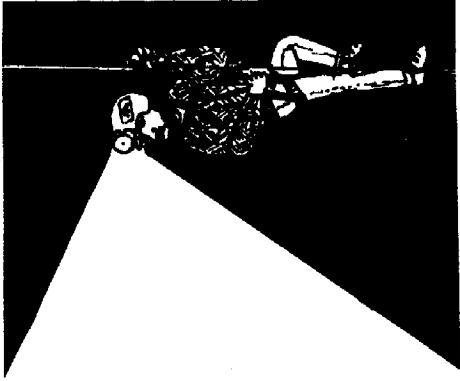


**JANUARY**

# **BIRMINGHAM GROTTO NEWSLETTER**

**NATIONAL SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY**



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

Subscription and Membership fees are now due. Annual subscription rates are included in the \$4 membership fee. Outside the Birmingham area, the subscription rate is only \$2. All are prorated from October.

Editors: Lynn McGill & Nancy Boice  
5279 Paramount Drive  
Birmingham, AL 35210

Submit materials for publication directly to the Editors. Deadline is the 20th day of the month preceding the month of issue.

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ALL OFFICIAL GROTTO MAIL (INCLUDING EXCHANGES) ADDRESSED TO ANYONE OTHER THAN THE EDITORS SHOULD BE SENT TO THE GROTTO PO BOX. THIS ASSURES THAT THE MESSAGE WILL GET THROUGH.

P. O. Box 3302  
Birmingham, AL 35255

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Officers for the 1981-82 year are :

CHAIRMAN - Greg McGill 956-1267

VICE-CHAIRMAN - Mike McEachern

SECRETARY - Dottie Alexander

TREASURER - Joe Domnanovich

TRIP COORDINATOR - Steve Hall

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The B'ham Grotto trip for February 13 is to Keeton Cave. Contact Steve Hall 879-2540.

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Contrary to recent rumors, Guess Creek Cave is open.

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The 1982 SERA Ridgewalk will be held on Feb. 20, 1982. Details will follow shortly.

## MINUTES OF DECEMBER 7, 1981

The meeting was called to order by Greg McGill. The following visitors were recognized: Russ Pastiam, Carol Stewart, Greg Nuckolls, and Wade Gilbert.

### Old Business

A report was made on t-shirts screened by Ken Brown to be sold at the Cumberland Caverns Christmas Party.

Larry Moore reported on the building of a cave exhibit at the Anniston Museum. In conjunction with this, the curator is planning a caving trip in January and would like volunteers to go on the trip.

### New Business

Nancy McEachern said that the new source for printing the newsletter (see November's minutes) had gone up from \$12 to \$65 per month. Hence, they would not be used. Don Curry then said his boss at the ad agency where he works had said that the newsletter could be printed there for free.

Greg McGill announced that the Grotto Christmas Party would be at his house on the night of December 19.

### Trips

A report was made on the aborted trip to Doodlebug Hole. The trip went instead to Graham Pit, Dinky Pit, and Snakes 200 Pit. On the trip were Mike McEachern, Don Curry, Steve Connors, Albert Smith, and Dottie Alexander.

Mike McEachern pointed out that he has a list of names for people who want to be called before each Grotto trip. Anyone wanting his name on this list should contact Mike.

Steve Hall reported on trips to War Eagle Cave, Neversink Pit, and Halls Pit. Members of the Huntsville Grotto were on the War Eagle trip.

Les Buren reported on a trip with Jet Thomas and others to a cave near Old Blowing Cave.

Steve Connors said that the road to Trenton Well and Four Wells has been gated and that the owner said it would be opened after hunting season.

Mike McEachern told of mapping trip to Bootleggers Cave.

Larry Moore reported on a trip to Horton Mill Cave.

The next Grotto trip is to Dowells Deep Six Cave on January 17. The meeting place and time will be the Krystal in Tarrant at 7:00 a.m. Other coming trips were mentioned by Les Buren (to Old Blowing Cave around Christmas) and Greg McGill (maybe to Argo Cave).

After break, Mike McEachern gave a lecture and a slide show on mortuary caves. The meeting was then adjourned.

## Structure of Bats

The structure of bats has been significantly modified from that of other mammals to accommodate true flight. The bones of the hand and fingers have been greatly elongated to support and manipulate the wing. The thumb ends in a claw.

The wing stretches over the fore limbs to the outside of the hind legs. It is formed by a double layer of skin. Between the hind legs and enclosing the tail is another membrane known as the interfemoral membrane. The free edge of the interfemoral membrane is supported by the cartilaginous calcar. In some bats the calcar is keeled, which means there is a definite extension of the free edge of membrane beyond the calcar. If the calcar lies on the free edge, it is not keeled.

On the inner base of the ear is an erect fleshy projection called the tragus. Its exact function is not known.

## — BAT OF THE MONTH —

The editors are pleased to present a new column for the newsletter. Each month a different Alabama bat species will be featured. The reports are being prepared by John Marshall, wildlife manager & enthusiast.

### MYOTIS LUCIFUGUS : Little brown myotis

Description: Forearm 34 - 41 mm; wingspread, 222 - 269 mm (Barbour & Davis 1969) reddish brown, to dark brown (Barbour and Davis 1969). This species is most distinguishable by its sleek glossy fur. The ears touch the snout when laid forward, and are about 14 - 16 mm long (Burt and Grossenheider 1964 and Barbour and Davis 1969). The skull has 38 teeth and weigh only about 4 or 5 grams.

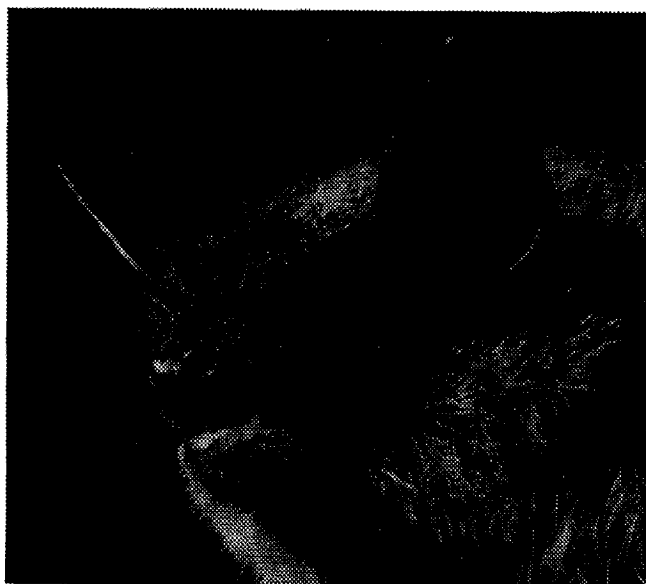
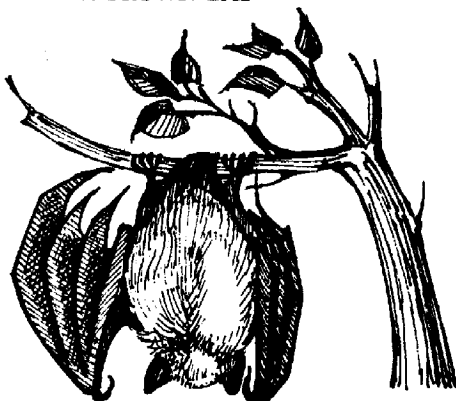
Distribution: Sources differ about their actual distribution in Alabama. Hall and Kelson (1959) show them as ranging through northern and central Alabama and being absent from the Gulf Coast and Coastal Plain. Le Val (1967) reported a specimen from Sander's Cave in Conecuh County, which probably is its most southerly occurrence. Barbour and Davis (1969) show M. lucifugus as occurring only in the northeastern corner of the state and the one report by LeVal in Conecuh County. They also state that M. lucifugus is scarce and local in the southern part of its range.

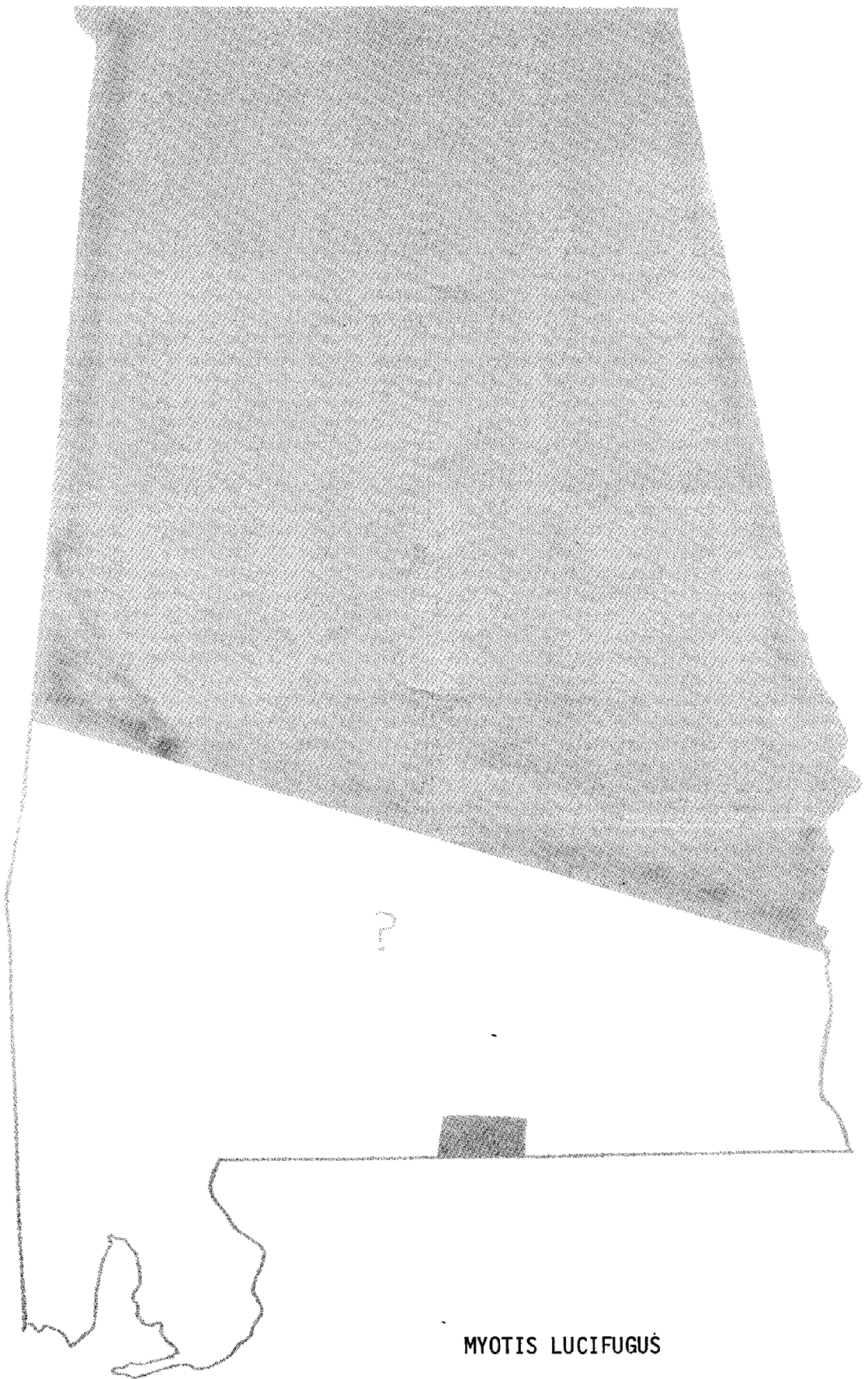
It probably occurs throughout most of the state regularly except the coastal areas, where it may be found as a straggler. It is more common in North Alabama than anywhere else in the state. It is a year around resident (Barbour and Davis 1969).

Habitat: In the summer they roost in buildings under bridges, and in caves. Nursery colonies often form in hot attics and number in the hundreds or even thousands (Barbour and Davis 1969). Males usually roost singly or in small groups. Groups occur in caves and buildings, while single males may be found in crevices, behind shutters and under loose bark (Barbour and Davis 1969). Colonies are usually close to lakes or streams since these bats prefer to forage for insects over water. (Barbour and Davis 1969).

In the winter, M. lucifugus is found in caves and mines. It hibernates in numbers ranging from a few individuals to thousands. (Barbour and Davis, 1969).

LITTLE BROWN BAT





MYOTIS LUCIFUGUS

## Bryant Mill Hollow

Greg McGill  
Lynn McGill  
Steve Attawal  
Marylin Moore  
John Attaway  
Lee Stubbs reporter

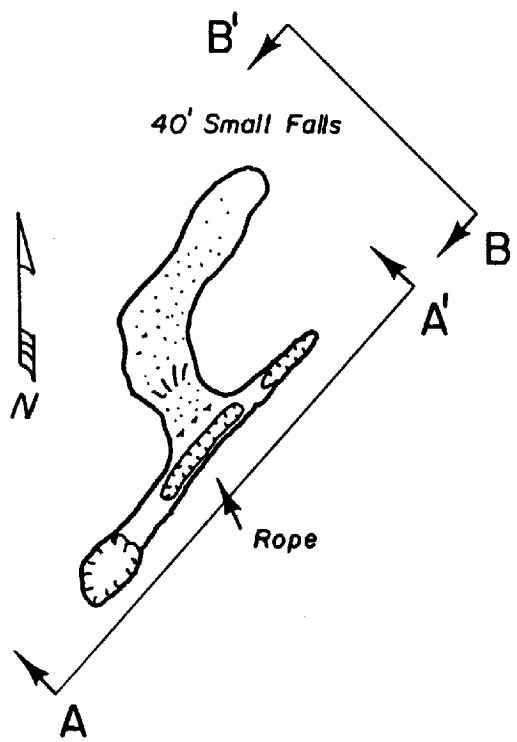
December 30, 1981

Greg and Lynn McGill and I went to Acanthus Sink to relocate and map Birmingham Canyon Cave. We walked the area for a couple of hours that afternoon, but did not find Birmingham Canyon. We did, however see Durhams Dungeon Cave. Durhams Dungeon has a very pretty entrance, a rock face approximately 20 feet high and 40 to 50 feet across covered with moss and draped with fern, and streams of water flowing over the face of the rock like a veil. After having made the 1 1/2 hour trip from Birmingham and carrying rope and a full compliment of other vertical gear all over the side of that hill, I insisted that we do a vertical cave, any vertical cave before returning home. Greg and Lynn agreed, and since it was getting well on into the afternoon we went to Haden's Dilemma. We did the thirty foot drop to the bottom and went on down the 8 foot climb down and looked around a few minutes before climbing back out, and heading home.

Jan. 2, 1982

John Attaway and I drove to Bryant Mill Hollow and met Greg and Lynn, and Steve and Marylin who had gone up the day before. The six of us started from Coon Dog Pit, a small pit that was fairly damp that day, and proceeded NE along the side of the hill to Acanthus Fault Cave, which we ducked into for a brief look. Acanthus Fault Cave is exactly what it's name implies, a long narrow, high ceilinged fissure in the side of the hill. The cave has a deep bedding plain of large and well preserved fossils. Continuing on from Acanthus Fault we walked NNE in a line along side between about 100 to 200 feet above the Valley Floor. Shortly we came to Durham's Dungeon again, flagged it and continued on. After walking some distance Marylin and Lynn found Bryant Mill Hollow cave, a small horizontal cave, just in time to see Lynn and Marylin disappear into it. The pit John and I had found was only about 50 yards over and Greg and Steve had found another only about 40 yards below. Things were looking up. After some time Lynn and Marylin came out and we all went over to look at one of the pits. Feeling that this pit was something new John, Steve, and I dropped into it to take a look around and to map it. And a small pit it was, with an entrance drop of 21 feet and a length of 21 feet.

After we got out and were ready to move on and continue our quest we heard voices coming up the hill. It was the property owners Haden and Mitzi Tidmore, they had recognized Lynn's car and come looking for us. We showed them the caves and then they continued to walk with us. Shortly John located Three Sisters Pit. Three sisters is a nice vertical cave with three entrances in a line along the side of the hill, each being about eight feet apart. Each entrance is about three feet across and six to eight feet wide. The middle entrance drops all the way to the bottom of the cave. The first 31 feet being a narrow chimney, after which it opens up to a free drop of another 44 feet for a total of 75 feet. Steve and I mapped Three Sisters while the rest of our group, along with the Tidmores, resumed walking. As Steve and I were preparing to leave Three Sisters and catch up with the rest of our group we noticed them coming back. We found out that they had indeed located the elusive Birmingham Canyon Cave. From there we walked down the hill to the road and back up the cove to see the water flow into Acanthus I. On our way out to the cars we stopped at Haden's Dilemma again and for some odd reason we all wound up in the bottom of Haden's again. This was the end of my second day in the Bryant Mill Hollow area, and it is very easy to see why Greg and Lynn keep going back. I feel we had a very productive and enjoyable weekend, and I am very eager to go back.



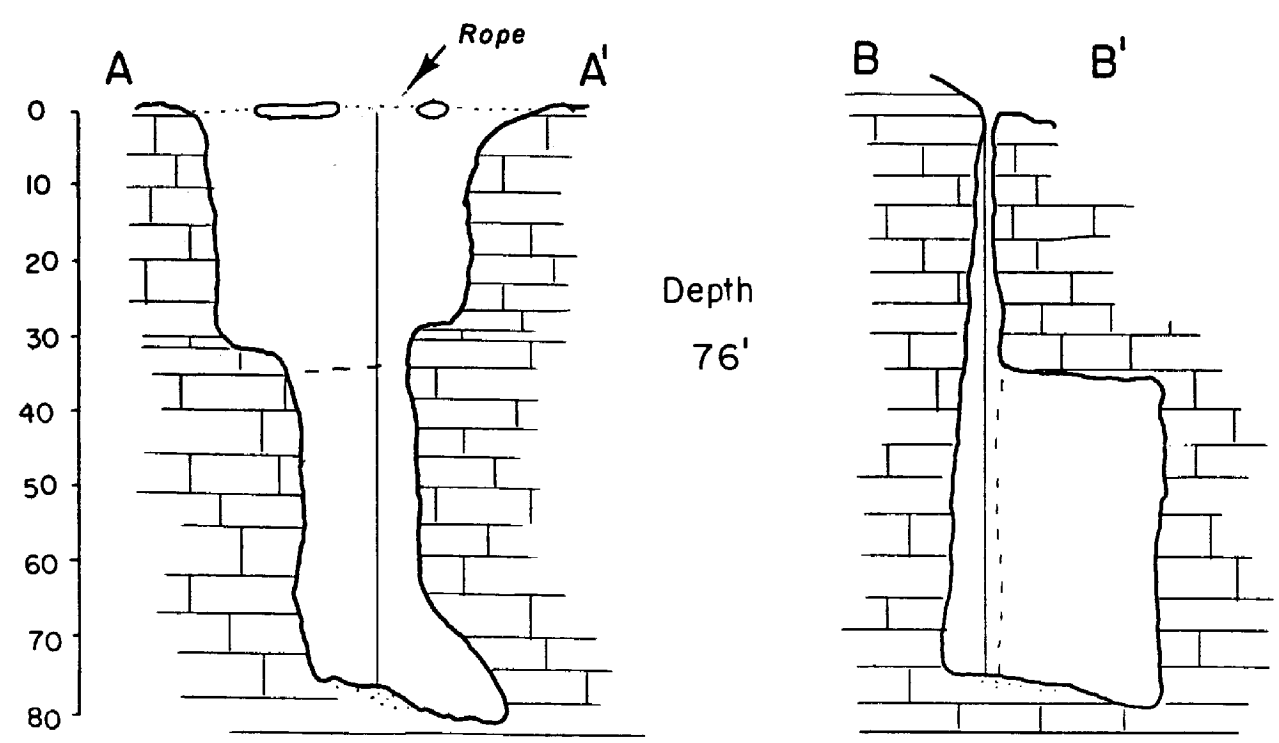
# THREE SISTERS PIT

ACS 1725

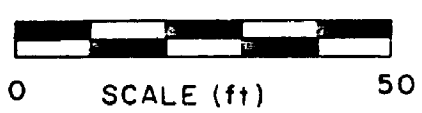
Mapped by

- Stephen Attaway
- John Attaway
- Lynn McGill
- Greg McGill
- Marilyn Moore
- Lee Van Stubs

JAN 1982



Feet



0 SCALE (ft) 50

First Annual Frog Cave-In  
Florida State Caverns  
Marianna, Florida  
November 7th, 8th, & 9th

Mark A. Polster

I arrived at the locked gate of the state park just in time to see the tail lights of Bill Fry's car fading into the darkness. My information about this event was strictly word of mouth. I didn't have instructions on what to do at nine P.M. about a locked and unattended gate. Since I was not in the mood for a long chilly stroll in an unfamiliar park I decided to go down the highway to the first house and try the phone.

It wasn't far, maybe two city blocks. With great deliberation and as much diplomacy as I could muster I first knocked on this stranger's door and then explained to the kind gentleman of my predicament. He replied that this was the park. He said just to continue down his driveway until I hit the paved road and then to take a right. When I saw the light I should look for the Frog, he said and turn in. He turned out to be the lieutenant Ranger; again thanks.

About a half hour later after a tour of the entire park, (the ranger did forget to tell me to go left at the fork) I found a small group of intrepid cavers braving the cold, the Hoot Owls. They were surprised to see me. The driveway through the ranger's yard was news to them also. After some conversation, Bill Fry offered me a bunk in his very comfortable trailer camper which I gladly accepted.

The next morning Ann Shapiro of the Florida Fish and Game Commission turned up. There is a large (by Florida standards) cave near the park that is one of the few known bat maternity caves in the area. Ann hopes to have the wildlife Conservancy buy Judge's Cave so that it may be preserved, but before that could be done the cave had to be mapped.

I had no mapping experience but I volunteered to give what help I could. Four experienced F.S. cavers also volunteered and after the traditional hemming and hawing we finally got ourselves organized and set off.

Judge's Cave is about a ten-minute drive from the state park. It is on private land in the north side of a low limestone ridge, just below the crest. The entrance is about three meters wide and one and one half meters high. Ann spoke of the bats exiting the cave in such thick clouds that she and Dr. Tuttle were able to capture the bats by hand. To support this statement, she later showed us a pile of guano that had accumulated in the last couple of years. This pile stands taller than I am!

The cave immediately widens out into a large, roughly oval shaped room approximately sixty meters by twenty meters. The lower third of this area was covered by water to an estimated depth of ninety feet. The bats also roost over the water. I'll leave the rest to your imaginations.

I went in initially as point man with Jim (sorry, I did not get any other last names) showing me how it was done. Dan was taking sightings and Terry did the recording and sketching. I found the work a lot more interesting and far less boring than I thought it would be. The excitement of a new cave and the challenge of the new technique may have really been getting to me, but I would be willing to go mapping again.

We soon found a side lead which started behind the huge guano pile and ran parallel to the lake. We pushed it pretty thoroughly hoping to bypass the water, but we never did reach the farther shore that way.

Of course there is always more than one way. Nothing can stop a truly determined caver! Beyond the water, Joe, our most determined caver, did find some more leads. He said that they were crawling on hands and knees passages but strangely was reluctant to push them. Dan finally decided that Joe should return. Joe then set the world record for underground swimming, free style of course.

When we at last returned to the state park we found that the main event of the day had just ended. The first annual Marianna Hodag Hunt was over. Once again the Hodag had won. Bill Fry then led this fierce beastie out of hiding to a place of honor under the pavilion. There it reposed, accepting the admiration of all the men and the oohs and ahs of all the ladies.

After spending some time admiring the Marianna Hodag, I went in search of Bill Fry. Someone said he was up on a low ridge not far from camp. I did not find him but I did find a rope tied to a tree and leading down into a small hole. I tried to pull this rope up but there seemed to be something on the end of it. I went back and got my vertical gear and soon descended into a bell-shaped pit roughly twenty feet deep. Who says there are no vertical caves in north Florida! After extensively exploring this pit in about five minutes I rigged up and climbed out. It was the only possible exit.

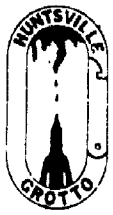


# SERA WINTER BUSINESS MEETING



## February 6, 1982

Sponsored by Huntsville Grotto



The SERA Winter Business Meeting will be held at the Bicentennial Chapel Hall and the Banquet will be at the NCO Club, both located on the Redstone Arsenal. (SEE MAP ON BACK)

### TENTATIVE SCHEDULE:

9:00 AM to 12 Noon

Programs will be given by:

Jim Hall - Shelta Cave History

Joel Sneed, Larry Blair & Jim Henry - Kingston Saltpeter Cave

Representatives from PMI - Vertical Discussion

Jeff Sims - Xanadu Cave

Jim Whidby - History of Lookout Mountain Caves

12 Noon - 1:30 PM

Lunch Break

1:30 PM - ?

Business Meeting

6:00 PM - Happy Hour at the NCO Club

7:00 PM - Banquet at the NCO Club

Banquet Speaker will be Hal Bridges speaking on the Toohy Ridge System

Banquet will consist of: Spaghetti, Tossed salad, bread and choice of coffee or tea

There will be a cash bar available at the banquet with mixed drinks and draft beer. We will also have a live band following the banquet.

PRE-REGISTRATION PRICE \$6.50 (\$6.00 Banquet, \$.50 for SERA Meeting)

PRICE DAY OF MEETING \$7.00 (\$6.50 Banquet, \$.50 for SERA Meeting)

\* \* \* \* \*

PRE-REGISTRATION DEADLINE February 3, 1982

Checks should be made out to Huntsville Grotto and mailed to:

Huntsville Grotto  
c/o Jeanne Pridmore  
3807 Williamsburg Drive  
Huntsville, AL 35810

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

zip code \_\_\_\_\_

For further information call:

Day - (205) 852-1300

Night - (205) 852-9549 Jeanne Pridmore or

(205) 533-6746 Vickie Cothren



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