



# BGN Calendar

JUN 4	The Birmingham Grotto Meeting begins at 7:00 PM, at the Home-wood Library, 1721 Oxmoor Road.
JUN 18	GROBS starts at 7:30 pm. Ask a grotto officer for the current hot spot.
Jun 25 JUN 28	Karst-O-Rama - Held at the Great Saltpetre Cave Preserve in Mt. Vernon, KY, just off I-75 at Exit 59. For more INFORMATION and ON-LINE REGISTRATION go to <a href="http://www.karstorama.com">www.karstorama.com</a> .
JUL 1 JUL 5	Tentative date for annual Sinking Cove campout. More info will be forthcoming.
JUL 2	The Birmingham Grotto Meeting begins at 7:00 PM, at the Home-wood Library, 1721 Oxmoor Road.
JUL 11	Hiwassee River trip. Come join the fun! Contact Danger Judy or Scott Fee for details.
JUL 16	GROBS starts at 7:30 pm. Ask a grotto officer for the current hot spot.
JUL 18 JUL 25	The 2009 NSS Convention will be held in conjunction with the 15th Annual Congress of Speleology in Kerrville, TX.
AUG 9	Third Annual Birmingham Grotto Splash at Springs Valley Beach, Blountsville, AL. Bring a side or dessert to share!
AUG 13	The Birmingham Grotto Meeting begins at 7:00 PM, at the Home-wood Library, 1721 Oxmoor Road.

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

## PLEASE NOTE THE AUGUST MEETING CHANGE!!!!

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](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...

Sherry Lee and Julie Fee at the 2009  
SERA Cave Carnival.  
(Scott Fee)



### 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.

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## Birmingham Grotto Meeting Minutes April 2, 2009 and May 7, 2009

Vice-President Dave McRae called the meeting to order at 7:06 pm at the Homewood Public Library on April 2, 2009. We had one visitor and former member, Robert "RB" West, who immediately joined the grotto under duress.

Daniel Wood reported that our actual "bank" balance is currently \$7,885.08 less the \$1,000.00 outstanding donation for the NSS. The treasurer started reminding the Getaway Auction Debtors in attendance that they still have a balance; naturally, the names may be announced at a future date.

Barring any corrections, amazingly enough, the March Minutes were passed as presented in the newsletter. Score: Secretary = 3, Nitpickers = 0.

### Announcements

- 1) ACS meeting will be April 25th at 9:00 am at the Scottsboro Library.
- 2) April 18th will be the annual Earth Day Clean up at Bryant Mountain Cave. Edna and Dave Caudle will host a pitch-in dinner.
- 3) Chris Leggett and Carolyn Foss

Chairman Scott Parvin called the meeting to order at 7:12 pm on May 2, 2009. We had three visitors. Robert Delgado found us via the internet and wants to visit Neversink. Fenn Spencer, son of first female president Kathy Freeland, also joined us. Molly Hopkins is a friend of Sherry Lee.

Scott Fee reported that even though the electronic file containing the minutes was submitted timely, and he serves as a proofreader, the minutes somehow managed to not get published. This was shocking to the membership as well as the editor. We expect to have two months worth of minutes at the June meeting. (Get your red pen ready!) A motion was even passed to that effect. Dan Wood indicated the Grotto Funds currently amount to \$6,603.69. Milo is reported as "paid in full" with regards to the Getaway Auction.

### Announcements

- 1) May 9th is the Walls of Jericho hiking trip led by Dave Howell.
- 2) May 16th is the SCCi membership meeting at Steward Springs Cave.
- 3) May 29th will be the SERA Cave Carnival at the TAG Campground.
- 4) July 18th is the beginning of the NSS Convention in Kerrville, TX.

are getting married on May 2nd in Huntsville. All are welcome.

- 4) SCCi will host an open house one May 16th at the Steward Springs Cave preserve.

### Old Business

- 1) The Walls of Jericho trip will be the weekend of May 9th. You can hike in and hike out for the day or stay the night. Meet at 11:00 am at the Alabama Hikers parking area.
- 2) Scott Fee solicited volunteers to host cavers during the NSS Board of Governors meeting the weekend of November 7th.

### New Business

- 1) Deirdra Hahn reminded us that various Alabama caves are now closed due to White Nose Syndrome. A spirited discussion then took place about caving in general and the future of caving in Alabama.
- 2) Judy Ranelli moved that \$500 donation be made to the NSS WNS fund. It was seconded and passed.
- 3) CAG is offering a paid vacation via raffle to benefit the NSS WNS fund.

### Old Business

We are still looking for NSS BOG Meeting hosts.

### New Business

- 1) The NSS Convention (also the ICS) is looking for volunteers. Registration is approaching 1500 cavers.
- 2) Keep in mind that Sinking Cove may be closed this summer. Details to be forthcoming after the SCCi annual meeting.
- 3) Birmingham Waterworks has put their property on the Locust Fork for sale. There is a meeting coming up to discuss the possibility of Forever Wild obtaining the land.
- 4) Scott Fee reported on the improved quality of the newsletter and why the members did not have it stapled.
- 5) Graves cave lock is no longer a combo but a key lock. Call Dave McRae for Details.
- 6) Lawrence Breland bought the Bryant Mountain Cave Property and is interested in gating the cave.
- 7) Grotto trip will be to Steward Springs Cave at the SCCi meeting.
- 8) A spirited discussion was held about the NSS Election.
- 9) Scott Parvin gave a detailed update on the results of the recent NSS Board

### Trip Reports

Deirdra Hahn's "greatest accomplishment" was doing the Blue Crawl in Tumbling Rock. She also visited Mrs. Millers Cave, Varnedoe Cave, and Camps Gulf with some of those "northern Alabama" cavers. Hazard worked on Scary Pit near Hang em High and did some ridgewalking at "Charlie's Place." Shay and Dave Howell enjoyed Limrock Blowing Cave. Tom Chamblee and son caved in Bluff River Cave. Gary Barnes spent a week caving in Belize where the "caves are deep are the water is warm." Bruce White went to War Eagle Cave. Dan Wood, James Wood, Julie Fee, and Scott Fee explored Case Cave (GA) along with some Chattanooga cavers. David Caudle, Judy Ranelli, and the Howell Clan toured Rickwood Caverns.

The meeting adjourned at 7:51 pm after which Robert "RB" West gave a presentation on "Caves in Rock Other than Limestone."

Respectfully submitted,  
Scott Fee, Secretary at Large

meeting that was held in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

### Trip Reports

Dave Howell, David Caudle, Scott Parvin, Scott Fee and others attended the ACS meeting. We have over 4,000 documented caves. The three incumbent officers were reelected to their respective positions. The ACS Data is being prepared for a protected web site launch with search capabilities and wiki updates.

Deirdra went to War Eagle on Saturday and then Vernal on Sunday of the ACS Meeting. Jonathan Gladden and Dan Woods did Rickles Cave in Blount County. Deirdra also visited Stephens Gap. Scott Fee talked about Dirty Dave Kneepads and that his product was featured in Wittenburg University's Pholeos quarterly Journal. Bruce White, Jayne, Josh, and Dale went to Tumbling Rock only to find it gated. They aborted to Neversink and reportedly had a great, gushing time.

Meeting adjourned at 8:02 pm followed by Michael Gilbert's program on White Nose Syndrome.

Respectfully submitted,  
Scott Fee, Secretary at Large

## News & Notes

Dave Howell

\*\*\* Whoa! That column in the April *BGN*, "Remarks & Rumors" by R.U. Sirius? Made some waves. A number of people, I hear, got their panties in a twist about the pending "Limbaugh Act," a bill that would ban all recreational caving, which the R&R column said is currently making its way through Congress. Guess I know how Orson Welles felt after the panic broadcast: "Our wives and daughters are at the church on their knees and you think you're funny!" Well, all I can say is... April Fool!

\*\*\* The annual meeting of the ALABAMA CAVE SURVEY, which took place April 25 at the Scottsboro Public Library, marked 21 new caves reported during the past year, bringing the total count to 4,216 caves in the state (i.e. through ACS #4218, due to duplicates, connected caves, etc.). In addition, 151 information updates to the cave files were submitted, as well as 88 new cave maps. ALAN CRESSLER, ANGELA MORGAN, and ANDY ZELLNER were reelected to the Board. The program described an exciting new initiative to combine all info in the cave files in an ACS website that will be open to current ACS members only. This will include all data on the caves, presented in a readable format rather than the difficult-to-decipher code used heretofore for updates; cave maps; and any narrative comments. In addition, there are plans to list the

NSS number of the original reporter of each cave - the old paper report forms are being researched to reestablish this listing - plus the number of the person submitting the most recent update. This wealth of information will be protected from accidental (or deliberate) disclosure to the public by several well thought out security measures. The website is currently under construction, and is expected to be open and in service this fall. Exciting stuff!

\*\*\* One other item of interest came out of the ACS meeting: our colleague BILL PUTNAM was there, and was asked, among other things, about what the SCCi's response was going to be to the request for voluntary closure of Tennessee caves as a precaution against White Nose Syndrome. Bill said that the SCCi will respect the request and close all of its Tennessee caves, but that across-the-board closure of all caves indefinitely is not something the SCCi sees as an appropriate response to WNS. The issue will be explored at the next SCCi Board meeting, but probably at least some Tennessee SCCi caves will be reopened, perhaps on some sort of limited or controlled basis. Nothing is definite yet, we'll have to see what happens, but the situation might not be quite as black as the April column made it sound. My fingers are crossed!

\*\*\* The carbide flame of love burns bright in the Grotto! Congratulations to CHRIS LEGGETT and CAROLYN FOSS on their marriage in Huntsville May 2! Many Grotto members attended the ceremony, which definitely lent a certain panache to the post-nuptial party. By caver standards it was a rather subdued party, though: nobody was arrested, and Annabella, the location of the event, was not left a smoking ruin. Great event anyway, y'all. (The Fat Tire beer was a master stroke.) Congrats again, and the Grotto's best wishes for a long and happy life together.

\*\*\* Did you see the on-line National Geographic article about TAG caving, featuring our colleague MARION SMITH and the exploration of Tennessee's JAGUAR CAVE? The article's narrator accompanies Marion and coexplorer KRISTEN BOBO as they push various leads in Jaguar. It's a good read, not only about caving but also about the "caving subculture," and there are some interesting pictures (not necessarily of Jaguar Cave). Check it out at [ngm.nationalgeographic.com](http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com).

\*\*\* Congratulations to our oldtime member LAURENCE BREELAND on his recent purchase of the land containing the main entrance to BRYANT MOUNTAIN CAVE! Word is that he is interested in gating the cave. Grotto project, anyone?

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**Birmingham Grotto Newsletter**

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**Forwarding & Address Correction Requested**