



Central Ohio Grotto Squeaks

August 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 by sending an email to cog @ ontosystems.com with the subject “subscribe.” The meeting site will be announced there and on the Grotto Facebook page.

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.

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: mswelstad@gmail.com

NSS organizations have permission to reprint material from the C.O.G. Squeaks so long as the author and Squeaks are given credit, unless otherwise stated.

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Upcoming COG Events:

See the Facebook events page for more information about these events or email a board member.

Note: All COG Monthly meetings (except December) are at the Worthington Presbyterian Church.

August 23	COG Monthly Meeting
September 20	Rigging 101 – Part 3
September 27	COG Monthly Meeting
October 25	COG Monthly Meeting

CENTRAL OHIO GROTTO 5-YEAR MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

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!)

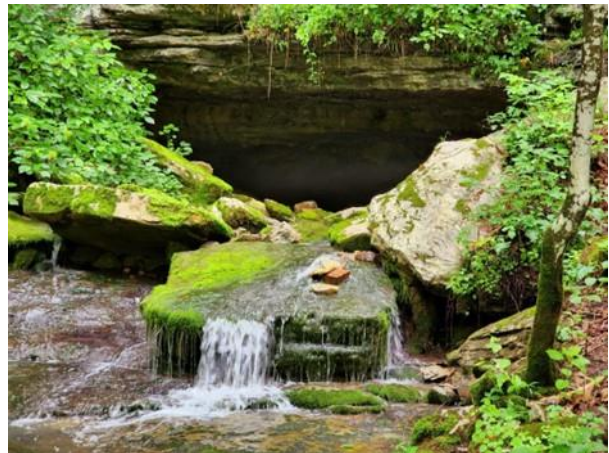
- Lead **trips** intentionally geared toward recruitment
- **Sponsor local events** or participate as vendors in events that get exposure
- Put together a **guest information packet**
- Teach **classes** at REI
- Hold **joint meetings** with related groups in the community
- Work with students who need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

Fletcher Spring Cave – Wendy Orlandi

All photos courtesy of Don Beach.

One of the two trips I lead for KOR was Fletcher Springs, a small but heavily decorated cave first introduced to me by Mark Swelstad.

The entrance is picturesque. The cave is set against the backdrop of a stone cliff, woodland surrounds the stream passage flowing out of the cave and gently slopes down towards the road. The property has been recently upgraded to include a gravel driveway and signage demanding visitors not litter. Visitors this particular Sunday included Don Beach, Kevin Dittamore, Tony Lutz, L. Rose McSherry, Adam Pendergrass, and Bethany Stephens Bucher.



As its name implies, this is a WET cave. While the entrance itself sports a left, wet entrance and a dry, right entrance, it's not long before both paths merge. The passage eventually becomes waist deep full of water for at least 30 feet. At this point, one can scramble over a pair of rim stone ledges that jut out over the water or, as Adam did, you can swim underneath and climb up a small waterfall. It's just a short walk from this spot to the main chamber of the cave which is literally dripping with thousands of formations from ceiling to floor. Luckily, we had a few serious photographers in our group among them, Don Beach, a new member of COG. It was difficult to move them out of this room and I had to promise we'd be back this way for more pictures before exiting the cave.



The first side trip we made was a hands and knees crawl to a dome within the cave. It's an easy crawl with soft soil underneath and ample room. After passing over a massive butterscotch flowstone that looks good enough to stick a spoon in, the dome is just ahead. The dome has some decoration and is rich in coral fossils. Notable, on my last two trips the dome has been bolted, but from the vantage down below, it's not clear where or if it goes. Mark speculated that someone may be trying to make a connection to nearby Fletcher Pit.



Back in the main passage, we found the entrance to the last dry passage we'd be exploring that day. It's a tight passage that has beautiful rimstone everywhere. Rafts could be observed in the still pools. We carried on for as long as the group felt comfortable until we turned around to head back to the main room where more pictures would be taken.



Fletcher Spring is a wonderful Sunday cave to refresh the mind and body before heading back to wherever it is you call home. Please enjoy the pictures, there are few caves in Rockcastle that rival the beauty of this one.



New Member Interview – Jennie Hawkey



Tell us a bit about yourself on a personal level?

I am a fairly new Ohio resident and have previously lived in New York, Maryland, New Jersey, and Arizona. My family and I moved from Mesa, Arizona to Pickerington, OH about a year ago to be closer to my husband's family. I met my husband in Arizona 8 years ago and we eloped on New Year's Eve in Sedona. We have 2 children together: William is 3 years old and Gianna is almost 2. Our lives revolve around them and their pursuit of finding the playgrounds with the best slides.

I have been working in the Global Trade industry for 12 years, primarily doing global trade compliance. I've been fortunate to work for some great companies in the medical and apparel industries. I am starting a new job with Cardinal Health which I am excited for; I

will be helping the company utilize more Free Trade Agreements and duty savings programs.

How did you first get into caving?

My college offered various outdoor trips for incoming freshman to get to know each other before the school year started. Caving sounded fun to me, so I signed up and after that, I was hooked. I became part of the school's Outdoor Adventure Experience club and led trips for other students... mostly caving, but also backpacking, kayaking, etc.

What are some of your other interests?

Kids have kept me busy for the last several years and I am in the process of rediscovering my old hobbies and picking up some new ones. I enjoy being in the outdoors - whether it's hiking, caving, or just camping, I just really like being outside. In my spare time, I like to exercise and go to the gym. I also enjoy listening to audio books and lately I've started to enjoy cooking, learning about the native birds here, and gardening.

What are some of your favorite caving experiences?

- Seneca Rocks area, WV - where it all started
- Doing vertical in Coronado National Forest, AZ
- Graffiti removal in AZ, lint removal for Kartchner Caverns
- GSP area caves - Pine Hill – KY

What guided your decision to join COG?

I was a member of CAG (Central Arizona Grotto) when I lived out west and I had to take a break when I became pregnant. I really missed caving and the grotto community, so I decided to search for the local caving

community to get back into caving.

What are you looking forward to learning or participating in as a member of COG?

I would really like to become more proficient and comfortable with vertical caving. I would also jump at the opportunity to learn how to do surveying and mapping. I'm also slightly curious about cave photography.

This is Why I Cave – Ellie Long

Editor Note: Ellie is Dave Long's daughter and this essay is for her college admission. She has given us permission to print it here.



Photo by Dave Long

I never would have imagined the tight space through which I was crawling. It was dark, muddy, and cold. My elbows and knees

scraped every inch I moved. How much longer until I was free? My heart danced and my breathing became heavy. There was nothing but my headlamp leading the way. Without warning, as the spaces became tighter, I realized I was in the part of the cave I had feared the most.

Several hours earlier, I was looking into a small opening in a mountain wondering if I would make it out. I had been caving many times before. It was a time I could feel a thrill and accomplishment. When I heard this may be the toughest cave I have done, those feelings melted away. I heard about the 'meat grinder' and I pondered whether this would be the last cave into which I would step. I checked my knee pads, helmet, gloves, and batteries. I felt ready. I looked at everyone wondering if they were as nervous as I was. We took a headcount. I was lucky number seven, which I knew I would need to make it through this cave. My palms started to sweat as everyone crawled their way into the cave.

After hours of walking, ducking, crawling, swimming, and trying not to fall off cliffs, my nerves started to settle. I could do this, like so many times before. I felt my knees getting sore from rocks digging into them from crawling so much. My fingers felt like sausages from holding on to the slippery mud. My stomach rumbled knowing all I had was a granola bar. I continued on wondering when I would face my biggest worry: the meat grinder.

I was hoping for a warning but when I began crawling through a space that barely fit me, I knew this was it. I was IN the meat grinder. What I had been preparing myself for was in the moment and it was happening. With one full sized human in front of me and one in the back of me, there was no turning back. In fact, it was so tight I could barely move my head 90 degrees. My feet could not stand upright. Army crawl was in full action.

All I could hear was the huffing and puffing of the people in front of me and behind me. My elbows were raw. My legs were limp, and my arms were numb. What was working just fine were my racing thoughts and my thumping heart. I thought, this must be what it feels like to be squeezed to death.

After what seemed like a lifetime, I could feel the breeze of openness. I had reached the end of the meat grinder. When I could finally move my head, I looked around and noticed a 15-foot drop. There was no rope and no rocks for my feet to find the path. I thought the meat grinder was supposed to be the hardest part. No one mentioned this. I took a deep breath, and I pictured a slide. A mudslide! I slid my way down. When I reached the bottom, I stood up and had the biggest smile on my face.

By the time I reached the end of the cave, I was glad to feel the sunlight beaming on my skin. I was muddy, covered in scrapes, and wet. That did not bother me. I had just finished the hardest cave I had ever done, and I felt like I could do anything. I wanted to do it all over again and feel the thrill of the meat grinder. I realized I had the strength to conquer my fears and more. I looked around. Everyone was laughing and I knew... this is why I cave.

Frog Days of Summer – July 30, 2022

Report by Tera Williamson

What started as a discussion between a couple of people being interested in getting together for a day of learning the frog climbing system turned into an organized COG trip with several folks. Participants were Jason Glancy, Zach Glancy, Andy Schofield, Angie Rhodes, Adam Batson, Shawn Zurcher, Daniel Zurcher, Nick Markley, Sindi Jo Paul, and Tera Williamson.

Saturday morning started with Jason and I meeting at the climbing and rappelling parking lot of Conkles Hollow at about 7:30am. We packed some gear and took off on the trail up to Big Springs, which is about a half mile flat hike followed by a steep 45-degree climb up the hill to the cliff wall. Once at the top we rigged about a 90-ft drop in order to claim a spot in case other groups showed up. We then wandered just a little ways past the waterfall over to the rock island and rigged two ropes (11mm and a 9mm) at about a 35-ft drop in between two rocks, which made for a fun little cool drop somewhat cave like.



Adam Batson is all geared up and ready to play! (Photo credit: Tera Williamson)

About 9am Jason received a message from Andy stating that he had arrived at the parking lot where he ran into Angie and Adam. Andy led the others down the path and up the hill where they met up with Jason and I. In the meantime, while the others were hiking to the top Jason gave his assistance with helping me set the foot loops and cows tails to the proper length for my new frogging system. As the others arrived, Andy stopped by the 90-foot rope and rigged a second rope which was about 110-ft; and Angie and Adam came over to the shorter drop and met Jason and I for some additional gear adjustments.



Discussion before Tera Williamson descends the short drop. (Photo credit: Angie Rhodes)



Adam Batson and Jason Glancy descending the short drop. (Photo credit: Tera Williamson)

Once all gear was adjusted Angie, Adam, Jason, and I began taking turns rappelling the short drop between the two rocks and frogging back up. While part of the group has started playing on the short drop, Andy had finished rigging the 110-ft drop and rappelled and frogged it. Shortly after ropes were rigged Shawn and his son Daniel made an appearance and joined up with the group, as well as Jason's son Zach. Also, some point that morning Nick Markley and Sindi Jo Paul made an appearance and joined the group for some rope time; and they also rigged a 9mm rope for about a 30-ft drop, then moved it over to about an 80-ft drop later afternoon. Everyone got a chance to rappel and climb the short

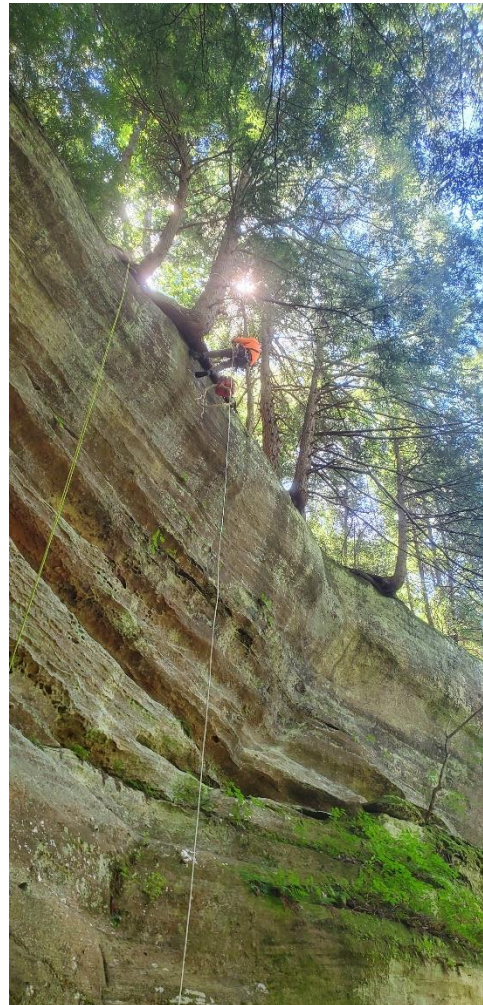
drops, and this 9mm rope gained the name grease lightning because of the smooth fast rappel it offered. Once we were all finished playing on the short drops, we derigged and the group moved over to the two longer drops.



Angie Rhodes descending after conquering her fear on the long drop. (Photo credit: Tera Williamson)

As we all walked over to the longer drops, we conversed more with Nick and Sindi and that's when Jason had realized that he had rappelled with Nick previously during a trip to Ellison's in Georgia. Over at the longer drops, Angie faced her fear of heights and exposure thanks to Shawn's patience and coaching, and everyone else cheering her on as she braved the 90-ft

drop not only once but twice. Once everyone was done playing on rope, we derigged and packed things up and started the hike back out to the parking lot. Once back to the vehicles, any borrowed gear was given back to the proper owners and the group decided to meet up and have some dinner at La Cascada Mexican Restaurant in Logan Ohio. During dinner we talked about the rappelling trip, other rappelling/caving trips that people have done recently and a bit about surveying. Following dinner, we snapped a group picture (minus Zach due to him having to leave early afternoon) and said our goodbyes and everyone had a safe travel back home.



Jason Glancy descending the long drop. (Photo credit: Tera Williamson)



Where's Andy? Ascending in between the trees. (Photo credit: Tera Williamson)



Left to right: Daniel Zurcher, Adam Batson, Shawn Zurcher, Jason Glancy, Angie Rhodes, Nick Markley, Sindi Jo Paul, Andy Scholfield, and Tera Williamson.

Rigging 101: 2.5 – Dana Sutherland

Last Tuesday, eight of us met and learned how to tie the barrel knot. Then we learned how to make and use a prusik. It was great seeing the people who got it right away, later help others who were struggling (thank you). After everyone was able to put their prusik on the rope one handed, I demonstrated how to ascend with prusik, and how to prusik out of a jam while on rappel. Thank you, Jason Glancy, for supplying the cord so everyone has a personal Prusik.

Next month we will learn the bowline and incorporate it into rigging.

Lastly, This month's random / bonus knot, the "handcuff knot" got...well...a LOT of attention! (There may have also been a request for a "naughty knots" clinic.)

All photos by Wendy Orlandi



Rigging 101 Participants practice tying double barrel knots.





Next, we practice tying prussik knots on a vertical line with our eyes closed!



Dana Sutherland demonstrates how to use a prussik in an emergency.



Suz and Bethany practice prussik knots one handed on a vertical line.

Rigging 101: Part 3 Bowlines	
Tues., Sept. 20th 6:45pm <small>528 Selby Blvd S, Worthington, OH</small>	

Our next workshop is Tuesday, September 20th at 6:45pm.

CENTRAL OHIO GROTTO

www.centralohiogrotto.com

GSP Key Policy – Debi Pavey (GCG Chair)

Property keys, including cave and kitchen, are assigned to GSP, GCG, RKC, COG, DUG and BGG board members. Before receiving a key to the *kitchen*, the recipient must be trained on kitchen use by either Werner Jud or Scott Pavey. Upon completion of training a Key Holder Form needs to be completed and signed by all parties. Then the Key Master (me – Debi Pavey currently) is given the completed form and assigns keys.

The above-mentioned board members are by no means allowed to give their keys to anyone for any reason.

Each Grotto's representative on the GSP board have a set of Grotto loaner keys. Grotto members can request the use of the cave key and will have to complete a form acknowledging the responsibility. For a Grotto member to request the use of a kitchen key, they need to go through the same above-mentioned training and the completion of the Key Issue Form. The form then goes to the Key Master who will log the Grotto member into a database. When a Grotto member asks for the kitchen key the GSP representative needs to check to ensure the Grotto member is authorized to use the key. This form will be supplied by the GSP Representative.

If a loaner key is not returned promptly to the GSP representative, the Grotto member will have to pay GSP \$20 per key; and GSP committee will change all the locks again.

Editor: *Misuse of GSP Keys, or GSP property, including the kitchen and the cave, is a violation of the GSP Management Plan and could lead to disciplinary action.*

Two pics from the 2022 Foxboro Neighborhood Trip so I can fill in this last column and not leave it blank. 😊



New Covers being made at GSP – Photo by unknown



Jon and Jamie – Photo by Unknown