



# The TAGLine

PO Box 11506 Chattanooga, TN 37401-2506  
<http://www.chattnoogagrotto.org>

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Chattanooga Grotto of the NSS

May 2007

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## Meeting Notice

This month's regularly scheduled grotto meeting will be held at Nickajack Cave Wildlife Refuge where we'll enjoy the sundown emergence of some 60,000-100,000 gray bats from the cave and a naturalists presentation on bat ecology. There are two ways to watch the show, which can last about 45 minutes: from the water or from the observation deck. If you would like to paddle around the lake and watch from there, you can bring your own watercraft or use a canoe, kayak, or raft that we will provide. We will launch our watercraft at 7:00 pm, normal meeting time, giving plenty of time to paddle around, fish (bring your TN fishing licenses!), eat a sack dinner, or just visit and enjoy the mosquitoes before the bats come out at sundown. If you don't want to paddle, you can take a short walk to the observation deck to watch (be advised that the trail is a bit washed out and you might want a flashlight for after dark). Of course, you're welcome to bring a sack of Krystals or whatever, and those who choose to watch from the observation deck may want to bring a lawn chair. Come enjoy the show! Note: The EC meeting will meet at 6:00 pm at the picnic shelter.

Directions to Nickajack and other details later in the newsletter.

## Looking for a Cave Trip?

Check out CaveChat! Our grotto has our own forum, complete with the latest announcements and cave trips!

[www.cavechat.org](http://www.cavechat.org)

## New Meeting Place!

Starting with our August meeting, the Grotto will now be meeting at the Chattanooga Nature Center! Directions and times to follow in next month's newsletter!



## Chattanooga Grotto Photographic Free-for-all

by Jerry Wallace

I have it in mind to put together a program featuring (digital) cave photography by the Grotto's members for sometime in the Fall, at either September's or October's meeting. This would not be a competition, just an outlet for the membership to show off some of their photographic endeavors, similar to what was done at the Christmas party, except more extensive. They can be anything from snapshots, to multi-flash art shots, as long they're of caves, or Chattanooga Grotto members caving. So start saving your best shots in a folder and I'll put reminders in the coming TagLines. Towards the end of the summer, I'll let you know how to get them to me, and give you more information on how to prepare them.

## Trip Report: Signal Light by David Lapham

This is my first time to write a trip report, so here goes.

Ralph, Jon (WildWolf) and myself went to signal light pit last night. I have been trying to get vertical for a while now, with changeover practice and such, but this is one of only three vertical cave trips that I have been on. And the first that has more than 30 feet of ascending. We parked at around 19:30edt and hiked up to the pit, then Ralph and Wolf rigged it. Wolf was the first down and I followed using a hodgepodge of my and Ralph's equipment. We all got down and decided to explore the cave. Ralph took us to the "signature room" which was really cool, with some signatures pre-dating the civil war by 20 years. Later we headed to a 20+- foot climbdown which took us to some nice walking passage. This seemed to go on for a while and we got some good pictures of fossils and such. The time was getting late so we headed out with a lot of passage left to visit on another trip. On the ascent up the rope my harness was incorrectly adjusted, and wolf spent several minutes helping me sort it out while Ralph waited at the top in a thunder storm. After fixing my harness, the accent went off without a problem. The thunderstorm and the fact that the rope was tied to a tree made me want to get off rope quickly as I was not wanting to repeat Ben Franklin's Kite experiment. A special thanks to Ralph and Wolf for a great trip.



## Get Ready for Summer Splash!

Our annual "Summer Slash" will be the weekend of August 18th this year! Come beat the heat at Sinking Cove. The Grotto will supply meat for a cookout-just bring a side dish or two! Directions and details coming soon!

## Directions and other Stuff for Nickajack:

\* Directions: From Chattanooga, take I-24 west to the Halesville/New Hope Exit #161 and turn left onto Route 156 south. Travel 5 miles and turn left into Maple View Recreation Area. A 0.2-mile trail leads from the parking area to the cave entrance.

\* Activities: Seasonal viewing of bats. At the recreation area, boating, swimming, fishing, and picnicking.

\* Facilities: Viewing platform at Nickajack Cave. At the recreation area, there is a boat ramp, swimming beach, restroom, and picnic areas.

\* Dates: Bats can be seen each evening between late Apr. and early Sept.

\* Fees: There is a \$2 charge for parking.

\* For more information: Tennessee Valley Authority, Chickamauga/Nickajack Land Management Office, 4833 Highway 58, Chattanooga, TN 37416. Phone (423) 954-3811. Or, Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency, Region III, 216 Penfield Street, Crossville, TN 38555. Phone (800) 262-6704.

## **Information Update for Old Timers Reunion 2007**



The 58 annual Old Timers Reunion (OTR) will start at 12 noon on Thursday, August 30, 2007 and close at 12 noon on Monday, September 3, 2007, at The Robertson Association (TRA) camp in Dailey, WV. The theme this year will be *Blackjack Comes to Club Grotto*. "It just seems like yesterday that we were preparing and setting up for OTR 2006 and now here we are preparing for OTR 2007", says Tim Brown, OTR 2007 Chair. "This year will be an exciting OTR as we are going to kick things up several notches with six great bands and a fun filled Las Vegas style charity gaming night at Club Grotto', to benefit your favorite Cave Conservancy", Brown says. This year will see the return of the 2006 OTR logo, mascot & bat, Blackjack Tobias Robertson. Blackjack went on a little trip and has returned with a few exciting games for your enjoyment on Saturday

night so bring your lucky bats foot or your best Vegas attire and enjoy the fun. To attend OTR, you must be a TRA member or the guest of a TRA member. To become a member, you must be sponsored by another TRA member and/or be a member of a pre-approved caving group, and pay the \$10 membership fee. For details, visit [www.otr.org](http://www.otr.org), or contact Scott Baker, TRA Membership Secretary, at 5470 Logan-Thornville Road NE, Rushville, Ohio 43150, 740-536-7074, [smcavin@sbcglobal.net](mailto:smcavin@sbcglobal.net) . July 31, 2007 is the deadline for TRA to receive all necessary paperwork. TRA memberships are NOT available during OTR and the deadline is firm.

## Grotto Auction!



The Grotto will be holding our annual auction in September this year! As we are no longer doing the munchie stand, this is now our ONLY fundraiser! We are counting on all of you to help make this event successful! We are already collecting donations, and would love to have you all help out! Remember, we don't just auction off caving gear! The auction will be held at the TAG Fall Cave-In site on the last work week-end of September. We will give more details out as time gets closer!



## Shiver Me Timbers!

If I was ever captured by pirates and forced to join their crew, I'd prefer to be the Boson's Mate. No one usually knows what a Bosom really does anyway, let alone his helper. That way I could always sneak off and take a lot of naps.

## TAG Fall Cave-In!

Make your plans now to attend the TAG Fall Cave-In, the first week-end of October! Registration form is included in our newsletter! Don't Miss It!



## Additional Information About Nickajack!

(The following information is copied from [Sherpaguides.com](http://Sherpaguides.com) and explains a little more about the event)

Nickajack Cave is adjacent to Maple View Recreation Area, which is operated by the City of New Hope. The cave is managed jointly by the Tennessee Valley Authority and the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency, and there are strict penalties for harassing the bats.

"This cave is not as much of an attraction as the creatures who roost here. Visitors will want to come to this site on an evening between late April and early September. That's when more than 100,000 federally endangered gray bats leave the cave and take to the sky. The bats emerge from their maternity roost nightly like a black veil unfurling, a show that lasts approximately 45 minutes.

Pregnant female bats arrive each spring and find just the right conditions for giving birth in Nickajack Cave. Warm air is trapped in pockets in the cave ceiling, creating an incubator-like temperature. Each night, gray bats feed on mosquitoes, moths, and beetles, with this colony consuming 274,000 pounds of insects annually. The cliff swallows visitors will see flying around in front of the cave feed on the same insects during the day. These birds build their jug-like mud nests in the twilight zone (the zone where light from the outside still penetrates the cave darkness), sharing the bats' habitat and food source but on a different schedule. The young gray bats are very vulnerable to human disturbance, so the Tennessee Valley Authority has fenced in the cave. Visitors stand on a viewing platform a safe distance away. This site is so biologically important, it became Tennessee's first nongame wildlife refuge in 1992, and today it is managed solely for the protection of the bats..

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In order to get the Tagline out earlier we would like articles for all editions of the Tagline to be submitted by the 28<sup>th</sup> of the month before publication. Send in pictures, articles, announcements, or what you want posted. See contact page for info. All drawings are copyright protected and the editor has received special permission from the artist to use in the TAGLine. The gifted Rick Spears provided the drawing on the envelope. Thank you very much! The Chattanooga Grotto TAGLine is the monthly notice of The Chattanooga Grotto of the National Speleological Society, Inc. The editor reserves the right to edit submissions for clarity and space requirements. Exchanges are welcome and encouraged. Please submit trip report and other longer material to the TAGLine PO Box 11506, Chattanooga, TN 37401-2506 or the Grotto TAGLine Editor.