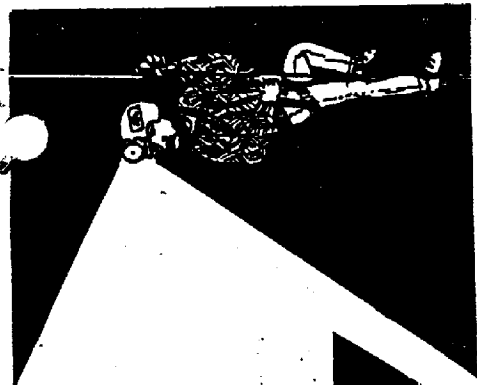


BIRMINGHAM GROTTO NEWSLETTER

NATIONAL SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

JUNE 1983



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 of the Birmingham area, the subscription rate is only \$2. All are prorated from October.

Editors: Lynn McGill & Nancy Boice
P.O. Box 55102
Birmingham, Al. 35255

The officers for the 1982-83 year:

President - Mike McEachern

Vice Pres. - Jay Clark

Secretary - Nancy Boice

Treasurer - Edna Caudle

The grotto meets the first Monday of each month at 7:30 pm at the Avondale Library.

The meeting after the meeting is at Burly Earl's around 9:00.

*****NOTICE*****

All Grotto and ACS mail should be sent to our new P.O. Box 55102

Calendar :

June 27-July 1 - NSS Convention, Elkins, W. Va.

Aug. 5-7 - SERA Cave Carnival. Contact Jeanne Fridmore at 205-852-9549 or the NSS Office at 205-852-1300.

Minutes of May 2, 1983

The meeting was called to order by Mike McEachern. One visitor was recognized, Ray McKinley- a friend of Eric and James. Edna gave the treasurers report. We have \$149.00 in checking, and \$1000.00 in savings.

Old Business:

Squirrel has BG bumper stickers for sale at \$1.00 each.

The 25th party will be held at the Roebuck Community Center on May 21 at 5:00 pm. A banquet will be held for \$5.00/person, \$3.00 children under 12, and children under 5 are free. The t-shirts are done and being sold for \$5.00 each. The Anniversary publication will be distributed at the party.

New Business:

Consent was given to Myrna Jordon to use any of the BG logos on ceramics she is making to sell at the NSS convention.

Trip Reports:

Frank Piazza took 3 new people to Ledbedder Cave. Dave Wright was gone to Germany for 7 days and will send a postcard.

Dave Caudle explored a cave near his house. Went about 600".

Squirrel checked a lead with Lee Stubbs, also went to Bryant Cave. He suggests the grotto plan a clean-up trip to Bryant Cave.

Tom Chamblee reported on Jess-Elliot and Ledbedder Cave.

Lynn McGill reported on the grotto trip to Eudi Cave.

Announcements:

The Red Mountain Museum Photo Salon will be held in June. Cavers with interesting photos should enter as there is money for winners.

A motion was passed to pay a \$4.00/hr. charge after 8:00 pm for use of the Avondale Library for meetings.

Grotto Trip:

The trip will be vertical and nonvertical in the Stevens Gap area. It will leave the Krystal in Tarrant at 7:00 on May 28.

The program was given by Jay Clark and Walter Plunket on vertical caving technique

Nancy Boice

Grotto Trip for June:

Wolf Cave, led by Les Bu
June 12, Krystal-Tarrant

7:30

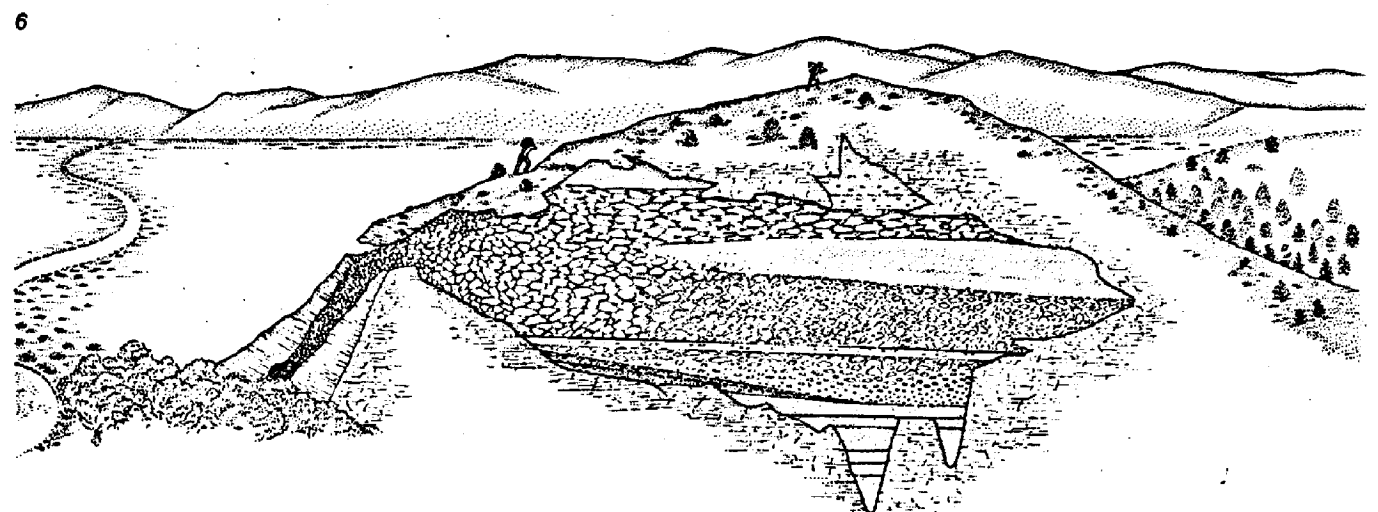
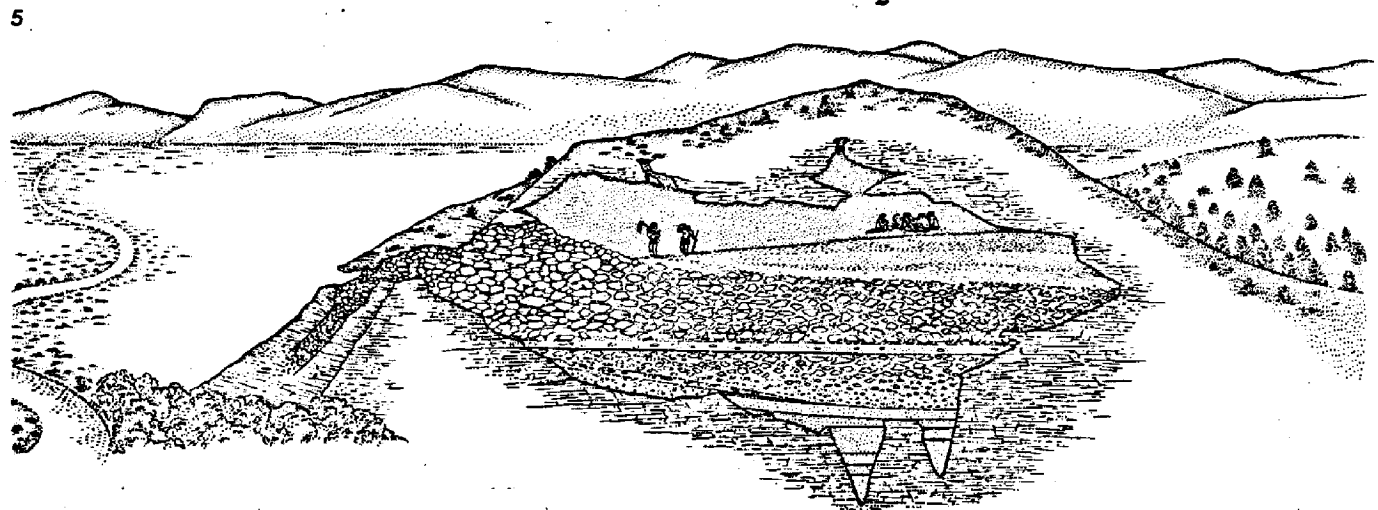
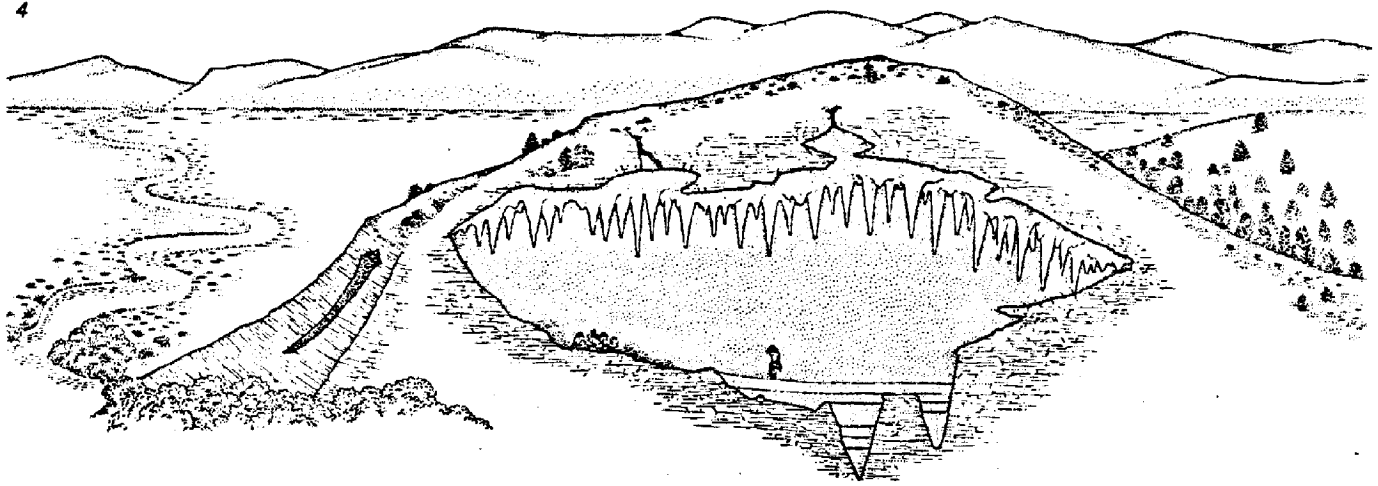
BIRMINGHAM GROTTO 1958-1983

The Birmingham Grotto's 25th Anniversary Banquet was held Friday night, May 20 at the Homewood Elks Club. The event was a great success. Approximately 60 adults and a dozen or more young adults were present, including three charter members of the grotto. They were; Walter Anderton, the first grotto president, Frank Dansby, and Newt Chamblee. They were given t-shirts and each gave a brief speech. Other long time grotto members were present such as Cathy Spencer, Laurance Breeland, Tom and Vivian Lamb and others. Two guests from Huntsville were present; Bill Torode and J.D. Swearingen.

A delicious bar-b-que dinner was prepared by Milo's father-in-law with the help of grotto members. Jay Clark hosted the program including slides, the Guffy Cave Movie and door prizes. Mostly, everyone enjoyed the good food and fellowship.

The grotto extends it's thanks to those who worked so hard to prepare for this important event including Gary Barnes, Jay Clark, Edna Caudle, Joe Domnonovich, those who made t-shirts, and those who cooked. A great time was had by all who attended.





dirt were carried by the river into the cave, leveling the gullies created by the erosion of the limestone. The resulting spacious shelter was adopted by Peking man about 460,000 years ago (4). The east entry and the eastern part of the cave were the main areas of habitation

until the collapse of the roof 300,000 years ago forced a move to the western part, with access through a fissure in the central section (5). By the time Peking man left the cave 230,000 years ago it had been filled with fallen rock and the detritus of human occupation (6).

Taken from: Animal Tracks April-May-June 1983 The Official
Journal of the Alabama Zoological Society

SWIMMING IN ETERNAL DARKNESS By Bob Truett, Director

There is a zoo not too far from us that every member of AZS should visit at least once. In several ways it is one of the most unusual zoos in the country. It is the only zoo with a large modern building devoted entirely to displaying insects. It is the Cincinnati Zoo.

No less unusual than the zoo he directs is Edward Maruska, the boss over the Cincinnati Zoo. Ed is probably the foremost authority anywhere on the keeping and captive breeding of salamanders. At all times he keeps hundreds of specimens of these fascinating little creatures.

For years Ed has been wanting some Alabama specimens of a salamander called Gyrinophilus palleucus. They are not easy to get. These obscure little animals spend their lives swimming in eternal darkness deep in underground streams. For some years Buzz Peavy and I have been offering to help Ed to get some of these salamanders.

Now wouldn't you be skeptical about travelling about 800 miles (round trip) and investing a couple of days of your valuable time on the shaky prospect of getting illusive and improbable creatures? Finally we convinced Ed that we really did know where Gyrinophilus palleucus could be found. Saturday March 26 was set as the date for the great salamander hunt.

Gyrinophilus palleucus is a true creature of the caves and of deep underground waterways. It is never found near the surface of the ground. Like many cave creatures it has lost its pigmentation

so it appears pale flesh-pink in color with rather translucent skin. Throughout its life it lives in water from which it extracts oxygen with its bright red external gills. Its snout is flattened and its eyes are reduced to tiny dots. The total length of a large specimen is only about six inches. Like all true cave dwellers, this salamander has adapted to survival on a very meager diet because food is scarce deep in a cave.

At the appointed time and place we met three persons from the Cincinnati Zoo. They were Ed Maruska, the director; John Arnett, a reptile keeper; and Dick Mills who operates the educational program for that zoo. Buzz and I had invited Ray Ashton, a noted zoologist who has recently moved to Birmingham, to accompany us. Armed with dip nets, plastic bags, and head lights the six of us invaded a wild and undeveloped cave about midway between Guntersville and Huntsville.

Just getting into the cave is a chore that normal folks would avoid. We slipped through a hole in the earth about two feet in diameter, then crept through deep mud for about fifty yards as daylight disappeared behind us. Next there is a steep dropoff where we used my rappelling rope to make our descent easier. After climbing down some fifty feet deeper into the earth, we reached a passage where the going was relatively easy for the next mile or so. There were occasional breakdowns with rock to climb over and some places where crawling was necessary but generally we were getting deeper by normal walking.

On the way we collected a small series of tiny cave beetles for Ed. I was glad to let him have all of them as I already have that species in my beetle collection. Finally, we arrived at a

1

huge breakdown room where massive limestone boulders are tumbled about helter-skelter. Movement through this area is quite hazardous and we lost one collecting net which fell into a deep crevice never to be retrieved. The most frustrating thing about this big room is the fact that numerous passages lead away from it in different directions and at different levels. After some confusion we found the small passage leading downward to the underground stream. Then the fun started.

We spent a couple of hours wading around in the very cold water carefully turning stones on the bottom of the stream. The little salamanders are hard to find, hard to see, and hard to catch but at last we had five of them in plastic collecting bags with a little of the cave water.

As we started back out I carried a large plastic bag filled with cave water into which they would be put when we got back to the cars. But getting back to the cars was no easy trick. First, we had to get into the right passage to get out. The confusing nature of that big breakdown room is beyond description so we hiked down several wrong passages. When we at last got onto the right passage we had to do in reverse what we did coming in. But this time we were loaded with heavy bags of water and our climb was up instead of down.

Some six hours after entering the cave we emerged into a rainstorm covered with sticky cave mud. But everyone was happy because we got what we went after. The next time we offer to lead Ed to a rare Alabama creature I think he will be more confident of success.

Reprinted from: BGN March 1973

SPELUNKETTES

By Harry Caver

Female cavers are no trouble at all

If one says only "Heck" in a long, difficult crawl.

Assistance over a ledge is considered quite chivorious

But place your hands anywhere but the obvious.

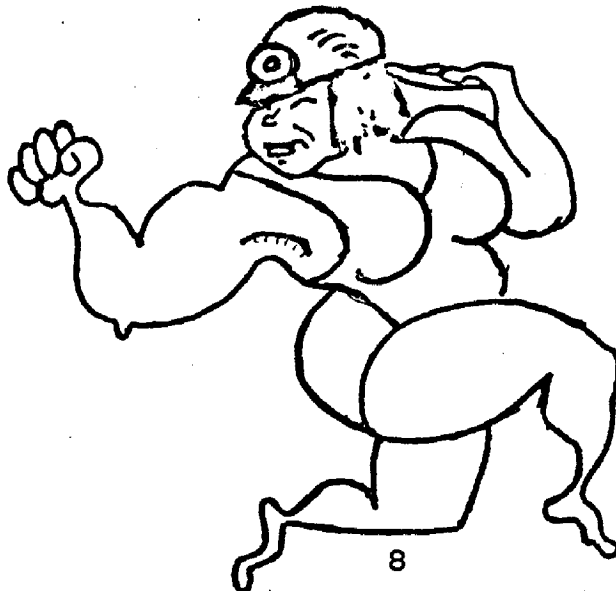
When changing clothes, walk into the woods until you're

Modestly out of sight!

Ignoring the chiggers and a potentially fatal snake bite

It is rumored, in summation,

Most male cavers support women's liberation.



P.O. #102
Birmingham, Alabama 35255

IF BOX IS MARKED, THIS IS YOUR LAST ISSUE.
PLEASE PAY DUES.



Dave & Edna Caudle
Rt. 1 714 Millcreek Rd.
Warrior, Al. 35173

U.S. POSTAGE 1.40
PERMIT NO. 3907
BIRMINGHAM, AL.