



THE GOLDEN NUGGET

FEBRUARY 2010
10-02



PROGRAM CORNER

When: February 10, 2011 **(DON'T GO TO OLD LOCATION ANYMORE!)**
 Where: **NEW LOCATION FOR MEETINGS:**
 1751 Congressman William L. Dickinson Drive (U.S. 231),
 Montgomery, AL 36109
 Time: 7:00 P M
 What: **WHAT ABOUT ALABAMA CAVES AND CAVE EQUIPMENT?**
 Who: Stan Tew, President Montgomery Grotto Spelunking Society



REFRESHMENTS

Drinks: Mary Lou McHugh Snacks: Ardis Cecil

Please remember to bring paper plates, napkins, and cups. Ice is available at the community center.

It is your responsibility to find another member to substitute in the event you are unable to fulfill providing refreshments in a month for which you signed up.

List for remainder of the year:

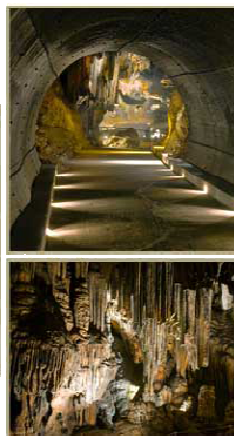
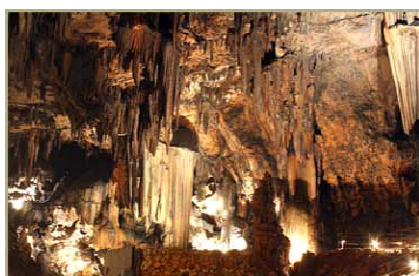
Mar	drinks	snacks
Apr	Frank Rowell	the Fetzers
May	Leslie Amato	the Randalls & Jeremy Towns
June	Harry Corbin	Iris McGehee
July	Linda Boyd	Frank Rowell
Aug	Drucilla Hornsby	Griebel/Berkman
Sep	the Sherrods	the Sherrods
Oct	Debbie Herbert	VACANT
Nov	David Bohon	VACANT
	Stan Stevens	VACANT



HAPPY FEBRUARY BIRTHDAY

1 Latongia Watkins
1 Amy McClellan

15 Jeremy Towns
21 Linda Griebel



FIELD TRIPPIN'

Our fearless field trip coordinator, Jeff Edwards, has planned another great adventure for club members.

DATE: FEBRUARY 12, 2011 (This is a non-collecting trip)
LOCATION: **DESOTO CAVERNS**
5181 DeSoto Caverns Pkwy, Childersburg, AL 35044
1-800-933-2283
TIME: 1:00 (meet in the gift shop)
DIRECTIONS: From Montgomery: I-65 N to Exit 212 (Lay Dam) / AL 145 E to CR 61 to AL 25; to AL 76 to US231 left AL 76 to Caverns (approximately 1 ½ hr)
From Wetumpka: US 231 N to Childersburg; right on AL 76 to Caverns (approximately 1 hr 16 min)
RECOMMENDATIONS: **>DRESS IN LAYERS SINCE THE TEMPERATURE INSIDE OF THE CAVE IS A CONSTANT 60 DEGREES**
>BRING YOUR CAMERA
QUOTE FROM WEBSITE: "See thousands of cave formations, making it one of the most concentrated collections in America. Your tour will begin in a room that is twelve stories high and larger than a football field. The caverns stay a comfortable 60 degrees year round, but with the 100% humidity inside the caverns, the temperature feels closer to 70. The tour through the caverns is a 1/3 mile walking tour. There is a ramp that is

used to enter and exit the caverns, so it is wheelchair and stroller accessible; however, motorized wheelchairs are not recommended. There are two areas during the tour that are not handicapped accessible, but the tour goes into those areas and comes back out into the main room after a few minutes. Our pathways are covered with small gravel with handrails provided where necessary for safety."

RATES: ADULT CAVERNS TOUR \$18.99 (group 20 or more \$14.00)
CHILD 3-11 \$16.99 (under 3 free)



Hello Everyone!

I have just finished reading a letter including a report on the two Gold fields (regions) of Alabama! The report is available for your perusal on the Geological Services of Alabama website. It is located under the on-line periodicals section. Not only does the doctor who did the report back at the turn of the last century tell about the gold in Coosa, Tallapoosa, Chilton and Chambers counties, but also the upper gold region of Clay, Randolph, and Cleburne Counties. In this report you will find the metes and bounds descriptions of where the sites were located it also gives the names of the mines and the " THEN" owners of record. What I did not know and wanted very much to pass on to you is the fact that we not only have gold close enough for a week end hunting trip, but silver and Tourmaline, magnetite, Tin, and Tantalite. If anyone does not know how to read the metes and bounds descriptions on a map, I would be happy to show them.

I also found it very interesting that the assay amounts on the various areas were also supplied. Most of the gold bearing ore was located at approximately nine feet or less.

I hope each one has had a good month and have some suggestions about a fund raising project. We can discuss at the monthly meeting. I am still awaiting a reply from the Estwing Company and Stanley Company as to discounts for our members on: tools, gold pans, pouches, drills and star bits and other products.

Looking forward to seeing you at this months' meeting! Keep on Digging!

Lynn Stauch, President



Wild Underground – Caves in Alabama

By M. Keith Hudson, Wildlife Biologist

When many people think of the natural beauty of Alabama, the mind's eye imagines beautiful verdant forests, rivers and lakes teeming with wildlife, or perhaps a favorite white-sanded beach. However, Alabama has

another tremendous natural resource – the world underground – its caves and karst systems. Karst refers to a landscape pockmarked with sinkholes, caves, and underground streams.

Alabama has one of the highest densities of caves and karst features found anywhere in the world and the northern part of the state has a particularly high number. Much of north Alabama is underlain with deep deposits of limestone, formed over millions of years by the deposition of innumerable calcareous organisms in a shallow marine sea. These gray limestone deposits can be seen along highways that cut through the area's mountains and hills. Most of the caves in Alabama were formed as water percolated through this limestone and dissolved away materials and formed openings and tunnels in the limestone. When enough material has been dissolved away, a cave is formed. This geology underlies much of south-central Tennessee, north Alabama, and northwest Georgia, or the TAG region as cavers refer to it. It is no accident that the national headquarters of the *National Speleological Society (NSS)* is in Huntsville, within the TAG area. The *NSS* is an organization dedicated to the purpose of advancing the study, conservation, exploration, and knowledge of caves. The *NSS* is the umbrella organization for local or regional caving groups, or "grottos," which explore caves through recreational caving, sometimes called spelunking. An organization affiliated with the *NSS* is the *Alabama Cave Survey (ACS)*, a group that surveys and maps Alabama caves. According to the *ACS*, there are over 4,100 known caves in Alabama and the *ACS* has mapped about a quarter of those. In most years, several dozen more are reported to the group. The *NSS* also contains groups who specialize in cave rescue and cave conservation.

Because a cave usually has constant environmental conditions and relatively permanent physical conditions, several unique animals inhabit and have adapted to dwell in caves, including several species of fish, insects, salamanders, and of course, some types of bats. Because caves are a unique and limited habitat, most of these creatures are rare and a few are considered endangered species. Alabama caves are habitat to two species of endangered bats, the Gray and Indiana bat. One cave in Lauderdale County contains the endangered Alabama cavefish that is found nowhere else in the world but this one cave. The Alabama cavefish is arguably one of the, if not the, rarest of all vertebrate species.

Several other Alabama wildlife "species of concern" use caves, including Rafinesque's big-eared bat, the Southeastern myotis bat, the little brown bat, the Tennessee cave salamander, the Southern cavefish, the Alabama cavefish, and the Allegheny woodrat. Many types of wildlife will use the "twilight zones" around cave entrances for shelter and for dens. Many birds, such as the cliff swallow and barn owl, regularly utilize cave openings in which to nest. In a recent status assessment of wildlife in Alabama, caves and cave systems ranked third of six terrestrial habitats in terms of importance to imperiled wildlife. Sauta, Key and Fern caves in north Alabama, are small national wildlife refuges established and managed for the benefit of their endangered bats and/or cavefish.

Alabama has a number of caves easily available to the public to visit. Some of these include the Alabama State Parks of Cathedral Caverns and Rickwood Caverns. Several private caves, such as Sequoyah and Desoto Caverns, are also available for commercial tours. These commercial caves highlight the cave environment and the beautiful cave formations found within. Indeed, when most folks imagine caves, they likely imagine stalactites, stalagmites and other unique cave formations. Russell Cave National Monument is also an interesting place to visit and learn about paleoman's use of caves, though access is restricted to the cave's entrance. For the more adventurous, the *NSS* offers opportunities for exploring "wild" caves for the novice and advanced caver. Find out more about *NSS* at: www.caves.org.

While exploring caves may not be everyone's "cup of tea," everyone should appreciate the recreational, aesthetic and ecological value of Alabama's wild underground.





CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations go to member Steven Easterling who will receive his Eagle Scout Award on February 12. This is a coveted award, and Steven has working hard to achieve this. Eagle Scout is something that will benefit him the rest of his life. We are very proud of you, Steven.

Ardis Cecil sent in the following link:

<http://www.wncrocks.com/magma/magmaupcomingevents.htm>

She stated: Many field trips are for anyone. A few are for MAGMA members, but you can join w/o any cost!



Montgomery Gem & Mineral Society Minutes - January 12, 2011

The meeting was called to order by President Lynn Stauch. The meeting was held at the Crump Center as the new location is not yet available for our group.

A survey about specific interest of club members was collected and will be evaluated. Minutes were read and approved.

The Treasurer's report was read by Iris McGehee which was approved and filed with the secretary. Membership for David Bohon was presented and approved. Iris McGehee gave a report on the stamp program and urged continued participation.

A report on the annual gem show was read by Mary Lou McHugh, which showed a low profit. It was generally agreed that ways to cut expenses would be in order. Snacks were provided by Lynn Stauch.

The drinks provider was absent. Due to harsh weather conditions, no January field trip is planned.

Several members brought and discussed examples of petrified wood and agate. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Mary Lou McHugh, Secretary



REMINDERS>>>



- ✓ Bring cancelled stamps to meetings.
- ✓ Bring spare rocks, gems, minerals to any meeting in order to prepare for the Wheel of Fortune.
- ✓ Show your recent acquisitions at the monthly meeting so other members can experience a variety of different materials.
- ✓ The shop will be opened **only by appointment**. Please email or call any of the following individuals ahead of time to set up a shop work date: Frank Rowell, Terry Fetzer, Iris McGehee, or Harold Glover. **NOTE: the shop will no longer be open on a regularly scheduled basis.**

PLEASE WELCOME OUR NEWEST MEMBER: DAVID BOHON



AUBURN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS VISIT WETUMPKA FOR CRATER CENTER DESIGN COMPETITION

(from *the Elmore County Economic Development Authority*)

Wetumpka hosted more than 60 individuals from Auburn University's College of Architecture, Design & Construction on Friday, January 14 as part of the design competition for the Alabama Impact Crater and Science Center. This event was a joint effort between the Elmore County Economic Development Authority (ECEDA), Auburn University, City of Wetumpka, and Wetumpka Impact Crater Commission.

The students and faculty met with the mayor, members of the Wetumpka city council, and members of the crater commission as well as others involved in the design competition. They also made a lengthy visit to the site of the proposed crater center -

at the city's current rest area on Highway 231 South. The students made sketches and took a number of photos while studying the master plan developed for the site.

Interim Dean of the Auburn College of Architecture, Design & Construction, Rebecca O'Neal Dagg, said on Monday, "We are excited to be joining with so many of the area leaders to develop ideas for a new interpretive center focused upon the unique conditions of the Wetumpka Crater. Collaborations such as this give our students the opportunity to participate in real-world design projects that help develop their skills and show the community the talent we have at Auburn."

Justin Miller, School of Architecture Assistant Professor, has developed a curriculum allowing 60 second-year architecture students to undertake a the task of developing design proposals for the Center. This effort builds upon the work of Gresham Smith's Master Plan for the Alabama Impact Crater and Science Center. He'll be one of the faculty members accompanying the students this Friday for their visit.

Mayor Jerry Willis noted, "We are very excited to be able to partner with Auburn University to host their architecture students for this competition. Their program has a reputation for being one of the most prestigious in the nation, so we know the competition for top prize will be tough." For more details on Crater Days events for 2011, visit the events portion of our website <http://www.elmoreeda.com/>

IMPORTANT MESSAGE FROM TREASURER IRIS MCGEHEE:

- **DUES ARE DUE NOW (ACTUALLY DUE JAN 1ST)**
- **IF YOU HAVEN'T PAID, PLEASE PLAN TO PAY AT THE FEBRUARY MEETING.**
- **FAMILY MEMBERSHIP: \$20.00 - INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP: \$15.00**
- **IF YOU ARE NOT PLANNING ON BEING AT THE FEBRUARY MEETING, PLEASE SEND DUES TO IRIS MCGEHEE, 2433 UPPER WETUMPKA ROAD, MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA 36107**
- **OVERDUE NOTICES WILL BE SENT OUT IN MARCH TO ALL WHO HAVE NOT PAID.**

Links to check out

International Colored Gemstone Assn newsletter <http://www.gemstone.org/>

Georgia Meteorite Association <http://www.meteoriteassociationofgeorgia.org/>

William Holland www.lapidaryschool.org

Wildacres <http://www.amfed.org/sfms/wildacres-retreat.html>

Al Mineral Locality Index

<http://www.mindat.org/rloc.php?loc=Alabama%2C+USA>

GIA

http://www.gia.edu/3954/gia_home_page.cfm<http://www.greatdanepro.com/somewhere%20in%20time/index.htm>

Where to find treasure: http://www.treasureplaces.com/index.php/Main_Page

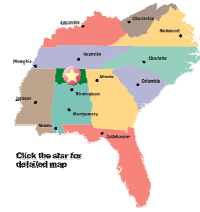
CAVES IN HUMAN HISTORY from web pages of the Upper Cumberland Grotto

Human beings have been exploring caves since the dawn of time. In human prehistory, they provided shelter, as well as a canvas on which prehistoric man could paint his desires for a good hunt. These early hunters apparently believed depicting the outcome they desired would cause it to happen. A wonderful display of Paleolithic cave paintings was discovered on Christmas Day, 1995, at Vallon-Pont d'Arc in Ardeche, France. Here in Tennessee, you are more likely to find petro glyphs or mud glyphs than cave paintings. Usually these were made by the Archaic, Woodland or Mississippian peoples.

Among Stone Age cultures, caves had great ritual significance. The Maya of Central America believed that caves were the gateway to the Underworld and, therefore, any rituals performed there would quickly gain the notice of ancestral spirits. So strong was this belief that some temples were carved to resemble caves, or in some cases, -->built over caves to encourage the spirits to interact with living priests. The Native Americans of the Northern Hemisphere also believed that caves were sacred places. Archaic and Woodland Indians sent their bravest warriors into the dark recesses of Mammoth Cave to mine epsomite and gypsum crystals. Those who returned were honored and the crystals they brought home with them became sacred heirlooms or sought-after trade items of the tribe.

In more modern times, caves have been used for a variety of purposes: refrigerated food storage during pioneer times, saltpeter mining and weapons storage during the 1800s, speak-easies and hideouts for moonshine stills during Prohibition and dance halls during World War II. Cumberland Caverns in Tennessee still contains a large dining hall which is regularly used for parties, receptions and Scout camp-outs.

Currently, extreme outdoor sports have gained popularity thanks to the "Mountain Dew" mentality of "been there, done that." For this reason, many of those who explore caves on a regular basis (cavers) feel they must double their efforts to educate the public to the fragile nature of the cave environment.



SE SHOWS

(for other areas, click on <http://rockngem.com/showdates/>)

- >Feb 1-Feb 28—QUARTZSITE, AZ; Desert Gardens RV Park; 1064 Kuehn St. (I-10 Exit 17, south side); 9-6 daily; free; Sharon or Sandy, (928) 927-6361; info@desertgardensrvpark.net; www.desertgardensrvpark.net
- >Feb 12-13—MERRITT ISLAND, FL; Kiwanis Island, Merritt Island Causeway; Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-5; adults \$3, children 12 and under free with adult; Ray Huntington, (321) 799-8536; bdewey@cfl.rr.com
- >Feb 26—TALLAHASSEE, FL; Elks Lodge, 276 N. Magnolia Dr.; Sat. 8-3; adults \$3, children free; Nate Curtis, (850) 591-2780; info@prehistoricflorida.com; www.PrehistoricFlorida.com
- >Feb 26-27—JACKSON, MS Trade Mart Bldg., State Fairgrounds, 1207 Mississippi St.; Sat. 9-6, Sun. 10-5; adults \$5, students and children \$3; Keith Peacock, kpcoc@aol.com; www.missgems.org
- >Mar 4-6—LARGO, FL; Minnreg Bldg., 6340 126th Ave. N., Fri. 10-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; adults \$5 (three days), Suncoast Gem & Mineral Society, www.sgams.com



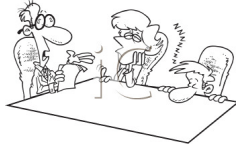
Southeast Federation Field Trips

Feb 26, 9-4 ET, Durham Mines, Walker County, Georgia, Penn Age Plant Fossils, Rockcastle Formation Bring digging tools, flat chisel and hammer; small cart or hand truck; lunch and fluids. Good site for children. Field trip will be postponed if any winter weather advisories; issued for Walker Co., GA, 24 hours in advance of the trip. Makeup date the following Saturday. Contact: Jeff Deere, H (770) 386-5447, C (770) 655-2298

wjdeere@comcast.net or jeff.deere@brownind.com

Apr 29, 30, May 1 (8am-6pm ET) Graves Mountain Rock Swap & Dig - All participants must stop at welcome table in the Hospitality tent to sign liability release & make small contribution to defray the cost of opening the mountain and providing port-o-lets. There will be several four wheeled vehicles available to transport participants who have trouble walking long distances. Dig will cease and everyone is expected to be off the mountain by around 6 pm each day. Participants will be allowed to park in a designated area on the mountain.

<http://www.gamineral.org/commercial-gravesmountain.htm>



Club Officers for 2011

President: Lynn Stauch 386-7330 1st V P/Programs: Thad Cheatham 462-3254
2nd V P/Field Trips: Jeff Edwards 312-0572 Secretary: Mary Lou McHugh 272-1817
Treasurer: Iris McGehee 262-7275 Directors: Jim Gaines 285-1988
Mel Barkley 277-2722

Board meetings are at 6:30 pm immediately before the monthly meetings.

General Information

The purpose of the Golden Nugget is to inform members of news about gems and minerals along with news about club, state, and regional activities of interest to our members. Most important, the Golden Nugget provides a way for each of us to share information about projects and to pass on tips that will help others enjoy our hobby. Unless members are willing to contribute, the *Golden Nugget* cannot meet this latter purpose.

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Meetings of the Montgomery Gem & Mineral Society are held every 2nd Thursday of the month at 7:00 p.m. at the Mureal Crump Adult Center, 1751 Congressman William L. Dickinson Drive (U.S. 231), Montgomery, AL 36109. The annual gem show replaces the December meeting. Anyone interested in gems and minerals is invited to attend. Field trips, workshops, and classes are held at various locations. These are announced at monthly meetings. Membership dues are \$15.00 for individuals and \$20.00 for families residing in the same household.

The Montgomery Gem & Mineral Society is a member of the Southeast Federation of Mineralogical Societies, Inc. and the American Federation of Mineralogical Societies, Inc.

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HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY!



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THE GOLDEN NUGGET

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