



COG SQUEAKS

November 1999



Restoration Project Foiled by Ghost

Photo by Lacie Braley.

GROTTO INFORMATION PAGE

THE CENTRAL OHIO GROTTO

The Central Ohio Grotto of the national Speleological Society meets at 8:00 p.m. at the Worthington Presbyterian Church the second Friday of most months. The church is on the northwest corner of the square in Worthington. Parking is available behind the church. Enter the parking lot from the first side street off State Route 161. Please contact a grotto officer to confirm meeting time and place.

Grotto Officers

Chairman	Steve Aspery	38931	614-841-1846
Vice Chair	Doug Davis	44171	614-792-8270
Secretary	Lacie Braley	44099	614-895-1732
Treasurer	Karen Walden	15678	740-965-2942

Executive Committee Members Officers plus:

Don Conover	20386	937-372-7581
George Hagen	36266	614-263-7581
Doug Burke	41817	614-983-9336

Squeaks Editor

Bill Walden 740-965-2942
 bwalden@infinet.com

Grotto Address

C/O Bill Walden, 1672 South Galena Road, Galena, Ohio 43021
 740-965-2942. E-mail dz716@cleveland.freenet.edu

List server

Cog@ontosystems.com
 Please join by sending e-mail to cog@onosystems.com with the subject **subscribe**.

Dues \$15 per individual or \$20 per family.

The C.O.G. Squeaks

The C.O.G. Squeaks is the official newsletter of the Central Ohio Grotto. Articles on cave exploration and study, cave trips reports, cave fiction, cave poetry, cave-related cartoons, cave-related art or photographs are encouraged. Please send material to Bill Walden via mail, e-mail, disk, fax, or even dictation. Bill usually has disks available at meetings. NSS organizations may reprint information from the C.O.G. Squeaks so long as the author and Squeaks are given credit unless stated otherwise.

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KARST CALENDAR

Nov. 6 & 7 Central Region NCRC Seminar in Bloomington, IN
 See article on page 3. For information contact
 Anmar Mirza at 812-339-1506 or e-mail
amirza@indiana.edu.

Nov 6 & 7 Cave Trip. Contact Bill Walden
Nov. 12 COG Meeting. Guest Bill Carr.
 Nov. 13 OVR Meeting in Cincinnati 2:00 p.m.
 See Announcement on page 4.

Nov. 19 COG Cave trip
 Nov. 20 Kentucky Cave Survey. See page 4.
 Nov. 25 - 28 Thanksgiving in Kentucky. Go caving!
**Dec. 11 COG Christmas Party and Meeting. This is
 Saturday.**
 Jan. 1, 2000 Celebrate the New Year caving. What better place to
 be than underground. No Y2K underground!

June 26 - 30 2000 **NSS Convention, Elkins, WV**
 July 23 - 27, 2001 **2001: a Cave Odyssey. The NSS Convention at
 Great Saltpetre Cave Preserve.**

The 2000 and 2001 NSS conventions are very close to home. All COG members should consider attending. The Greater Cincinnati Grotto is hosting the 2001 convention and we COG members should offer our assistance.

The Sloans Valley Restoration and Scrub Down

By Bill Walden

Bill McCuddy explained his restoration project to me at the Greater Cincinnati Grotto's Karst-O-Rama last summer. I assured Bill that I would assist. The date wavered a bit but finally stabilized for the weekend of October 23rd. The plan was to glue the Guardian at the top of Garbage Pit Hill back together and to restore formations at the Oasis and clean the rimstone in the Oasis area.

My daughter Katie and I drove down Friday evening arriving at the COG field house 1 a.m. Saturday morning. We slept till 8:30 and drove to Kings for breakfast. No cars there! Closed! I remembered that Darrell Adkins had commented on the restaurant at the flea market off US 27. We tried it. It was almost as good a Kings and about the same price. No complaint.

We arrived at Garbage Pit about 10:30 a.m. fearing that we were late. No, it was just starting. Two reporters from the Lexington Herald Leader arrived shortly after we did. John Cole asked me to lead a group from the Blue Grass Grotto to the Appalachian Trail to clean Graffiti from the walls. I was planning to carry my 1-1/2 gallon garden sprayer filled with water into the cave so I

opted not to carry a pack. I carried a backup headlamp in my pocket. I did not carry food or water to drink.

The group was inside the cave. I decided to wear a monster mask into the cave. After all, Halloween is just a week away. Cavers outside thought the mask neat. Once I got inside I couldn't see a thing. I stumbled along what was once Tetanus Crawl and tried to find my way toward the Guardian. I had to give up on the mask. I stuffed it in my pocket. I climbed down Garbage Pit Hill and headed toward the Oasis. I didn't see my group. I hollered. Lights on the hill leading to the Oasis passage came on. In the gloom what appeared as rocks were in reality cavers. Several WUSSes joined our group too.

We climbed through the Oasis pausing to enjoy the reflecting pool and I remembered Carl Weiman wearing his tuxedo here years ago. This old cave brings back memories.

Broken pieces of dripstone were marked with black plastic. We carefully avoided these as we made our way toward the Appalachian Trail.

Florence green, bright red, silver, and white spray paint on the cave walls greeted us on the Appalachian Trail. I located several of these obnoxious sites painted by someone from Paducah, Kentucky in 1972. At each graffiti site I ordered one, or two, or three cavers to work scrubbing the brilliant paint from the wall. Once I thought I had everyone busy I found someone with a spare brush and I too went to work but not for long. I was kept busy locating the graffiti as others scrubbed it from the walls. Back and forth across the Appalachian Trail I went – from one side to the other. By the time we reached the low-level passage that heads back to Garbage Pit Hill I was light headed – hungry and thirsty. Beth Hagen, one of the WUSSes wanted to go to the Big Room and work her way back toward us from there. I pointed the way through the low-level passage. She and her friends went toward the Big Room and I headed the other direction toward Garbage Pit Hill. I was out in less than 15 minutes.

Outside the cave I downed a quart of Gatorade and munched some tortilla chips then I headed back to my group. They had completed the graffiti removal in the junction area and were at the base of the First Lake Room. "Do you really want us to go through here?" Someone exclaimed. "Yes!" I replied. "Really?" "Yes."

Lake Cumberland normally floods the Lake Room. With the lake low, the rocks are covered with thick and very-very slippery mud. The Blue Grass cavers had rigged a safety line so individuals could safely descend the muddy slope. By the time it was my turn the rope was gone – carried by the belayer. I started down digging my heels in as I went. I lost my hold and away I went! Fast trip! I found myself wedged under a boulder. I lay there for a few seconds checking to make certain that I was ok. I was, so I slithered out from beneath the mud coated rock.

We climbed up the other side. No graffiti was found in this mud wonderland. We need not have come through. Any graffiti in this realm is probably under several inches of slimy mud. Once up the other side we were in the Hogback room and scrubbing again. We could see the distant dim glow from the lights of Beth Hagen and her friends high above us toward the east. I warned the cavers not familiar with this passage to beware of the many drop offs, some of which are deep.

We met up with the WUSSes in the crawlway, which for us non-winged cavers connects the Hogback Room and the Big Room. Here we all rested for a while. We had been in the cave for 6 ½ hours.

From the Hogback Room I led the group through the low-level passages to the base of Garbage Pit Hill cleaning graffiti as we traveled. Oliver, Hilary Hopper's son, had been carrying my sprayer through the First Lake Room and Hogback room, I offered to relive him of that duty. He gladly let me.

On climbing Garbage Pit Hill we discovered that the Guardian restoration attempt had failed. There were globs of epoxy resin on both surfaces and a hole had been drilled into both pieces. The bottom of the guardian lay cradled between rocks on the floor. No one remained in the entrance room.

Once out of the cave several of my twenty-year-old fellow cavers exclaimed how sore they were. My fifty seven-year-old body didn't feel too bad but I was tired. Several cavers were getting ready to go out for dinner. I was hungry too.

We went to Mr. Gatti's for pizza.

Once back at Garbage Pit Field, Katie and I went up to visit Tom Crockett. He was getting ready to watch the World Series. That seemed like a good idea. So, while Tom busied around doing this and that I watched the game till I fell asleep. I didn't sleep long. I sure had a hard time getting up. My body was stiff and sore and my chest hurt.

I felt good about the work achieved by the Ohio Valley Region with members from the Central Ohio Grotto, Wittenberg University Speleological Society (WUSSes), Blue Grass Grotto and others. About fifty cavers showed up for the event. COG members present included Kevin Toepke, Lacie Braley, Don Conover, Bruce Wartman, Bill Walden, and Katie Walden.

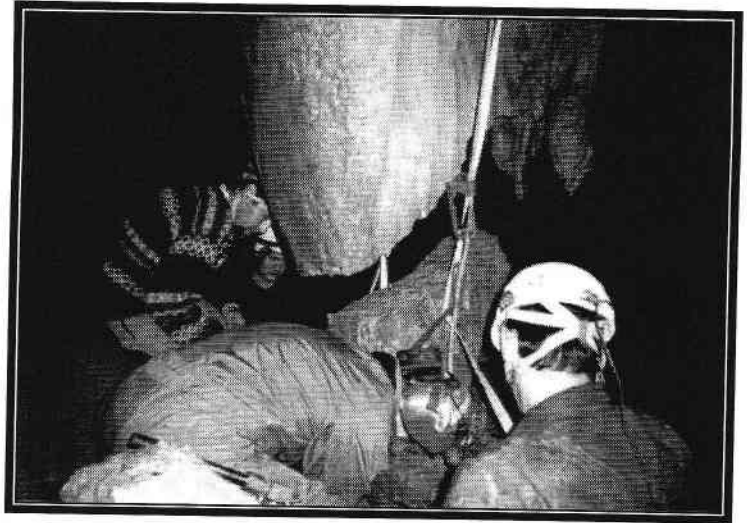
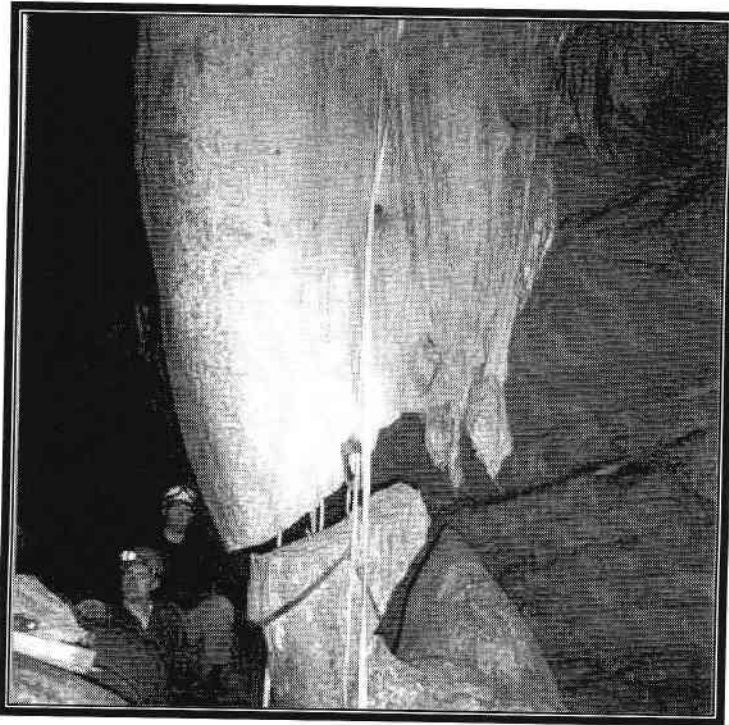
My congratulations to John Cole and Bill McCuddy for organizing this event.

Lacie Braley took a roll full of photos during the restoration. One of her photos is on the cover others follow as a photo story of the restoration attempt.

Oh yes, our effort made the front page of the Lexington Herald Leader Sunday paper for October 24, 1999!

Photo Story of the Restoration Project

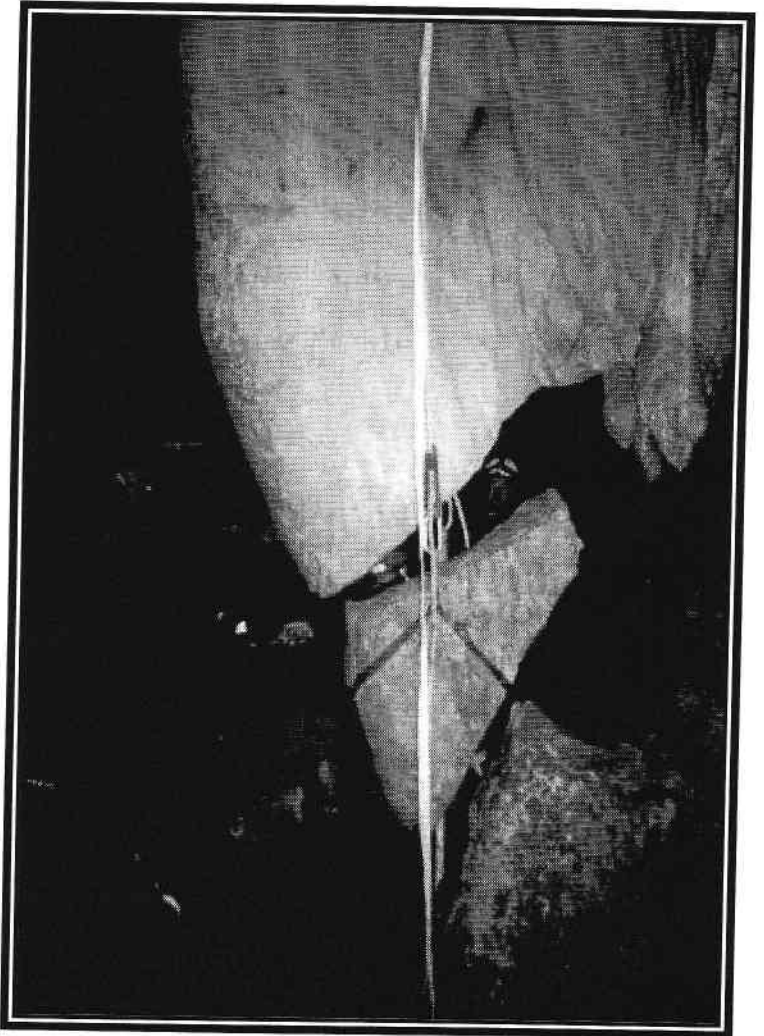
All photos are by Lacie Braley



TL - Lifting the broken piece. Does it fit?
BL - That's one big chunk of rock!
TR - Jockeying the piece into position.
BR - Almost ready for the glue.

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TL - Applying the epoxy.
CR - Glum faces after failure.
BR - In camp after giving it a good try.



ANNOUNCEMENT....

An organizational meeting for the formation of the Kentucky Cave Survey will occur on the evening of Saturday, Nov 20th 1999 at 7:00 PM EST in Room 102 of the Mines and Minerals Resources Building on the University of Kentucky Campus in Lexington, KY. This meeting will consist of a statement of purpose by the moderating committee with a presentation of efforts thus far. An open forum to discuss options and avenues of operation will follow. A more detailed agenda and directions will follow closer to the time of the meeting.

To be included on this agenda, please send a brief statement to mr_chaos@hotmail.com. Please bring copies of all relevant material to share with all groups and the moderating committee. Important documentation to share includes previous methods of data management and data entry, drafts of operational regulations and bylaws to be considered, and affiliations and sources of funding.

That same weekend, Lee Florea will host exploration and survey trips into Whetstone and Ping Hollow in Pulaski County Nov. 19th through the 21st. These trips will be run out of the Florea field house in eastern Pulaski County and are designed to help gather karst data along the proposed corridor of I-66 to help support our case against the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet. Contact Lee at mr_chaos@hotmail.com for more information.

The previous weekend, the OVR will host their winter meeting on Nov. 13th at 2:00PM EST in Cincinnati, Ohio. Please make arrangements to attend as relevant issues are on the agenda. Also, Larry Simpson will be leading biological survey trips to Wells Cave in Pulaski County on the 13th and 14th. Interested individuals should contact Larry at lsimpson@fuse.net.

I hope to see a great turnout for this effort and to see progress toward our ultimate and collective goal of preserving our fragile underground resources.

-Lee Florea, NSS 37909
Karst Hydrogeologist



Ohio Valley Region

1999 Conservation Project

by John LaMar Cole

The 1999 OVR Conservation Project, held in the Sloan's Valley Cave System in Pulaski County, Kentucky, was conducted on October 23. About 50 volunteers from Ohio, Kentucky, & Indiana gathered for the project, many camping on the Crockett property for the weekend. Good weather & good company helped to make the event enjoyable as well as very productive. Among the group's accomplishments were the thorough removal of graffiti & trash along two major borehole trunks for about a mile of total passage, the cleaning of caver-tracked mud from a very large flowstone hill, and the reassembling & cementing of a number of stalagmites & a 6' column in one of the more decorated (and severely damaged) areas in the cave. The primary sub-project—the reattachment of a 300 lb. tip of a 15', 8-ton stalactite (known as The Guardian)—was not a success, however, though much was learned from the attempt.

Bill Walden led a group of around 20 cavers (largely from WUSS, BGG, & COG) down the Appalachian Trail, removing graffiti & trash all the way to (through – Ed) the Hogback (en route to the Big Room); the group then returned via the lower trunk passage, cleaning it as they returned. This has been an area that has long needed graffiti removal but, due to its relative remoteness, length, & seasonal flooding, had not been seriously addressed by earlier clean-up attempts. I would like to express my personal thanks to Bill & his crew for conducting this much needed restoration work.

Deb Moore, Rick Gordon, & Mike Sutherly led their Venture Crew #21 from Bellefontaine, Ohio to the huge flowstone hill beneath the Oasis, spending the day scrubbing away mud tracks & handprints left on the impressive formation. Soft, nylon-bristle brushes were used so as not to damage the delicate travertine. The cleaning was facilitated considerably by 3 brand-new backpack sprayers lent to the OVR by the Somerset District of the Daniel Boone National Forest, though refilling & lugging them through the cave over slippery, mud-slathered boulders was an arduous task. The group then marked a tentative path around the Oasis Hill with flagging tape until stone markers can be installed. Many thanks to this hard-working Venture Crew and to the Somerset District of the Daniel Boone National Forest for their generosity, support, & trust.

The connection area between the Oasis & the Appalachian Trail was once one of the showcase formation areas of Sloan's—until the 1991 911-rescue attempt that laid it to waste. A month & a half before the annual project, Explorer Post 527 from Beaver Creek, Ohio spent the day gathering together the fragments of formations that were scattered willy-nilly by the '91 rescue team's sledgehammers; many pieces had fallen into a 20' pit adjacent the site. The Explorers collected the pieces on black trash bags for easy recognition. During the regional effort, Bruce Warthman and Van & Teela Bergen (DUG/GCG) passed the afternoon matching shards with stumps; a frustrating, tedious,

& somewhat depressing task. Later in the afternoon, Randy Paylor (BGG) began Round Two of the puzzlework, successfully assembling an entire 6' column, as well as several additional stalagmites. About a half dozen 2'-4' stalagmites and most of the 6' column were cemented into place around 8:00 in the evening, doing much to restore the original appearance of the vandalized area, and officially bringing the project to a close.

But the real attention-grabber of this year's project was the attempted repair of The Guardian, an ancient stalactite that overlooks Garbage Pit Hill from its crest, and one that also suffered damage from the poorly conducted 1991 rescue. Andy Mead, a reporter the Lexington *Herald-Leader*, took notes for four hours underground as Bill McCuddy & his crew (Don Conover, Mike Herrington, Brian Heckman, Chris Hacker, et al) struggled with the unwieldy fragment. Lacie Braley was put in charge of photo-documenting the effort. The epoxy, which is a type used to repair underwater coral reefs, Bill had been informed would hold the triangular, 300 lb. chunk without difficulty. This proved not the case, as the epoxy readily peeled away from the granular surface of the crumbling paleo-speleothem. The jacks (supplied by Don Conover), which were to keep the tip pressed against the host rock, could not be placed in such a way as to enable a firm, stable seal, also frustrating the attempt. When it became obvious that more harm than good was being done, this aspect of the project was postponed for further consideration. A "cradle" that could hold the fragment, the construction of platforms for the secure placement of jacks, and judicious bolting all seem in order at this point. A number of people have come forward with ideas; Bill will pow-wow with these folk and a smaller-scaled follow-up will be planned for the spring. My thanks to all for their hard work, determination, & creativity in addressing this complicated endeavor. I'm sure we'll solve it yet!

The event garnered considerable media coverage. Though disappointed by the unsuccessful formation repair, journalist Mead nonetheless wrote a significant article about the project, making Sunday front-page news in the *Herald-Leader*. This article was picked up by the Associated Press, rewritten slightly, and appeared as such in the Louisville *Courier Journal* on the following Monday. Somerset's *Commonwealth Journal* did a hefty, front-page article, loaded with photographs, also appearing in their Monday edition. Earlier in the month, the *Beaver Creek News Current* published an article covering the speleothem collection efforts of Explorer Post 527. So, all in all, it was our most publicized project to date.

My heartfelt thanks to all whom volunteered their brains & brawn for the project, and a special thanks to landowner Tom Crockett for his ever-gracious hospitality. The annual project was a remarkable success overall, attesting to the teamwork & talent that we collectively possess within the Ohio Valley Region of the NSS. Pat yourselves on the back for a project well done!