

# Central Ohio Grotto

A P R I L 1 9 9 0  
C O G  
S Q U E A K S

fashioned way, on paper, are also welcome.

For membership information please contact Denise Damon or Bill Walden.

## Grotto Information

## MEETING NOTICE

The Central Ohio Grotto meets the first Monday of the odd numbered months or the first Friday of the even numbered months, 8:00 PM at the 1st Unitarian Church, 93 West Weisheimer Rd., Columbus, Ohio 43214. Meeting notices are published in the Squeaks, the Grotto newsletter. Please call any officer for meeting information or caving trips.

For the next three months COG meetings will be held in the Petunia room of the Unitarian Church on Weisheimer Road in Clintonville. Meeting time is 8:00 PM on the first Monday of the odd months and the first Friday of the even months. Got it! The meeting schedule is as follows:

COG officers and committee chairmen are:

Friday April 6, 1990 8:00 PM  
Monday May 7, 1990 8:00 PM  
Friday June 1, 1990 8:00 PM  
No July or August Meetings are scheduled.

Darrel Adkins	Chairman	419-253-2320
Chuck Daehnke	Vice Chairman	614-263-7011
Don Conover	Secretary	513-372-7581
Karen Walden	Treasurer	614-965-2942
Bill Walden	Squeaks Ed.	614-965-2942
Paul Unger	Boone Karst	513-839-4258
Don Conover	Ex. Comm.	513-372-7581
Kathy Welling	Ex. Comm.	614-766-6381
Jay Kessel	Ex. Comm.	513-631-6345
Denise Damon	Membership	614-268-9558
Richard Hand	Library	614-885-5823
Mike Gray	Vertical	513-276-2436

If you have any questions or comments, or **need a ride** please contact a COG officer.

## SURVEYING AND ROPE CLIMBING

Saturday April 7, 1990 starting at 1:00 PM the COG will have a rope climbing practice and surveying training at the home of Bill and Karen Walden. (And perhaps kayaking on the mighty Little Walnut Creek.)

The official grotto address is:

Central Ohio Grotto  
C/O Bill Walden  
1672 South Galena Road  
Galena, Ohio 43021  
614-965-2942

One or two ropes will be set up in Bill's barn for climbing practice and surveying practice will be done on a course set up in the woods behind the Walden's property.

The official newsletter of the Central Ohio Grotto is the COG Squeaks. Subscription is \$10 per year. The COG Squeaks is published 10 times each year. Articles may be reprinted by other NSS member organizations provided that the author and COG Squeaks are given credit. Please contact Bill Walden regarding the COG Squeaks. Articles, poetry, fiction, and information related to cave exploration and study are welcome. Articles submitted on disk are most welcome. I can read IMB PC-DOS or OS-9 DOS (any convention) and probably other formats including CPM. Please identify format. Articles may also be transmitted via modem or fax. Please contact Bill Walden. Articles submitted the old

If you don't have vertical experience but would like to learn please plan to attend. There should be enough equipment around to share and have a chance to try several types of ascenders. Hopefully we will work with prussik knots, Jumars, and Gibbs ascenders. We'll try to have awls available for stitching webbing. No rappelling. (Cavers must learn to climb first!)

The COG has been using Sylvia compasses for surveying as they are inexpensive, hold up well in the worst of conditions, and provide good accuracy. Learn to survey with these easy to use compasses and to make an accurate sketch map as you survey.

It is suggested that if you even think you

might want to try Paul Unger's kayaks bring a change of clothes! (You might want to bring a change of clothes anyhow.)

At approximately 6:00 PM we'll break for dinner. Food will be provided. However, in the COG tradition, there will be a donation bowl set out. Please help pay for the food and drinks you consume. Also, when entering the house, please remove your boots or shoes to help keep from tracking mud and gravel into the house.

**A Note From Your Chairman**  
Darrel Adkins

I would like to take this opportunity to remind everyone that Easter weekend is coming. This weekend has become a traditional caving event for the members of the COG.

A number of the members plan to venture to Pulaski county Kentucky to participate in different caving projects. Some of these projects are in need of additional people and any assistance would be gladly welcome. This would be a good chance for some of our newer members to find out what we have been doing.

The projects that are planned will involve, surveying in a rapidly expanding and very promising new cave, surveying a new lead in an extensive, well known system, and digging and ridge walking in hollow that has yet to yield the cave system that should be there.

If any of this sounds to you like a good way to spend the weekend please plan to attend. If you have any questions feel free to call me, Andy Franklin, Paul Unger, or Bill Walden or talk to us at the April 6 meeting.

## ARTICLES

### **SINKHOLE SWALLOWS FIELDHOUSE!**

May connect to cave system!  
by Louis Simpson

Nineteen years of kitchen sink drainage, compounded by recent excavation under the porch, including some blasting, have resulted in the collapse of the surface below the fieldhouse! You can still get

in the upper levels, but they are now at ground level. The trapdoor entrance in the bedroom is providentially located over the debris-filled sinkhole below. Efforts are under way to remove the remains of the meringue-shaped former concrete basement floor and the crushed carcass of the defunct refrigerator. "We can see darkness below, and you can hear water dripping," said Jay Kessel. "And there is a slight airflow, blowing out on a cold day." Paul Unger, when he heard the news reminded us, "I always said you could pour five gallons of water off the back porch and it disappeared into the ground." There have been numerous sightings of cave crickets in the building in the past, but we always thought the crickets just came out of a known entrance, like Screaming Willy's. The new Fieldhouse Entrance, if and when we connect it, will make the seventeenth entrance to the 24-plus mile Sloan's Valley System.

### **Potential Rescue Needed** by Andy Franklin

We had a potential repeat of the Ohio University rescue several weeks ago on the weekend of March 16-17. Unfortunately, this situation was caused by a caver giving a Boy Scout troop maps of Sloan's and directions to the Fieldhouse and then sending them to Kentucky on their own.

We arrived at the Fieldhouse late on Friday night in a torrential downpour. It had been raining all week there (about 5 inches we learned later). The creek was flowing very full, which is always a sign of high water in the cave.

The driveway was blocked at Dalton's trailer by two Ohio vehicles parked side by side. We parked the car and began to unload our gear. We were quite concerned since we did not (1) recognize the cars, (2) there was no notice on the sign-out board, and (3) the cave was potentially in flood.

I began looking into the cars to try to figure out what was going on when I discovered an older man sleeping in one. We awakened him and learned that he was waiting on the surface for the scouts. He said that they had been given maps to the

cave and directions to it by 'someone in Dayton'. He did not know who, but the scoutmaster (in the cave) did. He first asked if he was at a state park, and later said he thought the fieldhouse area was abandoned. That was why they blocked the freshly graveled road.

He told us that the scouts had entered 'that hole over there' (Screaming Willie's entrance) and were expected out of the cave about 1PM the next day. When asked if the scouts had any experience, particularly vertical work, he said that 'some had been rapelling once or twice'! Suddenly we had the prospect of a group of kids in perhaps the most complex section of the cave during a week of heavy precipitation. He was not terribly clear as to the plans of the scouts, but he was to 'shout down to them' at 9AM. At this point it was difficult to not be hostile to the man.

There was nothing we could do at that time except wait. We were the first group down following the MVG meeting. As cars arrived we told people to get some sleep since there was the likelihood for a rescue in the morning.

It turns out that the plans for the scouts were to camp in the cave (where in that section I don't know) and to come back up their rope. Their vertical gear consisted of a dynamic 11mm rope, two figure 8's, and one one-size-fits-all Frog rig. They were teaching most of the scouts how to ascend as they exited the cave. At least they did not try to connect to Minton!

This situation made those of us involved extremely angry. We did learn who gave the scouts the maps and the directions. However, this publication is not the place to name names and point fingers. It is absolutely reprehensible to send a group like that unsupervised into a cave. The only knowledge that they had was the map, and they did not even think to consider the weather. It is particularly frightening to allow them to go vertical when they did not have the training, experience, or equipment to do it.

We may have turned off the scouts with our concern. Quite frankly, it bordered on

being hostile at times. That is a risk that we take, but we had no other means of expressing the gravity of the situation. The man at the surface was able to communicate that the experienced cavers did not think it was safe for them to be down there. My anger is not totally at the scouts - they were simply ignorant of what they were doing. The person who directed them there, however,.....

This was also the third time in the past four months that we have been involved with scouts on an extremely short notice. The prior times the caver who was taking the scouts backed out at the last minute. **IF YOU ARE TAKING SCOUTS CAVING BE SURE YOU CAN FULFILL YOUR COMMITMENT.** This means providing training, if needed, being sure that you have enough experienced cavers for tour guides, and making sure that the trip is within the abilities of your group. Please do not give people directions to Sloan's if you cannot accompany them.

## Trip Reports

### A Long Labor of Love of Long Labor

March 17-18, 1990

by Andy Franklin

The Pumpkin Hollow plot is thickening - just like the callouses on my hands. Some days I try to remember that caving is about cavorting in the great underground, not creating it! But, the secret to success is perseverance, so we will press onward and downward.

The goal for the weekend was to penetrate the new hole we had been digging at. As usual, it had been raining all week, and was raining as we arrived at Sloan's. Kathy and I set up the tent on some high ground after talking with a scout leader who was there with a group already in the cave. We went to sleep prepared for a potential rescue in the morning. Please read the accompanying article for more details.

We spent the morning working on clearing the creekbed and the culvert under the driveway to prevent more washouts of the road. Between this, making sure the

scouts were going to be OK, and breakfast we did not arrive at Pumpkin until 1 PM.

The insurgence was flowing from all the rain, but it was only about half the volume as the last time. Donny and Paul Conover worked on clearing more rocks from around the Slab, Barry Welling worked immediately beyond the Slab, and Kathy and I went to the Sump to learn more about the movement of the water.

As expected, the water was flowing into the Sump. What was not expected was that the water from the passage beyond there (see last month's article for the 'map') was flowing back towards the Sump. We decided not to press forward to see the source of that water since our way was guarded by a 6" crayfish (terrestrial) and a fist-sized toad.

Before heading out I probed the length of the Sump. It has varied from being 4-5' before pinching to being completely filled with gravel. I found I could fit my entire body down the length, which is more open than we have ever seen it. Our strategy to open the cave had been to do what we could to increase both the volume and velocity of water entering the Slab. This has had the unfortunate side effect of continually keeping the Sump plugged with rocks. We are hoping that the cave is opening somewhere downstream that will eventually allow the Sump to be clear. We cannot dig, since the next flow into the cave will negate the work to that point.

However, since the Sump appeared to be more open than usual, we embarked on a new strategy. From the Sump back out beyond the entrance we built a series of small dams. The theory is to slow the water so that it does NOT carry more rocks into the Sump. This may enable us to open it on the next trip.

Now that we were good and wet it was time to move to the other entrance-to-be. We looked around the area some more, and found another promising site about 50' from the dig. Barry then found a large sinkhole on basically the same north-south line of the series that contains the dig, but the next gully over. He, Donny, and Paul worked on it, Kathy and Sam worked on

the near hole, and I continued digging in my lead.

Kathy and Sam's dig had air movement, but the primary obstacle was the large flat rock that covered it. After two days of work they were able to learn that the lead drops into a 4 to 8" wide rock-to-rock crevice. Again, we are thwarted.

Barry's lead is extremely promising. It still requires more sledgehammer work, but it is almost enterable at this point.

My lead? Well, let's just say that if some day I screw up and get sentenced to hard labor I will have had a lot of practice. The hole is currently 8' deep. I keep getting teased by voids appearing, but after uncovering and breaking the rocks, I just have more dirt. The top sides of the rocks show the fluting evidenced in pits, and the bottoms have the sharp points caused by solutioning. I am not sure about air flow, but the inside/outside temperature differential was not significant.

The plan at this time is to keep plugging away at these digs. There is too much cave in the Hollow to ignore. The next trip will be April 21-22. Call me at (614) 766-6381 or (513) 767-2279 (days) if you are interested in helping.

#### **Florida Caving - for Air Breathers!**

by Kathy Welling

The weekend of March 10, the Tampa Bay Area Grotto (TBAG) hosted the Spring Board of Governors' meeting. Along with warm weather and a beautiful camping area, we were given the opportunity to visit a privately owned cave which has been closed for the past fifteen years.

My first reaction was one of surprise - are there caves in Florida that don't require diving gear? I figured it was a good chance to find out, especially since the cave could end up closed again if land owner relations break down.

On Sunday morning, I joined John and Pat Scheltens, Paul and Lee Stevens, Bill Bussey, Ann Harmon, and Aida Behtijarevic for our trip to Briar Cave. We were led

from the campground to the general area by Jerry Johnson, who then introduced us to Bill Birdsall, our trip leader. After the usual last minute stop at the shopping center (bathrooms, batteries and the like) we drove the last mile or so to the cave.

This turned out to be in the middle of a horse farm (the reason for touchy land owner relations)! This was fine with Pat, since she planned to wait outside anyway, and promised to divide her time between her book and horse watching. The rest of us geared up, being reminded that this was a Southern Cave, with warmer temperatures than Yankees are accustomed to experiencing. We proceeded to the gated entrance, and down a fairly constricted drop, to the main passageway.

After a bit of crawling and scrambling we began to encounter wider and taller passageway, although still a far cry from Kentucky borehole. There was virtually no vandalism, with the exception of occasional muddy hand prints on otherwise white formations. The Florida Speleological Survey is making bi-monthly restoration trips to remove even this damage. There were several crawlways that were made even more difficult by the numerous soda straws on the ceiling. A frequent accompaniment to the Oohs and Aahs was the warning "Watch your fanny!" as we followed each other down the passageway.

After a bit of this, we began to understand the warning about the heat, and several of us asked when we would get to the water part! Soon we did, beginning with an underground stream of a beautiful blue green tint, and sudden depths. Those who stayed by the edge got to watch as several of the more venturesome took sudden swims. It is a real surprise to hit water that feels good, even when not wearing a wet suit! The water was not really warm, but certainly not as cold as I am used to, and quite pleasant to move through.

We retraced our steps a little ways, and took another passage to the beginning of a larger stream. This was the real swimming test, as the water went from knee-deep to chest-deep to over-the-head-deep as we

moved down the passage. Paul and I managed to cling to the wall, and avoided actually swimming. Aida stayed behind at the pool room, and the rest swam for it. The walls and ceiling in this part of the cave were white, and crusted with fossilized shells and sea creatures. Sand dollars protruded from the ceiling, and everything was fragile. We took great care not to leave muddy hand prints, and to keep clear of the ceiling. The swim was fairly short, and then we were wading again. The floor was sandy mud, and staying in one spot meant sinking fairly quickly to above the boot-tops. At the end of the passage we found still more sand dollars, and a crab claw - black against the white of the ceiling - with pincers intact.

We proceeded on back toward the pool room, and Paul and I once again decided to try the wall route. I was in the rear, and took an unplanned dip when the section of wall I was clinging to broke away without warning, dumping me into the deepest portion of the passage. (This was a piece about the size of my day pack!) Bill turned around in time to see my green helmet disappear below the surface, and guided me by voice to a large rock in the middle of the passage. Luckily, I was using electric light, so I didn't have to fight darkness as well as dampness.

We rejoined Aida, took a break for lunch (while I drained) and then proceeded on to see "the pretty stuff". This turned out to be several rooms and passages with very nice formations, many of which are quite white amid red-brown walls and ceilings. We all stayed on the trail, and kept our hands to ourselves! Several areas were roped off with flagging tape, signifying areas undergoing restoration. We could still see down the passageways, and admired the formations from a safe distance. One room had formations that sparkled - I don't know if from mica or silicon or what, but it was pretty impressive!

Eventually we had to head out, taking a slightly different route. This took us chimneying over a water-filled canyon, at which point our guide warned us that the limestone was chalky, and not reliable for

bearing full weight (I could have used the warning earlier!). We met the next group on their way in, and after another short stretch or wading and a climb up a cable ladder, we were once again at the climb up. This was negotiated successfully, and we regrouped at the cars for our "after" picture, chiding Aida for having changed clothes too quickly.

After changing clothes, and exchanging some good (and BAD) jokes, the Scheltens, Stevens and Bussey headed for Orlando. Ann Harmon brought me back to the campground for my gear, and then took me to the Tampa airport for the flight home.

The Florida cavers have taken great pains to regain and control access to a truly fine cave. They are expending significant energy in restoration work. They are more than happy to show off their cave, but have a written agreement with the landowner limiting them to one trip a month, pre-scheduled, with a limit to both the number of vehicles and the number of people. Anyone who wants to see this cave first-hand should contact the area cavers well in advance, to determine if their trip will coincide with yours, and to determine whether or not space is available. The landowner gave a special exception for the weekend of the BOG meeting, for which I and other Board members are very grateful.

### **Pumpkin Hollow**

March 17 & 18, 1990

by Sam Franklin

Saturday afternoon Dad, Kathy, Donny, Paul, Barry, and I went to Pumpkin Hollow. When we got there the stream was flowing very hard. I could only go to the slab. Out of the cave Chris and I built a dam. In the cave Donny and Paul had their own dam. It helped a lot for Barry who was trying to dig under the slab.

Up on the hill we found two new caves. I found one of the two. Barry found the other one. We managed to break the big sledgehammer by the time we gave up on it. Meanwhile at Dad's dig he found two new holes. Both holes are about a foot wide and six inches in depth, not very big.

### **A NEW DISCOVERY**

by Darrel Adkins

I finally got back to Kentucky on March 10th, my last trip was New Years weekend. We arrived at the cabin at around 11:00 pm.

Mike Crider was with me this weekend, he is a recent graduate of OSU and fairly new to caving. He has done some vertical work with Dick Maxey but this was to be his first survey trip.

Everyone was up and ready to go by 9:00 Saturday morning. Greg Erisman wanted to do some digging on a cliff face where I had found some holes New Years weekend and he had gone and looked at later. I liked this idea because this area was close to the end of a passage in High Line cave.

Upon arriving at the site Greg ignored all the holes I had seen and indicated a six inch high crack as the place to dig. He said that when he had been there last, this had been blowing a large amount of air. Of course I had totally ignored this crack when I was there before. Oh well, live and learn they say.

Greg started digging while Mike looked at the other openings and I went down hill to look around. I returned about ten minutes later to find Greg ready to go in. He crammed his body into the crack and wormed his way through. Greg's feet were still sticking out when he said that the floor dropped down and that it got big. I asked how big and he replied real big. He said he could see a room with a passage going out of the back of it. Greg slid on in and said he would widen the opening some from the inside while I went and got Mike.

I quickly returned with Mike and slid in. I emerged into a 35 ft. wide by 20 ft. high room, at the top of a mud bank, near the ceiling. A 25 ft. wide passage could be seen leaving the back. Mike followed me in and we started surveying.

After just a few hours we had around 700 ft. of mostly walking passage surveyed. This may sound very good but, unfortunately, each new passage quickly ended and there are no obviously promising

leads left.

On the way out we looked at some small side leads off of the main passage. In one of these was an area that looked to me as if it were an old bear den. This would have to be very old or the bear came in a different way than we did. Our way was to small for it.

After leaving the cave we called it quits because it was late in the afternoon and we had not brought the equipment to enter High Line cave.

Sunday morning we returned to our new discovery that would later be named Over Look cave. We did a surface survey from this cave to High Line cave so we could see how the two cave are related to each other.

Upon completing this, Mike and I jumped into my car and headed home.

This little story is not over yet. On Saturday, March 24th, I received a call from Greg Erisman. His brothers, Mike and Pat had come down that weekend and he had taken them to Over Look cave. While exploring the small side passages off the main passage, they managed to find and survey a connection route to the end of the A survey in High Line cave. This added approximately another 700 ft. to surveyed passage in what is now High Line/Over Look cave bringing the total to an approximate 8200 ft.

## APRIL FOOLS

### Feifledom

A story about that newest hole in the ground;... the fieldhouse.

incidentally...  
by Jay Kessel

By Bill, I heard a tale the other day, one about this hole in the ground, that led to another path to the depths below, somewhere in a place called the Grand Central Spaghetti of Sloan's Valley fame. The man was talking about the fieldhouse, the old converted chicken coop, before that, a springhouse. However, he was describing, (or at least inquiring about)

the demise of that of institution.

Well, being the current manager of the fieldhouse, I felt impelled to tell the truth about its renewal and growth.

Renewal has come about as a result of growth. Growth is in the form of donations, money, and materials. The fieldhouse bank account, reflecting the donations of the past two years, has increased from \$285.00 in August, 1988 to approximately \$600.00 as of this writing. In tandem, with growing bank accounts came energy and space budgeting. This thinking, of course, led to the destruction and renovation of the fieldhouse walls, complete with new insulation, fiberglass and carpeting. Space budgeting called for increased supplies, given the increased population of cavers visiting the site. This led to the waterproofing, or at least an attempt to waterproof, the basement. An addition under the front porch has been gestating in the last three years.

Well you all might, or should I say will hear that the Sloan's Valley fieldhouse has taken a fall down the hill upon which it was built. Well, you might have heard it wrong. Yes, it is true that a long, hard rain had fallen and with it the main support under the fieldhouse. But, thanks to the dedicated efforts of a couple of people, Jean Franklin and Harry Tuch (I conned them into helping me), we were able to prevent any significant damage.

Since that time, about a month ago at this writing, Ed Siebert and I have replaced two four by four's for the original that washed out (it seems this concrete post was once a gatepost). Forms, inside and out, have been constructed. Rebar for reinforcement of the walls has been donated and is ready to be installed. Drain tile and gravel for controlled drainage and waterproofing have been donated and are also ready to be installed. The concrete will be poured as soon as the winter weather ends. The new room will be the home of the furnace, the lawnmower, and hopefully a shower.

However, there is one item that I might add. This item concerns the front steps.

This front stairway has been removed as a unit, unharmed for the time being. Only after the walls have been poured, will the stairway be reattached. The stairway will differ only from the days of old in that one will climb the steps at a 270 degree angle from the original. The top of the stairs will be adjacent to the front door (so you won't trip over those zombies in the pre-dawn hours of the day).

Incidentally, new bunk beds for the bedroom were donated by Shawn Gaherty and built on the weekend of March 17-18, 1990, by Randy Hare, Marvin, and COG's Barry Welling. Steps from the barn to the fieldhouse were built by Luci Franklin, Doug Stecko, and me on the same weekend.

Thanks...that's all for now. And now for some caving.

### Aside

#### Be Prepared with Bioluminescent Condoms by Louis Simpson

Custom Condoms has come out with a glow-in-the-dark condom, called Knight Lights. Just what the well-prepared caver needs. You say you carry flashlights for backups? Well, how do you hold onto a flashlight while climbing a wall or a rope? With one of these babies, you can have both hands free. The directions say to activate by holding it close to a light bulb. The bright green light lasts for fifteen minutes, which is ample time for most people to find their way out of a short tunnel. They cost 2.50 each and aren't re-usable. Makes me want to sing, "This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine."

### Congratulations

To COG member Janice Campbell on being ordained Sunday, March 18, 1990 at All Saints Evangelical Lutheran Church in Worthington. Jan will be the new Pastor at Salem Evangelical Lutheran Church in Ellerton, Ohio. The church address is:

4573 South Union Road  
Miamisburg, Ohio 45342  
513-866-4436

## Announcements

### Wedding Date

Andy Franklin and Kathy Welling are planning to wed May 5th. Please watch for specifics in the May issue of the Squeaks.

### Biological Treasures

April 12th at 7:00 PM Jill Yeager will be giving a talk titled CAVE DIVING FOR BIOLOGICAL TREASURES at the Glen Helen Nature Preserve in Yellow Springs, Ohio

