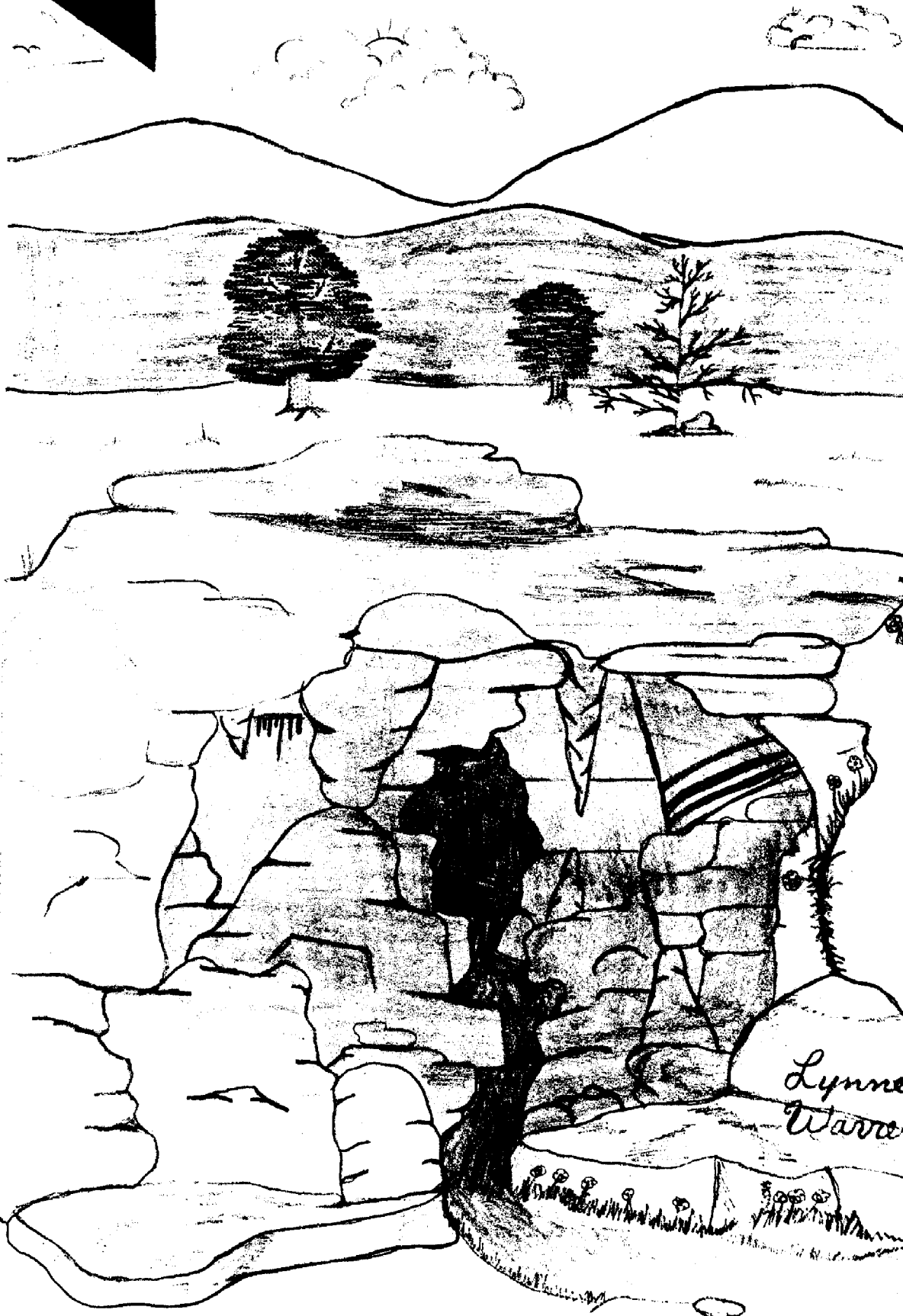
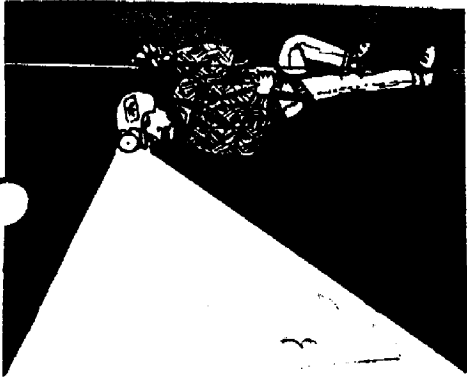


MAY 1982

# BIRMINGHAM GROTTO NEWSLETTER

NATIONAL SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY



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The Birmingham Grotto Newsletter is published approximately twelve times a year by the Birmingham Grotto of the National Speleological Society.

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THE SAGA OF KETONA BRIDGE CAVE  
- Greg McGill

In the spring of 1977 Lynn and myself visited Ketona Bridge Cave for the first time. We got as far as the first deep water, about 75' into the cave. The next trip was made after we obtained wetsuits about 6 months later. This time we reached the end of the cave and found what appeared to be an extension through an impossibly tight hole.

It was this belief that CHURCH CAVE might connect that sparked the interest in that cave. It was located and mapped, but the connection to KB was not found.

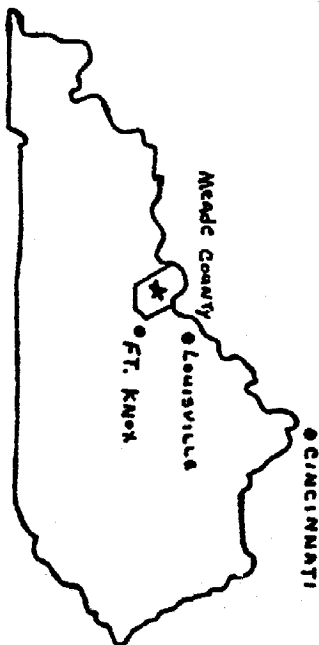
The years went by and we logged 9 trips (5 mapping trips) to Ketona Bridge cave before the last trip met with success. Previous trips taught us the difficulties of mapping a water filled cave; soggy notes, sinking pens, water-logged compasses, and other such worries. Mylar sheets and grease pencils work pretty well though.

Ketona Bridge should be visited by grotto members more often since it is close and provides some experience in negotiating deep water passage. There is plenty of air space and only two or three short swims.

The cave has one outstanding feature that stands as mute testimony to the efficiency of our utility companies. They have placed a utility pole right in the cave. It appears that they dug thru 16" of rock into the passage and just propped the pole up and jammed some rocks around to support it.

**Spellogfest**  
**1982**

MEADE COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS  
BRANDENBURG, KENTUCKY



**May 28th - May 31st**

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# KETONA BRIDGE CAVE

AL 1388

Length 547 Feet

The  
Country  
Club  
room

ENT 3

The Swim

5/5

The Brown  
Dome  
20'

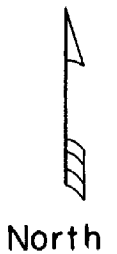
2/?

DEEP  
Water

ENT 2

The *SILT* Passage

ENT 1



3/1

The Gue Crawl

MAPPED BY

Telephone  
Pole —

Stephen Attaway

Greg McGill

Lynn McGill

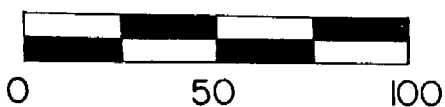
Bob Weller

4/1

roots

April 82

FEET



# BAT OF THE MONTH

by John Marshall

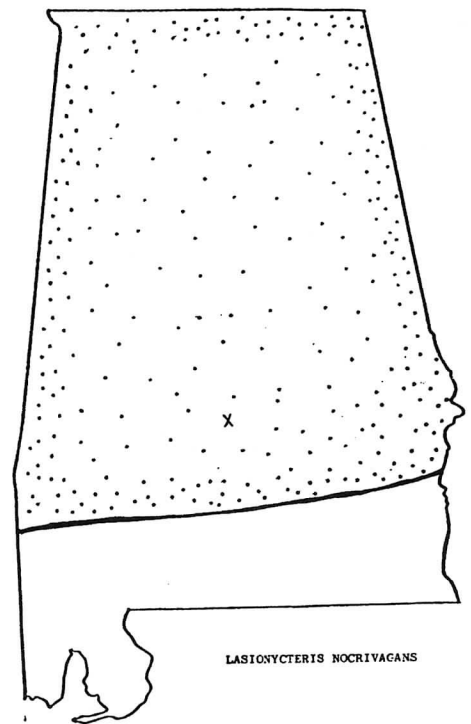
## LASIONYCTERIS NOCTIVAGANS: Silver-haired bat

**Description:** Forearm 37-44mm; wingspread, 270-310mm. The fur is usually dark brown or black with silver tips. The dorsal surface of the interfemoral membrane is lightly furred and the ears are short, rounded, and naked. (Barbour and Davis 1969).

**Distribution:** This is primarily a northern species, and its distribution in Alabama is not precisely known. Barbour and Davis (1969) show this species' range as extreme eastern Alabama from Tennessee south to the east-central part of the state. Hall and Kelson (1959) show L. noctivagans as occurring through most of the state except the extreme southern part. Howell (1921) gives a record from Autaugaville. The silver-haired bat probably occurs through most of the state, though more abundant in the northern part.

**Habitat:** L. noctivagans rarely enters caves, and generally roosts in more exposed areas. They use woodpecker holes, garages, and rock crevices for day roosts (Barbour and Davis 1969). These bats are typically found in forested areas near pond and streams. They prefer to forage over water (Barbour and Davis 1969).

This is a solitary species which usually hibernates singly. They generally hibernate in rock crevices, buildings, and protected tree crevices (Barbour and Davis 1969).



Silver-haired bat, *Lasionycteris noctivagans*.

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Thank heavens I'm well again. In the years before my breakdown I refused to use carbide light. I loved the beauty and adventure of caving but deeply abhorred the mechanical complexities of the carbide light with it's accompanying demands for tip cleaners, spare felts, water bottles and the seemingly endless paraphernalia necessary for its proper function. As you might imagine, my \$1.79 flashlight usually failed and I had to be lead out of many caves by my "carbide-equipped" companions. "Equipment nuts"; I called them.

But, as I understand now, my dislike of carbide lights was but a small symptom of a much greater disorder. Subconsciously I held a deep seated hatred for all thing mechanical. This aberation lead to my collapse one day last June.

It was raining. My Japanese car broke down on Interstate 59. The taxi I took slid into a tractor-trailor rig hauling chickens. No one was hurt but I was 48 minutes late by the office clock that always, but not always, ran slow. Closing the door to my small cubicle I sat down and starred blankly at the blinking and ringing phones on my desk. Events after this are vague but when my boss came in I was standing on my desk and peeing into the intercom. The crackling and sparkling it made as it shorted out made me smile. The verble fireworks of my boss made me laugh. I walked home.

I arrived home in good spirits and kissed my wife on the cheek. Then I kicked in the picture tube of the color T.V. in the den. Next I pinched off the rabbit ears of the portable black set in the upstairs bedroom. Raging through the house ( like a madman I'm afraid) I collected an electric toothbrush, a toaster, an electric can opener, a mixer, a blender, two hairdryers and seven clocks. These I put into the maytag washer. The noisy cycle had made it to "rinse" the the police knocked rudely on the door.

My confinement in the asylum was prolonged but at last I was released under the care of Dr Dowell McHowell, A psychiatrist who coincidentally happened to be a fellow caver. (Now here is the part that's hard to believe) after one visit to Dr. McHowell my sanity returned.

"Inner peace"...began Dr. McHowell as he put his desk calculator into a drawer"...can't be found through clever manipulation of the complex mechanisms of modern life. But if we focus our thoughts on one of these servomechanisms, great strides can be made toward a reunion with the universal void and eventual inner peace."

I nodded blankly while Dr. McHowell pushed a button that closed the draperies and then pushed another button that turned off the office lights

"Ommmm..." said Dr. McHowell, now sitting cross legged atop his desk. fianlly he continued. "Now just imagine...you are alone deep within a dark cold cave. All around you are great chasms and deep pits. You have no light. Without help you will soom die. Your eyes strain against the smothering darkness...danger surrounds and death awaits."

At that moment Dr. McHowell lit a carbide light. "POW!" said the carbide light. jarring me from my chair and scarring me witless.

After a long dramatic pause Dr. McHowell continued, speaking in a low, hypnotic voice.

"A machine...a simple machine...yet this device can transform your deathworld into a world of safety and security...the inner man and his support system interrelate to..." He continued talking in this manner for a long long time, interrupting himself only by an occasional "Om"., but I caught only brief snatches. My eyes and mind were transfixed by the steady, warming, life giving, yellow flame of the carbide light.

As I left, Dr. McHowell patted me on the shoulder and gave me a copy of "Zen and the art of Archery", as well as the lifegiving carbide light.

That was a month ago. Today I sit in my barren apartment anticipating my first caving trip since my recovery. I smile as I think of the look on John and Ken's faces when they see the brilliant silver shine of my reflector and the beautiful dull gold finish of my lifegiving carbide lamp. Their horn sounds. I gather my gear and climb into the back seat of their car. As we ride they chatter endlessly about sports and girls and other inane subjects. I began rearranging my immaculate pack. Finally I interupt with a needed lecture on the proper maintainace of the lifegiving carbide light. After a while they become silent and withdrawn. I do too. They are fools.

Now they are gone. I sit alone in the back of the cave. They were "Equipment Abusers", banging their hardhats on walls and clogging their tips. I gave them the finger. Who needs them. I need no one. The yellow flame of my carbide lamp burns steady. I am hungry. I reach down and scoop up a small handful of mud. The taste is cool and slippery. I want another handful, but I look down and see that my hands are already busy. They are polishing my carbide light.

"Om!" I go.

"Ommmmmmmm..."

# First Try Photo Show

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# Donna E. Matthews

UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL GALLERY. MAY 1982

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