



# The Month's Guano

November 2001

Kansas City Area Grotto

Volume 15, Issue 11

## Great Spirit Cave by Jeff Page

Date: 9/9/01

Participants: Bill Elliott, Gail ?, (Jeff City), Rich Orr, Joe Roberts, (St. Louis), Roger Brown, Bob Lerch, Joe Dom, (Columbia), Jeff Page (KC)

The purpose of this cave trip was to reward people who had aided the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) in the last three years with a tour of a very special cave. MDC Cave Biologist, Dr. Bill Elliott, sent out an invitation to those involved. The turnout was small however, presumably due to the heavy commitments of this group. Bill and his assistant Gail (I did not catch her last name) showed up with equipment to monitor temperature and humidity; also prepared to take notes on biology and the general cave conditions. Rich Orr and Bob Lerch carried sophisticated photography equipment.

Great Spirit was originally known as Maxey, then Inca during its show cave days of the 50s. Why it became Great Spirit is not known to Bill. It has been surveyed to over 10,000 feet. The entrance lies at the bottom of a very steep hill which at one time had an electric tram to transport tourists to the cave. The cave has a spectacular entrance, about 100' across. The entrance room is huge. It seems to breathe great volumes of air, since it took quite a while to reach the constant temperature zone. Most of us felt too warmly dressed for this cave which turned out to be warmer and drier than we expected. The trail from the former commercial tour is still in good shape although the wooden structures are not. We entered about 10:45 AM.

The first half of the trip was devoted to biology monitoring and noting the trash and graffiti. We moved slowly through the

cave, stopping to unpack gear and check devices already installed. Quite a few photos were taken. The cave is significant as a residence for red, gray, and Indiana bats. MDC has allocated funds to install a new gate on the entrance which should prove to be more effective than the current chain link gate. Great Spirit is a favorite of "pot hunters" who seek native American artifacts. The group worked its way through formation rooms formerly featured on the commercial tour. We found ourselves in a large room called Bat Heaven, which did not have too many bats, but did have some interesting nodule formations on the ceiling. There was quite a bit of graffiti as well. We then proceeded through narrower passage towards the northernmost end of the cave. There was one wide room along the way which had a great deal of graffiti from most of the 20th century. At the North Room, we made a hairpin turn to the south and ended up in the Bat Graveyard. This was a most curious spot as it seems that red bats go there to die. We witnessed many carcasses on the ground and some dead and barely living bats hanging from the ceiling. Bill told us this is not a known habit of red or any other species of bats. What may be the explanation, he told us, was the bats were somehow drawn too deep into the cave and were not able to find their way out. We spotted a bat hanging by one foot with its wings spread. We thought it to still be alive, but on closer inspection, it was not. Red bats use this position during the summer while hanging in trees to make themselves blend in with the leaves. Bill collected a few samples, then used his temperature and humidity equipment. A few cavers explored a lower crawling passage. We then returned to the entrance area.

**Great Spirit** (Continued on page 2)

### November 2001 Vol. 15 Issue 11

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Kansas City Area Grotto is affiliated with the National Speleological Society, The Missouri Speleological Survey, and a Founding Member of Missouri Caves & Karst Conservancy.

Meetings held every second Wednesday at 7 p.m. (**alternate site in May**), Magg Hall, behind Spencer Laboratories, Volker Blvd. & Cherry, Kansas City, Missouri. Annual Dues: \$ 15 for Full Members (3 caving trips with KCAG, nomination and vote of membership required.)

### NCRC Callout number Emergency use only

Central Region 502-564-7815. This number may be used for cave rescue emergencies in the states of, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Michigan, **Missouri**, Ohio and Wisconsin.

# UPCOMING EVENTS

**REMEMBER OHG HAS AGGreed TO LETS US CAVE WITH THEM. IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN A TRIP YOU MUST CONTACT THE TRIP LEADER.**

- November 14, 2001 **Grotto Meeting.** Meeting in MAGG Hall at 7:00 pm. After meeting to follow.
- December 8, 2001 **Grotto Christmas Dinner.** Again at the home of Rick and Kay Hines. Start at 6:30 pm. Bring a dish to pass.
- January 2002 **MSS meeting in Rolla.** Interested parties contact Jeff Page. The Grotto pays for your gas!!!!
- January 12, 2002 **Mike and Kaza tie the knot.** Congratulations!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
- January 25-27 2002 **Grotto Trip.** Amos Neal cave (certified novice level by Richard Cindric) near Jasper, AR. Copperhead Cave and/or Lost Valley trail according to weather and wishes of the group Contact Terry DeFraties 913-385-7374 or theerustbucket@aol.com
- May 18-19 2002 **Spring MVOR.** This one is being sponsored by CCC. If interested in helping give Rick Hines a call.

*(Continued from page 1)* **Great Sprit**

Bill, Gail, and Rich opted to end their trips at this point. The rest of us decided to make a push trip to the Onyx Mountain Room which Bob had visited three years earlier and highly recommended. Bob led us by memory on this western route which took us from one large room to the other, mostly by way of a small, and sometimes difficult connecting passage. We often had to search out the connectors. The Onyx Mountain Room was indeed worth the trip and those with film left in their cameras took more shots. The rock in this part of the cave tended to be very crumbly. Bringing up the rear on the return trip, I came upon Joe Dom whose foot had been wedged by a fallen rock in a crawlway. He asked me to dislodge him and as I did we both were thinking the same thing, Floyd Collins. Soon after, I was ahead of him and climbed down from a rock which seemed stable. He asked how I did that and I turned to see the same rock was about ready to give way. We exited the cave about seven that evening and were all pretty tired by then. The climb up the hill to the vehicles made me wish the tram was still operating.

All in all it was a great experience and we were pleased to see a cave which will be more restricted in the future due to it's historical and biological significance. Thank you, Bill and MDC.

Jeff Page



Bill Elliott inspects red bat (alive) in Bat Graveyard

# KCAG

## MEETING MINUTES

October 10, 2001

Meeting called to order 7:07 Pm  
Minutes accepted

### TREASURY REPORT

Paid \$180 to Rock Bridge Memorial Park for Devils ice box trip, will be reimbursed.

Collected dues from Bill

493.39

180.00

673.39

### OLD BUSINESS

Batteries

Does anyone know where they are? Please let Jeff Andrews know if you spot them!

### NEW BUSINESS

MSS Liaison needed

Volunteer needed to replace Jeff Page.

3 meetings per year/generally in Rolla

Pre meeting 9 to noon; business meeting 1 to 3 pm.

Issues common to Missouri caving community

Most grottos have a seat, good to have a presence.

Next meeting is in January of 2002.

Holiday Party

Saturday, December 8<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 PM

Rick Hines House

Bring a dish, meat will be provided.

Elections

A nominating committee will be selected in November

Crash/First Aid Kits

Need refurbishing. Will be a meeting program in Nov or Jan.

Carrol Cave

Using explosives to access cave.

CCC Sponsoring Spring MVOR May 17, 18 and 19. Date is solid, site not.

### TRIP REPORTS

MVOR

Bryon attended in Bourbon, MO  
Lonehill Onyx, Hamilton Springs  
Made good new contacts.

Peddgie

Met some moles, enjoyed herself and  
NEW YEARS CAVING TRIP IS ON IN ARKANSAS NO MATTER WHAT THE WEATHER!!

Jeff Page

Great Sprit Cave, trip put on by Bill Elliot for conservation volunteers. Previously a commercial cave, now a roost for Indiana, grays and reds. Red bats are dying at an unusual rate in one particular room, being investigated, possibly their chosen place to die. Crumbly entrance, one caver was trapped by falling rubble, Jeff will detail this trip further in a Guano.

Gary Charles

Devil's Ice box

Linda fell into the water, injuring herself and being unable to continue, they loaded her into a canoe, had her paddle and carried her across portages.

Mammoth Cave Working Weekend

First weekend of November. Fly to Nashville then drive.

See Jeff Paige for more information.

Tag

- 1 Jeff Andrews – met Gypsy underground, did Ricks Pit and Raven's Pit. Chose not to do Ellison  
Jeff had trouble coming out of Thundercave when his non-locking carabineer, which was holding his pack, got caught in his Knee ascender. Scary, but he worked it out. Also shared Sauna "Springer story."
- 2 Mike McKinney – Phenomenal experience  
Met the Gypsy cavers, profoundly wonderful vertical cavers. Knows now that 71/4 inches in the smallest passage for him. Caved with Vern in Snail shell, had a few "situations" all came out okay. Plans to block a week out PRIOR to tag, better to cave before the event.

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## UPCOMING TRIPS

### **Terry**

Novice trip. Early January. Arkansas, will probably motel it in Jasper. Details not nailed down, will be soon. See Terry if interested, should be a good one.

## **PROGRAM**

Scout Video presentation

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## MEETING AGENDA

Pass out extra copies of *Guano* to those who have not received their own copy

Approve/modify minutes of last meeting

Treasurer report

Old business

    Need volunteer for MSS liason (3 Saturday meetings/year, usually in Rolla)

New business

    Appointment of nominating committee

Trip reports

Trip announcements

Program: Part II of the “Scouting Approach to Caving” video



Group at work in Bat Graveyard

# Restoration\_Camp

Greetings,

I hope this e-mail finds you all well.

We are taking names for the November 3-4 restoration camp at **Mammoth Cave**. Work will focus on moving wood and debris from the Lake Lethe area. If the water is low enough, we may disassemble more bridge. Please contact me if you are interested in attending.

A note for those near Kentucky: During the August camp, a camera crew from KET/WKYU filmed our restoration work in progress and interviewed several volunteers. I just received word that it will air on a program called Mainstreet. I don't have the debut date handy but it should be the 3rd Friday of the October at 6:30 p.m. You may want to check your local listings.

Please forward this e-mail to your respective grottos and caving friends.

Have a great day.

Norm

--

Have fun. Keep informed and up to date. Join the Restoration Camp Group at:  
[http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Restoration\\_Camp](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Restoration_Camp)



Dead red bat hangs by one foot in Bat Graveyard



Hi All,

All of those who have dealings with Evelyn Bradshaw need to know that Evelyn has moved. Her new address is

5713 Castlebridge Rd. Apt. 226  
Fredericksburg VA 22407  
(540) 785-5361

Her email is unchanged at [ebradshw@staffnet.com](mailto:ebradshw@staffnet.com)

Keith

Keith D. Wheeland, Co-Chair NSS I/O  
2191 Mt. View Ave.  
State College, PA 16801-7214  
(814)238-2057  
[kwheeland@home.com](mailto:kwheeland@home.com)

## THE DEVIL'S ICEBOX STORY

### A Chilling First Hand Account by One Who Was There!

At 09:30 on October 26th, 12 clean dry people in 6 canoes entered Devil's Icebox. At 16:20, 12 wet muddy people in 6 canoes left the cave. In between times, they got to do some interesting things, see a few pretties, eat some rock and suck some mud. No worms but some silly frogs, good camaraderie, leisurely pace and a few giggles. Ended the evening with some Mexican food and more of that camaraderie stuff.

END OF STORY

# TAG

## October 4th, thru the 7th 2001 by Jeff Andrews

Terry DeFraties Richard Cindric Mike McKinney and I went to the 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Tennessee Alabama Georgia Fall cave in with a mission on our minds. We were going to do Ellison Cave. For those of you who do not know about Ellison or about TAG read on if you do know then you may stop because you understand. For this adventure, we knew we would need a guide. Mike and Terry enlisted a contact from NCRC, John Danyew. Mike decided to take advantage of some well-deserved time off so he left early and spent some quality time with John and his Grotto The Gypsy Underground. Richard also went early but he flew to Atlanta and then took a bus to Monteagle where Mike picked him up.

Terry and I left Tuesday night. The drive from Kansas City to South Pittsburgh Alabama. took about 9.5 hours. On the way, I could feel the excitement of this vertical adventure starting to build. The night was brisk so we took advantage of the coolness to keep ourselves awake. Driving east on I-70 we saw one of the coolest harvest moons that I have ever seen. The orange moon seemed to smile down upon us as if to say you are going to have a great trip. When we got to St. Louis the city had a fire works show just for us as we drove by. It must have been their way of saying "You are in for an awesome trip" or it could have been a Cardinals game (you choose). As the rockets filled the air, I couldn't help to feel like a child pointing each explosion out to Terry as we drove by. We arrived at South Pittsburgh at about 4 am. Noticing that there was no movement around the camp we decided to sleep in the van for a couple of hours. When we woke Mike introduced us to the most wonderful band of Gypsies that I have ever met.

The Gypsy Underground Grotto is an e-grotto. Their members are from all over the country and their meetings are held over the Internet through e-mails. They are an NSS recognized grotto and they get together and cave whenever and wherever they can. The members we met were Kristen, Randy E.T, Hank, Earl, Lannis, John and Dan.

After a quick breakfast, The Gypsies and their new

friends decided to do some warm up pits called Rick's Pits and Raven's Pit. Rick's Pits are three pits about a half-mile up a mountain outside of South Pittsburgh. The pits are 60, 90, and 140 feet in depth. The deepest looked to have some additional cave but access was blocked. Richard and Terry rigged the 90-foot hole and then Richard made the drop. After he came back up he asked me if I was ready. I said I was and got ready to drop the pit. I found my way to the bottom and took a quick look around. I then decide to make the climb up. After making it to the top and taking a short break I got ready to drop the 145-foot pit. This was going to be the longest single drop that I have done to date. As the rope fed through my rack and I watched the opening grow smaller I thought "what am I doing I have to climb back out of this". The next thing I knew there I was on the bottom. Mike was already there snapping pictures of what ever he could find. We spoke a few words about what I do not remember and then Mike proceeded to climb back up the rope. Watching him ascend I could not help to think my turn was coming. A few minutes later I got ready to start my climb. As I meandered up the rope climbing then resting and checking out the cave I kept telling myself "just a few more feet". When I got to the top and hoisted myself over the lip I couldn't help noticing that I was alone. I looked around and didn't see any of the group. At first I thought "damn I didn't think I took that long" As I sat there and wondered where everyone went, I took a long swig off my water bottle looked around and decided it must be up to me to derig. Just then Earl and Lannis came along. I asked them where everyone else was. Just as they were telling me where to go Mike and Vern came out from behind the hill laughing and asking me what was going through my mind when I found myself alone. My only thought at the time was I needed to climb faster.

Thursday was to be the day of the big climb. Ellison is located in Georgia about three quarters the way up Pigeon Mountain. The hike to the cave is about a one-hour or 1000 vertical feet from the parking lot/

TAG (Continued on page 7)

(Continued from page 6) TAG

campground. The hike itself is pretty uneventful. The trail is well marked and the view was breath taking or maybe it was the hike that was breath taking it is so hard to remember which. OK BOTH were breathe taking. We reached the opening of the cave and after making one last rope check we were on our way. The opening is a short climb down of about 10 feet. The first drop is about 1000 feet into the cave. The walk to the warm up drop as it is called on the map is nice flat walking passage. The warm up drop is about 125 feet from the ledge to the floor. This puts you into a room that is about 200 feet from floor to ceiling and about 80 feet across. As you are on rappel if you look to your right you see a small waterfall. From the top you can hear the constant slapping of water hitting the rocks below. Reaching the floor I made my way to the nuisance drop. This is a 50-foot climb on a pre-rigged rope. We ambled up the rope and found what we had been looking for: Fantastic Pit. To rig the pit a rope of greater than 600 feet long is needed. As all the others in our group made their way around to the far edge of the pit I stayed behind. Since I was not making the drop I felt no need to get too close to the edge. I think it had something to do with falling over the lip and the sudden stop at the bottom. But I could have been wrong. After the four super cavers dropped the pit and announced they were ready start the climb up I had Dan and John escort me back to the warm up pit so that I could ascend and wait for the others to return. When the others finally made back to the top of the warm up drop we made our way to the exit and then down to the cars. One thing to note just in case you have not heard Mike and Vern took one hour. Terry and Richard came up in 26 minutes.

Friday Mike and I decided to hang out and scope out the TAG camp and vendors village Terry went and dropped a couple of more pits. Richard went to an area called Rock City. Saturday we went to a cave with five drops. The drops ranged from 210 to 25 feet. The entrance drop was 122 feet with a waterfall. As I dropped the entrance I looked up and saw one of the prettiest waterfalls I have ever seen. As I descended into the mist I heard someone yell stop. Feeling cold heavy drops of water bouncing off my helmet and back I yelled down what's wrong. Nothing I want to take a picture was the reply. My return

was a couple of expletives and I was soon off rope. So no picture of me.

The passage wound around a stream passage and came to the next drop. To get to the lip I would need to chimney over a 6-foot hole in the floor. The hole was where the water from the stream emptied into the lower passage. I wasn't quit able to see how to get across until Randy came up and showed me how. After navigating the 25 feet to the floor, I had to do a battery change in my new Space Shot light made by Black Diamond. I have found the light to work extremely well in cave. The single led will put out enough light to see to the bottom of a pack or to see my feet when walking or climbing.

About the time I got the batteries changed, Dan came out of the continuing passage and announced that he was making his exit. He also said that the passage would be too tight of a squeeze for me. I decided that maybe this would be a good time for me to make my exit. I followed Dan up to the entrance climb. After Dan made his way out, I got on rope. About sixty feet above the floor, I had a small problem. My knee ascender found its way into a non-locking carabiner. This biner was holding my pack to my belay loop. Now here I am with my knee stuck to my crotch and to top this whole situation off I was now stuck in the waterfall. As I tried not to panic, I talked my way through my problem and freed my knee ascender. I was now wet cold and tired with about fifty feet of climb left. Slowly, I made my way out of the waterfall and up to the lip. After hoisting myself out and putting the rope back on the rope pad, I yelled off rope and E.T. made her way up and out. When she was up and out we said our goodbyes to Dan and waited for the others.

When the others made to the top of the lip, we de-rigged and made our way down the mountain. After changing our clothes we went back to TAG for the big party and bonfire. I spent some quality time in the TAG SPA and finally found my way back to camp around 3 am. The next morning Terry, Richard and I loaded up the van and made our way back to Kansas City.

Kansas City Area Grotto  
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Your  
Mailing  
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Goes  
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## Editor's Corner

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<http://members.tripod.com/~kcagrotto/>

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