



# BGN Calendar

MAR 5	The Birmingham Grotto Meeting begins at 7:00 PM, at the Home-wood Library, 1721 Oxmoor Road.
MAR 19	GROBS starts at 7:30 pm. Ask a grotto officer for the current hot spot.
APR 2	The Birmingham Grotto Meeting begins at 7:00 PM, at the Home-wood Library, 1721 Oxmoor Road.
APR 16	GROBS starts at 7:30 pm. Ask a grotto officer for the current hot spot.
APR 18	Earthday Cave Clean up and BBQ hosted by David & Edna Caudle
APR 25	Alabama Cave Survey Meeting; 9:00 am, Scottsboro Library
MAY 2	Chris and Carolyn are getting married!

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

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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](mailto: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.



### On the cover...

Shane Stacy after a trip to Mike's Wolf Cave.

(Dave McRae)

### 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.

## Birmingham Grotto Meeting Minutes February 5, 2009

President Scott Parvin called the meeting to order at 7:09 pm at the Homewood Public Library. We had one visitor: Steve Spencer who was a member from the 70's and reportedly even served as President of our illustrious club at one point. Daniel Wood blew us off for a dinner date with Leonard Nimoy; however, before rushing off to "live long and prosper" he gave his report to President Parvin. Our balance is currently \$5,819.56. Barring any corrections, amazingly enough, the Minutes were passed as presented in the newsletter. Score: Secretary = 1, Nitpickers = 0.

### Announcements

- 1) TinY and NikkY were thanked for giving last month's program under duress of being thrown out of the library.
- 2) Guntersville Getaway is coming up the weekend of February 20 -22. Don't miss the Dave Howell annual ridgewalk and bring your stuff for the auction.
- 3) ACS meeting will be 9:00 am on April 25th at the Library in Scottsboro.
- 4) Scott Squared will be leading a grotto trip to Tennessee in the upcoming months. Various cave names were tossed out for the grotto to consider.
- 5) Saturday will be the UA Recreation Department trip to Tumbling Rock. We are meeting in Cleveland at 8:00 am.
- 6) Edna Caudle has some of the 50th T-Shirts, Guidebooks, and Grotto Patches for sale.
- 7) The Annual Earth Day clean up and BBQ at the Caudles will be April 18th.
- 8) Membership lists provided - see Valerie Howell for corrections.
- 9) CAG's annual Manitou Caverns trip will be the weekend of February 14th.

### Old Business

- 1) None, nada, nothing!

### New Business

- 1) Anderson Cave clean up details will be in the next newsletter. Trash has been minimal and the fences are doing great.
- 2) Joel is offering a canoe trip down the Cahaba on Sunday.
- 3) Milo and Judy are concocting a grotto trip to Shark Tooth Creek near Tuscaloosa in the hopes of cavers paddling the river and looking for Shark teeth along the way. You are "guaranteed" to find some teeth if you are so inclined. Look for more information later.
- 4) Dave Caudle received an e-mail from someone analyzing crawfish DNA. On a related note, Andrew Mobley will be giving us a crawfish presentation at the March meeting.
- 5) David Caudle spoke with Myrna about stepping down from the Conservation Chairmanship since she mostly lives in Tennessee these days. Scott Parvin, the all powerful Chair, appointed Deirdra Hahn as the new Conservation Chairman. (Whatever happened to our mild mannered dentist?)
- 6) Dave McRae has arranged a trip to Mikes Wolf Cave, Newsome Sinks, for February 14th as the Birmingham Grotto trip. Under duress, Dave agreed to meet at Jacks (Blountsville) at 9:00 am.

### Trip Reports

Bruce White took his son and a coworker to Bryant Mountain Cave. Dave McRae, Samantha Acton, Jeff Harrod, Ryan Strickland, Dale Douglas, Kelli French, & Scott Fee bottomed Old Blowing Cave. Scott Parvin, Jeff Harrod, Ryan Strickland, Toby Kemp, Kelli French, Amy Parvin, and two Florida cavers went to the Kings Showers in Tumbling Rock. Earlier in the month Dave Howell found a long line of karst features on Keel Mountain. This past Sunday, Dave returned with Judy Ranelli, Jason Wall, and Reed Hilton. They attacked Keel Mountain in force to check out Dave's leads. Word has it that Reed found "an honest 100 foot pit" on Keel Mountain. The three-stage drop measured "exactly" 100 feet according to Dave's twisted "lie detector."

The meeting adjourned at 7:55 pm for a short break before Dave Howell gave a program featuring "finding caves through ridgewalking."

Respectfully submitted, Scott Fee, Secretary at Large

## News & Notes

### Dave Howell

\*\*\* For once! The date of the 2009 GUNTERSVILLE GETAWAY was not so far off of my deadline for this column that I could only write about it in advance or in April as hopelessly old news. This year we reserved 2 lakeside cabins (as in previous years), but brought only 1 keg (a departure from the 2 kegs of previous years). Both of these decisions seemed to work out well, as both cabins' beds and the quiet cabin's floor were filled, and we bottomed out the keg partway through the auction Saturday night. The Friday night party was as good as ever, with the now-traditional card table featuring 7 card stud, 5 card draw, Texas Hold 'Em, among other diversions, thanks to TOBY's generous loan of his Vegas-quality chips and green felt playing surface. That night was clear and cold, and Saturday dawned sunny and cloudless but still chilly. I understand special permission was arranged by VP DAVID McRAE for a trip to ROARING RIVER CAVE; thanks, Dave! I trust someone who was on that trip will favor us with a trip report in this or a soon-upcoming BGN. The Grotto ridgewalk led by *moi* was great, even though a good part of the day was spent at/in a cave already on the Survey. (See the next paragraph for more info.) The auction, which started early and went until almost 11:00 with high bids ranging from 25¢ to \$175, netted the Grotto \$1,631.50, which is, I believe, a record - thanks to all who donated auction goods and to all who bid, the Grotto's good works are possible because of y'all's generosity. Thanks also to Treasurer DANIEL WOOD for his work in record keeping during the event. Funny thing - the Saturday night party that runs concurrently with the auction is usually more subdued than Friday night, what with people

tired from their cave trips, ridgewalks or whatever. But this Saturday night after the auction the party cranked up, with mop and broom pole dancing on the table, music courtesy of GARY and JASON, and an episode involving a box of chewing gum auctioned earlier. SHAY: "There's something about having 10,000 Chiclets at your disposal that brings a group together." SHANE: "It was the best Grotto party ever!" Cleanup afterward wasn't even too bad, although I think the neighborhood raccoons will be blowing gum bubbles for some time to come. (Don't worry, only a tiny percentage of the 10,000 escaped cleanup.) An excellent Getaway, and a landmark Grotto party.

\*\*\* The GROTTA RIDGEWALK went out this year to the upper Big Coon Valley, to an area REED HILTON and I had been to a few weeks earlier and found to be a fertile field: the 2 of us were running from one karst feature to another like kids in a candy store. We began by locating the already-known cave in the area, the SPRING HOLLOW CAVE SYSTEM, a fascinating microterrain of interrelated pits, horizontal entrances, springs, gnirpses (inflowing streams), and other karst features. The initial pit proved to be a 38' drop with a waterfall issuing from a hole high in the wall, leading to very wet passage, crawls, and more drops beyond. Several nearby entrances almost certainly connect in, although most were also very wet this day. 2 other features slightly farther away were dug open and found 1) to connect and 2) to lead down 2 short drops to a 3rd drop, a 30' diameter pit whose depth was undetermined due to the large amount of water going in from 2 different above-and-below waterfalls. (This 3rd drop

was judged to be a wetsuit pit, and was not dropped this day.) Still another lead, a short climbdown to the top of several rope drops, led to an "elephant trail," maybe (but not necessarily) a branch of the Spring Hollow System. Following this, part of the group started back, but the hardcore walkers pressed on to find 2 more enterable pits, each circa 30' deep to ? (entry was postponed due to the lengthening shadows of afternoon), and various IKFs.\* The last portion of the group returned to G'ville Park in time for dinner (the lasagna was excellent, Jason, thanks!) and the auction's start around 7:15. (\*IKF = Interesting Karst Feature)

\*\*\* Saw a familiar face the January 26 UAB Reporter: the story headed "PMS journal recognized again by Best Creative Nonfiction" ran beneath a 1/3 page color photo of TINA HARRIS, PMS Editor. (PMS = *poemmemoirstory*, the women's literary journal published by the UAB Department of English.) The accompanying article contains an interview with Tina about the publication, its contents, the work that goes into producing it, and the rules for submission. Good article. Congratulations, Tina!

\*\*\* The news reached me of a rescue in STEPHENS GAP. It seems that 18-year-old JORDAN GARREN of the Limrock community broke his leg while exploring Stephens Gap on February 15, was rescued by a team from Huntsville and airlifted to a hospital. Don't know where he fell exactly, but my guess is it was that last 20' drop down to the main pit's floor that you encounter if you go in via the horizontal entrance. Watch this space for more info when it's available.

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