



# The Month's Guano

January 2002

Kansas City Area Grotto

Volume 16, Issue 1

## 10 great places to go underground

While armed forces scour Afghanistan for terrorist caves, Americans closer to home are heading underground just for fun. Michael Ray Taylor, author of *CAVES: Exploring Hidden Realms* (National Geographic, \$35), shares some of his favorite subterranean haunts with USA TODAY's Laura Bly. Each spot allows novice spelunkers to experience wild caving — crawling along with no paved trails or overhead lights — while claustrophobic types can enjoy more traditional tours.

### National Park Service

Thurston Lava Tube in Hawaii Volcanoes National Park is a loop trail. The cave is approximately 100 meters long.

Carlsbad Caverns National Park, White City, N.M.

In addition to the famous tour of the Big Room, with its underground lunchroom, rangers guide several wild caving trips in Carlsbad and other caves within the park. All are within the El Capitan Reef, a stretch of fossilized coral that once bordered America's inland sea in the time of dinosaurs. [www.nps.gov/cave](http://www.nps.gov/cave).

Blanchard Springs Caverns near Mountain View, Ark.

This Ozark cave, managed by the U.S. Forest Service, "contains some of the finest formations I've seen anywhere." The cave's massive mineral columns and stalactites play a starring role in the recent IMAX film *Journey Into Amazing Caves*. [www.fs.fed.us/oonf/ozark/recreation/bsc.htm](http://www.fs.fed.us/oonf/ozark/recreation/bsc.htm).

Mammoth Cave National Park near Bowling Green, Ky.

"This is the granddaddy of American caves. It's the world's longest, with over 350 miles of mapped passage, with new discoveries being made every year." [www.nps.gov/mac](http://www.nps.gov/mac).

Jewel Cave near Custer, S.D.

With more than 127 miles of passage surveyed, Jewel Cave is the world's third-longest cave. "The national monument's spelunking tour includes one of the tightest squeezes in any commercial wild caving trip. A concrete 'squeeze box' on the surface lets spelunkers know whether they can fit." [www.nps.gov/jeca](http://www.nps.gov/jeca).

Hawaii Volcanoes National Park, Kilauea, Hawaii

"Not all caves are found in limestone: Within the black lava of Kilauea and Mauna Loa lie thousands of miles of lava tubes formed by volcanic gases rising through the cooling magma." While some caves near the Kilauea Caldera are strictly off limits, others are considered safe and open for visits. [www.nps.gov/havo](http://www.nps.gov/havo).

Natural Bridge Caverns near San Antonio

The highlight of the "Adventure Tour" at this privately owned cave is a 160-foot rope drop into a large, well-decorated chamber. "Not for the faint of heart, this professionally guided trip introduces fit beginners to climbing, crawling and rappelling underground. Spelunkers who reach the end are rewarded with

**Top 10** (Continued on page 4)

### January 2002 Vol. 16 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 AGGREGED TO LETS US CAVE WITH THEM. IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN A TRIP YOU MUST CONTACT THE TRIP LEADER.**

- 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
- January 25-27, 2002      **The 21st Annual Carter Caves State Resort Park Crawlathon**  
See the following website for details. <http://www.crawlathon.com/>
- January 27, 2002      **Carroll Cave Conservancy Meeting.** Sunday, 1:00 PM at the Lake Ozark City Hall. For more Details on Carroll Cave or to make a Donation go to <http://www.carrollcave.org>
- February—March      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
- 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

## Subject: The Drennon Brothers..

They are the two oldest sons of Tom and Martha Drennon of near Hastain, Mo. Roy was born in a log hut on Nobby Creek. I was born at the place known as the Judge Hart farm, north of Hastain. There were 2 more brothers, Ted, [Larry Drennon's father] and Wallace, and 2 sisters, Vanita and Fay.

These two brothers, Roy and George, grew up together and were most all ways seen together. Tom Drennon or dad left the farm when Roy was five and I was three and moved to Duroc. After a short stay we moved to Warsaw where the family was plagued with a lot of sickness. Dad worked on the railroad for \$1.10 per day. A day consisted of ten long hours in those days.

When Roy was 7 and I was 5, dad was promoted to section foreman and we moved to Mora, Mo. where we stayed for a year. Then dad was given the ColeCamp section and that is where we lived for 7 years and that is where Roy and I got our schooling..

IN 1908, Dad having lost his health, we moved back to the same Judge Hart farm [This farm was located on the hill NW of Oak Haven] where I was born and there or close by is where Roy and I grew up to young men. Both of us liked to hunt, fish, go on trips and explore caves.

Roy had one of those old glass plate type cameras, so we took alot of pictures. We used flash powder instead of flash bulbs. We used a cave for a dark room and a spring for running water.. Roy married Ida Place, the daughter of Ed place, and built a home on the bluff north of Hastain where he lived most of his life untill he passed away in 1968 in the home he loved. There are many things that I could write about Roy, but that is not what I had in mind when I started to write so I will pass it by for now.

I served in the 35th division during WW1 and saw action in more than a few battles. Now I live in California and have for the last 30 years. I would like to tell you about a incident that took place in the spring of 1917. Roy lived on the bluff at the time. One morning he went over to the Hastain Store, which was owned and operated by D.H. Hart, [ better known as Beecher] , our uncle. While he was there Sherman Allen came in and wanted to borrow a flashlight, since it was daylight and the sun was shin-

ning bright, Beecher asked him what he wanted with a light at that time of the day. He told him that his two brothers, Willford and George, better known as "bugger George" had left the day before and had been gone all day and night and had said something about going in a cave before they left. So when they looked for the lantern, it was gone. Sherman knew the cave that the boys had talked about so they took another lantern and went back in the cave till they came to a round room and there in the middle of the room was the lantern, empty of oil. Therefore they decided when the light had gone out, the boys had come out of the room and took the wrong passage, which went further into the cave instead of coming out to the opening or mouth of the cave.

The news was soon spread out that the two Allen boys were lost in a cave. Roy knew where the cave was so he came by dads and told me about what had happened. In those days you either went with horses or on foot. The cave was about 3 miles down old Deer Creek, so Roy and I took out on foot to the cave and when we got there found quite a crowd of men and boys there, Jack Forth, Bob Forth and Ira Bailey were in the cave at the time. The cave was small and not much air, so many could not go in at one time and the people stayed away from the entrance so as to not foul the air. The ones that had gone in had taken two trotlines, each long enough to reach across the Osage River at Duroc and that was quite a distance. When they had gone to the room they tied one end and played it out as they went so they would have a marker to follow back out. We waited around till 11:30 am and the 3 boys came out and they said they had gone as far as they could go, and couldn't find any one. When asked how far they had gone they said they had used one ball of line and part of the other. Then Roy and I spoke up and said we would go in and try to get the boys. Jeff Montgomery, a real old timer from Duroc, spoke up and said, If the Drennon boys can't get them, they just can't be got...

Ed Allen, the boys father, borrowed \$20 from his brother, Henry and said I will give this to the ones that bring them out. Then someone said, " you boys are bigger than any of the three that just came out so how do you expect to go where the others

*(Continued on page 6)*

(Continued from page 1) **Top 10**

a close-up view of a 14-foot-long soda straw formation." [www.naturalbridgecaverns.com](http://www.naturalbridgecaverns.com).

Glenwood Caverns, Glenwood Springs, Colo.

Located up a steep mountain road above the famous resort, Glenwood Cavern's Fairy Cave first opened to the public "back in the days when Doc Holliday came to town to take the waters." Closed for eight decades, "discoveries of formation-lined chambers led to a new tour route, opened in 1999." Also offered: guided wild tours into areas only recently explored. [www.glenwoodcaverns.com](http://www.glenwoodcaverns.com).

California Cavern near Stockton, Calif.

"After viewing the 'tourist' section of the cave — open since 1850 and lavishly described by Mark Twain and other early visitors — explorers on the commercial 'Middle Earth Expedition' slither through tight cracks into chambers chock-full of knee-deep mud to see stunning helictite formations. The trip ends with a raft crossing of a 70-foot underground lake." [www.cavern.tours.com/CalifRt.htm](http://www.cavern.tours.com/CalifRt.htm).

Cumberland Caverns near McMinnville, Tenn.

An underground ballroom in this privately owned cave seats 500, and was used for scenes in such movies as *Jungle Book* and *Tom and Huck*. "Scout and church groups visit more remote sections of the 32-mile-long cave on guided overnight spelunking trips," and individuals often can connect with a larger group. [www.cumberlandcaverns.com](http://www.cumberlandcaverns.com).

Craters of the Moon near Arco, Idaho

"Another great spot for exploring lava tubes is this national monument. The most recent eruption occurred about 2,000 years ago, so there's little danger of steam or gas in the lava tubes that dot the aptly named Cave Trail. Maps of caves open to self-guided exploration are available in the visitor center; ranger tours are run during summer." [www.nps.gov/crmo](http://www.nps.gov/crmo).

Date: Mon, 10 Dec 2001 21:12:37 -0600

From: Jonathan <[mokanman@worldnet.att.net](mailto:mokanman@worldnet.att.net)>

Subject: Concreting expert needed

The MCKC needs assistance in the repair of the entrance passage to Crystal Caverns, a former show cave that the MCKC is leasing. Plans are to have the cave available for use as an educational resource by local schools.

The cave was recently inspected by Denny Mathes, one of the state's cave and mine inspectors. Inspectors visit show caves and mines for safety hazards and make recommendations on repairs needed to make these features safe. One of Mr. Mathes's recommendations was to remove a piece of concrete that is precariously positioned from the ceiling area of the entrance passage and to cap the two excavated holes (originally excavated by the cave owners some 70 years ago) in the ceiling. The plan is to remove the concrete block and the concrete over the two holes. The block is the result of damage caused by heavy equipment a few years ago.

The two holes measure roughly three to four feet in diameter. The block is a six-inch thick, three-foot diameter triangular chunk. We are hoping that someone on this list would have enough experience in concreting work to facilitate the removal and pouring of a new concrete cap. Anyone interested or know someone who might be?

Regards,  
JON (Crystal Caverns manager)

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**POSITION AVAILABLE -  
CHAIRMAN OF THE NSS MEMBERS MANUAL COMMITTEE**

The Members Manual Committee is in the office of the Executive Vice President. The committee is responsible for publication of the annual NSS Members Manual containing information about the Society; reports on current, projects and accomplishments; a list of active internal organizations, officers, and directors; and the membership list. The chair will be responsible for developing a publication schedule with specific process deadlines and then meeting those deadlines for publication in June of each, year. Members interested in this position should contact the NSS Executive Vice President, Don Paquette, via e-mail [speleo@reliable-net.net](mailto:speleo@reliable-net.net) or call 765-349-0211. Permission is given to forward, repost, or reprint as necessary.

# Mammoth Cave Restoration Project

For the past 12 years, cavers working under the Volunteer in Parks program have participated in restoration work at Mammoth Cave National Park, Kentucky. Volunteers were not participating as members of any particular group, however many were members of the National Speleological Society or affiliated grottos. Based on particular needs at the time, Park staff decided upon work projects, which included; wood removal in Great Onyx Cave and the Frozen Niagara area of Mammoth, pit cleaning along tourist trails, restoration of the ceiling in the Snowball Dining Room, removal of tour boats from Echo River, graffiti and lint removal, and other numerous projects. From time to time over the years, work was done in the Echo River area, but Echo River was not necessarily an area of focus. Restoration of Echo River began in earnest, at the August summer camp of 1997.

Participants stay at a bunkhouse provided by the Park at the Maple Springs Research Facility, located in the park, on the north side of the Green River. There are showers and full kitchen facilities for use by participants. Bedclothes, toiletries, food, and per-

sonal snack items are the responsibility of the individual. If participants want more privacy, they can stay at local motels or nearby campgrounds, but do so at their own expense. There are sites for large units. If camping, you will not have to make prior arrangements.

The work involves a lot of walking; some work sites are two miles from the entrance, so good hiking boots are a must. Old caving boots are a bad choice. The work is on old, unused tourist trail, but can be very uneven, muddy, and in places, dangerous. All participants must have their own caving gear, including a light mounted on a caving helmet, and leather work gloves. Only those who volunteer to go into the water will get wet. At weekend camps, we will work in the cave all day Saturday, and for those who can stay, a half day Sunday.

If you are bringing a group of volunteers, I would need to know how many. **There is no cost to attend the camp.**

## Conservation work in 2002

### Conservation work in 2002

KCAG is adopting two caves for cleanup and restoration in 2002. Skylight Cave in Ash Grove and Watkins Cave in the Bois d'Arc Conservation Area, both near Springfield. They are not challenging caves and are in need of trash pickup, graffiti removal, and possibly some speleothem repair. This is a good opportunity for KCAG to do its part for conservation. Contact Jeff Page if you'd like to get involved. [jpage@kc.rr.com](mailto:jpage@kc.rr.com) or 913-677-5632.



## Devil's Icebox Upcomming Trip

It's time to think about scheduling a grotto trip into Devil's Ice Box forv either February or March. Please let me know if you're interested and suggest dates that would work for you. Our last trip was on a Friday, whice kept us out of conflict with the park trips on Saturday or Sunday. That would probably be the way to go on this trip too. What I'd like to do is make it to the end of the Left Fork, the cave's longest side passage. This is farther into the cave and a longer passage than the Roller Coaster, so we'll need to move more efficiently this trip. We'll skip stuff like the Bat Room and Devil's Roost. We'll have to limit participation, so if there is someone who missed the last one and wants to go, they will have preference. Jeff

*(Continued from page 3)*

failed?" So they talked a smaller man, Arthur Allen a cousin to the lost boys, into going with us. We went in the cave at 12:00 noon and after we had gone a ways, Arthur said, "I don't want to go, I am afraid." I said to him, "now is the last chance if you don't want to go, I will take you back till you can see light, but what lights we have we want to take with us!" He said, "I sure don't want to go." So I took him back till he could see light and he took off on in a run. Then I went back and joined Roy in the cave. Roy was in front and I behind. The cave was so small that part of the time we were stooped, part of the time we were on our hands and knees and part of the time we were on our bellies. When we came to the end of the trot-line, that is, as far as the others had stretched it out, I said "What will we do about the line," and Roy said, "Forget it." We had been in a lot of caves and we never did use a line to follow. We kept going and the cave got smaller and smaller and the traveling got rougher and rougher. Finally Roy came to a place that was so small that he could not go through, so he said, "I can't go any further."

I was some smaller than he so I said, "Let me try," but here we had trouble again as there was no room to pass each other, so we backed up till we found a place tall enough that Roy could lay flat on the bottom and I crawled over the top of him. Then I crawled as far as I could go. You know, when you get in a smooth hole in a rock and stretch out with one hand in front of you with a flashlight in it and the hole gets smaller and smaller you just lose traction. So Roy got his feet pointed my way, laid on his stomach, put his feet against my feet and pushed me farther in the hole. Finally it looked like we had come to the end of the cave. The wall was only a few feet away, as I went a little further I could feel a drop off.

I couldn't go any further but, by using my flashlight, I could see the cave dropped down about two feet, then it ran crossways with the cave I was in. I hollered as loud as I could and Bugger George heard me and saw the light from my flashlight and came to me, and did he have a smile on his face! And I know there was one on our faces, also. I asked him where Williford was and he said he was fastened and couldn't get loose, but he believed with the help of a light he could get him free. So he took the light and after a while they both came back and we started our

trip out of the cave.

The going was still rough, but I believe we made better time for we knew our mission had been a success. When we got to the mouth of the cave it was much larger so we all came out together. I will never forget what happened. The Allen boys never hesitated. They just took a straight course for home and as I watched them go, they were going west, and the sun went down behind a hill. There was a creek to cross but they didn't stop for it but just kept on going.

Jim Bybee, one of the men, fainted. Ed Allen gave the \$20 back to his brother and didn't even stop to say thank you to my brother or I. We had our clothing badly torn and were tired. We had spent six hours in that cave, going and coming.

We both rejoiced though for we knew we had done a good deed and saved two lives. We didn't go for the money to start with. I would like to end my story here but I can't. Williford grew up and joined the army, and in a short time he was pronounced ill and spent the rest of his life in detention. Bugger George spent his life on the farm part time and part time in Nevada. [The state mental Hospital in Nevada Mo.] I don't say that the cave experience had anything to do with their illness in after life, but I sometimes wonder.

A few years back, a group of men came to that neighborhood, to make a record of the caves, so they got in contact with Roy and him to go with them to tell them the names of the different caves and when they came to this cave that I had wrote about and asked him the name he said the only name he had ever heard it called was the "Bugger George" cave, so that is what they wrote down. So I guess that it is listed in the records of the caves of Missouri I the name of "Bugger George Cave." Written by George Drenon (pgs.7-10. History of Benton County Missouri, vol. 3. c.1971, White & Miles, The Printery, Clinton/Warsaw MO.)

This cave is below Duckworth Camp, by where the big rocks are in the water, if you are quiet you will hear the water running out of it, 30-40 feet above the water level.

## T-Junction Dig 15 December 15 & 16, 2001

### Halfway There

Only 57.18' to go (118.5' from ground surface to cave ceiling)

Diggers: Bernhard Arnold, Bill Gee, Chad Hines, Rick Hines, Ron Lather, Seokbin Lim, Tom Lounsbury, Dave McCool, Jeff Page, Bill Pfantz, Kerry Rowland

After cleaning and squaring up the hole from the last blast on the prior week the distance to go was 65.18 feet, or a gain of 15.4 feet for the week long dig (12/1/01 thru 12/8/01).

Three blasts were completed this weekend. Eight holes were drilled for each blast and all holes were drilled approximately 4' deep. Three different time delays were used for the eight holes. We attempted to load 3.5 power split sausages in each hole. Sandy debris washing into the holes on the last blast prevented loading all the holes to the bottom and only 17 sausages were loaded.

We were concerned about plugging the 9-inch pilot hole since it plugged twice during the week long dig and since we knew that there was a 1/2" pipe standing in the pilot hole. We hung a 3" by 8' long I-Beam into the 9" hole with about 4' sticking out. After the blast we were able to wiggle the chain attached to the I-Beam and slowly meter the debris down the hole. It worked, no plug.

The I-Beam was used again for the second blast Saturday afternoon. We did not attempt to clear the debris until Sunday morning. By then there was 4 feet of standing water in the 30" hole. Again, wiggling the chain flushed the material down the 9" hole. The material took several minutes of gurgling to work itself down to the cave. For the third blast we tested 3 sections of heavy (5/16") chain hanging in the hole. Again, no plug. The chain test is not totally convincing since the amount of material blasted on the third blast was only about half that involved on the prior two.

Each of the holes in the first set was lined with a 5' by 1.3" OD PVC pipe with 1/16" walls. The pipes kept the sandy material out of the drilled holes and made loading easy. We attempted to remove the tubes and leave the explosive in the holes but the tubes were locked in the holes by grit. We got a pull of 3.8' on the first blast.

For the second blast we were back to using wooden plugs in the drilled holes since we blew up the PVC pipe. They were difficult to load. The two center holes were loaded first and we tried to load the bottom heavy by doubling over the half sausage in the 3.5 sausage string. It was difficult to get the double section to the bottom. On the 6 perimeter holes the sausage was not doubled at the bottom. On 5 of the 6 holes 2.5 sausages slid in without a problem. The sixth hole was about half filled with sand and was cleaned out before final loading. The last sausage was doubled up at the top and pressed into the hole. About 2" of stemming topped off each hole. The pull on the second blast was 3.2'.

Several partially plugged holes on the third blast resulted in a large step being left on one side of the hole. The step covered 40 percent of the hole. The pull on the high side of the step was 1 foot and was 3.8' on the low side.

Based on a 1 foot pull for the third blast the total for the weekend was 8.0'. Next week we will blast out the step.

On the third blast we used an 18" section of the pipe to plug two of the 8 drilled holes. The holes protected with the pipe did not fill with sand and explosive is believed to have been loaded to the bottom.

Next week we will try short sections of PVC pipe in each hole. We will also measure the depth of each hole and use the air blaster to clean the holes if necessary before loading explosives.

Another problem seemed to be insufficient air pressure at the drill to keep it operating at full power. It would periodically stop rotating and drop down on the drill. We have about 130' of 3/4" hose between the drill and the compressor and assumed that we are getting too much pressure drop in the hose. If we can come up with about 80' of 1.25" or 1.5" pipe we will hard plumb from the compressor to the dig and connect the 3/4" hose at the dig. Is there anyone out there with pipe to donate?

Thanks this week go to Bill Gee who participated in his first dig. He did an excellent job of keeping record for the weekend. Thanks to Gerry Gattenby for providing the I-beam, a new drill template and other steel. Thanks to Chad Hines for bravely testing the new 2:1 pulley system to make the last drop of the weekend to collect measurements on the third blast.



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## Editor's Corner

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