

# NEWSLETTER

**For He's A  
Jolly Good  
Fellow!**



# BGN Calendar

SEP 4	The Birmingham Grotto Meeting begins at 7:00 PM, at the Home-wood Library, 1721 Oxmoor Road.
SEP 7	Third Annual Grotto Splash at Spring Valley Beach.
SEP 18	GROBS starts at 7:30 pm. Ask a grotto officer for the current hot spot.
SEP 27	Fall meeting of the Tennessee Cave Survey from 9:00 CDT to about 12:00 in Johnson Hall on the Tennessee Tech campus in Cookeville.
OCT 2	The Birmingham Grotto Meeting begins at 7:00 PM, at the Home-wood Library, 1721 Oxmoor Road.
OCT 16	GROBS starts at 7:30 pm. Ask a grotto officer for the current hot spot.
OCT 31	Grotto Halloween Party. Location to be determined at the September meeting.
NOV 1	Grotto trip to Anvil Cave. More details to follow.

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



*Amy Parvin in Sinking Cove.  
(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.

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...

David Caudle in unidentified canyon passage.  
(Anonymous)

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

*From the President...*

I'm writing this while riding down Interstate 64 in West Virginia as we return from a fun filled weekend at OTR (Old Timers Reunion). It was my first trip to OTR, and it lived up to all the things I'd heard in the past. The clock is now ticking towards the TAG Fall Cave-In coming up in early October, so make your plans to be there.

I would like to personally congratulate Toby Kemp and Daniel Wood for winning Honorable Mention Ribbons in the NSS Cover Salon competition at the 2008 NSS Convention in Lake City, Florida. Great Job! Myrna Attaway also won two Honorable Mention Ribbons in the Fine Arts Salon with some stunning cross stitch and a beautiful painting. All of the Fee household (Scott, Julie, and Ryan) had pictures accepted for show in the Photo Salon!

The biggest story at 2008 NSS Convention was the bestowment of Fellow Status to our very own David Caudle. This award is reserved for no more than ten percent of the NSS membership, and the actual number of Fellows is far below that level. Fellows are awarded to those who have served the NSS faithfully for many years, and it is my honor to announce David Caudle as one of our new NSS Fellows. Mike McEachern, a former Birmingham Grotto member, also received the Fellows Award.

The Birmingham Grotto also received a Certificate of Appreciation from NSS President Gordon Birkhimer in recognition of our Grotto's fifty years of service to the NSS and the caving community.

As I've said before, we are fortunate to have such a dedicated and talented membership, and I am proud to be associated with such a fine group of friends and cavers.

Scott Parvin



*Our illustrious President at the 2004 TAG Fall Cave-In  
(Marty Dudrow)*

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## David Caudle Becomes An NSS Fellow

*Congratulations to David Caudle for being made a Fellow of the National Speleological Society! How wonderful to see the NSS recognize his vast contributions to the caving community of which we have long been aware. Following is the nomination letter Scott Parvin submitted to the Awards Committee.*

- Editor

Dear NSS Fellow Awards Committee,

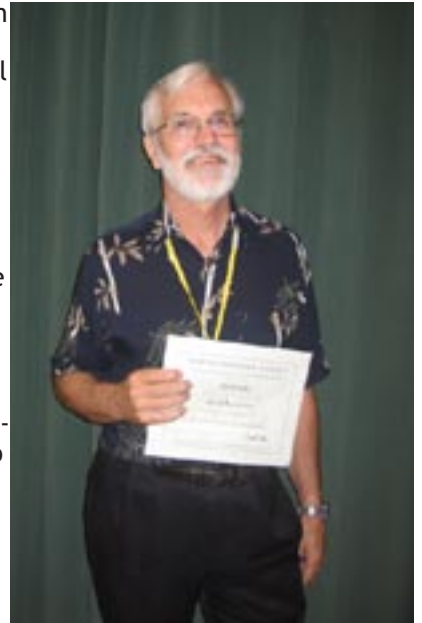
I am writing this letter as a nomination of David Caudle (NSS 13995) for the award of NSS Fellow. I have personally known David for almost twenty years, and I can think of very few people that have served the Birmingham Grotto and the NSS as selflessly as he has.

David joined the Birmingham Grotto in 1971 and worked as a member of the Civil Defense Rescue Squad Committee beginning in 1975. During his thirty-six years as a member of the Birmingham Grotto, he served as President in 1995, 1998, and 2007. He also served as Secretary during 1975 and Vice President during 2006. He has also continually served as the Grotto Archivist/Librarian since its inception many years ago.

Over the years, he has been very active in promoting safe and conscientious caving among the various visitors and new members of the grotto. Some examples of such activities are his numerous grotto and Boy Scout trips to Graves Cave and Tumbling Rock Cave. A more complete listing of such trips can be found in the attached summary.

Cave conservation has been one of David's passions since I have known him. He has traveled for the last seventeen years to the Caverns of Sonora to participate in

that ongoing restoration project. In 1983, he began hosting an annual Earth Day Birmingham Grotto clean-up trip to Bryant's Mountain Cave in Blount County, Alabama. Since that time, the grotto has removed literally tons of garbage from that cave and the surrounding area. The Earth Day Cleanup was always followed by a Grotto party at the Caudles house. He has also been a faithful contributor to the Southeastern Cave Conservancy from the beginning of its existence.



David has been very active in cave surveying throughout his time with the Birmingham Grotto. Such mapping projects include: Bryant Corkscrew Cave, Wine Cellar Cave, Bamboo Cave, Anderson Cave, Gene Lambert Cave, Hackney Cave, McClendon's Cave (17 trips), and Blowing Saltpeter Cave. He also served as an instructor in the recent class on cave surveying offered by the Birmingham Grotto.

Regionally, David has volunteered his services at many SERA (South-eastern Regional Association of the NSS) functions and activities. He was a member of the planning committee for the SERA Winter Business Meeting held at Goosepond Colony in 1991. He has worked at several SERA Cave Carnivals hosted by the Birmingham Grotto through the years. The SERA Cave Carnival is a four day gathering of cavers from all across the United States, but mostly from the Southeast. We typically host between 300 and 800 cavers during the camping event. In particular, one year he took an entire week of vacation to prepare Camp Jackson for that year's SERA Cave Carnival.



David's contributions to the Grotto and the NSS are almost too numerous to list. He is always the first to volunteer when something needs to be accomplished,



## Birmingham Grotto Newsletter



and he always makes sure the job is complete and well-done. I think he is an excellent candidate for the NSS Fellow Award, and I am honored to offer his nomination.

I would like to personally thank the NSS Fellow Awards Committee for the time and diligence you put into administering this award every year. Your efforts guarantee the success of the NSS and our cause in the future.

Sincerely,

Scott A. Parvin  
NSS 29279 RL, FE

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### Scenes from the Fern Crossover

Photos by Daniel Wood, Alan Cook, Jeff Harrod and Dave McRae



## Birmingham Grotto Meeting Minutes August 7, 2008

The August 2008 meeting of the Birmingham Grotto was held at the Homewood Library on August 7th, it was called to order by our president Scott Parvin.

With a flicker of the lights by Toby to quite the group, the meeting began just after 7:00 p.m. Parking was challenging thanks to the Sewer Board town hall meeting, I'm almost positive that non of the Grotto members were able to find a parking spot in the library parking area.

### Visitors

Alan and Ashley found us online while searching for caving maps and directions online. Surprise, surprise, they were unable to find any maps and found that the easiest way to get into caving is to join their local grotto

Jane and Bruce White were both in attendance. According to Jane, Bruce knows someone who knows someone who caves. Jane has also been researching several caves and has developed an obsession for completing Fern Cave. Fern Cave is approximately 26 miles in length. Jane and Bruce both joined the NSS the same day as the grotto meeting

Forest King had been a previous member of the Birmingham Grotto several years ago; upon introducing himself, he said that he missed us ☐

Note: Scott Parvin has made an information sheet for visitors and new members so that he and others no longer have to repeat the same answers every meeting. He then proceeded to hand out the info sheets to all visitors. The info sheet will be uploaded to the E-group to allow anyone access to it

### Treasurer's Report

All expenses for the Grotto 50th Anniversary are in! Daniel Wood announced that we did not loose any money for the 50th Anniversary. After collecting an additional \$200 during the Sinking Cove trip our current checking account balance is \$9729.00.

### Review of Minutes

Minutes for July were reviewed and approved. Much thanks to Daniel Wood and Scott Fee for standing in for our secretary while she was working out west!

### Announcements

August 11th begins the NSS Convention in Lake City, Florida. Several of our Grotto members are planning on attending.

August 24th is the 3rd Annual Birmingham Grotto Splash. It will be held at Springs Valley Beach (just north of Blountsville, Alabama). Scott Fee has reserved the large pavilion located on the far side of the big pool (pavilion 1). Grotto members are urged to come early, Scott Fee will be there by 11 a.m. to ensure that our pavilion is reserved. Daniel Wood made a motion to reimburse Scott Fee for the pavilion reservation; the fee for the reservation was \$20. The motion was passed.

August 28th is the Old Timers Reunion; this is the largest caving meeting in the United States. In order to attend you must be a guest of a Robertson Association Member.

October 9th begins the TAG Fall Cave-In. TAG will begin at noon at the TOTM site at Lookout Mountain, GA. The event will be hosted by the Dogwood City Grotto. Pre-registration is now opened and people are urged to register. Scott Parvin has made copies of pre-registration forms. The last day to pre-register is September 1st.

It is official, The Burly Earl has closed. This is an unfortunate event in all of our lives. Their deep fried bacon cheeseburgers will be missed, the clogged arteries will not.

### Old Business

There was no old business to report.

### New Business

Scott Fee brought up the purchase of the 50 Years of Texas Caving book. David Caudle was planning on purchasing the

book for our Grotto library during the NSS Convention; however, the book will not be available for purchase at the convention. David Caudle has arranged to have the book mailed to him instead; the total cost is \$50.

David Caudle commented on the overabundance of old Grotto Newsletters from around the country that no one has ever come to look at. He proposed that the out-of TAG newsletters should be brought to the NSS Convention and be sold at auction. The motion was made by David Caudle and approved.

People who attend the 3rd Annual Birmingham Splash are asked to bring a side dish. Leigh said that she will bring a ham and Jason Wall said that he will bring ice cream. Please avoid bringing vegetables or fruits that may spoil in the heat.

Discussions opened for a new meeting place for next years Grotto meetings. Matthews Bar has offered us a free place to have meetings. The meeting room has a separate entrance then the Bar and also has two available projectors. The room is approximately 40 x 40 which would allow for more room as we seem to be growing out the Homewood meeting room. The room also has a full kitchen. Our Homewood library location is paid for thru December. Southside library was also mentioned by Joel McGuire as a meeting place. Scott Fee mentioned a larger room in the Homewood library. Several Grotto members are planning on looking at Matthews tonight and see if it would be a suitable place as it seems to be very reasonable.

Dave McRae is working on arranging a trip to Talucah Cave for the Birmingham Grotto. The tentative date would be September 6 or 7

### Trip Reports

David Caudle, along with his son and daughter in-law and their kids went to Firefighters Cave; also in attendance were Todd Trammel and his two boys Caudle commented on noticing little change in the area and that the for sale sign for the

cave was no where to be seen.

David Caudle, Jerry Saulsberry and his two daughters went to Wards Cave.

David Caudle (apparently enjoying is retirement and filling it with caving trips) traveled to Perkins Cave with Jerry Salsberry, Karl Webber and his son, one of the entrances has been closed due to breakdown. Air is still coming through the breakdown but certainly no cavers. The group crawled about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile. They parked at the top of the hill and commented how the owner was very nice and helped them with parking on the logging road.

Reed and Dave Howell went to Keel Mountain. They discovered a definite qualifier; they reported that there was no water in the slope and may be connected to Lost Cave. Dave also saw about 100feet of passage, a hand line is needed to get to the lower passage. The upper passage is where the water goes and there was only a little water in it when Dave was there however it was thundering and so he decided against going any further.

22 people went on a Grotto trip to Guffey cave, with four different rendezvous spots. The pictures are currently loaded on Scott's flickr webpage. To enter the cave you have to pay the landowner \$50 deposit for the key; you also don't have to pay \$5 a car load to park, you can park on the landowners property with his permission.

Forest King, our visitor and a once member of the Grotto, visited Blue Spring Cave with Donna Cobb and they stayed in a mildly dangerous motel, where he and Donna slept with one eye open for bugs or infectious diseases! He commented on the easy walking to enter the cave. Kelly Norwood from Atlanta, GA and Eric Schoonover from Lagrange, GA led the caving tip. Also in attendance were two new cavers, Jane and Jennifer, co-worker's of Kelly's and Eric's. Forest commented on the 2,000 foot crawl and how Donna took a fall to the bottom of a small canyon passage in the crawl due to the slipping of a pack heavier then her, pulling her down to the bottom at 10-12 feet. Forest strongly suggests going to the cave if you have never been there. The cave also has the longest single

passage at 5 miles.

Daniel Wood failed yet again to reach the Wild Cat extension in Tumbling Rock Cave, he also did travel to the upper level of the cave.

Howdy went on a trip out west in June with the Ricos. They spent a week and Moab and rappelled several arches and took many baths in the Colorado, it was the fastest bath he has ever taken. Then went to Canyonlands and did mini-dome. After that the group enjoyed relaxing in several hot springs. Then they traveled to California and did a single rappel on El Capitan in Yosemite. Sounds like a good trip

### Program

Three slide shows were presented. The first was by Jeff Harrod and the other two were made by John Roberts. They were all very excellent and the music made the show very enjoyable.

-Jessica Backes

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## There And Back Again

Daniel Wood

Generally speaking, it is a place where one thing intersects another. Genetically speaking, it is a means of exchange of material during cellular meiosis. In music, it is a blend of styles intended to appeal to a wider audience. It is even an automobile that mixes two distinct kinds into one. On railroads it is a pair of switches to a short parallel length of tract which allows one train to sit while another passes and then to resume movement on the same track. In comic books and serial novels, it describes characters or elements borrowed from another fictional universe, for a guest appearance. In TAG, it is a rare and renowned trip where one group starts at the Johnston entrance while another starts in the Morgue and each makes its way to the Bottom of the Cave where they intersect, exchange, blend, mix, borrow, and pass, then follow the other's steps (and ropes) up out of the cave. We did the CROSSOVER in Fern Cave y'all!

Grotto members included Bros. Wood, Alan Cook, Kevin Bruff, Jerry Saulsberry, Jeff Harrod, Dave McRae, and Shane Stacey. Many thanks to Jennifer, Jimmy, and Steve for indomitable patience and for showing us the way.



## News & Notes

Dave Howell

\*\*\* An early report from the 2008 NSS NATIONAL CONVENTION: although the issue of *NSS News* covering the event isn't out at the time of this writing, intelligence sources report that the Birmingham Grotto made a good showing there, and that several of our number received awards. Congratulations to DAVID CAUDLE and MIKE McEACHERN, and also to our Huntsville Grotto colleague STEVE PITTS, on their ascendance to Fellows of the NSS. All well deserved, if I may say. Also, congrats to MYRNA ATTAWAY on her 2 ribbons in the Fine Arts Salon. I understand her bat painting was especially good. That's the early Convention report - watch this space for further coverage.

\*\*\* A big Welcome Back! to old time member FORREST KING, back in Birmingham now after an absence of several years. We're delighted to have you caving with us again, Forrest! I understand a recent article about Forrest ran in the *Birmingham News*, in which he talked about his job with Jensen Shipping Company, and was even quoted as saying, "I have the cave bug again." Now there's an example of the difference point of view makes - if that same statement had come from, say, former member TIM KING (no relation), it would have had an entirely different meaning. Incidentally, the way in which this news item came to us was unique. To quote DONNA COBB, "That stinkbug [Forrest] didn't even tell us about it [the newspaper article] - I happened

upon it when I was putting down... 'parrot on the play gym poopie doo paper.'" Oh well, news is where you find it - no s\_t.

\*\*\* Speaking of whom, it seems DONNA COBB is limping around these days following a mishap in BLUE SPRING CAVE that resulted in a cracked tibia. At least she doesn't have to be in a cast, although the knee brace and ice packs sound inconvenient enough. Hope to see you back underground sans brace real soon, Donna.

\*\*\* Grotto member and Ruffner Mountain Nature Center Director KATHY FREELAND announces the commencement of construction of the new Treetop Visitor Center and Education Pavilion, a project that has been many years in the making. The completion date of this KPS Group-designed, environmentally sound visitor center that will feature live animal exhibits and solar power for the education pavilion is April, 2009. Can't wait to see the new facility! (Actually I was involved in the original design of the visitor center years ago. It has changed a bit since then - I guess my ideas for the hands-on Toxicodendron exhibit, the walk-in beehive, and the pit viper-alligator snapper petting zoo just weren't well received.)

\*\*\* Did you catch the article in the Saturday, August 16 edition of the *Birmingham News* about the recent BAT BLITZ at Bankhead National Forest? The Blitz is a roundup of bats for

purposes of species inventory. Led by TIM CARTER, biology professor at Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana, in conjunction with TOM COUNTS, Bankhead district wildlife biologist and a number of volunteers, the Blitz caught a total of 394 bats by stretching nets across portions of Brushy Lake and other areas of the National Forest from dusk until after midnight. Caught and later released were a gray bat and an Indiana bat, both endangered species, as well as reds, big browns, eastern pipistrelles, and evening bats. (From dusk to midnight aren't they *all* evening bats?) Although an annual event, the Bat Blitz is not always held in the same location. This was the first time it has been held in Alabama, the article said.

\*\*\* Mark your calendars: Grotto trip on November 1 to ANVIL CAVE, a less often visited destination for TAG cavers since the land where most of entrances are went off limits some years ago (the landowner got tired of all the traffic through his cow pasture). No worries, though, this is a legal trip - we will go in the entrance on Flint Creek just off the posted property, which will involve a 3-mile canoe or kayak trip up the creek. Yes, "up" does imply paddling upstream, but still no worries - this part of the creek is in the backwaters of Wheeler Dam, it's lake-calm. The cave, if you aren't familiar with it, is the archetypal maze, miles long. It's an aMAZing place (heh heh). Further details closer to the 1st. Be there. Aloha.

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**Birmingham Grotto Newsletter**

**P.O. Box 55102**

**Birmingham, AL 35255-5102**

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