

C.O.G. Squeaks

April 2022



THE CENTRAL OHIO GROTTO (COG)

The Central Ohio Grotto (COG) of the National Speleological Society meets at 7:00 p.m. the fourth Tuesday of most months at the Presbyterian Church on the Square in Worthington, Ohio. Please contact a grotto officer to confirm meeting time and place or better subscribe to the COG list server at [cog @ ontosystems.com](mailto:cog@ontosystems.com) by sending an email to [cog @ ontosystems.com](mailto:cog@ontosystems.com) with the subject "subscribe". The meeting site will be announced there and on the Grotto WEB site.

Check out our Facebook group:

<http://www.facebook.com/groups/centralohiogrotto/>

Check out our Website:

<http://www.centralohiogrotto.com/>

Grotto Mailing Address:

C/O Pat Gibson, 4211 Caswell Rd
Johnstown, OH 43031 614-496-5345
Email: kd8ion@gmail.com

Grotto Membership Dues:

\$15 per individual or \$20 per family. \$40 for non-NSS members.

The C.O.G. Squeaks

The C.O.G. Squeaks is emailed to dues paying members and to grottoes with which the COG exchanges newsletters. Please send trip reports, caving articles, cave fiction, cave poetry, and cave photos to Mark Swelstad for publication.

Mark Swelstad
mswelstad@gmail.com

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COG Executive Committee:

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Secretary: Bethany Widmayer
secretary@centralohiogrotto.com

Upcoming COG Events:

See the Facebook events page for more information about these events:

April 26	COG Monthly Meeting – Worthington Presbyterian Church
April 30-May 1	Open House - Work Weekend
May 14/15	Open House - GSP
May 24	COG Monthly Meeting – Worthington Presbyterian Church
May 27-30	Speleofest Lone Star Preserve, Kentucky
June 13-17	NSS Convention – South Dakota
June 28	COG Monthly Meeting – Worthington Presbyterian Church
July 8-10	Karst-o-Rama Great Saltpeter Preserve, Kentucky
July 26	COG Monthly Meeting – Worthington Presbyterian Church
August 5-7	Indiana Cave Capers

75 MEMBERS ON OUR 75TH ANNIVERSARY IN 2027

Why

More members mean a larger pool of volunteers, leaders, and trip planners. Younger members mean that we can continue our grotto into the future.

How can you help?

If every current member brings in just 1 new member over the next 5 years, we will be close to meeting our goal.

Recommendations from active members is the best way to build a solid group of cavers. But showing up to a meeting or two isn't enough! We are looking for people committed to maintaining ACTIVE membership within the grotto.

Additional recruitment ideas (we NEED volunteers to make these happen!)

- Lead **trips** intentionally geared toward recruitment
- **Sponsor local events** or participate as vendors in events that get exposure
- Put together a **guest information packet**
- Teach **classes** at REI
- Hold **joint meetings** with related groups in the community
- Work with students who need **volunteer opportunities**
- Ask me about caving **stickers**



Why Volunteer for Wild Cave Outreach?

- Wendy Orlandi & Daryl Marsh

During the April 2022 COG meeting, Daryl Marsh highlighted the benefits of volunteering for GSP's Wild Cave Outreach. Among those benefits are learning what it takes to be a guide or tailgunner. Knowing the route through the cave and basic first aid are very important to the task, but so are developing soft skills such as being encouraging to others and learning to ease the anxiety of new cavers. Children as well as adults will benefit from both an experienced and compassionate guide. Speaking of experience, immersing yourself in our volunteer culture will result in YOU becoming a more educated caver. Do you know the difference between phreatic and vadose passage? Dolomite and chert? Tricolor bats

and Little Browns? Everytime I volunteer to guide with other experienced cavers, I become a more knowledgeable caver myself and I take away valuable information that I can then share with others.

Learning to lead or tailgun is also the best way familiarize yourself with some of the more popular caves in Rockcastle County, such as; Arthur Singleton's, Highwater, Miller's, Millipede, Mullins Spring, Pine Hill, Railroad, Rollercoaster and Sinks of the Roundstone, just to name a few. If you are new to caving, you can volunteer as a tailgunner until you are competent to lead yourself. If you think you already know a cave, go with a seasoned guide and you just may unlock more of that cave's secrets, such as the presence of several formation rooms in Pine Hill or a massive succession of domes in Sinks of the Roundstone. By leading often, you'll also begin to notice the seasonal changes that take place in each cave so that you will be able to quickly assess the safest routes based on environmental factors and the abilities of your group.

If the responsibility of herding young ones seems like a lot of pressure at first, consider joining a 'Learn to Lead' trip. LtL trips are youth-less trips where experienced cavers choose their favorite cave and then fashion trips in such a way that the other cavers will feel more confident in guiding a trip of their own through that cave. Attention will be paid to describing the nuances of the cave, how to navigate through significant passages, how a trip through the cave could be tailored for various adventures levels and ensure good land owner relations. With an influx of new-caver interest through the 'Let's Go Caving' outreach trips, we are in need of experienced cavers to give the gift of knowledge to new,

curious minds that would love to empower the next generation.

Becoming a volunteer guide also allows you to network with other experienced cavers. By building relationships with other cavers at outreach events you will earn the trust necessary to be introduced to more caves off the beaten path, often on the same weekend you volunteer. If you are waiting to be invited to less traveled caves and don't want to explore the "sacrificial" caves used for scouting, you may be waiting a long time. Volunteerism goes a long way in building confidence with experienced cavers.

My favorite part of being a cave guide is just being underground, but I also love educating youth about the importance of karst preservation. It's my great hope that these experiences will plant a seed of stewardship in these young people for the natural world that will last a lifetime. Equally as important, when I'm volunteering as a cave guide, I can be confident that I am contributing to the ongoing financial support of GSP. Every scout pays a camping fee to GSP and is in turn led by volunteer guides on cave trips. Camping fees are the single largest income generator for the preserve. Before the pandemic, 2019 camping income brought in \$14,492. With hundreds of scouts pouring through GSP to explore the caves of Rockcastle County each season, the Outreach program alone generated 47%, nearly half, of that total, making it a vital income generating resource for GSP.

I believe it's important for every active member of the supporting grottoes of GSP to volunteer at least once throughout the season. There's simply no room for snobbery when it comes to volunteering for Wild Cave Outreach. Volunteer in another area of GSP?

Great! AND you can also be an Outreach Volunteer as well! You're a caver, which implies you are simply amazing and can volunteer in more than one capacity! Now that the pandemic restrictions have been lifted, an overwhelming interest in caving has resumed and we are struggling to find enough bodies to meet the demand. While leaders are always needed, don't underestimate the importance of being a tail gunner. Recently, I was on a trip where some of our party simply weren't physically prepared for the rigor of the cave and though I had a tail gunner assigned to my trip, I would have been much more comfortable with two or more. Please consider supporting the Preserve and shepherding tomorrow's cavers by signing up for a trip today.

<https://tiny.cc/LetsGoCavingVolunteering>

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### **Skert Well**

Report by Brian Devine & Lee Florea

On a perfect early spring weather Saturday, March 26, Lee Florea, Sarah Burgess, Nathan Canaris, and Brian Devine entered the Skert Well entrance to the Sulfur Mountain System around 11am. The goal was to revisit leads in the Moonage Daydream Borehole. Nathan had some residual leads checks to do dating from some 2017ish trips, and Sarah and Lee had been availing themselves of multilevel passage to survey for several trips by this point.

We added almost 1,300 feet of new survey, bringing the total of the system to 9.24 miles (9.5 miles with Eaton Spring and Red Altar added). At present, the cave is ranked 86th in the US and 17th in Kentucky. None of the 2017 revisited lead developed enough to do more than just need survey from Nathan and

Brian, and team 2 had targeted a big bunch of stuff previously on visits, and contributed the lion's share of footage.

At the last waterfall in the Lost World, Nathan and Brian spend a bit of time installing a quasi-Tyrollian webbing traverse with the single bolt brought, to help reduce water saturation. Note...this works better on the way down. Climbing up still presents some challenges, and in fairness it needs to feel like you're doing the Fosbury Flop going up the rope & it's abnormal feeling.

Lee and Sarah started from where they ended their survey in January. Starting at F25, they added another 419 feet in the Moonage Subdream GF13-GF22. This passage flirts with the F survey above and eventually merges upstream near UF2. Sarah pushed a lead at GF21 with a chert ceiling that needs modification. This lead was trending downward and east of known cave.

Next, Lee and Sarah returned to GF5 and surveyed the active stream level, the Moonage Wetdream. In this GU survey, they added 525 feet. Downstream, this ties into the G survey from years ago that leads toward the terminal sump. Upstream, this passage weaves below the F and GF surveys. At GU 14, ponded, deep water prevented further advance. Dry season work with expectations of immersion should tie this passage to the cascading water observed at UF5 and from the Lost World at F13. Back at GU8, an infeeder, the GT survey likely carries the water coming in from the FU survey at F25. This needs survey.

In the meantime, Nathan and Brian appended more than 350 feet ahead and above the end

of F35 in an infeeder above a flowstone mound. Both the FU and F35x surveys appear to bringing additional water from the northwest, a great direction to keep pushing further. At a streamway near their EOS it was possible to hear the other team through a wet crawl neither duo tackled. Lee/Sarah had already quieted the area by the time N & B began exiting. I/Brian was last out at maybe 9:15pm, dragging behind Nathan by 40" in large part due to time to peel a base layer before I got sweat-logged after topping the rope out of the 1st dome room. I thereby avoided a serious bleed of electrolytes that can typify heavy perspiration, and the awful cramping that can then kick in during sleep after trips.

**Author's note/Brian:**

Lessons learned:

- A rubber band that keeps Velcro sleeve cuffs static would be smart, to thwart mud.
- BRING a PANTIN with any amount of rope this adjacent to walls, not to mention the long, penultimate climb heading out.
- Yoga is pretty good mindfulness training to keep the old wits when no hard cave trips for two years FYI

Click here to see a video from the trip on our COG blog:

<https://centralohiogrotto.blogspot.com/2022/05/skert-well-brian-devine-lee-florea.html>

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# Central Ohio Grotto

<http://centralohiogrotto.com/>

The Central Ohio Grotto (COG) is proud to present the 2022 Caving Stimulus Program, which will provide \$50 for up to four trips. The primary goal of the program is to supplement the cost of caving trips to encourage grotto members to cave together. Secondary goals include growing the COG community by including potential new members, encouraging an active COG community, and giving back to members.

The trip must meet the following requirements below to qualify for program funds.

1. POST
  - a. Create a Facebook Event on COG page at least 2 weeks prior to event
  - b. Open to all grotto members (trip maximums and skill requirements are allowed)
2. GO
  - a. Minimum trip of 4 with at least 2 current grotto members
3. REPORT
  - a. Create a trip report and post to Facebook/Blog
  - b. Discuss trip at next monthly meeting

Qualifying trips will be reviewed and approved by the executive committee with payment provided to the trip leader (current grotto member). Allocation of the funds to the trip members is at the discretion of the trip leader.

Reach out to Aaron Deal with any questions.