



# The River City Caver

Newsletter of the *River  
City Grotto* –  
Jacksonville, FL  
An *NSS* Affiliated Grotto

**February, 2017**

[www.rivercitygrotto.com/](http://www.rivercitygrotto.com/)

Updates from the latest Grotto Meeting and Events –  
NEXT MEETING: **WEDNESDAY** March, 15<sup>th</sup> 2017.

## UPCOMING TRIPS

**Catacombs Cave:** This trip is scheduled for February 25th.

**Florida Cavort Workday:** If you're interested in helping FSS prepare for the Florida Cave Cavort, you can help out on February 26th.

**Florida Cave Cavort:** FSS is hosting this year's cavort. It will take place from March 3rd-March 5th at Jerry's Farm. To register, got to this website:

<http://www.floridacaving.com/2017-cave-cavort-registration/>

**Boy Scout Trip:** Phil will lead a Boy Scout trip through White Cliff Cave on April 15th. There is another Boy Scout trip scheduled for April 22nd. A cave has not been chosen yet, but Jennings is a possibility.

## FINANCIAL UPDATE

We are solid financially.

## GROTTO T-SHIRT

The RCG T-Shirts are for sale; both short sleeve and long sleeve are available. You can purchase one here:

<http://rivercitygrotto.com/product/t-shirt2016/>

## MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

We have one new member.

## TRIP REPORTS

**Cavort Workday:** Phil participated in an FSS cavort workday on February 22nd.

**Climax Cave:** On January 28th a group of seven cavers visited Climax Cave with the intention of digging in the sand crawls. Much to their surprise the crawls had not filled in over the last 6 months. After reaching the down and under and realizing they were less than a third of the way through the crawls and with several restrictions to go,

**Climax Cave Continued:** Scott Tyler, Nathan Dunfee, Venkata Damaraju and David Studard remained and visited some off the beaten path formation areas, pushed back to Batman's Den and stopped for a swim in Razor Hall. They exited the cave after 8 hours and met Tevis and Donna for Mexican food. It was great to have a play trip after expecting to be digging all day.



three of the seven decided to turn around and exit the cave.



## **SCCi CORNER**

### **SCCi Updates for February 2017**

**Amber Lehmann**  
**SCCi Marketing Manager**

2017 is SCCi's 26<sup>th</sup> year of conserving caves. We had an incredible year in 2016, celebrating our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary milestone, and want to continue the success we had through 2017. There is a lot going on behind the scenes and in the pipeline that we want to share with you.

As part of our milestone year last year, we had tremendous exposure to local media, potential donors, and the general public. Our mission this year was to tell as many people as possible the SCCi story. As a growing organization, it was imperative to us to spread the word about who we are and what we do (and why we do it) to people beyond the caving community. It is the folks beyond the caving community that will help expand our market so that we can continue to keep and purchase caves for the caving community. We will continue spreading the message throughout 2017 and beyond.

In 2016, our inaugural bluegrass concert fundraiser titled Bats, Beer, and Bluegrass held at Frick's Cave Preserve was a huge success for us, exposing us to an audience who had never even heard of us before! Of a sold out show of 250 people, about half were new to SCCi. That was a direct result of great media coverage, a social media push, and word of mouth. That event raised over \$22K for our Stewardship Endowment Fund, which ensures that our caves are protected and managed forever. We are holding that event again this year on September 16. We will start publicizing this event soon via the grotto circuit and social media.

Speaking of stewardship, I wanted to take a few moments

### **SCCi Corner continued:**

much-anticipated acquisition, but it's one of the most important aspects of what SCCi does. Without stewardship, we could not continue to manage, improve, and maintain the beautiful preserves that we own. From improving roads and parking, to making sure trash is eliminated, to protecting historic areas of our caves – all of this is necessary to ensuring the life of these preserves for perpetuity. My favorite saying is that if absolutely everyone decided to stop caving (which we know is hard to believe), we STILL have to manage and maintain our preserves. After we have purchased them, the expenses do not end. Much like buying a house or individual property – the initial purchase price isn't the only amount of money one will put into that house or property in its lifetime. We have to make sure that the property we purchase can remain available and accessible to cavers and visitors for as long as we own it.

Speaking of purchases, SCCi recently purchased 41 acres to add to the Vahalla Cave Preserve in North Alabama. The purchase increases the size of Valhalla to 186 acres and was the last privately owned tract of land inside of Western end of Goshen Hollow. All of that area is now owned by either the State of Alabama's Forever Wild program or SCCi.

The land had not been logged since the early 1970s and contains very valuable timber. The Woolridge family had been in negotiations to license logging on the land that would have detrimental to SCCi's property and would have destroyed the access road. SCCi negotiated a price of \$60,000 based on the Wooldridge family's share of the potential timber proceeds.

Sometimes opportunities come up unexpected that help us protect the caves we cherish.

Also in 2017, we anticipate some exciting improvements and changes that we know will propel SCCi to the next level. First of all, we are looking to fill several seats on our board of directors. If you have thought about serving on the board, but just haven't for whatever reason – make 2017 the year you do! If you are interested in serving in any capacity, please let us know! You can email me at [amber.lehmann@scci.org](mailto:amber.lehmann@scci.org). We are looking for hard-working and dedicated individuals with an array of different talents. If you think you can bring something awesome to the table, speak up!

Our online permitting system will also be a huge milestone for us in 2017. We have heard from many of you already about how easy it is to use. Every preserve will be on the online permitting system in January of the new year. I like to consider this system a "reservation" system more than a permit system though. It ensures that you can reserve the preserve for your group without the risk of having three

to talk about that. I have spoken at several grotto meetings and with many supporters about stewardship over the past year. It's not nearly as exciting to talk about as a more **SCCi Corner continued:** groups on the same day. I also helps us understand who is visiting our preserves, and solves the challenges of liability. When we were a small non-profit, it wasn't as important to know who was visiting our preserves, but with more than 2,000 visitors a year to just a single preserve, it is more important than ever that we know who is there. There are many reasons why SCCi needs a system like this one for its preserves.

In closing, we hope that you continue to support SCCi by way of membership, donations, planned giving, or volunteering. We cannot do what we do without your support.

## **NSS CORNER**

**2017 NSS Convention:** This year's convention will be held in Rio Rancho, NM. ([more info](#))

**Geophysical Applications to the Karst of Edwards Aquifer:** By Mustafa Saribudak-This webinar presents resistivity imaging (2D and 3D), natural potential (NP) and other geophysical data (conductivity, magnetic, induced polarization, and seismic refraction data) collected over the karstic features of the Edwards Aquifer of southcentral Texas. Features include caves and conduits filled with air and/or sediments, sinkholes and major faults. More than 16 years of experience using geophysical techniques in karst terrains has proven that the best methods are a combination of NP and resistivity techniques. Several case studies of resistivity and NP methods applied to the karst terrains and to major faults are discussed in detail. Mustafa Saribudak, Ph.D. is the President of Environmental Geophysics Associates (EGA). He received a master's degree in geology and a doctorate in geophysics from Istanbul Technical University, Turkey. He came to the University of Houston in 1989 to work on a project funded by the National Science Foundation. During the last sixteen years he has conducted geophysical surveys at more than 300 sites in the U.S and Central America, and has published numerous papers in geophysical and environmental journals. ([article](#))

## **CAVING IN THE NEWS**

**Microbes Survived Inside Giant Cave Crystals For Up to 50,000 Years:** Microbes found stowed inside giant crystals in caves in Chihuahua, Mexico, may have survived there for tens of thousands of years. Extremophiles hint at possible resilience of life beyond Earth. ([article](#))

**Underwater Cave Discovery Features Stunning Red Coral Garden:** "Cave b" harbors the most dazzling population of red coral in the Mediterranean, but its discovery calls for renewed conservation efforts. ([article](#))

**Crystal Ice Cave is a Treat Not Many People Get to See:** Crystal Ice Cave is one of the most spectacular places at Lava Beds National Monument — a place steeped in mystery, magic and ice — but few visitors ever see it, due to it being locked up year around to preserve the fragile ice features. ([article](#))

**After 60 Years, Archaeologists Find New Dead Sea Scrolls Cave:** Last week, an excavation led by Hebrew University and the Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA) announced the discovery of a new scroll-related cave at Qumran, in the West Bank—the 12th, to be exact, and the first to be successfully excavated in more than 60 years. ([article](#))