

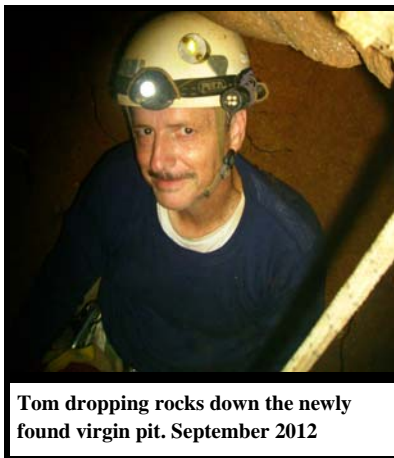
Calcite Column
by Tom Moltz

Twenty Years Ago

It all started on the 20th of

January 1992. Minter Goodson, John Klayer and I found the Balcony in Ellison Cave the previous day. Minter and I were getting the itch to do Fantastic Pit. John was too scared (maybe too smart) to come around the ledge to the Balcony. We drove back home that night.

The next day, January 20th Minter and I went to Rock House cave below Cordele Georgia. When we came out of the cave is when it all started. Tom Mercer, a caver from Albany, was showing two Macon yahoos Rock house Cave. Kevin Moate would become a life time friend but at the time I figured he was mildly retarded. The other guy was Doug Gentry. He was intently looking and listening but these guys didn't seem just right. They said at the time they wanted to start a grotto with the NSS. I wasn't really interested. Doug was rappelling using a hickory handle of a hammer as a break bar. This is why I gave him the name "Hammer".



Tom dropping rocks down the newly found virgin pit. September 2012

Carol and I had been caving hard for a few years by this time. In reminiscing through my hand written log from then, here is a short sample from 1992 of the trips leading up to the creation of Middle Georgia Grotto.

25 January: I found a nice section of virgin passage in Climax Cave with Buddy Welker.

15 February: Minter and I did Fantastic pit for the first time. That is a story in itself.

16 February: Crevasse Pass in Pettijohns cave.

28 February: Fantastic Pit. Doug Gentry, Chris Presley (also from Macon), John Klayer and I went to the top of Fantastic. None of them would come around the ledge to the Attic. Chris had problems climbing the Warm-Up pit. He panicked 20 feet from the top. I went down to him on a short rope we had. I talked him up. He gave me his brand new Petzl Harness in thanks for saving his life. I just realized that I have been using this harness off and on for 20 years and used it on the 2nd of September 2012 on a trip with Minter.

7 March: Minter and Andrea Goodson, Kevin Moate, Doug Gentry and I went to Dykes Extension in Climax Cave. Doug got real stuck in Bens Bypass. Minter and I broke some of his ribs getting him out. Andrea and Minter caught Histoplasmosis after that trip (Andrea diagnosed by a doctor). Kevin and Doug probably had it also. They laughed at me for wearing a mask during that trip.

Cover art work

The cover art work is a collage of MGG newsletter through the years created by Andrea Goodson

Letter from the Editor

My assistant and I are asking for articles and trip reports to go into the newsletter. If you have any other information you would like printed, *SEND IT IN!* Email to: goodson_m@tampabay.rr.com
To: Minter Goodson (Editor)
1748 Clarendon Avenue
Lakeland, FL 33803



MGG at TAG fall cave-in 2000.

The adventures continued and are too numerous to list here.

This is the historic date and entry from my log:

26 July: First grotto meeting at Doug Gentry's. Middle Georgia Grotto is born.

I counted close to 70 hand entries in my log for 1992 and they included more trips than entries. We spent an awesome week of hard caving in New Mexico. We grew to be close friends, I loved and respected. Kevin Moate was a genius and so funny. He didn't have to say anything to make you laugh. Doug was smart, practical, and hard charging. He did many great pits in TAG and met the famous cavers of the time. Chris Presley was our first Treasurer. He was motivated and did a great job. Ken Montjoy started publishing the news letter Cave Talk. We had monthly meetings and newsletters for a while. I was chairman. John was Vice-chair. Carol kept me straight. Doug Gentry caved hard every weekend.

Minter and Andrea, Bill and Angela Bailey, Mark Esco, Steve Cole, Varie Rustin, Buddy Welker, and Chris Moore, all soon were members.

Credits Please do not use any articles, artwork, or photos in this newsletter without the author's, artist's, or photographer's permission (With the exception of NSS internal organizations.) All rights reserved. All Artwork and Articles are credited. All without credits are the work of Andrea & Minter Goodson, Ed Pratt or Tom Moltz.

The years passed quickly with hundreds of cave trips. MGG sponsored the SERA Winter Business meeting. We did a lot of projects that included cleanups, exploration, surveying, introductory trips and a lot more. I didn't want a grotto because I figured they would get this thing started and then head on. Doug realized he was missing his son growing up so he did what was right for him. Kevin told me from the start that Doug, Chris, Steve, and Ken would go at it hard a while and then quit. He was right but there was enough new blood to carry on.

I think it was early in 1999 a guy called me saying he use to cave and wanted to get back into it. Yeah sure, I'll show him. I took this guy on a ridge walk that would set him straight. We actually walked over the sink that would be Flowing Stone in a couple of years. He wasn't coming back. Little to my surprise he calls back in a couple of months and says he had his vertical training with Bruce Smith. He wanted to do some pits. Well Ed Pratt was a member by late in 99 and a pivotal addition to the grotto. He brought with him some new life and vigor.

This is some of the early history of MGG. It would take a book for me to get down all the people and trips that have influenced our grotto. Since this is getting way too long I'm quitting here.

A few years ago.....





Doug Gentry At TAG

THE MIDDLE GEORGIA GROTTO “*The Embarkation*”

(This article original appeared in Cave Talk January 1993)

Written by Doug Gentry and Edited by Ken Montjoy

The Middle Georgia Grotto is located in the heart of Georgia and in the city of Macon. The MGG’s first name as an unofficial grotto was the “Fall Line Caving Club”. This club was begun by Tom and Carol Moltz along with a couple of other cavers. But in August of 1992, seven middle Georgia cavers applied for official grotto status under the name “Middle Georgia Grotto”.

Tom Moltz began caving with some NSS friends in 1988, but it wasn’t until the next year before he talked to his wife, Carol, into a trip to Petty-johns. They got the NSS address off the bulletin board there and sent off for information. Before long they joined the NSS and were addicted to caving.

When they got a NSS news (Members Manual), they found listed another middle Georgia caver. An oldtimer named John Klayer who is now a MGG charter member along with Tom and Carol. Soon the three of them were caving together a lot. They met a lot of good people in TAG and Florida, but in middle Georgia where the limestone is thin and the caves are few there was just those three.

In 1990, Dr. Leslie Garland moved to Macon. She had gotten the Moltz’s phone number from another caver so she looked them up. Soon she

was in the NSS and caving with the gang. Later that year, Dave Ellis, a Mercer Law student from Florida, contacted them. He had caved with NSS people who knew Tom. Soon he too joined the NSS and was caving with Tom, Carol, John and Leslie.

Early in 1991 the gang began talking of forming a grotto. They decided to just call themselves the “Fall Line Caving Club” until they had some more dedicated members. The FLCC did pretty good. In 1991 they found two virgin caves locally, tripled the size of one local cave by finding two hundred more feet and did a clean-up trips in Glory Hole Cave. They established good relationships with two landowners, did a presentation for a cub scout pack using video they had taken and dug in a lot of sink holes. The FLCC took a lot of people on their first and last caving trip and all this between serious TAG caving.

Early in the spring of 1992 brought new blood that would bring life to the FLCC as a formal grotto. While at Rock House Cave in February, they met Doug Gentry and Kevin Moate (both MGG charter members). Already NSS and yearning to cave, Tom took Doug and Kevin to Climax Cave to show them some hard-core caving. Doug cracked two ribs and bruised his lung as Tom pulled him through Bens Bypass. Kevin was too tired to go to work and they both think they caught hysto. That trip was enough to convince Doug and Kevin to cave with the FLCC.

Doug moved to Macon from Kentucky where he had caved as a teenager. In Macon he met Kevin and Kevin kept after Doug about going back to Kentucky on a caving trip. Their first wild cave exploration together was done with a Coleman lantern and a pair of crutches as Doug had just had foot surgery. After that they to Mammoth Cave and they to

were addicted to caving. Kevin came home and joined the Dogwood City Grotto in Atlanta.

A short time later they went to Guffey’s Cave in Alabama then to Huntsville and joined the NSS. Doug was fascinated with the ascenders in the NSS news, so Kevin went to the library for some books on rappelling. In them was an example of a guy rappelling using a carabiner and a hammer handle. This was all it took for Doug to buy a parachute harness and start rappelling using a hammer. Thus he earned the nickname “Hammer”.

As Doug learned more about rappelling, he introduced the sport to two more of his friends at work, Chris Presley and Kenny Montjoy (both MGG charter Members). Together they did Rusty’s, Cemetery, Valhalla, and Neversink. Some of the other caves these four guys did with Tom was the warm-up pit at Ellison’s, Moses Tomb and Mystery Falls.

On July 26, 1992, Carol, Doug, Kevin, John, Chris and Kenny had the first Middle Georgia Grotto meeting at the Gentry’s house. The meeting was there because the week before Doug had slipped on a mossy rock crossing a creek at a state park and broken his leg. Tom wasn’t there because he was in the hospital for a hernia operation.

We filled out the necessary forms, drew up a constitution/bylaws and elected officers. Tom, since he wasn’t there, had the good fortune to be chairman, Doug was elected vice-chairman, Chris the treasurer and Kenny the secretary for the first fiscal year.

As a grotto so far we have found over 200 feet of new cave in the middle Georgia area and we are in the process of mapping it. We are planning on a clean-up trip to Rock House along with hope of installing a gate at the entrance. We have gotten off on a good start all except Doug’s unfortunate accident and we hope to be caving under the MGG logo for a long time to come.



Things I heard said or I said during the last 20 years of MGG not in any chronological order:

I got a big problem now!

We don't need that girly rope.

He broke his leg.

You guys gotta help me!

Rebelay?!

This pack is starting to get heavy.

I'll go with you Tom.

I'll show you where to pee.

John, remember who your friends are.

It was funny but it would have been funnier if it happened to someone else.

I'm in the water!

Get that light out of my eyes!

It'll cool you off.

I wouldn't look at any other woman but my wife. Jesus Christ! (Twice)

I wear a helmet because my professional life depends on my brain. Doesn't everybody's life depend on their brain?

I just can't deal with this!

Sometimes you can't help stinking.

I just took a shower, you might think about taking one or two yourself... and using some deodorant.

Am I being rude?
I think you're being a jerk!

This is the most beautiful cave I've ever seen in my life!

I'm worried about getting buried alive.
John, you won't get buried alive.
You mean I'll get buried dead?

Haphazardly!!!!!!

Slow down!

There's a bad moon a 'rising.

I forbid you!
I'm fix'n to vomit!
You can just hold it in till you burst!

Here's the cairn, now will you shut up?!

The bats peed on me.

The rope got cut!!!!

Who knocked the rock down on me?
It came from above me!

Caving could be dangerous.

Well, we cheated death again.

Does that frog want to get out of this cave?

If you fall, fall on the water side.

Just look at me, everybody will think I did it.

It's not an organ, it's a muscle, you gotta exercise it.

Yeah, yeah, yeah ...Christmas

Maybe someday I'll be able to walk down to the bonfire.

Maybe someday I'll be able to walk down to the bonfire.

Get me a cup of coffee.

The doctor said I should walk.

You're the mean nurse.

Analyze it, analyze it!

Who farted?!

Get away from me. I don't want to talk to you; I don't even want to look at you.

The room is so big that light won't even hit the other side.

You can't even buy this music in stores. Who would want to buy that shit?

HIT the damn thing, don't tap it.

Don't forget where this orange rain-coat is.

It looks like you're going to go in too.

I saved some children in a burning car.

Let me get some of this water out of your way.

Is this safe? Hell no it's not safe!

Don't throw your pack over there.

How far do you think we've gone? About halfway.

Somebody stole my sleeping bag.

We need someone from Dogwood City Grotto NOW!

I chase off the drunks, dopers and faggots.

John Klayer



John age 50 in Ellisons Cave near Fantastic Pt.



The 2011 MGG grotto meeting participants from left to right were: Allen Mosler, Chris Hudson, Guy Yates, the Bailey Family, Ian with Katie, Bill, Angela, Jacob, behind them Henry Maddox, next to him Minter Goodson, Sarah Goodson, John Klayer, Varie Rustin, Tom Moltz in back, Brian Williamson, and Kim & Ed Pratt.

MGG News and Notes

Meeting minutes of the Middle Georgia Grotto

Meeting held at MGG campsite during the TAG Fall Cave-In 2011 Sunday October 9, 2010

The Chairman, His Grand Highness, The Wise and Honorable Big Cahoon John Klayer called the meeting to order at 9:40

Attendees:

Angela Bailey, Bill Bailey, Ian Bailey, Jacob Bailey, Katie Bailey, Kim Chatfield Pratt, Minter Goodson, Sarah Goodson, Chris D Hudson, John Klayer, Henry Maddox (new member), Tom Moltz, Allen Mosler, Edward Pratt, Varie Rustin, Brian Williamson, and Guy Yates

The Secretary (Tom) read the minutes from the previous year. Minter moved they be accepted as is. They were voted approved.

The Under Secretary to the Secretary of the Treasurer (Ed) gave the treasures report. The ending balance on sep 30, 2011 was 120.88. The highlights were a \$100 donation to the SCCi and \$100 to Allen Mosler for a plaque for Arista Gainous. Refer to the annual report for more detail.

Ed reported that our old checks were no longer acceptable to the bank and new checks would be over \$30. Tom made a motion that if it was ok with the treasurer that the treasurer could write a personal check and reimburse him/herself from the grotto account. This was acceptable. The motion was seconded by Minter and approved.

Old Business

Minter brought up the subject of vertical training that Kim had suggested we do last year. Minter reported on the grotto holding a training session at the Pocket after Thanksgiving last year. It went well. Sarah and Luke climbed there first real climbs. The person contacting the grotto desiring same said training was supposed to come but did not show.

Minter said he would be willing to lead a climbing session this year after Thanksgiving on Friday or Saturday at The Pocket. Tom said he could probably help.

Minter stated that Tom heard from Buddy Welker. Tom reported that Buddy was alive and well.

Allen Mosler reported that the plaque for Arista Gainous (Cave Grandmother from Glory Hole) had been made. It has not been placed in the cave. A plaque for Bruce Brewer has been placed in Climax Cave at the New Formation Room.

New Business:

John asked about camping arrangements at TAG and if we wanted to camp together as a group next year. There was some confusion as where the grotto was camping and two locations were used. Brian apologized for the confusion, however he arrived early and roped off the area he thought was desired.

John said we should make a better effort to camp together next year. Angela made a motion that the grotto camp next year in the Chicken Loop. The motion was voted in.

Bill Bailey said he would like to see some vertical training done in the Middle Georgia area. Ed said that we could do some vertical practice at his building in Marshallville. In the mean time Bill will check into us using GA Military College rappelling tower.

Allen asked if the newsletter could be sent out before the TAG Fall Cave-in. Minter stated that he would try to get it out earlier next year but that would mean that people would have to submit articles earlier. A deadline was discussed but none seriously agreed upon. The editor will state the deadline next year (over-reaching secretarial decision here).

Allen Mosler Talked about Malloys Waterfall Cave. The cave and surrounding land has been sold. The owner is a conservationist and talked to DNR. Allen will introduce himself to the owner and try to get some good relations going. The cave was under several tracts but now they are all owned by one person. There is no official access at this time.

John asked if Glory Hole was open. It was stated that Matt Kalch was in charge. The gate had been broken into. There is some confusion as to which key will work, as the last time someone tried a key on the gate it did not work. Tom stated that conservation trips were possible but trips will continue to be very limited. Allen said the sink needs work as there is another collapse or wash-in occurring.

Ed got a call this past Friday from a youth minister from South Carolina going to Florida. He wanted to know if there was some where to cave on the way. This was late notice as they were going very soon. No prospective caves were brought up as a solution. Ed will coordinate with them some more.

Varie said some scouts from Macon contacted here wanting a cave trip or demonstration. Tom said he would help do a trip and probably some others from the grotto would help. Varie will coordinate with the scouts.

Minter stated that the grotto is coming up on 20 years since it was started and felt we should have some kind of celebration or recognition. No decision was made.

Elections for Officers:

Sarah nominated John for Newsletter officer. John declined.

There was some discussion. Current officers stated that if someone else was interested in a position to speak up.

Minter made a motion that all officers stay the same. The motion was seconded and voted in. Officers are as follows:

Elected Positions:

- Chairman** **John Klayer**
- Vice Chairman** **Ed Pratt**
- Treasurer** **Kim Chatfield Pratt**
- Secretary** **Tom Moltz**

Assigned Positions:

- Trip Coordinator** **Roger Gainer**
- Newsletter Editor** **Minter Goodson**
- Safety Officer* *Minter Goodson*
- Conservation Contact* *Minter Goodson*
- Advisor in General* *Minter Goodson*
- Gear Specialist* *Minter Goodson*
- 20 year Celebration Chair* *Minter Goodson*
- Environmental Impact Coordinator* *Minter Goodson*
- Political Affairs Contact* *Minter Goodson*
- Public Relations Officer* *Minter Goodson*
- T-Shirt committee* *Minter Goodson*

Ed took some group photos.

Door prizes:

Kim won a Japanese rock climbing book that Tom donated.

Minter Goodson won a vest Ed donated. This was an SCCi vest Ed had received from the SCCi for being a sustaining member.

Meeting adjourned about 10:30



(above) Ed tests the new ladder for John to enter and leave his holography cave site. (Below) Climbing out, view from inside the cave.



Antenna Tower in a Cave
by Tom Moltz

John Klayer has been making holograms in a cave off and on for a few years. Each time he went in this cave he had to rig 3 ropes. He lowers his gear on two of them and rappels on the third rope. This way when he is done he climbs and then pulls his two loads of gear up. Sometimes he lowers his gear on the two ropes and comes back an hour or more later after his gear has equalized in temperature to the cave.

I had a friend give me a couple of 6 foot antenna tower sections. Ed Pratt helped me put them in this cave and stabilize them. We had to feed them in one at a time and then assemble them into one piece at the bottom of the drop. It's a big step down, after taking a short climb-down using the rope for a hand line. Now John can quickly climb down or up after clipping onto the rope with a safety. He doesn't have to bring his vertical gear so it saves him a lot of time.



Treasurer's Report









for the Middle Georgia Grotto 2011-2012



Transaction	Name	Date	Purpose	Balance
Beginning Balance Sep 30, 2011		30-Sep-11		120.88
Receipts:				
Dues Collected at Oct 9 Grotto Meeting				\$ 135.00
Total Receipts for Sep 30, 2011 - Sep 30, 2012				\$ 135.00
Expenditures				
Automatic Withdrawal	BBT	1-Nov-11	Inactive Account Fee	\$ 5.00
Automatic Withdrawal	BBT	1-Dec-11	Inactive Account Fee	\$ 5.00
Total Expenditures for Sep 30, 2011 - Sep 30, 2012				\$ 10.00
Ending Balance Sept 30, 2012		30-Sep-12		\$ 245.88
NOTES:				
BBT Account Closed 9 Dec 2011 per board decision due to fees.				
Received a letter from BBT that they were going to start charging \$10 per month.				



















(LEFT) This is a copy of the treasurers initial report. The (ABOVE) report was the second and official copy sent.





























Take the quiz. See how many of the people pictured in *A few years ago* you can recognize. Try to name the cave or location where the picture was taken. Hopefully we will discuss the results at the meeting. For a true puzzler, try to determine who, when and where John Klayer heard the comments in his list of Sayings.
 

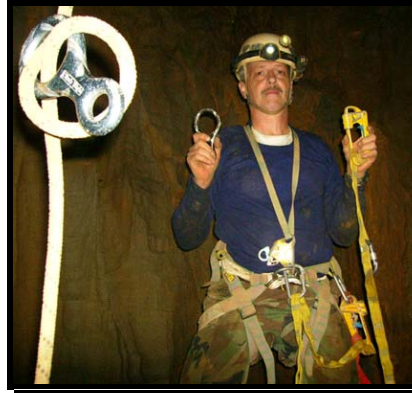









Tom and Minters Cave by Tom Moltz

I found a lead on some friendly private property that I had walked all over pretty good in the past. Sometimes I go through it to get to another tract of land. I often try to take a slightly different route just in case something pops up. A few weeks ago it did. I could not believe I had probably been within 30 feet of either side of this lead and had not seen it. A steep sink hole about 10 feet across had a great looking lead under a large slab of rock. I only looked at it enough to get the feel it was a good lead.

September 2, 2012 I convinced Minter Goodson (Strike King) to look at it with me. He also was amazed as he had walked not far from it himself. We dug some dirt and moved a few rocks. It was about ready to squeeze into but the safety officer and I felt like we better use a hand line.

Using the hand line got us down the first 5 to 6 foot deep hole that was all dirt wall, all the way around. It looked pretty solid and hard so we weren't to concerned about that. One step forward was down a few feet to a bolder choke over a drop. It looked and sounded to be 30 feet deep. Rocks took a good second to report back. Minter got down on the bolder choke first to move some rock. We had the hand line around a tree. Minter tied-in and I held onto the other end. If things gave way underneath him, then I had him. It was risky enough to make me nervous about loosing my friend. He dropped some 50+ pounders. We could now fit but it looked risky, through a narrow slot over a large loose rock still chalked in place.



Tom showing tools in Tom&Minter cave.

This rock was a 400-pounder and would not easily move but was not secure enough to play on.

We went back for real vertical gear and a rope long enough to reach bottom. This looked like it was going to turn into a real cave trip. Now I got my turn on top of the pit. Yep I was rigged in. The only comfortable spot to put my feet was on the rock that needed dropping or on a rock that might move as a side affect. Minter took the end of our 28-pound bar and I guided it. After some pounding I was able to take the bar and pry the big rock a fraction of an inch at a time until it went. A mighty KABOOOOM vibrated back up and we were ready to do a pit.

I tried to get Minter to go first but he was experiencing some delays (Minter Pause as Ed Pratt calls it). Minter encouraged me to go on so I did. It was a treat with a lot of nice flowstone and formations down a 30 foot pit. I saw passage going down from the bottom of the pit that would be for Strike King. The pit was about 12 feet in diameter without much room to hide from rocks in search of a target.

Tom ready for the initial assault on Tom and Minter Cave. (Left)
Carol during the debrief after the trip. (Far Left)

Minter took the lead and climbed down about 10 feet into passage that went around the corner. It lead to a corridor about 25 plus feet long and maybe 20 feet high. Water comes in from the far end and leaves through a horizontal space under the wall. It was a silt floor and I could get a view several feet through the passage leaving that was a few inches high. I could not tell how far we would have to dig to see if it would be worthwhile. The only reason I am mildly interested in the lead is because air left the cave through this small slot and explained why the cave was on the warm side. There was a higher dome I climbed up into but that was about it for this cave.

It was a good trip and real caving. It's always nice to see some passage no human has seen before. It seemed like it was in our own back yard. I guess we could go back and poke around in it and do a survey of it.



Minter coming out of the 2nd drop in Tom&Minter cave





The Lighting of the Fire TAG 2011.

2011 Tag Fall Cave-in by Minter

On Friday and Saturday according to the information I received though pictures or observation, the following trips took place.

- **E**d and Kim went to watch the crew races on the Tennessee river in Chattanooga.
- **T**om, Brian and crew went to Pigeon Mountain to try and open up a cave from the surface through a Large Boulder Break-down pile using advanced stone levitation techniques.
- **E**d and his crew met up with the Brian's crew moving rocks on the mountain.
- **E**d then headed to Pettijohn's cave to show his brother John and his group the main room.
- **M**inter and Sarah went for a quick trip in the main room of Pettijohn's cave on a different trip.
- **A**ll the folks staying at the cave-in site headed back to wait for the lighting of the bonfire.

The bonfire was exceptionally beautiful because of the large moon in full view in the sky. John Klayer was also very visible with his LED string light wrapped around his torso. He is visible in the photo above. Bill and Angela Bailey had arrived with their Family.



The rock levitation Section TAG 2011.



Minter and Sarah at the entrance to Pettijohn's Cave

TAG 2011.

On the Sunday morning of TAG the MGG had it's annual grotto meeting. The minutes and photos of that meeting are recorded elsewhere in this newsletter.

After the meeting many of us headed up to Paradise Hill. We talked about what trips or activities anyone wanted to do. In the end it was decided to continue the reconstruction of the catenary arch on the highest point around.

Previously, the arch had been constructed near where the stones were quarried. The stone arch had been disassembled and the individual stones relocated to the top of the hill with the idea to reconstruct the arch at a later date. The plan involved using photos of the first time the

Ed, his brother John and their group at the entrance to Pettijohn's Cave.



(above) The arch rebuild crew. TAG 2011.

(below) John and Varie seated under the arch at sunset.



the arch was built to replace the stones in the correct position. Using this plan Ed, Brian, Tom, Minter, John, Sarah, Guy, Varie, Jim Ozier, Mike McCloud and Steve Harper reassembled the arch on the top of the hill. To see Ed's other tag photos point your browsers to:

http://hydroselator.smugmug.com/Events/2011-TAG-Fall-Cave-In/19486213_zVQ4hk

To see videos go to; Moltz singing side by side <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AZy9ZKOCJrM>

The rock levitation session on video. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e27NFDn7m1A>



Steve, Ed and Tom test the integrity of the newly reconstructed arch. Mortar was applied to some of the joints to help against earthquake.

THE Kids' caving corner

My First Experience at TAG

Written by: Sarah Goodson

Last year, it was my very first time going to the TAG Fall Cave-In. I had a marvelous time. My father took me to Petty Johns cave (and for those of you who are groaning right now, just know that I can't hear you) and we went in the entrance. It was a short trip, but it was still extremely fun. I also got to walk around and look at all the cool stuff that the vendors were selling. When we got to the Dogwood City Grotto booth, I was not exactly enthusiastic about the squeeze box. I don't usually voluntarily squeeze my guts out, so I decided to save that experience for later in my life. I got some cool new Chili Heads hats on sale on the night of the bonfire. The bonfire was REALLY bright and EXTREMELY hot. You could always tell where Mr. John was because he had an LED rope light that blinked and blinded you when you looked at it. The next morning at the MGG meeting, my dad won the SCCI vest and gave it to me. Then, we went to Mr. Tom's property and we built the roman arch on top of the hill. I had an extremely exciting time!



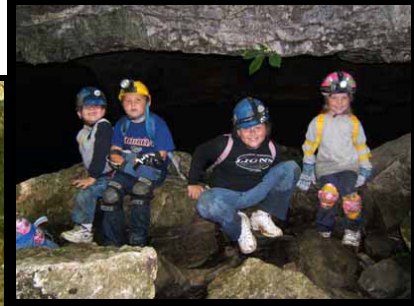
Sarah, Tom, Autum and Alexis in Pettijohns cave, December 31, 2011
(Right) Travis climbs out of a sandstone cave.



Evan and Minter in a sandstone cave on top of Look Out Mountain Thanksgiving 2011.



Old pictures of Young People!



Sarah at the entrance to Pettijohns Cave during the TAG Fall Cave-in 2011



Memories

from Tom Moltz

Thinking about celebrating the grotto 20 year anniversary, I was looking in my old hand written log for some details to send Minter for the newsletter. I became interested in putting my old log into text files. Something I have wanted to do for many years. Just like the video I want to transport when I get a new computer. I am typing up 1992 and it is at least twice as long a log as 1991 which I finished last week. I couldn't help after reflecting back 20 years, sharing some of past trip reports. This was the first week of September 20 years ago.

Hope it brings back some memories like it has for me, what brain cells are still active (I'm talking for me).

exerpt from toms hand written log from 1992...

9-5 Neversink.

Always beautiful. Criss (?) Carol, Minter, Andrea, Terry. Terry likes rack and rope walker. He is nice, careful, and confident.

9-6 Pretty Well.

Carol, John, Monk, Flame, Kevin, Minter, Andrea, Terry (from Oregon). Good trip but too many people. Monk got strap caught in rack. Had a communication screw up coming out. Took some good video. Terry and a couple others rappelled the pit past the dome room.

(At the bottom of the pit) Terry (from Oregon), "How do I get up there." Andrea to Terry, "Well you're a rock climber aren't ya?"

Varie waited at top for Jonnie Angel. I was a too nervous with so many people. Carol and I climbed together.

Terry was one of many enjoyable people we took caving. I also remember he tried to save our lives that night by telling Andrea (driving Big Blue) "*Red light, red light, red light, never mind*". as she ran right trough it. Ha Ha!! We were lucky many times where others weren't.

9-6 Limerock Blowing. Everyone from above plus Varie. Easy trip. I found nice camera. Went past register. Huge creek passage. Kevin found connection out so we didn't have to back track. Minter and I stayed back and had good conversation in low mud crawl. We stayed back in case they were wrong. Varie seemed to enjoy the trip.

9-7 Desota Falls. Kevin, Monk, Flame, Carol, Terry, me. 2 ropes. I flew down rope. Flame rocketed. I rappelled into water head first. Terry went slow and had fun. He helped unhook Carol from rope pad. Scary walk across dam. Good trip.

MORE STORIES

Doug Gentry's first rappels were from deer stands using a hickory hammer handle as a break bar on a carabiner. That is why he was named "Hammer".

From Andrea's Caving Log:

6-10-90 Pettyjohns.

I bought a lost creek bag and large duffel and sticker, but who knows where it is...We all thought Horror Hole was our hardest cave trip, then came Pettijohns. 9.5 hour cave trip. Mud from hell. Camped in refuge. (pigeon mtn). Neat place. Cave trip was all night, slept from 5AM to 11AM. Tom, Carol, Me and Minter.

An email from Kevin Moate

My family did do a trip to sky-light cave in July. It is a 900 ft lava tube and the entry is a ten foot ladder. Not much but the skylights made for a neat picture.

(Tom's trip report continued)

6-10 Pettyjohns.

A six hour tour. Minter, Andrea, Tom, Carol. I told Minter and Andrea I could take them on a 6 hour trip in Pettijohns, and it could have been, but... We took that junction again and rappelled down to the stream. It was in a different place than that where Robby, Bill, and I dropped down. It was real close to the waterfall. We had some delays getting a rope rigged. Minter and I had layed down across the top of the stream passage canyon at one point. We were 20 feet up being a bridge. Carol and Andrea crawled across us. Andrea had short sleeves. She was praying and Minter yelled at her to stop praying. We (probably Minter) rigged a loop of webbing around something at the top edge of the canyon and we rappelled down. We pulled down the rope but left webbing and carabiner up there. Carol swung down at the beginning of the rapel and banged the wall a little but she was OK. Yep, the 6 hour trip was 9.5 hours so it's a wonder they ever caved with us again.

For a few years I could look up and see that webbing still there but I can't see it now.



Minter, Carol and Andrea prepare for their six-hour trip into Pettijohns cave. The trip turned into a nine and one half-hour trip.