



COG SQUEAKS

GROTTO INFORMATION

The Central Ohio Grotto of the National Speleological Society meets the second Friday of each month at the Worthington Presbyterian Church. The Church is on the north west corner of the square in Worthington, Ohio (intersection of High Street and SR 161). Meetings are in the Woodrow Room at 8:00 p.m. Please contact a grotto officer or committee person for information and caving trips.

OFFICERS (NSS)

CHAIRMAN	Pat Kelly (38938)	614-885-1270
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YOUTH	Pat Kelly (38938)	614-885-1270
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(Pat is responsible for Boy Scout activities with the COG.)

BOONE KARST	Dick Maxey (28034)	614-888-2285
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SQUEAKS

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The COG Squeaks is the official newsletter of the Central Ohio Grotto. Subscription is \$10.00 per year per address. The Central Ohio Grotto publishes the COG Squeaks ten times per year. The club welcomes articles on cave exploration and study, cave trip reports, cave fiction, cave poetry, cave related cartoons, or cave related art. Please send to Bill Walden via mail, disk, e-mail, or fax. Free disks and mailers are available from Bill at the meetings. Contact Bill for information on modem or fax transmission.

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KARST CALENDAR

Feb. 10	Grotto meeting 8:00 p.m. at the Presbyterian Church in Worthington, Ohio.
Feb. 17	Grotto caving trip.
Feb. 25	Climbing practice. See article on page * by Andy Franklin.
Feb. 25-26	NCRC Basic Orientation Course, Carter Caves State Park, Olive Hill, KY. Contact Bruce Bannerman at 304-743-5455
March 10	Grotto meeting 8:00 p.m. at the Presbyterian Church in Worthington, Ohio.
March 17	Grotto caving trip.
March 17-19	Spring NSS BOG Meeting, Cincinnati Museum of Natural History, Cincinnati, OH. Contact Bill Thoman 513-251-7357.
April 14	Grotto meeting 8:00 p.m. at the Presbyterian Church in Worthington, Ohio.
April 21	Grotto caving trip.
April 22-23	NCRC Basic Orientation Course, Eastern Kentucky University, Richmond Kentucky. Contact F KU Division of Special Programs, 606-622-1444, or Dennis Roberson, 606-272-3776.
May 12	Grotto Meeting 8:00 p.m. at the Presbyterian Church in Worthington, Ohio
May 17	Grotto caving trip.
May 26-29	Speleofest '95, Camp Carlson, Fort Knox, Kentucky. Contact Glenn Driskill, 334 Martin Road, Rineyville, KY 40162 502-862-4054.
June 9	Grotto meeting 8:00 p.m. at the Presbyterian Church in Worthington, Ohio.
June 16	Grotto caving trip.
July 14	Grotto meeting.
July 17-21	NSS Convention, Blacksburg, Virginia. Ask for registration form at grotto meeting.

Trip Reports

Farmer's System Thanksgiving Weekend by Steve Aspery

Personel: Darrell Adkins, Steve Aspery, Greg Erisman, Pat Erisman, George Hagen, and Alice Woznack

The weekend started on a note of concern as we met at the Franklin's and learned of Katie Walden's accident. We headedsouth with fair skies and a forecast of continued good

weather, but a couple of hours later it began raining and continued to do so for the rest of the day. So much for our plans of painting the outhouse, and so much for a reliable forecast.

We decided instead to do some ridgewalking to check on an sinkhole shown on the topo at a surprisingly high elevation on a ridge. After looking around for a while it became apparent that someone was quite confused. All we found was a small, shallow, manmade water hole. Looking around farther, we did find an old homestead foundation.

Friday evening we camped at Erismans near the infamous outhouse and future fieldhouse. Dinner was smoked pork chops and leftover Walden beans, a delicious combination.

Saturday morning we went to our projects. Andy and Kathy decided to check Franklin's Doom and a new entrance that Greg had shown them. The rest of us went to do survey work in the Farmer's system through a new entrance that had been recently opened. The entrance was smaller than anything I had been in as it had been dug open. We entered feet first and squirmed into a decorated but dead chamber about four feet high. As it quickly became tighter it was difficult to avoid the small formations and I suspect they won't last long with continued traffic. At this point the passage became low enough that you couldn't turn your head, another first for me. Here is where I realized my error. As a rookie, I had no idea how fast Greg Erismans could move through any passage. As the passage became a tube twisting downward, I lost sight of the Erismans and felt very alone in the tightest passage I had ever been in. I paused at a wide spot to collect myself and instead began to wonder why I was here. We were no more than 100 feet into the cave and I began to consider turning around. I could only wonder if all of Farmer's System was like this. Would I really enjoy spending the rest of the day squirming through stuff like this? Is this why I left my family on Thanksgiving weekend? If I backed out, would I quit caving, would I care?

Fortunately at this point Alice caught up and said all the right things. Although she had no idea how much further this continued, it was her first time in this entrance too, she pointed out that everyone got spooked once in a while and that there was nothing wrong with backing out if you were uncomfortable. At this my mind again became rational and we pushed on. It wasn't nearly as bad as it looked and we were soon on a ledge overlooking a decorated 20' chamber. We all climbed down using a handline and squeezed through to a spacious passage. The tight stuff was done.

We crossed Suicide ledge and enjoyed some good walking passage before beginning the descent. We climbed and chimneyed down about 100' through various passages 3-4' wide to reach the bottom of the main passage. From here it was basic cave with plenty of mud, and lots of intersecting passage. After a couple of hours it became hands and knees over gravel and we spotted some cave crayfish marooned in a pool with a 4 or 5" outside crayfish who had been washed in. At the sight of increasing standing water I began to worry about the wetsuit that Greg had been lugging along the whole trip. I was assured that we wouldn't need one.

Finally we reached the area that we had hoped to survey only to find that it was still flooded and sumped. We stopped to eat a bite of lunch and spent some time poking side leads. Some of these even an Erisman had never seen.

George headed into a small tube to check it out, but eventually ended up back in already surveyed passage. It had looked promising but was now disappointing. George said that it kept going from this intersection and he started grunting and groaning away again. Greg and I discussed that one of us should go with him, but Alice finally offered to join George in his little adventure. I began working along the known passage, certain that they would be joining us again soon.

After finding nothing I headed back to join Greg, Pat, and Darrell who were all enjoying a very enviable break. We sat and rested enjoying the peace only occasionally interrupted by the muffled labors of George and Alice.

After about 15 minutes we began to wonder about them. From what we could tell, there was no turning around in that passage. We wondered what might be up but also thought about the prospect of all of us having to back up through what apparently went some distance. They were either in trouble or had found something that we were sure didn't go anywhere anyhow. Darrell and I yelled for a report but got no reply and decided to check on them. We began our own labors working through the small tube which continued very consistently for 150'. Then we popped into a room through a tight muddy hole. This was virgin passage. When we called out we heard distant, excited yells from an obviously large room. George and Alice were climbing the substantial breakdown piles looking for the end of a room that looked like it belonged in Sloan's. When they stopped, they were mere specks of light.

At this point Darrell, being the true gentleman that he is, volunteered to go back and get the Erismans. The story from George and Alice was that the passage had indeed been too small to turn around in so they had pressed on just hoping to find a turnaround. When it got tight and muddy they considered backing out but George was sure that if he dug away some of the mud that they could turn around just ahead. Thus I believe this was named "George's Turnaround."

Once we were all together again, we decided to look around a bit to see what we had. The main room is probably 300-400' long and about 100' tall and wide. (These are only estimates, and I was excited) It has a couple of high passages and some potential through the breakdown in the end. The other direction became hands and knees with lots of mud. We climbed up to the easier of the upper passages and found areas that were obviously above lake levels, and eventually found some beautiful formations that had never been muddy. We also found cave pearls, flowstone, and a series of small rimstone dams running for about 100'.

Continuing through a subway like passage, we saw several solitary bats giving hope that another entrance might be found. We eventually came to a great breakdown room nearly filled with a single pile. Atop this pile was a flowstone dome, one side whitish, the other black, all atop black rock (which I am told is manganese) We all sat in wonder of it as

we had a snack and rested a bit. Opinions vary, but the base of this dome is probably between 25 and 30' in diameter.

We poked the edges of the room a bit as we still were finding airflow but found nothing. We had been in for about seven hours and it was time to head out. As we started out we discussed the guilt over having bopped without surveying, but it was quickly forgotten in our excitement. We all promised to come back soon to survey the find, but with the holidays we were uncertain when this might be.

The trip out was uneventful but tough. There is a lot of elevation to make up on the way out with enough short climbs and chimneys to really sneak up on you. The entrance section that had worried me on the way in was no problem but is very tiring. We were all glad to see the outside.

Saturday night it began raining again in earnest. Apparently the outhouse was not meant to be painted this weekend.

Trip Report - The Survey, new section of Farmer's System

Weekend of December 3-4, 1994 Darrel Adkins, Steve Aspery, Cheryl Early, Greg Erisman, Mike Erisman, Pat Erisman, Beth Hagen, George Hagen, Dick Maxey, Alice Wosniak (sp?), Sheila ?, Tim ? (Sorry, I don't know last names)

All of the members of the previous week's trip and a few additional hardy souls all managed to find time for a trip in the midst of the holiday season. It's amazing what a little excitement can do.

We drove down Friday night after a meal at Tia Mia's and a dessert stop at Denny's. I mention this only because Tim spent this weekend praying to the porcelain outhouse with apparent food poisoning while the rest of us enjoyed the caving.

Despite our late night arrival, we were up early and into the cave by late morning. We talked about how fortunate it was that Tim discovered his illness BEFORE going into the cave. The entrance section didn't bother me this time, but it took quite awhile to work eleven people through the tight spots and the handline, especially while we waited for Alice to run back to the car. As we sat waiting for the rest of the group I began to wonder about my decision to bring my photography gear, including a full size tripod. It was already proving bulky and difficult to carry.

This was a capable group including George's daughter Beth, who is 14, and we made good time getting to the new section despite our numbers. Our plan was to divide into three survey teams one of which would do some photography if time allowed. When we reached the new passage, Pat and Mike Erisman volunteered to survey the 150' tight, winding tube after we had all gone through. I believe that I heard a collective sigh of relief as they volunteered. That survey would be real work.

Through the tube I learned an inconvenient lesson as I doused my carbide lamp on the floor, found my striker full of mud, and was dragging my pack wrapped around my ankle.

Luckily George was still within earshot and waited to provide some light and lit me in a wide spot. I guess carrying a maglite would have its merits.

We stopped in the big room (to the best of my knowledge these haven't been named yet, sorry) to add layers and have a snack. Meanwhile, Darrell and Greg found a way up to the second upper passage using handlines. We set a point to tie the survey together and sent the first group (Darrell, Alice, George, Beth, Greg) into the newest upper passage and our group (Dick, Cheryl, Sheila, and myself) into the previously explored upper passage. Pat and Mike could then survey the big room and explore other leads.

In both upper passages we found raccoon tracks giving good hope for another entrance. (We were about two hours from the nearest known entrance and the tube passage is normally flooded). Both upper passages turned out to be significant and with the big room and a connecting passage found by Pat and Mike the team surveyed over 4000 feet total.

Our group did take some pictures of what we are calling Double-Dip Dome and a few miscellaneous formations, but for the most part didn't have time or energy for a lot of photography. This of course made the camera equipment feel all the heavier and bulkier for the rest of the trip.

After about nine hours, half the team elected to head out leaving Dick, Cheryl, Sheila, Darrell, and me. We finished Double-Dip survey and decided to begin surveying a promising side passage that no one had yet looked at. It was generally 3-4 feet high and 4-10 feet wide and continues on consistently. But after 12 hours, a few difficult stations sapped our enthusiasm. The passage does continue beyond the 300' that we surveyed and I'm told that it is trending across the valley.

On the way out we cleaned up a couple of tie-ins and called the survey done for the day. The trip out seemed long and never ending as I cursed my tripod at every opportunity. I also vowed to get better kneepads. Tired arms and legs made the climbs and chimneys slow for the group, but at 2 a.m. we emerged into the outside world.

Driving back to the campsite we found Alice sleeping in the truck with the frame bottomed out on a rock in the "road." After some gentle rocking and persuasion (the truck, not Alice) we got back to camp to enjoy Darrell's chili and our unusually comfortable sleeping bags.

Everybody put in great effort to make a productive trip. The teams, spending 11 and 15 hours in the cave, logged 141 man hours surveying over 4000' with going passage left for a return trip. It was a very good weekend.

Cave Creek
Pulaski County, Kentucky
November 25-27, 1994
by Louis Simpson

Dorothy Goepel, Harry Goepel, Bill McCuddy, Jim Odom,
Lou Simpson, Fred Zuck, & Bruce Warthman

On my November 5 trip to Punkin, the unconnected cave about a mile long that overlies the middle of Cave Creek Cave System, Ali Mirzamani pointed out the possibility of digging out a new entrance that would bypass the tight entrance crawls and squeezes. Since I have considered the cave dangerous because of the impossibility of a rescue, I thought I'd try to locate and excavate a new, larger entrance, approximately 75 feet northeast of the Punkin entrance. There ended up being four of us doing the dig on the Friday after Thanksgiving: Dorothy and Harry Goepel, Fred Zuck, and me. We brought digging tools: crowbar, sledge hammer, shovel, pick, mattock, hand sledge, chisel, and a come-along.

Fred and I rode down in Fred's Jeep. We stopped at the US Forest Service ranger station in Somerset to find out how to get a key to a gated trail in Cave Creek. We were told that the Memorandum of Understanding with cavers requires a written note from Paul Unger or Bill Walden. Fred's Jeep has plastic bumpers anyway, so we weren't that seriously interested in driving to Punkin. Bill Walden had sent me an E-mail message that he and Katie planned to go to Punkin some time during the weekend. Fred and I checked into the Planet Motel in Burnside, then headed to Rufus Hyden's. A note from Goepels indicated they had already checked into the motel, but we arrived at Rufus's ahead of them because they stopped to have lunch and buy cave food. Fred and I stopped at Dorothy Casada's in Sloan's Valley for cave food and I showed Fred the Post Office entrance of Sloan's Valley. Harry received permission from Rufus to drive our trucks down to the end of the field so we wouldn't have so far to carry the tools.

The four of us arrived at the Punkin entrance and soon marked the spot that the map said overlies the place in the cave where leaves and roots are visible. We looked around for any kind of opening. We found several. The deepest and most promising was one just down the hill from a tree, about ten feet from our survey point. It was about an arm's length deep and about big enough for an arm. We began digging. Of course, the hole filled with dirt and we had little to encourage us as we (actually, mostly Fred and Harry) dug a three-foot foxhole. Finally they hit rock. Below and beside this major rock were more rocks. Punching down with the crowbar, we were able to see a small black opening! It soon became apparent that we had indeed hit the cave! Soon we were dropping rocks and dirt down into the hole instead of lifting them out. The first large rock we had encountered turned out to be quite a large sandstone boulder. We tunneled vertically around it and decided to enter the cave at this point, even though we hadn't really opened the entrance up enough for it to be easy. But we were eager to scoop and map in the side passage where Harry, Ali, and I had turned back at a 16-foot drop on November 5. Two hunters with all-terrain vehicles stopped by during our digging. They said they planned to stay overnight in Jim Goldson's trailer nearby and that we should visit them on our way back.

Dorothy squeezed through the vertical hole first. She shouted in surprise at the depth she encountered. Harry entered next and tried to hammer at some remaining projections, but didn't have a very good foothold. Fred and I squeezed through, but everybody had to hold their arms over their head to fit. I doubted that I'd be able to get out that entrance. We found ourselves at the exact spot we had

hoped to reach! The large sandstone boulder was the same one we had seen on our trip earlier in November. We brought in ropes and a ladder so we could continue the survey down the 16-foot drop in the side lead nearby.

First we hacked some good footholds on a sloping ledge leading to the project area. We rigged the ladder to a rope that Harry looped around a rock 12 times but didn't even tie. I climbed down the sixteen-foot drop (actually a climbable drop--Harry and Aaron Belvo had climbed it in 1993) and we started surveying. The others descended and we continued, placing station 8 through 20 in two parallel, interconnecting levels. Dorothy pushed a low crawl over rimstone and said it might continue. There were about six other narrow canyons we couldn't get through in the area. Fred chimneyed across a high canyon and came out high above one of the rooms we had mapped. We left the cave at about 10 PM. I couldn't climb out the new entrance, but the others succeeded. It only took me ten minutes to reach the original entrance, only 75 feet away from the new one on the surface, but much more difficult underground. We stopped at the trailer, where there was a truck and a lighted Coleman lantern, but the hunters were not there, so we walked back to our trucks and returned to Rufus's. Rufus said the hunters had stopped by and were concerned about us since they hadn't seen us come out of the cave. We visited Rufus for a while and then returned to the Planet Motel.

Jim Odom and Bill McCuddy arrived at the Planet Motel about 1:30 AM, having stopped by the Crocketts' and the fieldhouse. The next morning all six of us had breakfast at King's restaurant in Burnside, then headed directly to Rufus's, not wanting to get a later start by hanging around the fieldhouse. Dorothy took a "before" picture of us with Rufus on the porch. We proceeded to hike to the South Firestone entrance, stopping to look at Hog Hole, Humongous Pit, and the two Punkin entrances. Lake level was 689, plenty low enough for a through trip between the Firestone entrances. Lake level is available by calling a recording at 1-800-965-5253. Following lake level, extensive advice on fishing is also provided. Jim said he felt good and that he didn't think his broken ribs would be a problem. When we arrived at the South Firestone entrance, Dorothy exclaimed "I smell human feces." It turned out to be Fred, who had stepped too near some white paper back of the trailer where the hunters had stayed. Since Fred needed to head back to Ohio by 3 PM and it was already nearly noon, we proceeded directly through the South Firestone entrance maze to Double Zero, the beginning of a tight series of crawls and maneuvers that eventually leads to the large sub-lake trunk, named the Cloaca. Cloaca is the name of the storm sewer in Paris, France. It is also the excretory organ of a frog.

We attempted to find the Hernia Bypass, which would avoid the wet, tight belly crawl called The Slough, but the talus slope near the Hernia Bypass had collapsed into the dig, making it impossible to go that way without extensive digging and stabilizing the talus. Harry started through the Slough, digging with a trowel to deepen the floor under the water. By the time I crawled through, it was plenty big enough, only a couple body lengths, and almost dry, thanks to other cavers soaking up most of the water. Another tight belly crawl along a wet, cobble-floored stream finally opened up into

walking and we reached a deep pit. I knew the way around this and we walked, crawled, climbed, crawled, climbed, crawled, and finally reached the twelve-foot "risky" down-climb for which I had brought a fifty-foot belay rope. The first five descended with the belay, stretching to reach the widely separated footholds. Dorothy was given a ride down the rope. Fred climbed last, looping the rope over a rock and through a hole. I belayed him from the bottom, then we retrieved the rope. All reached the booming Cloaca trunk, which extended as far as the eye could see in both directions.

Leaving the Cloaca closed to where we entered it, I led the group through more crawls in deep sub-lake mud, passing through the Red Room, Castration Crawl, and up a slope to the Monolith, a large rock reminiscent of the mysterious monoliths encountered in "2001: A Space Odyssey," where the ten commandments of caving, if written there, would begin "Take nothing but pictures. Don't cave alone. Carry three sources of light." Hmmm, I feel a top ten list coming on.

We hopped over pits and skirted The Jump by following the left edge and crossing a breakdown bridge. We moved quickly through the Bat Aerie, seeing only a few bats, and reached the series of sporting down-climbs in a narrow canyon with rushing water. We finally reached bottom in a big dome, followed the canyon drain, climbed up a level, stooped in mud for a while, and emerged in the main North Firestone passage. Not having time for a tour to the north because of Fred's deadline, we turned right, crawled a bit, and saw daylight! We're saved!

We hiked back to Rufus's passing Goldson's entrance. Goldson's has many hibernating bats and should be avoided until April. There are even numerous bats in the crawl leading out of the Goldson Room toward the Realm of Confusion. Dorothy took an "after" photo of us, much muddier than before, then we visited Rufus some more and returned to the Planet to get cleaned up for the Crocketts' annual caver Thanksgiving party. Rufus told us that Don Conover had stopped by and had told him Katie Walden was seriously injured in a head-on collision after slipping on black ice on I-76. Katie suffered two broken legs, a broken arm, a broken nose, and a brain contusion. She's still in MetroHealth Hospital in Cleveland. The driver of the other car was also seriously injured. Passengers in both cars were also injured, less seriously.

The Crocketts' Thanksgiving party was well-attended, as usual. Guests signed a register, all the Crocketts wore shirts with the name Crockett on them so you could recognize them, the food was served on time and was plentiful, and a bowl was passed for contributions. Doc Dougherty was there from Kutztown, Pennsylvania, with 20 college students. Total attendance was around a hundred, as usual. John Cole presented the John Cole award for the best screw-up to Jim DaCosta for surviving an electric shock. Jim Odom was runner up for his plunge through the barn loft floor earlier in the month. Greg Harrington was seriously injured in a fall in the Big Room in September and rescued, but the award is intended to be light-hearted, so it was not given to Greg. A group photo of an adult nature was taken in Garbage Pit. I arranged to go to South Firestone on Sunday with Bruce Warthman and ride to Ohio with him afterwards. Goepels

and I were tired and returned to the motel well before midnight.

On Sunday, Jim, Harry, Dorothy, and I enjoyed yet another breakfast at King's. Bill had stayed at the fieldhouse. Jim told us Don Conover had wrecked his jeep Saturday night when he slipped off a gravel road. Bruce joined us at Kings. We stopped by the barn and Crocketts. Don had some bleeding bandages on his face. With part of my equipment in three different cars, Bruce and I returned once more to Rufus Hyden's and explored leads fairly close to the South Firestone entrance, including a deep, sublake level. We half-heartedly pushed tight, muddy belly crawls down there, probably deeper than I had previously. There is a possibility of a connection down there to the Cloaca. Probably the key to connecting Punkin to the system is to reach the deep levels also. We concluded our exploration in a breakdown room that extends fairly close to Punkin. In that area, we hammered and dug in several places and did manage to scoop a little bit of passage. Jim and Bill ridgewalked in Rockcastle County and found several caves. Traffic was heavy when we first reached I-75 near Renfro Valley, but it was not difficult after about Berea. The media had predicted dire traffic jams. We did encounter heavy rain in northern Kentucky.

I plan to return to complete the dig of the second entrance of Punkin on January 1 and 2. I want to dig out the dirt above the large rock and either winch it out or smash it into smaller parts. I have a spud bar to use as a long-handled chisel. Following the dig, I would like to explore Punkin more thoroughly, especially leads near the new entrance. Lake level as of this writing (December 7) is still about 689. Precipitation for the midwest is below normal, so the lake could get even lower. The lake usually rises by now, but has remained low through December on occasion.