



The Month's Guano

February 2002

Kansas City Area Grotto

Volume 16, Issue 2



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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 AGGREGATED TO LETS US CAVE WITH THEM. IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN A TRIP YOU MUST CONTACT THE TRIP LEADER.

- February 23-24, 2002 **Orientation to Cave Rescue**, Carter Caves, Kentucky. Cost: \$30. Contact: Don Kemper de.kemper@worldnet.att.net. Put Carter Caves in subject line or call (606) 836-4165. <http://www.caves.org/io/ncrc-cr/schedule.html>
- March 2002 **Devil's Icebox Trip**. This trip is limited in size. Those not able to be on the last trip will have priority seating for this trip. See article in January *Guano* for details.
- March 9-10, 2002 **Mammoth Cave Restoration Project**. See Article in the December 2001 *Guano* for details Go to <http://oldsci.eiu.edu/physics/len/mammoth/mcrp0.html> for More information
- April 6-8, 2002 **Digital Photography Trip**. Little Bear and Four Mile Caves. See Richard Cindric for details. cindric@swbell.net. (913) 262-2006.
- April 5-7, 2002 Scout Trip. Date is firm but nothing else is. This is a closed trip and
- May 4-5, 2002 **Mammoth Cave Restoration Project** See Article in the December 2001 *Guano* for details Go to <http://oldsci.eiu.edu/physics/len/mammoth/mcrp0.html> for More information
- May 18-19, 2002 **Spring MVOR**. This one is being sponsored by CCC. If interested in helping give Rick Hines a call. <http://www.mvor.org/>
- August 4-10, 2002 **Mammoth Cave Restoration Project** See Article in the December 2001 *Guano* for details Go to <http://oldsci.eiu.edu/physics/len/mammoth/mcrp0.html> for More information
- November 2-3, 2002 **Mammoth Cave Restoration Project** See Article in the December 2001 *Guano* for details Go to <http://oldsci.eiu.edu/physics/len/mammoth/mcrp0.html> for More information.



Cavers and what we mean to each other

Kate Johnson By Mike McKinney NSS 39699

Last December a good friend & caver passed away after a long battle with Cancer. Since hearing this news I've re-lived many memorable memories of Kate. This has brought both joy and sadness to me. Many of my favorite caving stories and memories have Kate in them. Some of you may not have gotten to know Kate very well, so let me share a bit about her with you.

In the beginning:

When I came to Kansas City in 1989 I met a friend who brought me to a KCAG meeting. Kate was there. The Grotto was very different then. I was surprised to see an "older" woman in the caving club. Well, we became riding-buddies, going to many "Bruegger" trips together. Traveling with someone you get to know a lot about them, we became very good friends. We would be ride-buddies for a long time.

In the middle:

Kate made me laugh all the time...constantly surprising me. This "older" woman knew so much about so many things...she had started caving through a caving class with Dr. Ashley, a Cave Biologist, at MU. They became friends, and she accompanied him on many trips and often participated in scientific data collection. Kate was no wimp when it came to trips either.

Kate was on the infamous Cindric vertical trip where we spent the night lost in the very wet Arkansas forest. Kate and I were the only ones who didn't

sleep at all that night. At one point every one was asleep. Kate and I huddled together under a space blanket to get warm for a while. While we were certainly in a bad situation that night, we agreed that we were having the time of our lives.

Always a good sport:

After caving all day, sitting by a warm campfire on a cool night, Kate fell asleep in her chair (who hasn't?). Kate, being a photojournalist, had taken many pictures, some of them a tad embarrassing, of most of us over the years. So, when a small line of drool began to fall from her lips to the ground, a picture was mandatory...and it was posted in the guano. The drool didn't show, so Bob Younger had to "enhance" it a bit...but Kate laughed louder than anyone.

In the End:

Kate has made an enduring mark on the caving community. As editor of the Guano, KCAG had a talented and skilled professional journalist. At one point there was discussion about changing the name of our newsletter since it was fast becoming a quality newsletter. Kate suggested that if we wanted to have more credibility, maybe we shouldn't call our newsletter "guano" since it was being sent to libraries and professional organizations, but the name stayed. Kate also became a contributing editor to the MCKC magazine. Accompanying Dr. Ashley, she assisted in data collection and other scientific contributions. As a photojournalist she left memories captured on film. As a caver she helped on many novice trips, and was always a resource. As a friend, she was always positive and uplifting.

You might be best friends one year,
pretty good friends the next year,
don't talk that often the next year,
and don't want to talk at all the year after that.
So, I just wanted to say,
even if I never talk to you again in my life,
you are special to me and you have made a difference
in my life,
I look up to you, respect you, and truly cherish you.
Send this to all your friends,
no matter how often you talk,

or how close you are,
and send it to the person who sent it to you.
Let old friends know you haven't forgotten them,
and tell new friends you never will.
Remember, everyone needs a friend,
someday you might feel like you have NO FRIENDS
at all,
just remember this and take comfort in knowing
somebody out there cares about you and always will

‘Just the facts, Ma’am.’ by Richard Cindric

The weekend of 1/26/02 was billed as a “novice weekend”, and that was true though we only had one novice. Who showed up? Mike and Kyle, Terry and Kathy, Pam, Igor (the novice) and myself.

We went to Little Bear Cave on Friday, very near Jasper, Arkansas. It’s a long cave and we saw just a small part of it. What we did see was fairly easy with the exception of an angled crack near the entrance, which was a little sporty. I had been there twice in the past but I knew I would remember little about it because it had been so long ago – maybe 10 years.

What we saw near the end of the trip was reason enough for me to want to go back again, but with a camera. There was a large room, sloped from left to right, with loose rocks like a talus slope, and pure white stalagmites were scattered throughout it. They were about 4” to 8” in diameter and 1’ to 6’ long. Most stalagmites are wide at the base and taper to the top, but these are quite cylindrical. They’ll look fantastic when they’re backlit with slaved flashes.

About 100 feet past the room, the passage becomes flat, is about 75’ wide and 20’ tall, and has a 16” tall rimstone dam that goes from wall to wall. The upstream side of the dam is full of clay, and water hasn’t gone over it for a millennium or so because a parallel passage has redirected the stream. We continued on and climbed down to the stream, to where water was shooting out of a wall (it had rained heavily a few days before then). There’s a cascade of flowstone below it that’s truly exceptional.

On Friday, all of the group but myself went to Copperhead, Skull, then Amos Neal Caves. I went ridgewalking with Mark Bokun and Chuck Bitting, who both live nearby. We walked along a creek on the Buffalo River, south of Ponca. The first cave was one that Mark had heard reports of, and he had previously seen the entrance. A couple who owns the property had parked a semi-trailer full of goods nearby, to tide them through the catastrophe that everyone knew would come after 1/1/00. Mark decided

to call it Y2 Cave.

That cave is a nasty sucker. It has only about 100’ of horizontal passage but it took us at least three hours to reach the end and return, because it starts out with a 20’ pit with loose sandstone, ends in a 60’ pit, and requires up and down free climbing over lots of sharp and loose rocks between the pits. We were joking (kinda’) about what the cause of death would be if we fell; the landing, the loose rocks that would fall on us, or the evisceration we’d suffer from the razor sharp rocks. I wished I wore a cup.

The ridgewalking was very successful if you gauge that by the number of caves we found and entered. We went in about ten new caves in a short time. None of them turned out to be much, but it was fun to get excited about being the first to enter a batch of caves. We had to dig out most of them so that’s why I know we were first. It also helped that the walking conditions were perfect; mid-60s, clear sky, no leaf vegetation, no ticks, no mosquitoes, no copperheads.

The McKinney’s, Kathy and Terry left for the CCC meeting on Sunday but Pam, Igor and I did not. We went to Lost Valley, which is a nature trail south of Ponca. It has a tunnel that is actually a cave that collapsed on either end, a huge shelter cave (Cob Cave – very impressive), and a bona fide cave – Eden Falls Cave. Eden Falls Cave is about 300’ long. There is a 25’ dome at the end with a waterfall of the same height. The water made a helluva racket so I was happy that I just happened to have ear plugs in my pocket. The air movement caused by the falling water was also impressive ... and cold.

I have been to Lost Valley many times but I never grow tired of it. Also, it’s nice to experience it through Pam and Igor’s eyes, who were seeing it for the first time.

Rock Slide in
Little Bear Cave
Trip Report
By Mike McKinney
NSS 39699
NCRC III

LITTLE BEAR CAVE: January 25, 2002

Trip Leader: Richard Cindric

Present: Richard Cindric, Terry DeFraties, Kathy Sumner, Pam Rader, Igor Shkolnik, Mike & Kyle McKinney



Figure 8 Pam Rader and Kyle McKinney

Little Bear is a gated cave said to have some spectacular photo opportunities in it. I was really looking forward to this, and brought my camera along. Also along was a friend of mine from work, named Igor; it would be his first experience caving. The cave was touted as being “sporty” and is not necessarily novice-friendly.



Figure 7 Mike McKinney Unlocking the Gate

Standing outside Richard tossed me the key to unlock the gate; I headed toward the cave. Igor said: “Mike, I think the cave is this way” and pointed to a larger hole in the rock. When I told him no, the cave is right here in this little hole...he was shocked. “I don’t think its possible,” he said. I chuckled.

We entered the cave and climbed down the crack and started looking around for the rest of the cave. We found some cool formations that were dry and dusty along the way. We worked our way back to a large room with steep slope of rock tailings and boulders.

Where the Tailings met the wall was a small opening into a passage. It was low, and went down steeply gradually getting larger. We headed through one by one and waited on the other side for everyone to re-group. When Pam and Kyle didn’t come through, I headed back to see if there was a problem, or if they had turned off into one of the side passages.

Pam had gotten in the passage, felt claustrophobic and not seeing anyone became frightened and had to back out the passage up hill. Kyle said he simply didn’t fit. I’m not sure why, but he just wasn’t able to get into the passage. So, I headed back to the group and we came up with a plan.

I was going to take Pam and Kyle out, and the rest of the group was going to look a little further in the cave, and then return, being only 30 minutes behind me. That was the plan. I headed back into the passage to meet up with Pam and Kyle. Just as I came to the final low up-slope my pack fell off of my foot where I had been dragging it. I reached back and grabbed it with my hand and pulled it up along my right shoulder. I took another move forward and I think my pack brushed the rocks on the side of the passage, and I started a landslide of rocks and boulders down onto myself in the passage. The steep mound of boulders and tailings started moving like an avalanche down onto me.

As rocks and boulders rolled at my face I turned my head, much like a man will duck when a building falls on him. I knew exactly what was happening, I didn’t move. The rocks came to a stand still. My pack had become a chock stop, stopping the rest of

the mound from completely burying me in the passage. As the sounds of rolling rocks stopped I heard Pam's voice: "What do you want us to do?" I said quickly: "DON'T MOVE!" I carefully lifted my head and surveyed my situation; I started moving rocks one by one to make an escape route, and got myself out of danger. When I pulled out my pack several large stones rolled down into the passage I had just come through.

We knocked down the rest of the unstable rocks until things seemed stable, then we cleaned out the passage so every one on the other side could get out. Having completed this we headed back towards the entrance. I knew the rest of the party should be close behind us at this point. We were back at the final climb and Kyle had just made his way up when the rest of the group joined us about 10 minutes later.

The group told me the rest of the cave is spectacular just ahead of where I separated from them to go back. I can't wait to go back and see what I missed. I'll take a good look at the rocks by that passage next time. I'm just glad things went like they did; that I didn't get buried by the land slide, that the group didn't get sealed in, that it didn't happen to my son, or perhaps Igor on his first caving experience. Having

Pam and Kyle on the end with me meant I had help if I needed it, and I'm so glad my pack served as an effective chock stop, arresting the land slide. Things could have been very different in an instant.



Figure 9 Pam Rader by one of the Large Formations in the Front of the cave

We know caving has its risks. Generally we are at a greater risk getting to and from the cave than while in the cave. The law of averages says something will eventually happen. I'll look for unstable rocks more now after this.

Digital Photography



I'm planning a mostly-photographic trip this spring. The theme will be "digital photography". Failure to own a digital camera won't exclude you from going: There will be a need for assistants and models.

I think we would go to Little Bear and Four Mile Caves on 4/6. They're very nice, horizontal (no rope work), and fairly easy. We would drop one of the nearby pits (all in Newton County, Arkansas) on 4/7.

Richard



Kiddy mix Cave By Mike McKinney NSS 39699, NCRC III

Ok, I've been bad about submitting Trip Reports! So, this year I'm going to be better about it! So, here goes:

January 4-6, 2002. PREWEDDING CAVE TRIP FOR MIKE FRALEY

Trip Leader: Mike McKinney

KIDDYMIX CAVE: January 4, 2002

Present: Jeff Page, Terry DeFraties, Jeff & Josh Andrews, Mike Jacobs, Bryon Carmoney, Mike McKinney, and of course, Mike Fraley.



Bryon working through the "Agony"

searching

for the connection to the bore hole passages we heard about but we were not successful. I'm not really wild about climbing around underneath a bunch of breakdown...just doesn't seem right.

The only trouble we had at all was at the "agony". Jeff Page became exhausted, since he was still recovering from being ill for a month before the trip. Jeff Andrews cave suit got hung up on the rocks and wouldn't let him through. I gave him a helping hand...my shoulder is still bothering me from pulling on him. On the way out Josh Andrews light was going very dim. I suggested a battery change before going into the crevice, and he said: "This isn't a very opportune place to change my batteries." I handed him my TEKKA light off my helmet and he headed on down the crack. In less than 2 minutes his head-light was completely out and he was relying on the TEKKA.



Getting ready to go in Whip-poorwill

We drove all day, went to a

prime rib/Cajun buffet dinner, and then went caving. Shortly after entering the cave we needed to climb up a vertical crevice. The narrow space convinced Mike Jacobs to turn back right away. It was a fun little climb with an area toward the top where you had to move diagonally upward through a small gap...we have since referred to that spot as the "agony".



Mike Fraley coming up the vertical crack

There is a room at the top of this crag filled

with lots of breakdown. We poked around in the break down



Jeff Page in Kiddy mix Cave

I strongly support having 2 separately powered

sources of light ON your helmet for this reason! Once in the crack, there was no way that Josh could have gotten his 2nd source of light out of his pack and he would have been in a very bad place in the dark. Think about it!!*

Assisted Self Rescue Aided by Whistle Communication

By Mike McKinney

NSS 39699

NCRCIII

We met TJ and parked at his house. With fresh instructions from him we started our hike up the ridge. We were looking for ladders to go down to the cave from the top of the ridge. We were having trouble finding the ladder. So Terry and I came up with the plan that he would go back down the mountain and talk with TJ again, and I would continue looking for the cave. We decided on a set of whistle codes and he headed off down the mountain.

In my search for the cave I was half way across a bluff, moving on a ledge that wasn't even big enough for my feet. Just below me was a sheer cliff. I was being very careful (I thought) by making sure I had a good anchor that would support my weight before (I thought) I made any moves. I crossed over a stump of a tree that had fallen from the face of the bluff; some of its roots were still attached. I tugged on it to make sure it would hold; it seemed solid enough. I crossed over the stump, needing to put all my weight on it for a moment. This went just fine. I went a few more feet when I decided I needed to turn back. I checked my anchors again as I moved back, but this time when I pulled on the stump it fell away from the bluff and slid down the steep slope and over the cliff just below me...there was a notable silence before I heard it impact somewhere below.

while not knocking myself off the little ledge I was on. I acknowledged Terry's whistle. Terry whistled several times, each time I acknowledged, but he noticed my whistle blows were not getting any closer and he started looking for me. Meanwhile I was putting my full attention on the task of getting safely off the bluff. I was actually getting annoyed at Terry's incessant whistle blasts. My son was growing concerned, and suggested I might be in some trouble... Terry reassured him that if I was in any trouble that I would be doing 3 whistle blasts (the universal distress signal). About that same time I realized I was making a classic victims mistake: not realizing I might be in need of assistance. I blew my whistle 3 times (twice).

Terry showed up right on cue, he couldn't see me from the overhang above me, but we could talk. I told him I was stuck on a ledge. He asked what I needed and we came up with a plan. He needed to know where I was in relation to him, so he lobbed a stone and asked me if I could get to where the rock was. I expected him to toss a little stone, but he tossed a small boulder that, of course, began to roll right toward me...thanks Terry...what a pal!

(editor's note: Way to go Terry!!! At least I am not the only one Terry tires to stone.)



the view from the safety of the ledge I climbed up to. The Cliff is just below. You can see the middle of a large tree showing

I was deciding what I needed to do to safely get back across this bluff face now that a key anchor was no longer there when I heard Terry's whistle blast indicating he was at the cave. I needed to get my whistle out of my pack

Terry headed back to get the rope, I meanwhile, worked on moving vertically up the bluff, using my handy-dandy webbing and 'biners for safety that everyone should be carrying in their pack (right?). I got up to where Terry's boulder had first fallen, and waited, took some pictures, looked at a little cave-found there on the ledge.

I decided I really didn't even need to wait for Terry, and had just started to climb up the last wall when he came back with the rope. I used the rope and a safety and easily walked up the final rock ledge. 5 more minutes (or if I hadn't decided to take some pictures) and I would have had myself completely

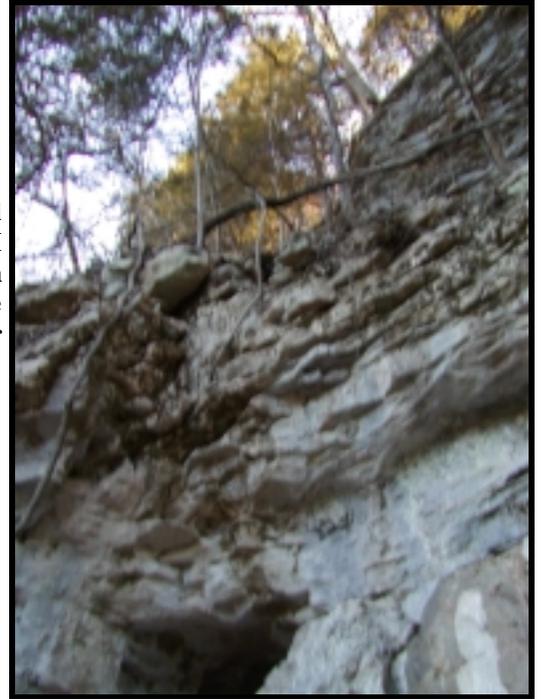
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The little cave I found on the ledge

The final rock wall I went up with the assistance of a rope for safety.



self-rescued, but an assisted self-rescue is still fine by me. Thank you Terry.

It was critical that we had whistles to communicate. Voice communication would have been completely ineffective in that terrain. Everyone should carry a whistle with him or her. The Universal Distress signal is 3 of anything.... Three whistle blasts, three shouts, three fires, what ever. When using any such signal it is important to do it twice. Walking on leaves, or talking may make it difficult for someone to hear your message at first. So, you should signal, pause for about 5 seconds, and repeat your signal. If you are the receiver, you should acknowledge any signal. Everyone needs to know this. Everyone needs a whistle of their own, incase they become separated from the group. Terry and I have discussed making up a card of predetermined whistle codes for use in hiking and vertical situations. A whistle should be as much a mandatory part of your pack as your water and batteries.*

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Editor's Corner

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