

BIRMINGHAM GROTTA

NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2008



VOLUME 38

NUMBER 4

BGN Calendar

APR 3	The Birmingham Grotto Meeting begins at 7:00 PM, at the Home-wood Library, 1721 Oxmoor Road.
APR ?	4th annual WALLS of JERICHO hike and campout. Date to be announced at the Grotto Meeting. Meet 11:00 am on the Saturday announced at the hikers' parking area on the Tennessee side, a couple of miles north of our usual parking place. Come for the day or to camp the night. Bring cave gear if desired.
APR 5	Tennessee Cave Survey meeting will be held at Blackman Auditorium on Alabama Ave. University of the South, Sewanee , TN at 9:00am CST.
APR 17	GROBS starts at 7:30 pm. Ask a grotto officer for the current hot spot.
APR 19	Bryant Mountain Cave cleanup and outing. See the announcemnet on p. 47
APR 26	Alabama Cave Survey meeting will be at the Scottsboro, Alabama Library. Meeting time will be 0900-1300 CDT. We have to vacate the building by 1300 CDT.
MAY 1	The Birmingham Grotto Meeting begins at 7:00 PM, at the Home-wood Library, 1721 Oxmoor Road.
MAY 3	Birmingham Grotto 50th Anniversary party at Horse Pens 40. See announcement on the next page or contact Edna Caudle at 205-647-221 for more details.
MAY 15	GROBS starts at 7:30 pm. Ask a grotto officer for the current hot spot.
MAY 17	Tentative date for the Third Annual BUFFALO RIVER canoe and kayak trip. Details to be discussed at the Grotto meeting.
JUN 5	The Birmingham Grotto Meeting begins at 7:00 PM, at the Home-wood Library, 1721 Oxmoor Road.
JUN 6 JUN 8	57th Annual SERA Summer Cave Carnival, Hosted by the Mountain Empire Grotto, Bristol , TN
JUN 19	GROBS starts at 7:30 pm. Ask a grotto officer for the current hot spot.

Thanks to Scott Fee for assistance in maintaining the BGN Calendar.

The *Birmingham Grotto Newsletter* is published twelve times a year by the Birmingham Grotto, Inc. of the National Speleological Society, Inc. Other NSS Internal Organizations may reprint material provided credit is given to this publication and the author.

Annual dues are \$15.00 per individual and \$20.00 per family which is payable on October 1st. Dues are prorated for anyone joining during the year. The subscription rate is \$15.00 per year. The Birmingham Grotto will exchange publications with other NSS Grottos. Exchange newsletters should be sent to:

Birmingham Grotto
PO Box 55102
Birmingham, AL 35255

Articles, Trip Reports, Graphics, Poetry, and any other speleo-related material should be sent to the Editor via email at the address noted below. Naturally, the Editor will accept typed text in practically any form; however, electronic submission reduces the risk of typographical errors. Submissions via e-mail should be directed to: editor@bhamgrotto.org. The deadline for publication is the 20th of the month; however, the Newsletter is limited to 12 pages and often fills up quickly.



Disclaimer

Caving trips posted are led by volunteers. No grotto committee reviews any trip leaders' qualifications. New cavers should inquire about the nature of the trip and the experience of the leader in advance. Those participating in the trips should be aware of their limits. On vertical trips all participants are expected to supply their own gear and be knowledgeable about rigging and safe practices.

On the cover...

Misty Tomasello in Horse Cave.
(Scott Fee)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Birmingham Grotto Officers
President: Scott Parvin, NSS 29279 RL, FE scott@scottparvin.com (205) 568-1612
Vice President: David McRae, NSS 51358 RE (205) 616-1490 dirtydaves@bellsouth.net
Secretary: Jessica Backes, NSS 59241 jnbackes@gmail.com (205) 305-5866
Treasurer: Daniel Wood, NSS 57671 RE fdw@kullmanlaw.com (205) 249-4632

Newsletter Staff
Editor: Toby B. Kemp, NSS 37091 editor@bhamgrotto.org (205) 903-1211
Publisher and Membership List: Valerie Howell, NSS 18128 FR vdshowell@yahoo.com
Proofreaders: Julie Fee, NSS 47637 caverjules@bellsouth.net Scott Fee, NSS 19797 LF scottfee@bellsouth.net Valerie Howell, NSS 18128 FR vdshowell@yahoo.com
Archivist: Dave Caudle, NSS 13995 cavers@bellsouth.net
Conservation: Myrna Attaway, NSS 16921 conservation@bhamgrotto.org
Webmaster: Jeff Harrod, NSS 37101 webmaster@bhamgrotto.org

From the President....

Hello Everyone! It's great to see the beginning of Spring, with the green returning to the trees and grass. I guess the downside is the end of ridgewalking season for most of us. I've enjoyed reading about the new finds this year, keep up the great work.

The warm weather also brings to mind the impending 50th Anniversary Celebration. When you read this, the big event is only about a month away. The planning committee has done a great job, and it should be a tremendous event. SERA is also coming up the first weekend in June, and then Sinking Cove, the NSS Convention, and TAG! Whew, the fun is about to start.

One note about the official NSS Forums at www.cavechat.org: If you haven't had an opportunity to check out this great resource, I highly encourage you to do so. There's even a section set aside for use by the Birmingham Grotto. I think this presence will give newcomers another way to get in contact with our Grotto.

Have a great month and I look forward to seeing everyone soon.

Scott A. Parvin
NSS 29279 RL, FE



Grotto Ridgewalk at Keel Mountain

Dave Howell (photos by Jeff Harrod)

Terri Constable, Leigh Dudrow, Jeff Harrod, Don Harter, Dave Howell and Judy Ranelli

Weather on Getaway weekend is always unpredictable. The forecast was for highs Saturday in the 50s, but the falling temperatures Friday night boded ill. We arose Saturday morning to a sky the color of a dirty sweat sock, blustery winds, and temperatures barely nudging 40. Meeting in the now-tranquil party cabin for a council of war, the intrepid group of ridgewalkers discussed alternatives: go as planned? Wait an hour or two until the temperature comes up a bit? Or (horror of horrors!) scrub the trip? Cool heads prevailed, and it was decided that the walk would go out as planned, and conditions would be reevaluated at the parking place.

I had originally thought about ridgewalking in the vicinity of the Walls of Jericho, but Jeff made an interesting countersuggestion. There was, he told us, a Nature Conservancy public access area on Keel Mountain that was hardly known even in nearby Huntsville, with a trail going up to the Lost Cave (AL) sink. The karst looked good up there, Jeff said, and there were deep pits already known on the mountain, Esslinger Pit at 110' and The Cataract at 297' to name a couple. Why not walk there?

The parking area is unprepossessing, we had to search for it and actually drove past it once without even seeing it. However, as promised a nice trail began by paralleling a lovely streambed then ascending into karst woods. We followed this trail to the Lost Cave



sink, which was unexpectedly gorgeous, a major waterfall disappearing into a large, steep-sided sink reminiscent of the Waterfall Entrance to Sinking Cove. After a quick recon around the beautiful sink, we started the ridgewalk, spreading from an elevation just above the sink to one just below it, heading east around the hillside.

We started finding IKFs* right away (*Interesting Karst Features). Most were not enterable, although this changed as we walked along. Don made the first enterable find, an attractive pit entrance that seemed to drop 35-40'. Jeff, the only one of us with the wherewithal to carry a rope and vertical gear, dropped the pit, finding a 35' entrance drop with 33' of horizontal passage at the bottom - a qualifier!

On my way toward Don's hoot when he made his find, I walked up on another IKF, this one a little more "I" than the others. When business was finished at Don's pit we went to check this one out. An 8' entrance climbdown was cleared and enlarged with a few minutes' work, and I entered. The climbdown led to a small room with a crawlway going off. Peering into it, I could see it went about a body length then dropped into a pit. In I went! Alas, the pit was only about 10' deep and too narrow, 6" at its widest through solid limestone, with no air movement. No go, unless with chemical persuasion. I climbed out and we walked on. About 5 minutes later I discovered my glasses were missing - the crawlway! I hurried back, climbed down again, and sure enough, the glasses were waiting for me right where I thought they'd be.



We walked as far as Esslinger Creek, and a little beyond since the hillside east of the streambed led generally back toward the parking area. The only other enterable find was Judy's, a crawl under a shelf at the base of a large limestone outcropping. Like mine, it led to an apparent shallow pit that was too narrow to enter.

The last half mile back to the cars was unexpectedly rigor-

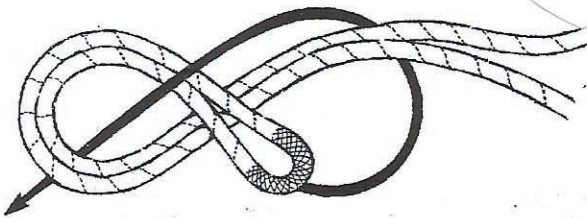
ous. The creek went through a narrow area with steep, often vertical sides, almost but not quite a canyon. The group fragmented at this point. Judy tried to follow the streambed, but found that it stepped down repeatedly in 10-15' steps, undercut with impressive shelters but therefore not climbable. After detouring around the first 3 of these, she joined me at an elevation I judged would take us above the streamside cliffs below. The route did this, but was so steep walking was difficult. Don climbed higher, out of sight. Terri and Leigh we hadn't seen in a while.

Eventually we made it around the hill to where the slope eased, and we descended to the now less steep streambed, the trail, and the parking place. Terri and Leigh were there waiting for us, and Jeff and Don joined us a few minutes later. We made it back to the cabins at Gunter'sville State Park in time for an unhurried homecooked dinner, and the evening's activities, the Saturday night party and Grotto auction.

Cool trip. Thanks for the suggestion, Jeff.

Dirty Dave's Monthly Menagerie

Dave McRae



3-11. Tying a Figure Eight on a Bight.

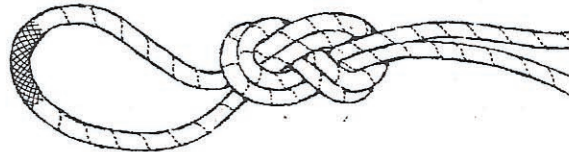
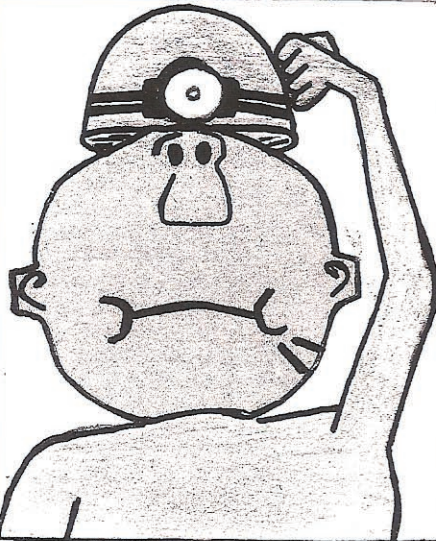


Figure Eight on a Bight

By forming a bight near the end of the rope, an easy, reliable non-slipping loop can be formed for hauling, life support or gear lifting. The *Figure Eight on a Bight* (Fig. 3-11) has numerous applications, including carabiner clip-ins, trolley line hook-

ups, primary riggings from the end of a line, mid-line riggings and reanchors. It is the preferred end-line safety knot because it supplies a loop to stand in at the end of the rope that could assist a climber during an attempt to change-over from rappel to ascend.

Knot of the Month



HELMET SCRATCHERS..

by: Dirty Dave

Take the Letters ERGRO. Put three letters in front of this combination and the same three letters behind it to form a common English word.

Answer Next Month

Grotto 50th Anniversary Celebration

It's almost time for our 50th Anniversary party. The committee has quite a few things planned for you. We have a number of displays that will be up by Friday night (we hope) including newspaper clipping about caves, bats, & cavers; a list of all former grotto members (at least all we could find) and the years they were members; samples of grotto patches; grotto newsletter covers; pictures of cavers and caves; cave maps of Anderson & Iron Hoop. Please bring any items you'd like to have displayed with you, so all can enjoy them. We'll also be showing a continuous slide show of cave pictures. If you have some you'd like included, get your CDs to David Caudle.

Friday night there will be an informal social at the park. Bring your drink of choice and munchies to share & join us at (the pavilion - the grotto tarp? Not sure which place yet.) A caving trip will be led by Dave McRae on Saturday morning to Wolf Cave and Mike's Wolf Cave leaving from Horse Pens 40. Those who don't want to go caving can hang around the pavilion & share caving stories, explore the rocks in the park, watch the slide shows, etc. We plan to have a Story Cord booth up to allow you to record your caving memories.

The evening festivities begin at 6:00 with a banquet. Some of the ladies have requested that everyone dress up for this event. They mentioned that we see everyone in their caving duds all the time, & it would be nice to see them in other (better?) clothes. So, if you are so inclined, dress up for the evening event.

The menu, while not fully worked out, will include chicken cooked some way, a variety of vegetables, tea or coffee, & a dessert. There will be a vegetarian dish for those who prefer it. At approximately 7:00, the program begins. We have 5 different speakers lined up who will each speak for 5 minutes, covering the 5 decades the grotto has been in existence. They are in order of the decade they will cover: Walter Anderton, Kathy Freeland, Dave Howell, Scott Fee, and Toby Kemp.

After the 'official' program, the party will continue. We may have an 'open mike' session allowing everyone to tell their favorite caving story. If that doesn't work out, I'm sure there will be many shared stories in conversations. Bring your own drinks of choice - but remember, no glass containers are allowed outside of the pavilion.

I hope you have all sent in your registration forms by now, because the deadline for registration was May 3rd. If you haven't and are planning to come, CALL me ASAP. I'll see what I can do about getting you added to the list. Looking forward to seeing all of you there!

Edna Caudle



*Amy and Scott Parvin at Weaver Cave.
(Scott Fee)*



*Dave, Julie, Chris and John inside Indian Rock Cave.
(Scott Fee)*

SPELUNKETTES*

By Harry Caver

Female cavers are no trouble at all

If one says only "Heck" in a long, difficult crawl.

Assistance over a ledge is considered quite chivorous

But place your hands anywhere but the obvious.

When changing clothes, walk into the woods until you're

Modestly out of sight!

Ignoring the chiggers and a potentially fatal snake bite

It is rumored, in summation,

Most male cavers support women's liberation.

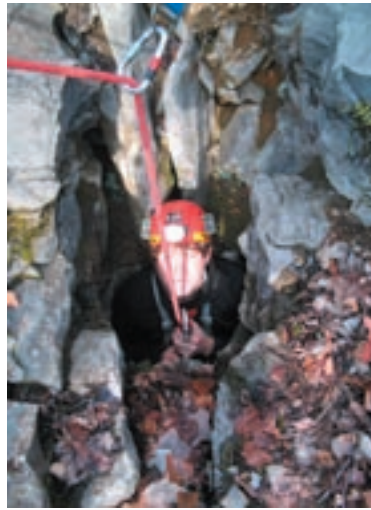


**From the March 1973 issue of BGN.*

Horse Cave, Indian Rock Cave and Procession Mountain Pits



The gang outside Horse Cave
(Dave McRae)



Dirty Dave dropping Brigadoon Pit
(Jeff Harrod)



Chris on Procession Mtn.
(Toby Kemp)



Hanging out at the Indian Rock entrance
(Dave McRae)



What was Jimmy Buffett doing in Indian Rock Cave?
(Dave McRae)



Jeff on Procession Mountain
(Toby Kemp)



The gang INSIDE Horse Cave
(Dave McRae)

Seen at, in or around Gene Lambert Cave - Sunday March 30th

Photos by Scott Fee



Birmingham Grotto Meeting Minutes March 6, 2008

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 pm by President Scott Parvin.

Visitors

The following guests were recognized: Robert Thomas, who found out about us from the kiosk at Anderson Cave; Barry Skelton from Pell City; former member Terri Constable, recently returned to Birmingham after an extended sojourn in southern California; and Terri's daughter Samantha.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Daniel Wood reported that the Guntersville Getaway February 22-24 grossed \$793 from 48 participants, but expenses (cabin rental, kegs, etc.) totaled \$825. The auction brought in \$1,203, of which \$460 remains receivable at the present time. The Treasurer further reported that there is currently \$8,731 in the Grotto's checking account.

Previous Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of February 7, 2008 were approved as printed (with misspellings) in the March 2008 Birmingham Grotto Newsletter.

Announcements

The NCRC is holding a Cave & Rescue workshop at Camp Skyline May 3. Registration is \$548 (no, that's not a misprint - it's expensive), and the registration deadline is April 25. Edna Caudle pointed out that this event conflicts with the Grotto's 50th Anniversary Party.

The SERA Summer Cave Carnival will be held the first weekend of June in Bristol, Tennessee. Registration is \$28, the deadline is May 21. This event is cohosted by the Mountain Empire Grotto and another unnamed underground organization.

An advisory has been issued regarding the White Nose Syndrome that has been causing mass die-off of bats in caves in New York, Vermont, and Pennsylvania. This advisory offers the following guidelines for Southeastern cavers: upon exiting the cave, remove mud buildup from boots; seal boots and caving clothes in an airtight bag; wash these clothes

in hot water with 10% bleach; dry in sunlight if possible.

Old Business

Edna Caudle reported on the status of preparations for the Grotto's 50th Anniversary Party. Copy for the 50th Anniversary Book is substantially done, layout is to commence this month. Photos from any period of Grotto history are solicited; in-cave or group shots are welcome. Full credit will be given to photographers. Submit photos to Dave Howell at vdshowell@yahoo.com, or by mail to 4183 Cliff Road, Birmingham, AL 35222. All submitted photos and slides will be returned. Edna urged all Grotto members planning to attend the 50th Anniversary Party to register as soon as possible.

Scott Fee observed the thinness of the Birmingham Grotto Newsletter, and urged all members to write and submit trip reports, articles, confessions, exposés, etc.

Larry Money stated that the Guffey Movie is in "final version," lacking only opening and end titles. He displayed the DVD case for this movie in substantiation of this claim, and proclaimed that the finished movie will be available to purchasers at the 50th Anniversary Party.

Joel McGuire promoted the Anderson Cave cleanup scheduled for 9:00 am Saturday and Sunday, March 15 and 16. Attendees should park alongside the road "in the usual place." Joel reminded everyone that this is time change weekend - "Spring ahead, Fall back" - and that afterwards the cave will close for the year to protect bat hibernacula. He also stated that in addition to the cleanup, a missing data logger is being sought in the cave. Its finder will be handsomely rewarded with a hearty handclasp.

New Business

David Caudle stated that this year's Bryant Mountain Cave cleanup will be held April 19, with attendees welcome at the Caudles' house afterward.

Jimmy Sims thanked all those who have helped to date in tracking down

former Grotto members and their current addresses for the purpose of mailing announcement and registration forms for the 50th Anniversary Party. Specifically thanked were David & Edna Caudle, Greg Caudle, Leigh Dudrow, Milo Washington, Donna Cobb, Bubba Geyer, Tom Chamblee, Kyle Crider, Reed Hilton, Jason Wall, Larry & Margaret Money, and Dave & Valerie Howell. 198 announcement/registration packets were sent out as a result of these members' efforts and Jimmy's work. Thank you, Jimmy!

Vice-President David McRae stated that the March Grotto trip will be announced on Grotto the e-group.

Trip Reports

Toby Kemp reported on his recent trip to Australia, where he saw kangaroos, spiders, sting rays, eels, and various other things that can kill you. Also he surfed the Pacific without running afoul of any great white sharks or other things that can kill you. His luggage enjoyed a 1 week longer trip than Toby himself, making stopovers in Seattle, San Francisco, and Chicago.

Dave Howell reported on the Grotto ridgewalk to Keel Mountain, held in conjunction with the Guntersville Getaway. Ridgewalkers included Terri Constable, Leigh Dudrow, Don Harter, Jeff Harrod, Judy Ranelli, and Dave. The trail was followed to the Lost Cave sink, then the walk went northeast at the general elevation of the LC sink. One qualifier was found by Don and entered by Jeff, and was found to be a 35' pit with an estimated 33' of horizontal passage at the bottom. Don has not named the find yet. The only other enterable find was an 8' climbdown found and dug open by Dave; alas, its horizontal extent was insufficient to qualify it.

Daniel Wood reported on the Grotto vertical trip to War Eagle Cave, also in conjunction with the Getaway. A fine time was reportedly had by all, and 722 photos were taken. (Can't wait to see the next Newsletter!)

Julie Fee reported on her recent trip to Perkins Cave, and on Scott's fruitless

Birmingham Grotto Newsletter

search for the fabled Hall of Echoes. Permission to go to Perkins was obtained from the landowner, who was nice enough to open the gate for easier access. The trip consisted of Amy and Scott Parvin (who hauled all his camera equipment through the cave for ONE photo), Jonathan Gladden, Tyler ?, Jon Tracy, and Scott & Julie Fee.

Andy Zerbe reported on his recent visit to the (manmade) cave at Busch Gardens in Tampa, Florida.

Program

A digital slide show of miscellaneous in-cave and entrance views picked up off the internet was presented by David Caudle. Subject views were from caves

in various parts of the world, excluding TAG and Mexico.

The meeting was adjourned to The Tap Room.

Respectfully submitted by Dave Howell,
Acting Secretary

Bryant Mountain Cave Cleanup and Earth Day Grotto Outing

Kid-friendly event at the Caudle's house

April 19th

Meet at 10:00 at Logan's Store - I-65 north of Birmingham - exit 285

Or come by the Caudle's earlier for coffee.

We'll begin the cleanup at Bryant Mountain Cave and continue until lunch. We'll have garbage bags and burlap sacks to contain the garbage that we'll surely find in Bryant Mountain Cave. You should come prepared with gloves, as well as your normal caving gear, since much of what we will pick up is glass. Be prepared for climbing down the canyon, if you are inclined. If not, there will be plenty of trash to clean up in the horizontal areas in the top. After a break for lunch on your own, we'll check out the caves in the vicinity. Through trips in Bryant Mountain, dropping Bryant Mountain Pit, Rickles' a/k/a Hackney's Cave, Smoke Rise Pit Cave, Tim's Ice Hole, and Mulberry Cave are all available. If you want to leave that mountain, Hamilton Mountain Pit Cave, Pollock Suck Hole, Hamilton Mountain Spring Cave, and Rickwood (commercialized) are just across the interstate. If you'd rather move toward the party for afternoon caving, there's Gaut's Shortcut Cave, Bamboo, Wine Cellar, Bryant's Corkscrew, and Mill Creek Squeeze within walking distance of the Caudle's house.

As the muddy cavers straggle in, we'll prepare for an evening meal at the Caudle's house. Everyone is welcome to use the Caudle's showers. Please bring a side dish to share, as well as whatever soft drink, beer or other liquids you might desire. If you wish, feel free to bring your dish/drinks to the Caudles before the cleanup. The Caudle's will be providing BBQ Pork for the meat dish.

This is a kid-friendly gathering. Many of the caves are kid-friendly. With the grandkids next door, there's a trampoline, fort, and other toys available. There's a creek to play in; we'll have the rope in the tree for kids of all ages to climb on; and lots of woods to explore.

We'll have a 50th Anniversary final planning meeting sometime during the day/night. Anything that needs our attention can be discussed/worked on then.

If you can't make it to the cleanup, we'd love to have you for whatever part of the outing you can make. We're at 544 Mill Creek Road, Warrior, AL. You can call us at 647-2221. DIRECTIONS: Take I-65 north out of Birmingham to exit 287.

Exit to the right, then turn left at the first possible road, next to the Conoco station. Bear right at the junction, and continue about ¼ mile. Turn into our drive at the double-dome house (our son's house) & come on down the hill to the gray house in the woods.

If you stay late and/or drink hardy, bring your sleeping bag, & stay the night.

David & Edna Caudle

News & Notes

Dave Howell

*** Welcome to April. March was fine, but February brought us not only valentines, but also the GUNTERSVILLE GETAWAY. (Yes, I know I'm reporting old news here, but my usual deadline for this column prohibits me from writing about the Getaway in a more timely fashion. By the way, my deadline for this column you're reading was the Vernal Equinox. It is an omen!) Arriving Friday night as we did, the armed guard at the park gate (*Your papers?*) gave us no trouble, I dropped DAVID CAUDLE's name and was instantly waved through. The party cabin was in full swing, with the bed raffle done and the participants either celebrating or drowning their sorrows. The now-traditional card game was going strong, with no aces up any sleeves (that I saw), and no pistols or blades pulled. Saturday morning dawned gray, blustery and cold, much colder than forecast. So cold, in fact, that consideration was given to scrubbing the Grotto ridgewalk. (Read: Dave didn't bring any warm clothes.) But the staunch congregation of ridgewalkers would have none of it, and the walk went out as planned. Read the trip report elsewhere in this issue, but I'll allay your fears by revealing that nobody got frostbite, nor was anyone attacked by polar bears or lost to stampeding walruses on the glaciers. (Imagine my relief!) I hear the vertical trip to War Eagle Cave was also successful. Saturday night brought a delicious and blessedly hot home-cooked meal in the cabin, followed by the Grotto auction. I didn't count the lots, but there were an awful lot of them (ho ho!), which went for various winning bids ranging from 25¢ to \$35, netting a total of

\$1,203 for the Grotto. Thanks to all who generously donated auction goods and to all who bid, and thanks to those who assisted with the auction: EDNA, LEIGH and VALERIE, LARRY MONEY, SCOTT FEE, and my lovely assistant BECCA CAUDLE. On Sunday morning Valerie and I joined various others for breakfast in the newly renovated lodge; the food had upgraded from poor (as it was 2 years ago - how can you mess up breakfast?) to only adequate. Oh well, the lodge looks great. Cabin cleanup was easy this year - I can remember years when getting things in order was like cleaning up after the Battle of the Bulge - bringing to a close an excellent and highly successful event. I'm already looking forward to the 2009 Getaway.

*** Good news for the trail hikers in our group: the APPALACHIAN TRAIL has been extended into Alabama! Yes, that's right, the AT now goes past its former southern terminus at Springer Mountain, Georgia to hook up with northwest Georgia's MacKaye Trail, which joins the northern end of Alabama's Pinhoti Trail. But wait, there's more! The Pinhoti Trail, whose southern end is presently near Talladega, is also to be extended to Flagg Mountain in Coosa County near Weogufka. This extension will increase the total length of the AT by about 335 miles (depending where you measure from), and will increase the time required by end-to-enders by about a month. Shall we plan a Grotto hike starting at Mt. Katahdin, Maine?

*** The Grotto's sympathy goes to JOEL MCGUIRE in the loss of his father, LEON MCGUIRE, last month following

an extended illness. Even when not unexpected, the passing of a parent is devastating. Your Grotto friends are thinking about you, Joel.

*** Remember a few months ago when MARION SMITH requested Grotto volunteers to act as typists for sections of the book he had written (by hand) on Civil War saltpeter workings in Alabama? Well, our efforts have borne fruit, Marion's book is now in print, and available for purchase. The opus is entitled *Confederate Nitre Bureau Operations in Alabama*, and can be had for a mere \$17 postpaid from Marion at 2023 Bone Cave Road, Rock Island, TN 38581-7429. Considering our participation in this project, the finished book should be a worthwhile piece of Grotto memorabilia as well as an important documentation of an obscure piece of Alabama history.

*** And now, my annual shameless plug for my own pet project, this year's WALLS of JERICHO hike and campout. I was hoping to give you a date here, but because I'm trying to schedule around the Buffalo River trip whose scheduling is as of this writing still indefinite, all I can say is the Walls trip will be a weekend in mid or late April. The exact date will be announced at Grotto meeting, or check with me or a Grotto officer. The trip should be cool, I'm planning to use the Tennessee trail this year instead of the Alabama one; I've never hiked in from the Tennessee side before. Meet at 11:00 am on the selected Saturday at the hikers' parking area on the Tennessee side (a couple of miles farther up SR 79 beyond the Alabama trail head). See you there!

Birmingham Grotto Newsletter

P.O. Box 55102

Birmingham, AL 35255-5102

Forwarding & Address Correction Requested