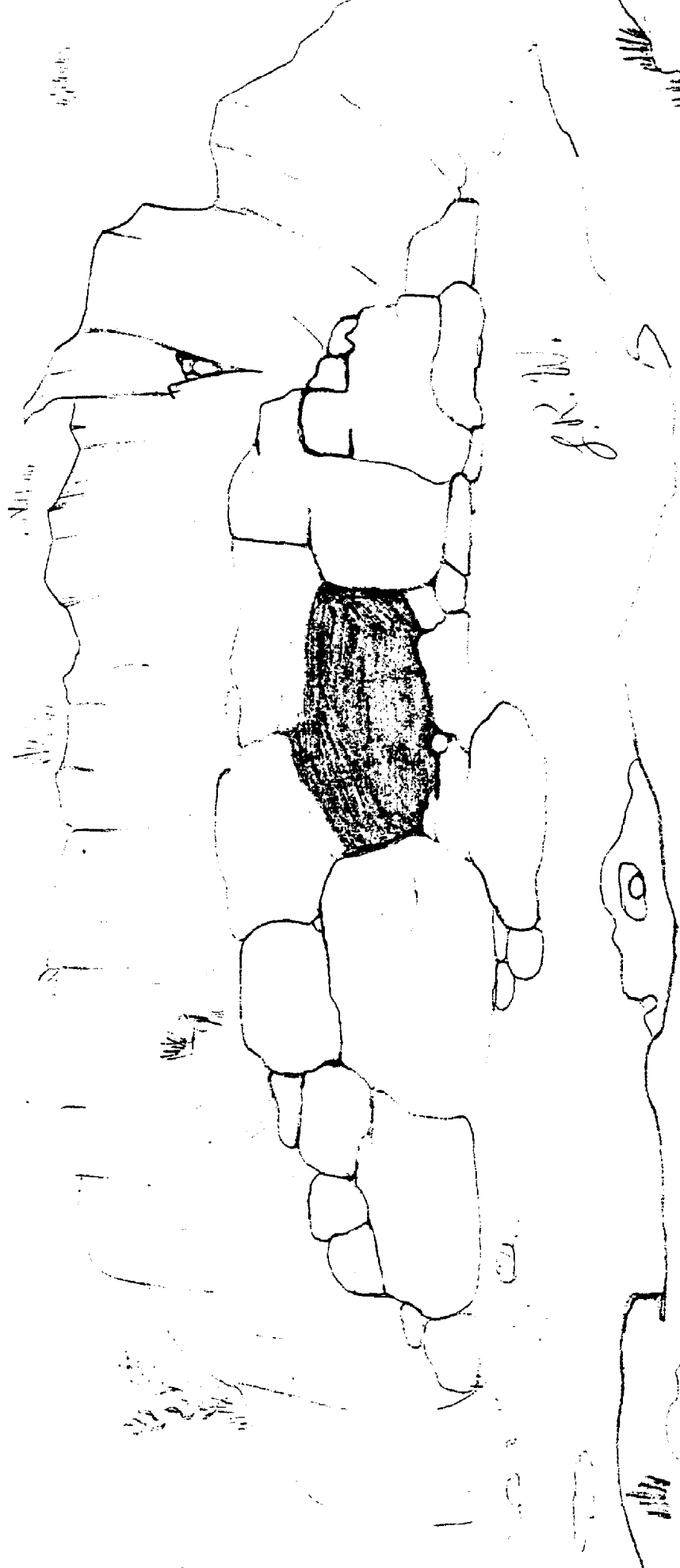
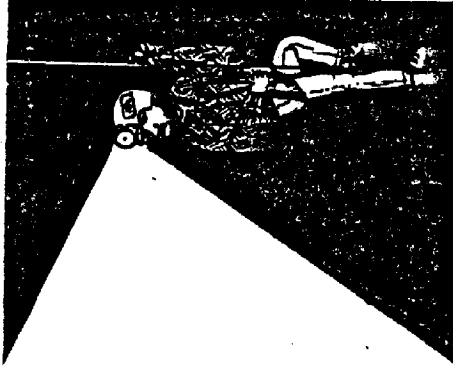


BIRMINGHAM GROTTO NEWSLETTER

NATIONAL SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

SEPT. 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.

ALL GROTTTO AND ACS MAIL SHOULD BE SENT TO OUR NEW P.O. BOX 55102

TAG FALL CAVE IN: OCT 7-9

OLD TIMER'S REUNION: SEPT 1-5

TEXAS OLD TIMER'S: SEPT 23-25

FALL MVOR: OCT 7-9

GROTTTO TRIP:

Minutes of August 1, 1983

The meeting was called to order by Mike McEachern. Two visitors were present; Joe Duncan and Everett Pagby. They were welcomed. Approximately 30 people attended the meeting.

Edna Caudle gave the treasurer's report. She reports \$282.00 in the grotto checking account and \$711.96 in savings.

Old Business:

Dave Caudle got a verbal thanks from the owner of Bryant Mountain Cave for the cave clean-up trip.

There was no new business.

Trip Reports:

Jay Clark reported on a trip to Doodlebug Cave in which his brand new 600' Bluewater rope was hacked in two by a falling rock. A rock fell app. 100' and landed on his rope where it went over a ledge. This caused a severe rip to the core of the rope.

Tom Chamblee reported on the grotto trip to Cave Springs Cave. This cave is now gated by the feds. due to the gray bats that live there. So the trip went to Herring Cave instead.

Milo reported on a rode tour of Saint Clair County. He reports lots of limestone and potential for new caves to be found.

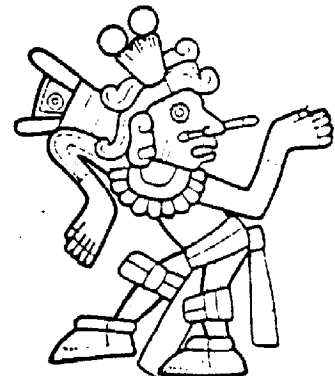
Grotto Trip:

The August trip will be to Limrock Cave led by Margaret Ray. The trip leaves the Krystal in Tarrant at 7:00 AM on Sunday August 21.

Program: Jay showed slides of Limrock Cave.

Nancy Boice

QUETZALCOATL



TRIP REPORTS By Lee Stubbs

Grotto Vertical Session: Pipe Side Pit and Stephens Gap, Jackson Co.
Sat. May 28, 1983

Trip Leader: Jay Clark

Assistants: Walter Plunket, Mike McEachern, Lee Stubbs

Participants: Margaret Ray, Frank Ray, Eric

After a discussion on equipment and rigging everyone dropped Pipeside Pit (app. 30-40 ft) and climbed out without difficulty or incident. The group then proceeded up the hill to Stephens Gap, a beautiful waterfall pit with a horizontal entrance and well. Everyone repelled down and exited the horizontal entrance. Later that afternoon we looked for Troupe Point Cave, a very pretty 50' pit, but we were unable to locate it.

Tumbling Rock Cave, Jackson Co.

Sun. May 29, 1983

Participants: Dottie Alexander, Alfred Smith, David Howard, Lee Stubbs

If you haven't seen Tumbling Rock don't wait seven years like I did, see it soon. Tumbling Rock is a large cave. With 1.7 miles of passage, huge rooms (some several hundred feet in length and height), mountains of breakdown, and large beautiful formations; it is worth the \$2.00 charged to gain entry into the cave. The most difficult aspect of a trip into TR is negotiating a good bit of breakdown, and that is not too hard, but should be done with care. There are a few easy crawls and a lot of easy walking passage. A through trip shouldn't take over 5 to 6 hours. So go spend one enjoyable afternoon in an impressive cave.

Fern Cave, Jackson Co.

Sat. June 11, 1983

Participants: Jay Clark, Walter Plunkett, Mike McEachern, Sam McGill, John Hathaway, Lee Stubbs

The primary objective of the trip was to yo-yo the Surprise Pit. Entering the entrance number 3 and climbing down to the stream level we entered the stream and followed it about 400' to the Waiting Room where we belayed our trip leader out onto the ledge, after the ledge was rigged we all got onto a huge chock stone (about the size of a small house trailer) and awaited our turn to descend the pit. Due to the immensity of the pit the light from our lamps was swallowed up by the darkness making it impossible to see the walls or the floor. It was an eerie ride down and an even longer climb out.

Hellhole, Pendleton Co, W.VA.

Mon. June 27, 1983

Participants: Jeff Uhl, Tom Klein, Greg McNamara, Kevin Bruno, Lee Stubbs.

Hellhole, located in a large sink in the middle of a pasture, funnels down steeply into 3 openings. All of the openings drop 155' on to the floor of a large room, roughly 200' across and 100' in height. We visited the Bat Room, a large breakdown room off of the entrance room. We also went back to Little Hellhole, a 35-40 foot pit, located down another short passage off of the entrance room. Due to the number of people present that day, about 40-45 cavers, and the amount of objects falling down the entrance (rocks, full cans of beer, boots, etc) we exited the cave without looking at the main passage. Despite this we had a good time and saw some nice cave.

Cass Cave, Pochontas Co, W.VA.

Thur. June 30, 1983

Participants: Greg McNamara, Lee Stubbs

Cass Cave was not listed in the Convention Guide Book, but Greg had heard that it was near Cass, West Virginia in Pochontus Co. We sojourned 70 miles along fine W. VA. highways to Cass, where we immediately began to solicit information from the townfolk. There are a lot of good places to seek information, but be warned, the neighborhood beer hall isn't one of them. No one seemed to know exactly where the cave was, but we were given the general area and some rather vague instructions which enabled us to find the cave with a little luck and a lot of looking. Typical of W. VA. caves we were in a stream within the first 5 min of entering the cave. This continues on untill we reached the top of a waterfall that fell into the Big Room. The Big Room was about 100' in height and 900' in length becoming increasingly more decorated the further back we went, at the very end of this room it was so heavily decorated we could hardly move without breaking a formation. At this point we turned around and exited the cave.

Harmons Waterfall Cave, Randolph Co. W. VA.

Fri. July 1, 1983

Participants: Tom Lance, Alice Lance, Shari Lydy, Lee Stubbs

One of the longest caves in east-central W. VA. with about 2 miles of passage. The passage was mostly narrow canyon with water in the lower cave. If you like tight places, you'll like this cave.

School House Cave, Pendleton Co, W. VA.

Sat June 2, 1983

Participants: Kirk McGregor, Brian Judge, Greg Jordan, Martin Peloquin, Jim Hodson, Sue Loveless, 6 others, Lee Stubbs

Time and space prevent me from putting down all the details of this trip, but I will say three things about Schoolhouse. Big, beautiful, and nearly constant exposure. There are two books that you can check out from the library with articles on Schoolhouse. They are Depth of the Earth, and Celebrated American Caves. Both can give you plenty of details about the cave. Depths of the Earth recounts the original exploration in the early '40's.

Editor's Note: Sounds like Lee has done some interesting caving in the last couple of months. Thanks for the report. Anybody else? The editor's encourage everyone to write up your exciting caving trips. We will gladly put them in the News. Most of our readers say they prefer to read trip reports over articles. So everyone get busy and write up your trips!

Cave drawings mystify experts

United Press International

TOKYO — A mystery that might be dubbed "The Case of the Juvenile Cavemen" has grown up around the recent discovery of a cryptic set of cave drawings in southwestern Japan.

The mystery concerns whether the marks on a cave wall in the Oita district of the southernmost Japanese main island of Kyushu, about 500 miles southwest of Tokyo, are the work of Stone Age artists or the scribbles of neighboring children.

Discovery of the "cave paintings" was first reported last week by an excavation team led by Mitsuo Kagawa, an archeology professor at Beppu University.

The team speculated the drawings could be 10,000 to 13,000 years old because some of the black marks seemed to depict a horned deer that disappeared from Japan over 10,000 years ago.

Earlier discoveries of neolithic pottery in the cave seemed to substantiate the claim and the team has been taking infrared pictures of the drawings in an attempt to determine their age.

Several archeologists have expressed doubt about the claim, however, because some of the cryptic marks resemble Chinese characters and residents have told reporters the mountaintop cave is a favorite playground for local children. Chinese characters have been used in Japan for about 1,200 years.

One resident, Itsuro Goto, 32, came forward after the find and told reporters he often wandered into the caves near his home as a child and remembered scribbling on the walls with charcoal.

Reporters who viewed the marks said two of the "drawings" can be read as Japanese characters representing the name, "Ichiro."

GROSS-SKELTON CAVE FLOAT TRIP BY TOM CHAMBLEE

May 16, 1983

This past Saturday morning, I met with Gary Barnes, three of his associates (one from India, one from Cleveland, and one local), Valerie and Dave Howell, myself and my wife's cousin, Edward Harris, for a very memorable speleological endeavor.

Parking Gary's van at the lake near the Skelton entrance, we proceeded to ascend Gunter Mountain to Key Basin and the Gross entrance 1 1/2 miles away. Upon entering Gross we proceeded down an arching, clean washed alluvial conduit of moderate cross sectional area. Soon one encounters two 9' drops parallel and entering a common passage below. The character of the passage changes to high, 4' to 5' wide clean borehole which leads one down to the brink of a 13' drop into a sizeable room and lake (the head of the main stream passage beyond). The area is solution sculptured, dark gray, massive bedded limestone with a hint of the contrastural beauty further along. Just past this point, is the location where I observed numerous, luminous organisms over a large section of the ceiling and walls. Not too far distant is the first large chamber, beautifully adorned with a massive stand of tiered stalagmites and numerous other sundry close grouped speleothems. On the left (proceeding d/s) wall of this room hangs tons of large, well cemented alluvial boulder conglomerate. The present stream has undercut this fossil bed and left it suspended high above present creek level.

Passing beneath a beautifully exposed erosion remant flowstone, we continue to wade the creek over large, rounded either black magnesian or tan sandstone boulders. A little farther along, I spy a major talus zone tempting me to depart from the crew and ascend it's precipitous slopes. Upon doing so, I find numerous 6' to 8' tall, toothpick stalagmites amongst other sundry forms of secondary deposition. This "talus room" is very large and the ceiling probably over 100' in elevation above the stream! After descending this talus mountain, I enter a chest deep pool and climb out by way of a huge active flowstone which engulfs the entire cross-section of the passage at this point. Atop this flowstone is a striking forest of large "totem pole" and "Christmas tree" stalagmites above which hangs all manner of stalactites. Not too much further along, the nature of the passage changes to a square shaped borehole subway, clean, scalloped and adorned with snow-white onyx flows of breath taking appearance. Through this section are a couple of almost chest deep pools to negotiate; quite refreshing! In the middle of the alluvial boulder bed, just before entering "the subway", I rejoined my crew waiting around a gorgeous column stalagmite mass smack in the middle of the stream's channel.

After leaving "the subway", I rejoined my crew waiting around a gorgeous column stalagmite mass smack in the middle of the stream's channel. After leaving "the subway" we are faced by a massive, red-orange active flowstone covered by forests of tall stalagmite and overhung by 7' to 8' long stalactites, rimstone pools, soda straws everywhere! This is in the upstream portion of a passage section 300' long X 75' to 100' wide X 18' to 45' high, the downstream portion's walls covered by bright orange calcite flow against dark gray, clean walls. The stream gradient is dropping sharply through this zone.

Leaving here we proceed beneath suspended, multi-colored and variegated flowstone into the chilling depths of a sizeable lake beyond. I have only crossed this body of water one time afoot during my many visits to the cave. This time we all walked through only chest deep! Beyond this lake, the passage opens into a large canyon 40' to 60' high and is one of the most beautifully adorned areas in the cavern. In the ceiling hang profusions of multi-colored soda-straw stalactites; the walls are drenched in toothpick stalagmites and flows of fantastic coloration (bright orange, tan, pink, white, navygray, chocolate brown). One could spend hours just in this section. A little further along, we view massive talus mountains in the enormous hall of the Integration Formation. The ceiling above the creek must rise 100' to the gaping avenue above. Once on top one can either travel up or downstream along this 1300' long avenue. Width in the avenue varies from 60' to 135' wide and height above top of talus is 12' to 20' high. The avenue's physical appearance resembles a combination of Mammoth and Tumbling Rock Caves. In the downstream end stands the Integration Formation, a fat balloon-like stalagmite half magnesian black and half snow-white, perfectly divided!

Passing across a monolithic flowstone of giant proportions, across a large field of rimstone dams, I spy a breathtaking stand of snow-white, clear pink 6' to 7' long stalactites above an impressive row of perfectly proportioned, evenly tiered totem stalagmites (also clear pink and snow-white!) I could have stayed there forever! This avenue makes the trip truly memorable indeed.

Rejoining the crew back at the creek, we proceed d/s into the deepest water in the cavern beneath suspended flowstone of substantial proportions. Having already donned our flotation apparatus (life jackets and one Pizza Hut beach ball under Edward Harris' jacket), we commence with operation "swim" across this quite deep body of water. Cold, refreshing and just like winter, sure is hard to imagine the hot, sultry air outdoors!

Once out of the lake, we proceed down masses of alluvial boulders by way of what is now a smooth, arching, elliptical tube of moderate cross-section. What seemed to be 2000 linear feet lead us out the discharge entrance known as Skelton Cave at the base of a lovely moss covered cliff in a forest of very tall, straight tulip poplar trees. This cave system is totally unmarked, unlitteed or damaged in anyway and stands out in my mind as one of the most beautiful around!

NOTICE!!

The Federal Agency Liaison Committee has been abolished and its function transferred to the NSS Conservation Committee. The "Trout Pocks Cave Committee" will be known as the "John Guilday Cave Preserve Management Committee" in the future.

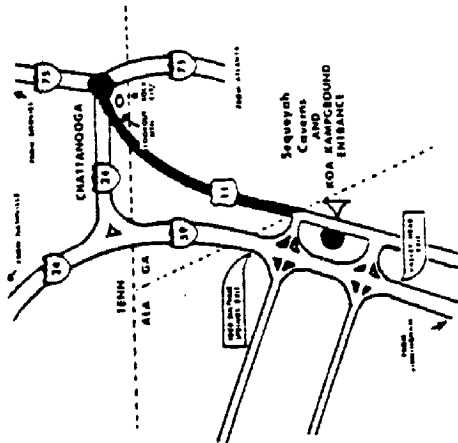
Below is a list of the members of the NSS Nominating Committee. Members who wish to be a candidate in the 1984 election of NSS Directors or Officers should contact the Chairman of the NSS Nominating Committee (Vance Nelson) or one of its members no later than 1 October 1983.

Vance Nelson, Chairman, 1942 Lombardy Dr., La Canada, CA 91011
Larry Adams, 265 Lisa Lane, Nashville, TN 37210
Jay Jorden, 6222 Kenwood Ave., Dallas, TX 75214
Evelyn Bradshaw, 1732 Byron St., Alexandria, VA 22303

An ad hoc committee has been created to develop a new method for electing NSS Directors in which four Directors will be elected from specific geographical regions and the remaining eight Directors will be elected from at Large (the present method). The chairman of the Committee is Bob Ehr and the members of the committee include Ric Day, Bill Mixon, and Doug Medville. Those Society members who wish to suggest ways of implementing geographical representation on the BOG should contact one of the committee members. Their addresses are as follows:

Bob Ehr, Chairman, 1226 Alamo Way, Pittsburg, CA 94565
Ric Day, 4414 E. Burns, Tucson, AZ 85711
Bill Mixon, 7413 Grover Ave., Austin, TX 78757
Doug Medville, 11762 Indian Ridge Rd., Reston, VA 22091

6th ANNUAL T.A.G. FALL CAVE-IN OCT. 7, 8, 9 SEQUOYAH CAVERNS VALLEY HEAD, ALA.



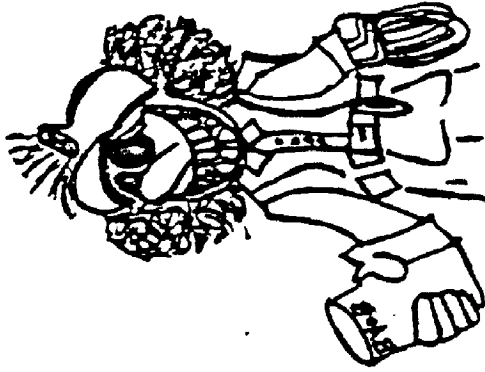
Bluegrass Band

Bonfire

Guided Trips

Door Prizes

Speleo Olympics



Equipment
Suppliers

SEND PRE-REGISTRATION TO:

PATRICIA WALDRIP 1655 MCKENDREE RD. LAWRENCEVILLE, GA. 30245

\$5.00 PER PERSON UNDER 12 FREE

BANQUET \$4.00 UNDER 12 \$3.00

BY SEPT. 27

Sponsored by
Dogwood
Groto City

Saturday - October 29th

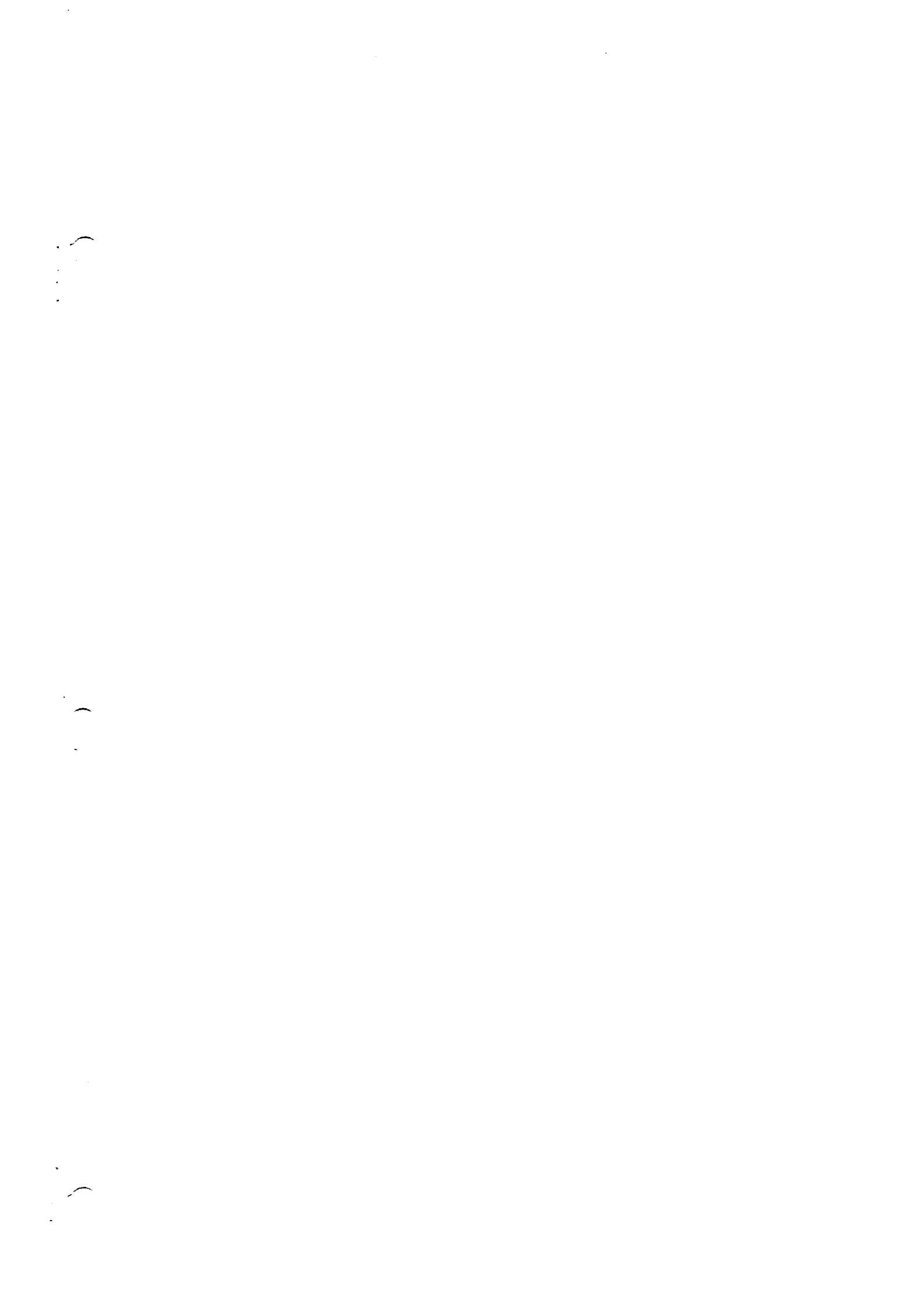
At

The Attaways 'Haunted' House

A Halloween Celebration

Starting About "dark-thirty" - by 0

{ Costumes are Mandatory }



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