



BGN Calendar

Details at Grotto meetings, on Grotto egroup, & on Facebook

Dec 15	Cumberland Caverns Christmas Party, McMinnville, TN. Email for details: Nicole@cumberlandcaverns.com
Jan 7	Grotto Meeting, 7pm, Rojo side room, 2921 Highland Ave.
May 2-4, 2025	SERA Cave Carnival, East Fork Stables Campground, Mena, AR, Hosted by East TN Grotto

Birmingham Grotto Officers

President

David McRae NSS 51358
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Vice-President

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Secretary

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Treasurer & Member List

Lee Abts, NSS 70690
treasurer@bhamgrotto.org

Immediate Past President

(Executive Committee Member)
Tawnya Abts NSS 70101

On the cover...

Belinda Hyatt descending, Nov '24 Moses Tomb Camp-Out

See article on p. 72
(Photo by Van Coffey)

Other Supporters

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Corrections to the posted version accepted thru the end of this month-Eds.

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Grotto Equipment Wranglers

David McRae and Jeff Harrod



Jingle Bats
Jingle Bats
Jingle all the waaay

Birmingham Grotto Online!

Find us on:

Members eGroup {https://groups.google.com/#forum/bham_grotto}
Facebook {<https://www.facebook.com/groups/150556684966936/>}
CaveChat {<http://www.forums.caves.org/viewforum.php?f=47>}

or

www.bhamgrotto.org

Disclaimer

Caving trips are led by volunteers. No Grotto committee reviews any trip leader's 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 approximately 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. The Birmingham Grotto will exchange publications with other NSS Grottos. Exchange newsletters should be emailed to editor@bhamgrotto.org or mailed to:

Birmingham Grotto

P.O. Box 59607

Birmingham, AL 35259

Articles, trip reports, graphics, poetry, and any other speleo-related materials are welcome. **Email submissions to: editor@bhamgrotto.org** or contact us for other options. **The deadline for publication is 2 weeks before the next Grotto meeting;** however, the Newsletter is limited to 8 pages per month and submitted material may be held for future issues. 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. A Lifetime membership is currently available for \$250. Newsletter subscription rate is \$15.00 per year. See PayPal link on the Grotto website (bhamgrotto.org)

More about Caves and Caving National Speleological Society

The Birmingham Grotto recommends that all Grotto members join our parent organization. More info can be found at <http://www.caves.org/>

Southeastern Cave Conservancy, Inc.

The SCCi is a wonderful organization led by cavers for cavers, which purchases and protects caves with reasonable management. Learn more at <http://www.scci.org/>

Prefer Paperless?

Grotto Newsletter e-subscriptions are now available on request. Just let the Treasurer and Editors know, confirm

Birmingham Grotto Meeting Minutes

The November 2024 live meeting of the Birmingham Grotto was called to order by President Dave McRae at 7:04 PM.

New Members

1. Caleb (Last Name)
2. James Hill

Announcements

1. The weekend of November 16th (Friday and Saturday Night) for Moses Tomb and Foxhole.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer, Lee Abts, reported on Grotto account activities since the last meeting:

Beginning Balance: \$9,785.15

Income: \$0.00

Danielle Jones donation: \$10.71

Dues: \$124.22

Gary Barnes dues: \$15.00

Howells dues: \$20.00

Kris Baldwin dues: \$15.00

Gentry Patterson dues: \$15.00

Judy Ranelli dues: \$15.00

Caitlin Green dues: \$14.21

Martha and Hazard Mills dues: \$19.11

Total Income: \$124.22

Expenses:

Total Expenses: \$0.00

Ending Balance: \$9,909.37

Outstanding Debts:

Outstanding checks and commitments*

Total of outstanding items: \$0.00

**Total balance taking into account above:
\$9,909.37**

New Business

- A discussion was had and tabled for the EC board to decide on changing the procedures regarding an officer responsibility change: The president will oversee the programs for monthly meetings, and the vice president will oversee monthly trips.
- A motion of the Bham Grotto to donate Dirty Dave \$300 dollars towards beverages at the TAG event has been passed.
- A motion to donate \$1000 to the SCCI Cave Acquisition \$1000 to the NSS Cave Acquisition fund has been passed.

River Alliance has been approved.

- A motion to donate \$100 to the Black Warrior River Keeper has been approved.
- A motion to donate \$100 to the Huntsville Cave Rescue Unit has been approved.

Old Business

- Last call for t-shirts. The order will be placed the weekend of November 9th.
- We're still trying to get the steel for the Graves Gate. Once all materials are delivered, we will be hosting a workday in December (Potentially the second or third weekend of December).
- December are officer elections and our Christmas party. Start gauging if you are interested in running for an officer position. Also, we'll have dirty Santa at the party (\$20 gifts).

Trip Reports

1. Caleb and James Hill

- a. Trip to Anderson
- b. Trip to Kennamer

2. Tawnya Yates

- a. Trip to Sloans Valley with Gary Barnes and Mitch Mitchell

3. Van Coffey

- a. Trip to Off limits pit with Kelley Franklin, Shane Kelseu and Josh Johnson
- b. Trip to Kings Spring
- c. Trip to Jess Elliot
- d. Trip to Iron Hoop with Katie Mueller, Amber Jackson and James Lavigne
- e. Trip to Iron Hoop with Kelley Franklin
- f. Trip to Starline cave with Katie Muller and Lee Abts

4. Bradley Jones

- a. Led trip to Cherry Hollow

5. Amanda Bridges-Dunn

- a. Trip to Cooks pit w/ Vann Coffey
- b. Trip to Green Tree w/ Vann Coffey
- c. Led trip to Devinator

6. Lee Abts

- a. Trip to Iron Hoop led by Van Coffey and Kelley Franklin with TPH, Kevin Giles, Kris Baldwin, Katie Muller and Amber Yeakel
- b. Trip to Limrock led by Lee

Next Grotto Trip

Moses Tomb the weekend of November 16th (Vertical) (Campout Friday and Saturday).

Program

Dave Caudle – Bamboo Cave Presentation

MOSES TOMB CAMP-OUT

Right: Lee Abts at entrance

Bottom, MT-chefs:
Toby Kemp, Bel Hyatt, Tawnya Yates



Above: Katie Mueller caving helmetless



Left: MT bottom of the pit

Below: MT Day After: Brooke Boyd, Bel Hyatt, Danielle and Bradley Jones



Right and far right:
MT Full Moon
Revelry





1 MILERS

Above Front Row: 1Milers, Amanda Bridges-Dunn & Lee Abts

Back row LtoR: Valerie Vinton, Mike Gentile, Dane Garreau, Alex Lambie, Jesse Bucher, & Gustavo Bautista

Dane Garreau: (this refers to the group shot – names above) Pretty exciting news this weekend... We connected two known caves (known to cavers since the 1970s) and completed the survey!!!! The two caves are now one.....and it is the newest mile long cave in Alabama!!!!!!

This is my first time ever being involved in a big connection, and now my 2nd mile+ survey project.

Thank you @adventuringlight for the photo!

Amanda Bridges-Dunn:
(this refers to the cave passage photo)

My birthday was filled with all the best things- phone calls, text messages, time with family and caving!

I know it sounds crazy, but crawling hundreds of feet through a cold, cobblestone, stream crawl on your belly is a good time! It's type 2 fun for sure, but I loved every second of it.





medievalistmatt

On a scale of medieval bat how are you feeling today?



Register here:

<https://caves.org/convention/2025-registration/>

News & Notes

by

Dave Howell

*** December is here, which is the month of GROTTO ELECTIONS. Whether you are running for office or simply voting, bear in mind the change we recently made to the responsibilities of the President and Vice-President: the Prez now not only presides over meetings, he/she now also arranges programs for the meetings; the Veep now arranges monthly Grotto trips, and of course as before acts as backup for the Prez. A better division of duties, I think. Next meeting is Tuesday, December 3 at the Derby - attend and vote!

*** Our long-ago former Grotto President and prominent TAG caver JAY CLARK requests that those caving or ridgewalking in the Big Coon Valley please take care to not stray off the Wildlife Management Area onto private land. The landowners adjacent to the WMA have been very friendly to cavers, and ask that no one come onto their land during hunting season. Please respect their wishes, and help us maintain good relations with landowners. Without their friendship and cooperation our range of caving

and ridgewalking opportunities would be severely limited, as happened in the 1980s with the rise of hunting clubs.

*** News from the cave mapping front: 2 known caves, SMELL WELL, AL 1492, and DEER SKULL CAVE, AL 981, have been connected. Prior to this connection Smell Well was mapped to 803 feet, Deer Skull to about 200 feet. This connection gives us a cave of around a mile in length. Good job, explorers/mappers! Who, as I'm sure you're wondering, consist of DANE GARREAU, ALEX LAMBIE, and our own Vice-President, AMANDA BRIDGES-DUNN. This connection resulted from Dane's pushing of a low and particularly uninviting stream crawl. And there is a lesson for anyone exploring/pushing known caves: you never know what you're going to find. This bears out what I have said for years: ridgewalking is all very well, but there are major finds to be had in caves already known to the ACS. Keep pushing!

*** Good to see JEFF HARROD back in Alabama, even if only temporarily. Jeff, as most of you know, has for the last couple of years, headed (constituted!) the Grotto's Nevada outpost. While it's nice to see the Birmingham Grotto

represented nationwide, it's especially good to welcome our wayward members back, even if they're only here for a visit. Looking forward to seeing you in the woods and/or underground, Jeff!

*** After an unseasonably warm fall so far, finally the leaves are dropping from the trees, improving visibility in the woods for RIDGEWALKING. With the passage of years and the advent of Lidar, many folks think there is little left out there to be found, but this is so wrong! New entrances, i.e. those previously unknown to the Alabama Cave Survey or the organized caving community, are still being found; it's just that big open-air pits and huge walk-in entrances are getting scarce. Also, to risk being repetitious, I have long believed that there are excellent, significant finds to be made in caves already on the ACS but not well explored or pushed, as illustrated by the Smell Well-Deer Skull connection discussed above. The finds are out there, y'all, we just have to go find them. But that's half the fun, don't you think?



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