of year 2020 Heart of Gould (HoG) Cave in White County, TN had been mapped at over 8,000 feet long and 356 feet deep, making it the deepest and one of the longest caves in the county. Going passage, accessed by Jim Fox's bolt climb at the end of the 500-foot reported cave, had led downward to a river which was the source of water for a large spring, feeding most of the nearby Cherry Creek. Unfortunately, the downstream exploration was stopped by too low passage before a physical connection to the spring could be made. The upstream progress suffered similar disappointment when a massive breakdown presented an impenetrable filter for human access to the suspected extensive cave beyond. With cold weather bearing down and rising water levels from the impending winter rains, the end of 2020 saw a new focus on the upper levels of the cave, and especially on bolt climbing to any high enticing leads.

The upper level of the map had been slowly filling out while Chris McMichael and Jim Fox led the charge on bolting any virgin pit or dome that they could find, some with minor footage to be gained, but several which ended blindly. The map hinted of a possible connection between the new and historic parts of HoG via a belly crawl that ended in a too low, gravel floored passage just 200 feet away from the entrance of the cave. Jim, Chris, Zeke McKee, and Marion O Smith attempted to find this shortcut, which would eliminate one hundred feet of ropework and the need to bottom the historic route in order to climb to the



Zeke McKee, on book

2020 extension. On the way into the cave the ensemble peered down the second pit and contemplated rigging it (Marion especially calling for a rope to be secured), but passed on the chance with low expectations being the prevailing attitude of the morning. 1,100 feet of horizontal cave, broken by several hundred feet of ropework among rigged pits and domes, brought the lead into sight. Several minutes of digging at the gravel floor yielded swift results. A black, echoing void appeared just ahead. Whooping into the cavity, the diggers quickly scraped away the remaining few feet of gravel. Standing in the tall passage, bisected by an enormous boulder, it was quickly recognized as the base of the 26-foot pit near the entrance of the cave. With daylight just feet away there was no way to reach it. With Marion's calls to rig the pit echoing in everyone's head, the cavers turned around to face the long route back the way they came.

By April, new discoveries were back on the menu. Chris and Jim, joined by Alfred Crabtree, had moved further into the cave, three pits above the river level. Just below and across from the base of the 49-foot pit on the route to the base level of the cave, they had climbed a 60-foot pitch to a strange chert

layer with a small stream cascading down to join the other water on its journey down to the Goulden River. Balls, nodules, and oddly tilted bands of chert permeated this upper level, which was mostly hands and knees crawling trending west/east. The Chertch, as it was named, was the first going lead from bolt climbing in the cave since Jim's original climb. The western edge of the Chertch ended in breakdown while the eastern direction continued in a low crawl, pierced by two small pits.

May 14 found Kyle Lassiter, Zeke McKee, and Marion O Smith surveying the Gold Rush Canyon, a tall narrow slot found below the second pit off of the Chertch, with a light steady breeze beckoning the cavers onward. The going was slow and required navigating on ledges protruding at various levels of the rift, rarely walking on a solid floor. One loop route had required navigating an exposed traverse and climb up, just to appear back at the top of the most recent bolt climb. The main canyon trended east, and as the survey shots began to accumulate in that direction a mechanical humming was echoing toward the surveyors. Jim and Chris had gone ahead of the survey team with bolting equipment at the beginning of the day to scout ahead and rig any vertical obstacles which presented themselves. Apparently an 18-foot deep pit had been encountered and was being tamed by the duo. By the time the survey reached the lip of the drop it had been descended and the passage was found, just fifty feet ahead, to terminate at a small dome with a grim looking crawl that would need bolting to reach. However, the 850 feet surveyed on this day was the most mapped in one trip since the river discovery of the previous year. The additional footage projected the cave towards the two-mile mark and brought hope that such a milestone would be reachable before the exploration concluded.

By the end of July, two miles had come and gone in just two survey trips. On the 5th, twelve cavers found themselves trudging along the longest horizontal discovery in the cave to date. Thirteen vertical pitches below the entrance, amounting to 450 feet of ropework and three thousand feet of survey from the end of Gold Rush Canyon, the collection of cavers was touring the Gypsum Highway. Bare-bones exploration rigging paired with route finding issues had compounded to make the trek to this part of the cave especially difficult and tiring on this trip. The grim crawl noted at the end of Gold Rush required cavers to belly crawl backwards while attached to a horizontal traverse line out into a 17-

foot pit at ceiling level. Then swapping to vertical gear while being wedged at the top of the pit, and finally descending a 54-footer, the Chocolate Drop, under a ledge just at the bottom of the pitch. From here a muddy scramble down a horizontal passage steadily became drier as it progressed westward under the Hartselle Sandstone cap of Goulden Mountain. Around a mile from the entrance, gypsum of all varieties began to sprout from the limestone walls, floors and ceiling of the borehole. Portions of the floor were covered in a dense carpet that



Large gypsum flower, Gypsum Highway of HoG

looked like snow, curls and needles sparkled on the walls in dense clusters, and in two places gypsum beards hung delicately from the roof of the passage. It was at this point that the cavers began to route for the entrance. Marion Smith being last out of the cave, after a 15-hour marathon and a combined 900 feet of ropework, has likely set a record for the only 78-year-old who will overcome the high friction of terrain necessary to visit the Gypsum Highway of HoG.

Jim Fox and Justin Huffman resumed the survey from the gypsum on the 24th. The two surveyed the dry borehole until it broke out under the west flank of Goulden Mountain, at which point they surveyed a crawling stream passage, and just north to where three domes over 100-feet tall intersected the horizontal level. The heroic effort of the day brought in nearly 6000 feet of mapped passage. Combined with the previous trip the cave now stood at three and a half miles long.

On Friday the 13th of August, Jon Zetterberg made his return to HoG. His most recent trip being over one year prior (it was the last survey trip before the breakout), he had not visited the cave since it had been only 500 feet long. On this trip he was joined by Cody Munday, Zeke, Marion and Terry "Monk" McClanathan. Jon, Cody and Zeke ran ahead to the bottom of the Chocolate Drop and partially down the horizontal borehole passage to a junction area while Marion and Monk made their way in the same direction. The trio surveyed northward in a dry, mostly hands and knees crawlway for nearly 1000 feet before being stopped at a breakdown with wind blowing through the right side. The lead was noted and the group headed back to the bottom of the Chocolate Drop where Monk was making his way down the 54-foot pit. Here Jon, Cody and Marion began their exit as Zeke and Monk toured past the gypsum to Three Domes and water crawl before routing.

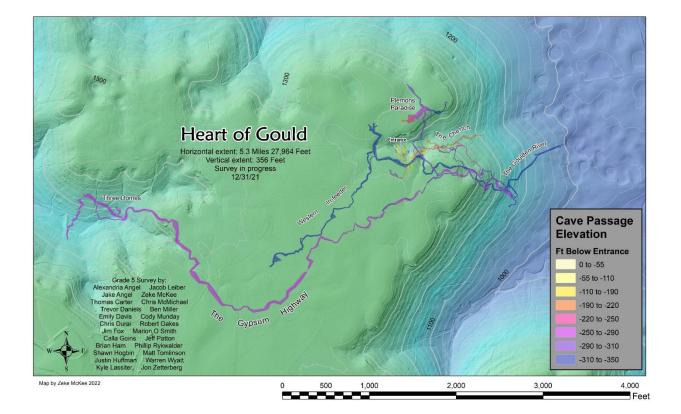
Jon returned at the end of October with Justin and Jim to map at the river level for the first time of the year. On the left wall, near the upstream breakdown terminus, the main river is joined by a tributary. This in-feeder was the survey target of the day. The wet passage bowed south and west following the trend of the Gypsum Highway which lies just to the south and 60-feet higher in elevation. 3000 feet of survey led the team to a low grim crawl in water which is assumed to be the downstream appearance of the water intersected at Three Domes and seen meandering under the Gypsum Highway near the end.

The next month saw Jim, Justin, and Trevor Daniels staring at the breezy breakdown which had prevented further progress to Cody, Jon, and Zeke during the August "Monkathon" trip. In his typical style, Justin glided through the breakdown and discovered the cause of the collapse. Here the two other cavers joined him in a room at least 80 feet wide at the base that bisected the tunnel they had been in. The west side of the wide passage stretched upward for 70 feet before becoming too low to be navigable. A couple of lower and muddier passages were mapped off of this room, as well as a bypass loop that intersected back into a lead noted by the August excursion, making navigation thru the breakdown collapse unnecessary. Two days prior to the trip Doug Plemons, the caver responsible for first describing HoG in the TCS, passed away. The November trip saw fit to name the large room Plemons Paradise in his honor.

Only one trip remained for HoG in 2021. The morning of December 31 seven cavers departed Jim Fox's house enroute to Heart of Gould. Shawn Hogbin of West Virginia had made his way onto the trip after the cancellation of a CRF Mammoth weekend he was to participate in. He and Justin had a full day ahead. The five other cavers made their way to The Chertch where Jim worked on rigging while Jon headed up the mopping-up of the remaining leads in this section of the cave. During this time, Justin led

Shawn to the bottom of The Chocolate Drop, where they surveyed nearly all of the remaining leads in that area and discovered a new 75-foot dome. They then proceeded down the Gypsum Highway to the end of the cave to finish what was suspected to be a quickly terminating passage needing a few shots just beyond the domes. 800 feet of virgin survey later, the trunk finally ended in impenetrable breakdown at the furthest surveyed distance from the entrance at just shy of 12,000 feet in. The duo then exited the cave to retire the survey for the year.

At the beginning of 2022 Heart of Gould cave stands at 27,964 horizontal feet, or 5.3 miles of surveyed passage. Second only to the 40-plus mile Blue Spring Cave for cave length in White County. HoG is also currently the 25th longest surveyed cave in Tennessee. Large discoveries capped off a year of perseverance by determined explorers and mappers. The project reflects a similar situation as one year prior, with leads winding down an end appears to be in sight. However, now pushing what will be a 6-mile system it is hard to ignore the fact that a 2-mile goal seemed lofty just twelve months ago. It only takes one climb, one crawl, or one pit to change our entire understanding of the cave system that lies within the relatively small outlying hill of Goulden Mountain.



Remembrance: Adventures with James E. Youmans aka "Iron Man" NSS7004 FE

By Jim Smith NSS14529FLB

I met Jim Youmans at a Dogwood City Grotto Meeting in 1973. He was the Grotto President and his presence was commanding and confident. I could see among DCG members that Jim was held high in esteem and that he was a natural mature leader. Physically, Jim was muscle bound and his features were chiseled with the look of an outdoorsman and explorer. He saw me at the meeting and asked me about my caving interest and experience. He was friendly and invited me to go caving. I was 17 years old and still in high school. I went caving with Jim and it was the beginning of a life-long friendship and eye-opening adventures. Jim was my mentor in vertical caving, teaching me how to rig ropes and set bolts correctly. After my first caving trip with Jim I knew I had found the right guy to cave with. I was hooked. He introduced me to Jack Hart and Marion Smith and Gerald Moni. Jim took me on pit bopping adventures and weekends with the goal of a 1,000 feet of rope to rappel and climb. On one weekend, at 10:00 p.m. on a Sunday evening, we needed only about 20 feet to pass 1,000 feet of rope climbed and we did the roadside Diggins Pit in Alabama. He insisted, go all the way down! He was training me. Peter Lord, the British caver visiting the US and Mexico in 1973, talked about a British Expedition to the Gouffre Berger, near Grenoble, France, the world's second deepest cave, was in the planning stages for 1974. Jim said he wanted to go the Gouffre Berger. I told him I would go with him. Peter Lord invited me to come to England to go caving with him then to go on the British Expedition to the Gouffre Berger. Jim would fly to Grenoble and join me.

I caved with the Brits in the Gouffre Berger from August 1st to 15th, 1974 on an expedition hosted by the Buxton Speleological Group, University Leeds Speleo association (ULSA), Northern Caving Club, and CWMBRAN Caving Club. I was with Peter Lord, Linda Andrews, Roger Howells. The expedition ended before Jim arrived but another group was scheduled to arrive and explore the cave. I stayed up in the Parc du Vercors until the day before Jim arrived. I got a ride down to Grenoble and had an adventure sleeping on a park bench and getting a bus to airport. Everyone got off the plane but Jim, at least not until the last person got off and I was relieved to see it was Jim. He rented a car and we provisioned at stores and went back up to Parc du Vercors. When we arrived an Italian French Expedition had taken to the field. Several older cavers ran the show. Most of the cavers were as young as I, recently turning 19 years old. The French seemed to be in charge. Communication was difficult and I told them I had been on 4 trips into the Berger. They agreed to let us join their group. The Italian leader, Fernando, a barrelchested strong man, ran the Italian contingent. He invited Jim and I to eat with him, offering us wine and blood sausage. Jim ate the food and told Fernando that in the U.S. we call sausage Horse Cock! They repeated what he said, probably not knowing what it meant, as only one of the Italian cavers spoke any English. Ah! Horse cock! Jim laughed and threw his shoulders back with hands on his hips. Even though there was somewhat of a language barrier, the Italians and French were onto him. We all laughed! In such ways bonds are formed. Cavers are basically the same, no matter where you go.

The next morning, August 17, 1974, we suited up and followed Fernando to the entrance of the Berger. We were on the Italian Team hauling in cable ladders. He waved good bye to the two of us and we followed the ropes. Teams had already started rigging the cave the day before. There were rope and ladder teams ahead of us. The French and Italians were using single rope technique and ladders in contrast to the British who used cable ladders and green Ulstron rope to descend on. The teams ahead of us rigged the cave to the bottom of the Monkey Shaft, at -900+ meters, where Jim and I met up with the rope team as they were rigging the roaring 45-meters deep Hurricane Shaft. I had made it to the top of Gauches Pit, about ten drops from the last rope to be rigged, with Peter Lord et. al. It was the deepest point the Buxton Leeds Expedition penetrated, so I knew the way.

From the Berger entrance shaft of 12 meters, Jim and I descended Ruis Shaft 28 meters to Cairn Hall and then followed, for half an hour, the narrow Winding Cleft, ending at Garby's Pitch, a 40 meter drop. We avoided the ladders when we rappelled each shaft. Below the shaft the narrow canyon continued to Gontards Shaft at 27 meter deep. We followed the canyon another 30 meters to the 55-meter deep Aldo's Shaft, which had both a rappel line of nylon rope and a cable ladder rigged. The cave was mostly rigged for single rope techniques (SRT) and cable ladders. From Aldos Shaft, at -236 meters, we got into a large borehole called Petzl Hall which was traversed for more than a kilometer. We next encountered Lake Cadoux, which was only a wide stream at the water levels of that day. We climbed up a breakdown mountain into the Grand Gallery with iconic giant stalagmites and rimstone pools and flowstone traverses around pools. We intersected a 100-meter wide by 60-meter high chamber that lead to the Little General, a 10-meter drop. A 5-meter tyrolean around a cascade lead into stream canyon 15meters wide by 20-meters high. The stream disappeared into the breakdown of the Great Rubble Heap in the largest room encountered. We entered Camp I at -500 meters. We stashed nuts, chocolate and carbide for our Premier cap lamps. From Camp I we followed large passage descending to the Hall of the Thirteen, with 10-meter tall, flat topped stalagmite columns. It was wall to wall white calcite rimstone dams with 2.5-meter deep pools in the Grand Gallery. We followed breakdown chambers down into stream canyon known as the Canals, requiring wading and swimming in very cold water and four rigged cascades 5- to 7-meters deep. We rappelled 25 meters down wet and windy Claudine's Cascade, followed by the Topographers Pitch of 5 meters, to the last big trunk, the Grand Canyon. On the British expedition we camped at the bottom of the Grand Canyon at about 800-meters deep. The large trunk, 60-meters wide near the bottom, descended 100 meters on slippery mud to the top of Gache Pit of 20 meters. We descended two 8-meter wet drops to the Grand Cascade, a chilling 25 meter waterfall caught in the 39.2F water. Although rigged to escape most of the water, wetsuits made the descent in the chilling spray survivable. We caught up with the rigging team at the wet Little Monkey Shaft, a 25meter deep drop. Next was Hurricane Shaft, 45 meters deep. We followed the stream passage until it required swimming. The Italian French team stopped at the swim. Jim and I were wearing full wetsuits and jumped in the cold water and swam the canals making it to the sump at -1122 meters. We grabbed a pebble from the sump and left the register room and headed to the surface. Jim was still jet-lagged from the day before and we paced ourselves through all the obstacles. The sole on my boot peeled and I borrowed old telephone line to tie up my boot. I had also lost a wing nut off my Mitchell Chest box which required me running the rope behind the chest plate a real pain. At Camp I we found our carbide but our nuts and chocolate were gone! It was understandable there was so much abandoned food from expeditions dating from the 1960s. Cans exploded from spoilage. Old batteries used to make movies and food from recent expeditions abandoned. We took several meals of curried food that was probably left from the British Expedition I was on. The canned food we bought at stores was not very good and the curried meals proved to be the best packaged food we had and the paper packaging would not have lasted long if left. Of course our cave food was expended and our food we counted on was not to be. One the way to Aldos Shaft I found a side passage that had a fresh pan of ravioli stashed. We peeled the tin and gobbled it down. We had been in the cave over 24 hours and it was the boost we needed. We met some French cavers at Aldos Shaft and they told us the fixed rope was bad and we needed to climb the 50-meter cable ladder. Admittedly, communication was almost sign language. It would be my

longest ladder climb ever, with the second longest ladder climb Lancaster Hole in England at 33 meters. I self-belayed off the rope. I tied the rope around Jim's foot who said he was going to sleep while I climbed. I made it up the shaft and examined the rigging. It looked good to me. I yelled down to Jim and yanked on the rope. No answer and I pulled on the rope, lifting his butt off the ground. I could hear, "God Dammit!" I yelled "Wake up!" I let his leg down and told him to climb the rope. He climbed Texas climbing style up all the drops. We climbed up Puits Gontard's, a 43-meter rope climb, followed by The Meander to Puits Garby, a 25-meter rope climb, through the Winding Cleft, with wooden stemples bridging the canyon, to Puits du Cairn, a 23-meter rope climb and Puits de Ruis, the 30-meter rope climb to the welcomed 10-meter entrance pit. We exited tired after 30 hours of caving, having climbed 32 rigged ropes and ladders and 1,122 meters. We may have been the only two on the expedition to make it to the sump. I had just turned 19 a few weeks before and Jim was 33 years old. We made a great team. It was one of Jim's and my greatest caving adventures, one we recalled many times over the years. We watched the Instamatic slides until they faded. Jim was truly my inspiration.

After the expedition, we drove across southern France, picking up Brian Smith from Atlanta, who was visiting his dad in Grenoble as a physicist. We drove around the French Alps and Swiss Alps and hiked below the Matterhorn in the rain. At one point in our travels we ran out of gas. Brian and I had to push while Jim yelled encouragement out the window. We rolled into a gas station and were on our way. After dropping Brian off in Grenoble, Jim and I went east to the Pyrenees Mountains. We stopped on the side of the road to camp in a pull-off with our headlights off to not attract attention. We stumbled around in the dark and threw our bags on the ground and bedded down. Youmans said, "Smith I smell shit!" I said "I do, too!". The next morning at first light we noticed there was a big pile of shit between where our heads were on the ground. You can only imagine what was said!! We continued on our way to the Pyrenees and drove to Tardetts, Licq, to Saint Engrace, where met the leaders of the Association Research Speleology International Pierre Saint Martin (ARSIP) leaders Ruben Gomez and Max Cosyns. Max, 67 years old (67 doesn't seem so old now), took us to the EDF Tunnel, the lower man-made entrance of the Pierre Saint Martin, the world's deepest cave. We toured the Salle de la Verna, a 260meter diameter, 200-meter tall chamber. We couldn't see a thing with carbide lights. It was a black void. Jim got the idea to return in 1975 and field a U.S. Expedition to the Gouffre de la Pierre Saint Martin (PSM). We discussed the proposal with Ruben and Max and they provided us with maps and welcomed a U.S. Caving Expedition. Later in the year they gave us objectives for our expedition that would hit areas they needed explored and surveyed. Jim and I drove up on top of the Pyrenees into Spain. We stopped at the Lepineaux Shaft, a gated 320-meter deep pit. While there, we saw a couple of caver looking types on the side of the road, with mud in their hair, and we stopped to meet them, sharing a bottle of wine with them. We eventually drove to Paris and flew back to the U.S.

After a year of organizing the first U.S. expedition to the PSM, the world's deepest cave at 1,170 meters, Jim Youmans, myself, Fred Wefer, Bill and Cheryl Combs, Tom Ramsey, Arthur Champion (UK), and Dwight Drennon met in Licq, France on August 11, 1975. Bill (US Serviceman) and Cheryl drove their car from Germany while Jim and I drove from Paris. The others arrived by bus. The next morning we awoke to the sound of pigs being slaughtered. We were told we could camp in the field behind the building. It was a slaughter house. We bought a drum of carbide and had to break up the chunks with hammers to fit in our cap lamps. We met Rubin and Max, who informed us that the French had just connected M3 to the PSM, on July 8, for a new world record at 1270 meters deep. M3 entrance was a 100 meters higher than the Tete Sauvage entrance. The French climbed a dome in M3 and dropped down the other

side and explored to a rock cairn and pile of spent carbide. They suspected they had connected to the PSM. Ruben directed us to survey the Santesteban Stream from the M3 connection to the Affluent Larumbe, the primary goal for our expedition. We were glad to have a new and important task.

Jim started ferrying people and gear up the mountain. We had brought a 300-meter long rope as we thought we might go do the 300-meter shaft in Gouffre Aphranice but it was not be. We had four other 200-meter lengths of rope we would use to rig the Tet Sauvage entrance of the Pierre Saint Martin. Jim made three trips to get everyone and their gear and food up the mountain for the three-week long expedition. Finally, we were able to setup the camp at the Col du Pescamo, which was a flat grassy area closely cropped by grazing sheep among ski lifts. It was one of the few flat areas in the classic Alpine karst of the Pyrenees. Also camped in the Col was Graham Wilton Jones and John Duke, from the Bristol Exploration Club, who came to ridge walk or



1975 PSM Expedition Crew: Left to right: Dwight Drennon, Johd Dukes, Graham Wilton Jones, Cher Combs, Bill Combs, Tom Ramsey, Fred Wefer; front row: Jim Youmans and Jim Smith

"prospect", as they would say, for caves in higher elevations of the Pic Soumcoy. We made friends with John and Graham and delighted in their company.

On August 13, 1975, we had an 18-hour rigging trip down numerous shafts from the Tete Sauvage entrance to just above Salle Cosyns, the junction with the Affluent Basaburuko stream and the end of the shaft series. Beyond we would follow stream gradient. The first 150 meters of shafts were fixed metal ladders made of two inch pipe. Drops in the Tete Sauvage shaft series included 16m, 45m, 50m, 25m, 4m, 6m, 30m, 18m, 11m, 4m, 28m, 100m, and 8m. Jim set most of the 8 bolts backed up by natural anchors on the last 8 drops. Jim rigged the drops for a free hanging rope. We rigged down to - 403 meters.

Our August 15th next trip into the PSM would be to camp at Camp des Anciens, in Salle Monique, about 500 meters from the last drop at a depth -600 meters. We planned to camp for three days to accomplish the goals of surveying the connection to M-3 and the survey of Salle J. Susse. Trips times to camp ranged from 7 to 13 hours between three descent teams. On the way in a duffle bag burst and some of the food was lost down the shaft. We made it to camp, which was located next to a canal and would require a swim first thing in the morning. We had brought in two small rafts but they were more of a hassle to paddle so we swam and put our packs in the rafts.

On August 16th, the first team of Jim, myself, Fred and Arthur would survey the M-3 connection. The second team of Bill Combs, Tom Ramsey and Dwight Drennon would survey Salle J. Susse and check for leads. After a meal, a sleep and breakfast, we had to put on our wetsuits which we had used as sleeping pads. The wetsuits were excruciating cold to put on since they were wet and probably in the 30s F. The

real fun was to jump in the 39-degree water on the edge of camp without really warming up. The seven of us swam or paddled across the canal, gasping for breath, and climbed up into the breakdown chamber of Salle J Susse. Halfway across Salle J. Susse, the M-3 connection team split off from Team 2 and traveled up the Affluent Larumbe, past Camp 70, and through the Tubo Viento #2, into a river passage to Eldon Cascade, an 8-meter wet rope climb, and further upstream to a small, cold and wet windy side passage. We had traversed 1,400 meters from our camp to the lead. We put on our wetsuit hoods and wetsuit gloves went upstream until we reach a dome pit with carbide letters smoked on the wall and arrows pointing to the PSM and to M3 and a bottle of champagne. We drank the whole bottle of champagne and it made us sleepy. It was way too cold to linger and we began our survey downstream through stream crawls and pools and down a series of small cascades in hands and knees crawling for 460 meters. It was a bitter survey. We made it back to camp after a long tiring trip of 11 hours. The cold will take it



Jim Youmans and Jim Smith in Affluent Larumbe on the way back to camp after surveying Affluent Santestaben to Affluent Larumbe connection in PSM-M3.

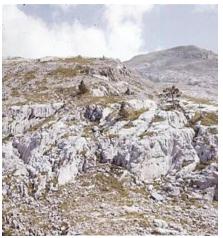
out of you. Team 2 completed their mission in 8 hours, surveying Salle J. Susse, and made 22 crosssections. After 12 hours of sleep we headed to the Tete Sauvage entrance, hauling our camp duffels below us. From camp we exited as three teams taking from 8 to 18 hours on August 18, 1974.

While we were camping in the PSM, on August 17th John Dukes, Graham-Wilton Jones and Cher Combs found an entrance high on the Pic du Soumcoy and rigged down 16-meter, 21-meter, and 51-meter shafts. August 18, 1974, the same team rerigged the first pitches and descended Bryce Canyon, a 60-meter shaft and had a 7.5 hour trip.

On August 19th, Fred and I, with John Dukes, Graham Wilton Jones and Cher Combs, headed up to the cave they dubbed SC-3, or Belfry Pot, or, in Basque, Segnutegniako Lezia. That day we rigged down 280 meters, setting bolts and rigging two cable ladders on 2 6-meter shafts, a 45-meter shaft named Puits Nuit, the 60-meter deep Bryce Canyon, and the 91-meter deep Belfry Pot. We had stopped at the top of a deep pit and then climbed out having a 4 hour cave trip.

On August 20th Bill and Cher Combs surveyed SC-3 to the top of the 91 meter broken shaft known as 39 Steps or The Belfry.

After the camp trip we were approached by two British cavers from the Eldon Pothole Club who wanted to do the through trip out the EDF tunnel and wanted to borrow a rope to rig a shaft that



SC-3 Entrance

would be encountered as an upclimb on the thru trip. They rigged the rope via the EDF Tunnel. They did

the thru trip in 8 hours 45 minutes. Fred, Arthur and I wanted to do the world's deepest thru trip. Jim Youmans drove off the plateau to get the key for the door to the EDF Tunnel from Dominic Prebeden and returned empty handed. We went down again on August 20, 1974 and through the leaders of the ARSIP were able to get the key from Dominic and unlock the door.

On August 21st we did the 7 kilometer through trip in just under 11 hours. From Salle J. Susse we followed 2000 meters of wading and swimming passage to Tubo del Viento #1, which had a cable strung along the ceiling, as the wind created current in the water. After the water we climbed up into the large breakdown rooms up a rusty cable ladder, with 3 rungs missing in a row. The first chamber is Salle Navarra, which climbed into the Sala Lepineux, where Marcel Loubens died. The chambers had huge breakdown and we were thankful there was a reflective trail to mark the route. We only got lost once but refound the trail. Then onto Sala Casteret, Sala Loubens, through more chambers into Sala Chevalier, once described as big as the Queen Mary ocean liner, and finally the giant Sala Verna, where we met Tom Ramsey and Jim Youmans and exited the EDF tunnel.

Back on the Plateau we had weather that was typical of the mountains, with sunny days and days of whiteout and drizzle. We had a return trip to SC-3 for the big push on August 23rd. We walked along a blue blaze paint trail through the karst and got off trail and went up to a hill to the entrance shaft. John, Graham, Fred, myself, Cher, Bill and Arthur, carried rope and planned to survey on the way into the cave. At Bryce Canyon, a narrow fissure drop of 60 meters, lead to a deep fissure, the 91 meter deep Belfry Pot. A narrow meandering canyon at the bottom lead to a deep fissure. Fred and I each set a bolt at the top of the canyon and once on rappel it opened up into a nice, open shaft of 45 meters. Graham was first down the Liberty Bell Shaft. We had descended to a depth of -336 meters. We tried to follow the stream through boulders but were forced to push a narrow canyon that intersected a stream. We went down stream and saw boot prints in



Salle Verna after Tete Sauvage through trip, exiting EDF tunnel. Fred Wefer, Authur Champion, Jim Smith

the sediment. We had connected to something. We went upstream to a terminus and written in carbide on a boulder is "Ruben 67, Alibert J.C. T.S. Terminus R. Gomez". We had indeed connected to the Tete Sauvage upstream Bassaburuko. We met Arthur, Cher and Bill and told them of the connection. We made the journey to the surface for a 12-hour cave trip. We exited into the night and total white out in 35 degree temperatures. We all started down the mind boggling karst looking for the blue trail. It was hard to see in the white out from our lights illuminating the fog. We never found the blue paint blazes in the fog. We could hear sheep bells in the distance and we knew they must be at camp. If the sheep were not in camp we hoped the sheep wouldn't mind if we huddled with them to stay warm. Survival was the goal. We walked to the sound for what seemed forever with no bearing except for the bells. We tripped over a guide wire to a tent and knew we were in camp.

The next day August 24, 1974, we drove off the plateau and called Ruben Gomez. He was shocked we connected to the PSM. We thought we had a higher entrance than M-3. He called Max Cosyns and they planned to drive up the plateau the next day.

August 25th, the survey of SC-3 was finished by Fred, Arthur, Bill and Cher tied into the landmark Rubin recommended in the Afffluent B. They pulled rope up the Liberty Bell Shaft and exited after 12 hours. Graham and I derigged the Tete Sauvage shaft series. Rain had created waterfalls down the shaft series. We hauled out 400 meters of rope in four hours. Graham and I got lost 30 meters from camp in 2 meter visibility.

Max and Rubin drove up the plateau with radios and altimeters. Max, Ruben, Graham, John and Jim took altimeter measurements in the rain, cold and fog at M-3 and SC-3. An accurate altitude of M-3 was measured at 1,985 meters and SC-3 at 2,043 meters.



Liberty Bell shaft in SC-3

They confirmed that SC-3 was 60 meters higher than M-3 making the PSM 1,330 meters deep, a new world record! It was a great joint effort for the Anglo-American team. Unbelievable luck. No American Team to-date has had a world depth record in caving. The expedition continued and another trip into SC-3 tied into a known landmark as directed and described by Ruben Gomez.

August 26th, SC-3 was derigged to the bottom of the entrance shaft. On August 27th, SC-3 was derigged by the whole team and 450 meters of rope were hauled out of the cave in two hours under beautiful clear skies. August 28th we had the first bath in 19 days. The expedition was over and Bill and Cher drove back to Germany. The following day the British Cavers left. Jim and I were the last to remain and we hiked to the top of Pic Anne, a 2,500 meter peak. On August 30th we sold 360 meters of Bluewater Rope to Ruben Gomez of the ARSIP and drove toward Paris.

Jim Youmans said to me that his two trips to France were the highlights of his caving career. This is why I chose to recount these adventures for The Southeastern Caver. He continued to cave in TAG through the 70s and 80s and then went to Huautla in 1985. He said he is glad he got to cave in Huautla, finding two new entrances that lead to the 130-meter deep TAG Shaft, explored by Jim, Richard Schrieber and Frank Bogle. Thirty-three years later they were connected to Sistema Huautla. He said 1985 was the last year he could make a real contribution to caving, as his health began to deteriorate. He gave his all while he could. He was and is such an inspiration to me and a true friend. He was incredible to travel with and his sense of humor and strength of character a positive force. He inspired so many TAG cavers.

Thank you Jim!

IN MEMORY OF JIM YOUMANS

When I first came up in the caving world in the 1970's, I knew very few cavers, had no resume and had very few people to cave with. I was fortunate enough to meet Buddy Lane, who was very welcoming, and he introduced me to Marion Smith and Jim Youmans, who were equally welcoming. Soon I was caving constantly with these characters, as well as Jim Smith, Smokey Caldwell, Elwin Hannah, Trick

Howard and others, all who became lifetime friends. Jim Youmans and I went on countless horror hole trips together. I learned a lot about rigging and bolting the "hard man's way " from him.

Jim gave me two gifts I can never repay. He was the first person to take me to Whiteside Mountain, NC to do the big 600 ft "caver drop". I was absolutely taken by the mountain and moved to the base of it in 1990 and have lived there ever since. Beyond the "caver drop" experience, the rock climbing on Whiteside is world class and I have made hundreds of ascents of it and established numerous climbing routes on the mountain. After Jim passed, I placed a portion of his ashes in a small cave on the south face, along with those of our fellow caving buddy, Bear Thurman, so I think of Jim most everyday when I look up at the cliff.

In 2004, Jim, who was involved in high rise access work in Atlanta, learned that Stone Mountain Park in Atlanta was looking for a caretaker for the Confederate Memorial carving on Stone Mountain. Jim, knowing my background as an engineering geologist and owner of a specialty geologic drilling company, thought I would be perfect for the job and hooked me up with the park people. When I arrived for the introductory meeting, I was astonished to find that my client would be the late Bob Cowhig, my boss from 30 years prior, when I worked construction at Six Flags Over Georgia during my college



Jim hanging out in front of the Confederate memorial carving at Stone Mountain

years at Emory. For the next fifteen years, we cleaned lichen and vegetation from the carving, replaced old rock bolts, caulked seams and repaired an exfoliation-related rock blowout in Stonewall Jackson's face. Jim assisted me in the early years before deteriorating health precluded him from accessing the carving.

So, clearly, Jim made a big impact in my life. I am a better man for having known him and I miss him. Rest in peace my brother

Mark Lassiter Whiteside Mtn, NC NSS 17031 FE Feb 2023

Remembering Jim Youmans Teresa Williams Benamy

I suspect people will be writing about how tough and strong Jim was, which is absolutely true. I would like to write about what made him one the strongest men I have known. It was his heart. When Jim loved, he loved all the way. He was a gentleman and his kindness was boundless.

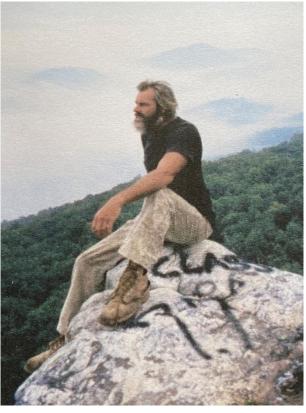
I met Jim Youmans when I was 23, fairly new to caving. We clicked. He encouraged me in my adventures as a young single woman, and as a mother taking my kids out to experience the world. For about 6 months, I worked for Jim doing water proofing while he recovered from knee surgery. He would lean over the parapet walls while I hung below on a rope, instructing me what to do as I told him what I saw. The best part, here I was loaded down in harness and gear, grubby even, but I dare not touch the door handle, he was gonna be the gentleman and let me in. Several years later, I would often bring my little girl, Cait, up to visit him and Kathy. These visits always were filled with fun and laughter, including Jim and Cait "hiding" a fart sound box around the room and blaming each other for the obnoxious noise. Sometimes we would pick him up and head down to visit with his dear friend Smokey on his porch. He and Smokey were insulted if I questioned their ability to watch her playing and keep her safe on their side of the porch. As she and her sister, Cora, grew, he made a point of sending them Valentine cards. Cait, in return, sent him postcards from our travels. He eagerly awaited the stories from my travels and adventures, so encouraging in every way. He consistently showed us his love, although he could not say the words, there was no doubt how deep his feelings ran.

His love and care extended to friends and family. I had the honor of being invited to his mother's house a few times. As she became frail with old age, he faithfully visited and sat by her bedside. He called faithfully every week to check on Teddy Bear Thurman as his illness progressed. Several times he asked me to call and check on an old friend Joe in Atlanta, a friend from his early caving days.

Miscellaneous photos provided by Kathy Mackay and Arthur Champion



Jim and Kathy



Jim "The Ironman" Youmans, somewhere in TAG. Arthur Champion photo.

Eulogy for Stan Olekas

Stan Olekas died earlier this year after battling a long illness. He was 59.

Some folks are just easy to love. I never met anyone who didn't love him. I first met Stan building a fence for the Cave In. It was a group project and he and I worked with a tractor and augur digging post holes. The easy banter and his sense of humor were instantly engaging. For 32 years he was my little brother. We built things, went caving and paddled many rivers. I love him like no other man.

Stan grew up in Michigan. His accent followed him. He called himself a Pollock. His humor was full of sarcasm. But he was so engaging. He was one of those people who could say the most outrageous things and get away with it.



Stan came to Georgia with his first wife Nancy. They followed NASCAR and moved there for it. I could never understand that until he explained that he went to people watch rather than follow the race. He saw it as a large social and cultural event. He would quip "look for me in the crowd; I'll be the guy with a ball cap and a tee shirt on". Then he found caving.

We were on an epic caving adventure in Pigeon Mountain. After 12 hours underground, Stan was preparing to ascend the deepest pit in the US. He attached his climbing equipment and then as we all watched, he threaded his descender on the rope as well. We kidded him about that from then on but it goes to show you just how tired he was at the bottom of that climb.

Stan was a very strong man. He was tall and thin but I watched him for years take an eighty pound canoe off the truck and hold it straight up in the air as he casually walked to the water's edge. What strength, balance and nonchalance.

Stan loved music but he couldn't carry a tune. He loved to sing loudly while we paddled using about four notes. He knew he couldn't sing but just loved music that much.

When Stan and Lynn got together, it was for me an incredible union of two souls I dearly loved. Lynn was like another daughter and Stan was a younger brother. It was funny watching them calling each other "honey-bunny" after we had all seen Pulp Fiction.

Stan loved his family, especially his daughters. When Carmen happened, I got an early "don't tell anyone" call and was elated. After she was born we started being called "potty mouth" a lot when she was present. They got over that but it was cute to watch. I remember watching her toddling away from me and Stan saying: "That is the best thing I have ever done". Samantha may be more like him. They are both living embodiments of him.

As I have watched this family for 20 years I have seen them endure lots of hardship and heartbreak. But their family just got tighter. As his health worsened, Stan remained upbeat. He kept saying "this will not beat me". We could see him fading but he lasted far longer than most others would have.

Stan the Man, Hugman, Huggin' Phucket; I will miss your greeting like no other. I always loved being around you.

Jim Wilbanks 02/27/22



Thanks to Lynn Taylor Olekas and Nina Martin for permission to use these photos. They capture a life well lived.





Doug Plemons, In Memorial

Douglas William Plemons, a long time TAG caver, was born 7/28/1956 in Nashville, TN. His first cave trip, at age 13/14, was Mammoth Cave, in Mammoth Cave National Park. Doug was introduced to wild caving by his life-long friend, Mark Miller, in the late 70's. He loved the Great Smoky Mountains National Park and was an avid hiker. In 2002, Doug moved to Sevierville TN. He was primarily employed as a psychiatric technician and most recently worked in home health care. In addition to being a caver, Doug was also a talented musician and songwriter. His partner of 10+ years, Terry Skidmore, provided this background information.



Gareth Gould was a good friend, and wrote the following tribute to Doug:

I met Doug in 2019 but feel like I've known him for 20 years because I read many of his old trip reports as long ago as 2002. Some of those reports dated back to the early 80's. Doug was well known throughout TAG. He was a solid caver and had a lot of knowledge about the karst found throughout TAG. Doug had a strong personality, but he was always ready to make new friends and pass his knowledge along to the next wave of cavers. Doug spent thousands of hours ridgewalking and turned in hundreds of caves...several of those caves are multi mile systems. One cave, Heart of Gould, is currently being surveyed and has passed 25,000 feet. The day after Doug passed away, the surveyors found a large chamber and named it Plemons Paradise in his honor.

My love for caving eventually led us to crossing paths and it wasn't long until we became good friends. I will never forget the last cave we visited, Cedar Ridge Crystal Cave, or the reason we were there (TCS meeting). If I had known it was the last time we would see each other, I would have definitely spent more time with him.

A few weeks before he passed away, he sent me a zip drive with a lot of leads and other things on it. It makes me wonder if he knew how serious his situation was but didn't want to worry anyone. Also, about three weeks before he died, I found a cave on Short Mountain and named it Plemon's High Hole. I had been using lidar without much luck, so Doug told me to use my instincts because they had always worked for me. So, the next day I did exactly that and within 10 minutes of my hike I found a cave not on the survey (Plemon's High Hole).

Doug Plemons left his mark on TAG and I'm glad he counted me as a friend. I'm sure he is in virgin cave on the other side as you read this memorial. RIP Doug Plemons.

Kimberly Lughart was also one of Doug's friends, who misses his sweet soul. She wrote the following about Doug:

Doug was one of the sweetest people I ever met. I met him through Flittermouse Grotto in western North Carolina. We immediately hit it off, developing a wonderful friendship. We had many caving adventures, and with Doug, even a mundane trip could turn into an adventure! Once, in the summer of 2021, we were looking for a couple of caves he knew about in east TN. About an hour or so of fighting through briars so thick I had to use my EMT shears to cut myself loose, Doug says "You know, maybe we should have taken the road." That was such a "Doug" adventure day.

I was shocked to hear of his passing. His partner, Terry, messaged me late in the evening on November 25, letting me know that he was in the hospital, and said that he'd asked her to let me know. I didn't see the message till the next morning and by that time, he had already passed. She told me that he wanted to be cremated and his ashes spread at Lost Creek Cave at some point in the future. I would love to have a celebration of Doug's life when the time comes to do



that, and I'm sure the caving community would love to participate. When a date is set, I'll post details on the TAG Facebook page, my personal page, and any other sites who have people who would like to participate.

Rest in Peace, my sweet friend!



A Spring Cave, Somewhere in Tennessee, Alfred Crabtree photographer.



Run to the Mill Cave, SCCi Cave Preserve, Alfred Crabtree photographer.

