

Montgomery Grotto, NSS 297

Dear friend:

Thank you for your interest in our organization. The Montgomery Grotto (MG) exists to promote the science/study of speleology, the protection of caves, and fellowship among those interested in them. We are a member of the National Speleological Society.

The MG meets the first Tuesday of each month at the First United Methodist Church at 7pm. The address is:

*First United Methodist Church
2416 W. Cloverdale Park
Montgomery, AL 36106*

Yearly dues are \$10, and NSS membership is required after the first year. Meetings are about one hour. We try to provide a program each meeting. Grotto business, welcoming newcomers, upcoming trips and future trips are also discussed. The most important part of the meeting is to pick a date for a monthly trip. We also try to set dates for future trips.

For additional information, contact Stan Tew at stan_tew@yahoo.com or (334) 272-0012. You may also visit our website at:

www.caves.org/grotto/montgomery/.

MG Officers

Cave Conservation

Caves are fragile, and one careless or thoughtless act can destroy a beautiful room or formation forever. Even innocent acts, such as lightly touching a formation, can break it or halt its growth. In many states and countries, intentionally damaging caves, cave formations, or disturbing cave wildlife is against the law.

- (1) Never take anything out of the cave that you did not take in (except other people's trash).
- (2) Always take everything you brought into the cave back out.
- (3) Remove other people's trash when you find it, but do not remove ancient artifacts.
- (4) Never urinate (or worse!) in a cave except in appropriate containers to be carried out.
- (5) Never touch any formation, especially with bare hands.
- (6) Don't bother the wildlife. In particular, bats can be very sensitive to being woken up and can die.
- (7) Always respect the land around cave entrances. A cave owner who may meet you smiling at the door and happily give you permission to use his property, may just as easily meet you with a shotgun or the sheriff if you're caught trespassing. A single rude caver can ruin it for all of us. Be polite and respect the cave owner's wishes!

Cave Equipment

Disclaimer: This is a basic list geared toward beginning cavers. This is not meant to be a complete list of equipment and supplies needed

for caving. All caves are different and will require different types of equipment and supplies.

- (1) 1 large plastic bag to put dirty cave clothes into for the trip home.
- (2) 2 complete sets of clothing:
 - a. 1 set of clothes to wear to and from the cave. TIP: Put on your cave clothes when you get out of bed, this way you don't have to change clothes twice.
 - b. 1 set of clothes to wear in the cave. TIP: It should be loose in the crotch to allow freedom of leg movement, with a belt to hold up the pants. Outer shirt should be long sleeve - don't overdress because you will get hot and sweaty.
 - c. TIP's: no sweat shirts or pants; and shoes should not be new.
- (3) Optional Items (but highly recommended):
 - a. Knee pads.
 - b. Elbow pads.
 - c. Pack (back or side) containing the following items: plastic zip-lock bag for trash (like food wrappers); disposable camera with flash; snack food like trail mix/beef sticks; and 1/2 liter bottle of water.
- (4) 1 pair of gloves (cotton gardening gloves are OK).
- (5) 1 helmet with chin strap:
 - a. To protect your head from bumps.
 - b. Place to mount light.
- (6) 1 light that can be mounted on the helmet. TIP: Optionally a handheld light may be carried, but it restricts the use of your hands and should definitely have a tether cord to prevent dropping it to a place where you can't get it back.

- (7) 2 sets of batteries (must be sufficient for 4 hours of operation).
- (8) 1 handkerchief.
- (9) 1 jug of water to wash with while changing clothes. TIP: Baby wipes are also great to use.
- (10) 1 towel for use while changing clothes.
- (11) Money: Tumbling Rock charges \$10 to go into the cave. In other caves you will not need money. However, you will always need money for eating after you leave the cave.

Cave Safety

Caving can be dangerous; even something as simple as losing your light can result in your death, or at the very least days lost underground waiting for rescue. Climbing underground and rope work is specialized and dangerous, and mistakes can easily be fatal. If you remember nothing else, remember these eight rules.

- (1) Always have three sources of light: a "primary" light source mounted on a helmet; a second light such as a regular flashlight; and a third source can be matches, a cigarette lighter, "glow sticks," candles, or another flashlight. Don't forget extra batteries and bulbs! If you lose your light, you can lose your life.
- (2) Always wear a helmet.
- (3) Always bring the right equipment: good boots can ensure safe footing; a first aid kit is a must when help can be hours (or sometimes days) away; long pants and a warm shirt are a must in potentially cold caves; gloves will save your hands; and your vertical equipment should be of good quality

and well maintained.

- (4) Never cave alone.
- (5) Always tell someone where you are going and when you will be back.
- (6) Never attempt climbing a pit without proper training and equipment.
- (7) Never cave while under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- (8) You are responsible for your own safety. There are no phones underground, and even if there were, rescue teams can take too long to reach you. Even with immediate response, the nearest rescue team is likely 6-8 hours away, or more. Learn self-rescue techniques, and make sure you and the members of your group know first aid.

Are you an open water diver? Do you want to dive in an underwater cave? If you do, you must get proper training in cave diving. It doesn't matter if you're an expert open water diver. If you dive in a cave without proper training as a cave diver you will die. For more information on cave diving, visit the NSS Cave Diving Section.

For More Information

Additional information can be found at the following websites:

National Speleological Society:

www.caves.org/

Southeastern Cave Conservancy:

<http://www.scci.org/>



**Montgomery
Grotto**