

Central Ohio Grotto Squeaks July 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.

July 26	COG Monthly Meeting
August 5-7	Indiana Cave Capers
August 16	Rigging, Part 3
August 23	COG Monthly Meeting
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**

Fantastic Pit – Ellison's Cave – Jason Glancy

The Fantastic pit Ellison's cave pigeon mountain Georgia 1-29-22 team was Jason Glancy, Zach Glancy, Jonathan Carmen, and

Jarred McGuffey objective was the long drop called Fantastic Pit 586' unobstructed drop the best you can find in the USA. This was my fourth time dropping the pit since 1995 this was everyone else's first time to the bottom. we drove down 8 hours the day before we entered early Sunday morning 7am in order to get the best rig spot We geared up for the tough day ahead the 650' 11mm Highline rope is a mere 38 pounds so helping haul the rope up the mountain and into the cave is no simple task after 45 minutes of uphill hiking we arrive at the cave, with a little crawling at the beginning we step into a stream passage for ten minutes when we reach the warm up drop 125' further in we in counter the pre rigged 18' nuisance climb within a few minutes of that we are peering over the edge of the pit, some have told me I could be lying about the pit depth because when you shine your brightest light down you only see darkness it's not until the rope is rigged and you yell On Rope and the rope starts singing thru the bars of your rack that you truly realize how far down it goes then you are quickly taken back by thought of climbing the rope! I was told since I provided the rope I must ride it first in case it's too short. After everyone successfully rappelled the 586' drop Zach and I climbed together I can think of no better way to spend time with my son than that! The others climbed tandem as well then, we pulled the rope and headed out and down the mountain back to the cars I took 8 hours my fastest trip in there!

Jason Glancy
COG
NSS 52230

Note: About the photo on the rope first is Jason Glancy second is Zach Glancy. The act of tandem climbing saves time.

Rigging Clinic # 2 – Dana Sutherland

The rigging clinic only had three people attend. We refreshed the knots from June and learned the double fisherman's in order to make a prusik.

Since there was such a small turn out, the August clinic will be again prusiks. Watch the Facebook page for more details.



Photo by Wendy Orlandi – Dana Sutherland teaching how to tie knots.

New Member Interview – Tera Williamson (Interview by Wendy Orlandi)

Tera Williamson is COG's newest member! She's already been on two grotto trips with us and is a great fit for our caving community. Get acquainted by reading her interview

below and be sure to welcome her next time you meet underground!



Tera Williamson pops out of Dillon Cave, a small sandstone slump cave in nearby Licking County, after her first trip with COG to Blackhand Gorge. Photo courtesy of Aaron Collier

How did you first get into caving? I was browsing my newsfeed on Facebook one day, when I had saw some pictures that a friend of a friend had posted about a caving trip that he had completed. When seeing these pictures, I could tell that it was not just a trip through a commercial cave. As they came out of the cave covered in mud and everyone had helmets, lights, and packs. It was at that point that I sent an instant message to the friend of a friend, and I was given the name of a local grotto group to reach out to for more information. I sent a message to the local grotto group and chatted back and forth

about wild caving, what to expect and about an upcoming trip they had planned for newbies. I joined them the next weekend on my first cave trip into Sharps Cave and after that I was hooked and became a member of my local grotto group.

What are some of your other interests? I have always had an interest for being outdoors. I grew up camping frequently with my parents, which led to attending many Girl Scout camping trips over the years, which included camping, hiking, canoeing, and more. Then after high school, I continued to enjoy camping and hiking and just being outdoors. About 8 years ago, I bought my first kayak and started kayaking as often as possible over the summer. Which then led to adding kayaking into the weekend camping trips. When not spending time outdoors, I like to work 1000-piece jigsaw puzzles.

What are some of your favorite caving experiences? Being able to explore areas underground that many people do not have the opportunity to do, as it's like a whole different world. Being able to ooh and ahh when seeing pretty formations. I also like the social aspect that occurs during cave trips, after cave trips, or at caving events.

What guided your decision to join COG? I was interested in finding a grotto that was more active in planning caving trips and doing a variety of different cave trips. Having the option to become a member and be able to participate in meetings virtually was also a plus.

What are you looking forward to learning or participating in as a member of COG? After completing my first caving trip with COG, which was the recent Kees/Bowden trip, I decided that it was time that I learn how to

use the Frog ascending system. As I have no interest in carrying around a bulky Rope Walker in a cave pack again, especially for shorter climbs. I am also looking forward to doing more vertical caving trips, as well as expanding my caving skills.

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Karst-O-Rama Caving Trip Report by Jennie Hawkey

Date of Trip: Friday, July 8th 2022

Cave Name: Climax Cave

Trip Leader: Mark Swelstad and Jon Swelstad

After some socializing at the Guano Grill at GSP, our group of 8 departed around 10:15AM and carpoled to Climax Cave, which I learned is named for the small town in which it is located. We parked at the Climax Fire Station, geared up, and headed through the cow field to the mouth of the cave. Some of us including myself could not avoid stepping in some cow piles. After a quick safety brief and developing a count off method, we switched on our headlamps and headed inside.

The cave was mostly dry and was a respite from the hot muggy weather outside. Mark led the group through the cave and his son, Jon, assisted so he could learn to lead trips to this cave in the future. The cave is labyrinth-like with several paths that have not been mapped yet. There are parts that require some crawling, but for the most part it is walking and climbing over breakdown. We visited the entrance at the other end of the cave and explored a bit, had snacks, and admired the large formation of that room, upon which we noticed a bright orange salamander. During our trip we picked up another caver, Andrew, who was visiting the cave which makes it the first time I've gone

caving and left with one more person than we came with. On this trip we also became reacquainted with the importance of wearing sturdy pants to go caving. Just ask Viktor.

We departed around 2PM and a few of us made a quick stop at On the Rocks Wine and Spirits which is highly recommended. We made our way back to GSP to clean up, have dinner, and enjoy the Howdy Party that night.

Date of Trip: Saturday, July 9th 2022

Cave Name: Pine Hill Cave

Trip Leader: Jon Swelstad

After breakfasting and enjoying coffee at the Guano Grill at GSP, we gathered our group around 10:30AM and carpoled to Pine Hill Cave. We parked on the side of the road near the cave, geared up, and did the short walk through the woods and crossed the train tracks to get to the mouth of the cave. After a short safety brief and explanation of the cave and trip plan, we developed a count off method and headed into the cave.

The cave was very wet, which is normal. There is a stream in the cave which we walked through and crawled through. Overall, it was mostly ankle deep but there were parts of the stream where I was in up to my hips. We went first to the register room then went through the Midsection Bypass. We did a section known as the "Meat Grinder" which required some technical scrambling over a crevasse with about a 10-foot drop underneath. This led us to the Tower Domes which is a beautiful canyon-like section of the cave with high ceilings. Mike Stoll brought a 60K lumen lamp with him which really showcased the beauty of that section. We then made our way back and crawled through what is known as the Birth Canal, which is about 100 feet of

tight crawling. Right before entering the passage, we encountered another caving group from KOR who did the rappel into the cave through Skylight Dome, so we waited for them to come through before heading in. After checking out Skylight Dome, we decided to make our trip to the waterfall a quick one in order to be out of the cave on time. A few of us jumped in the pool before quickly heading back out to exit the cave. Sadly, Viktor's pants did not hold up once again, bringing the pants casualty count to 2.

We exited the cave around 6PM, cleaned up as much as we could, and hurried back to GSP to enjoy Saturday night cookout and the Down the Rabbit Hole Party.

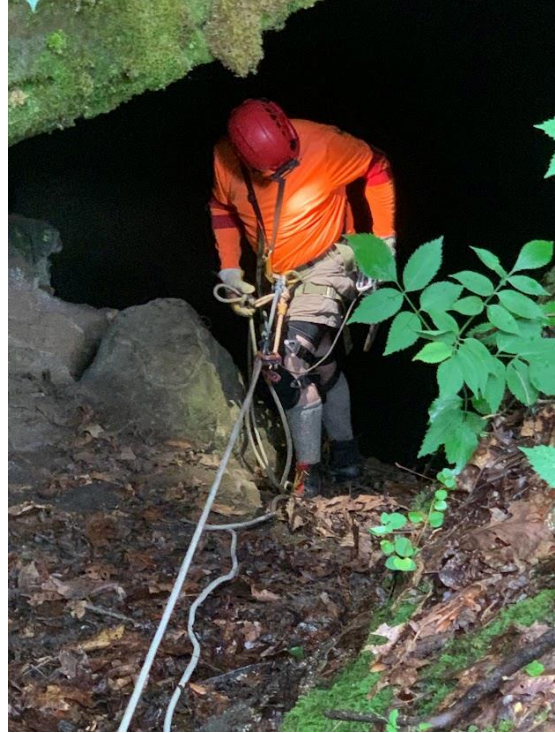
Some random pictures from Karst-o-Rama 2022



Janeen Sharpshair – Photo Credit: Mark Swelstad



Wendy in Sinks – photo credit: Holly Hartman



*Jason Glancy getting ready to descend a pit -
photo credit: Aaron Collier*



*Down the Rabbit Hole party – photo credit:
Jennie Hawkey*



*Kevin Lorms stirring the pot – photo credit:
Aaron Collier*

Marler Hollow Cave – Wendy Orlandi

Leading two trips this year at KOR, I wanted to make sure my “free day” was well spent. I signed up for Marler Hollow, a cave I’ve never heard of before. However, the trip leader, Mary Gratsch, is legendary.

The cave is located on the other side of 75 and entrance is only granted by permission of the land owner. When our party arrived Mary pulled a long two by four out of her vehicle and said we would need it to cross a stretch of water that has no known depth. Our party consisted of Mary, fellow COGers Andy Schofield and Dave Long, Jeff Holt, Mike Harrington and Josh Dick. The entrance was a short crawl into walking passage through which we shared the burden of carrying the two by four.

Making a left after the crawl brought us to a canyon passage that must have been 20-30 foot deep but had ample ledges near the top to straddle the length of the canyon. After that, we wound through more canyon that was passable through both the top and bottom, some parts were extremely tight and others nicely decorated with flow stone and the like.



Right before the passage opened up, there was the pool for which we needed our bridge. It was probably about 10 ft in diameter all the way around and would have been very difficult to pass without getting wet. The passage we followed was

filled with some very large formation and sadly some of it seemed intentionally destroyed.



Soon we came to a junction and took a stream passage near a century+ signature carved in the limestone. This was one of the most slippery passages I’ve ever encountered and certainly the longest. Staying on one’s feet was a challenge many of us failed.



Finally, the mud gave way to a rocky stream passage. Mary continued to lead the way until we came to a glorious tower of garbage. This pit is owned by a separate land owner than the entrance we entered. Mary told us the landowner

was sick of cavers asking about the pit so he filled it up with washing machines, tricycles, dolls with missing limbs, etc. Far from a putrid mess, it almost seemed like a sculpture dedicated to the inevitable failure of men to create anything of permanence, unlike the cave itself.



The condition of the pit as well as the attitude of the land owner prevented a through trip in this cave, but there may be other entrances. Mary believes there's more cave to explore and the map is in need of a new survey. All in all, a fun cave to explore and a great day with some very special people.



All photos of Marler's Hollow Cave courtesy of Andy Schofield

Holes in the ground in Iceland - May 2022 – Mark Swelstad (all pictures courtesy of Mark Swelstad)

My wife Andi and I were joined by my father (Ron) on a bucket-list trip to Iceland in May 2022. We spent a couple of days around Reykjavik and one day following the famous Golden Circle route. The rest of the time, we followed the Ring Road that circles the entire island. There were a ton of things to see along the way and we accumulated an amazing number of memories, not to mention two thousand pictures between us. This being a caving newsletter however I will focus on the holes in the ground we found!



Iceland offers many opportunities to see ice caves, and there are a lot of lava caves as well; our itinerary didn't allow us time to visit those but there were a few interesting cave-like features along the way. In the north part of Iceland there is a volcanic rift zone that features a large lake called Lake Myvatn. This area has a ton of fascinating volcanic features including an area called Dimmuborgir, which translates to 'Black Fortress' (interestingly, there is a heavy metal band from I think Sweden named after this). Several walking trails snake around the striking volcanic rock features, and there are a few places that have cave-like features. The geology of this area is complicated but in a nutshell...water, lava/magma, air bubbles.



Andi Swelstad in a cave-like feature, Dimmuborgir

If any of you have seen Game of Thrones, you might recall a memorable scene featuring two main characters...in a cave...."you know nothing, Jon Snow"...Anyway, this cave is really more of a crack in the rock but it's gorgeous. Grjótagjá Cave is formed in one of many rifts on the island;

Iceland sits on the divide between the North American and European continental plates and you see rift fissures like this all over the place. The cave is heavily visited and there was one unique individual who took off his shirt and was posing for his girlfriend and blocking everyone's pictures. Good times.



Grjótagjá Cave

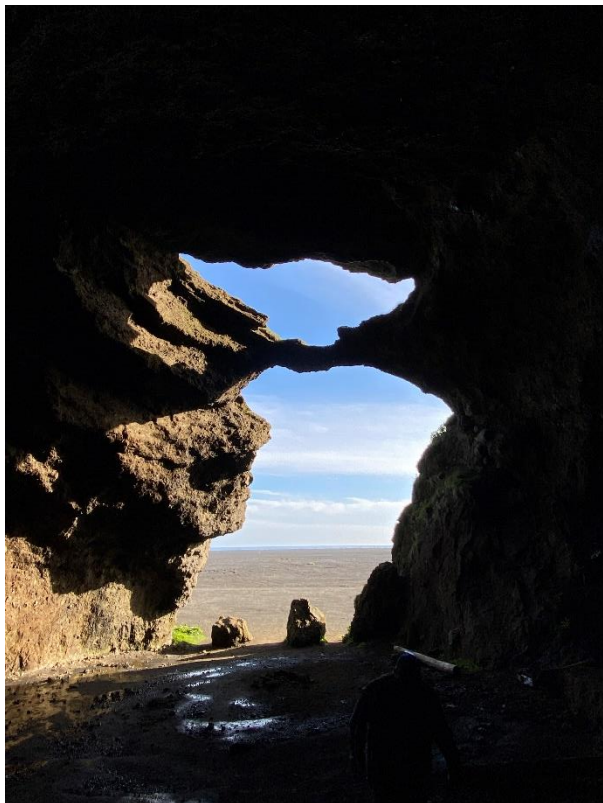


Grjótagjá Cave – person in red was the guy who took off his shirt.

The south shore of the island consists of a wide plain between the ocean and a cliff that represents an old coastline. From this cliff there are a ton of amazing waterfalls, and here and there you'll find a sea cave as well. Some are pretty far inland while some are right on the coast. One of our favorites is the famous Yoda Cave (look at the picture carefully). It's proper name is Gígjagjá and like many words and placenames in Iceland, I was simply unable to pronounce it.



Gígjagjá from the outside



Gígjagjá from the inside

Near the town of Vik there is a large promontory of land that divides a miles-long black sand beach. This promontory features a sea arch, as well as a what has to be 25,000 puffins. Near this there is a sea cave called Hálsanefshellir Cave which is carved into columnar basalt. Again, in a nutshell...volcanic activity, magma cools, crystal structure of the minerals, makes interesting shapes that you can climb on.



Sea stacks near Vik



Dyrhólaey



Hálsanefshellir Cave



Atlantic Puffin

The last unpronounceable ancient sea cave was Loftsalahellir Cave. This required a short climb up a steep hill, following a trail made by some of Iceland's ubiquitous (and quite tasty) sheep. Inside the cave I found a bunch of really pretty ferns of some kind, as well an angry family of gulls that allowed me about 5 minutes to take a look before warning me off.



Loftsalahellir from outside



Loftsalahellir Cave from inside

Iceland is really an amazing place. The scenery is unbelievable...breathtaking even. The people are amazingly friendly and willing to help, and the food is actually quite good. Lots of fish and lamb, and some horrifying things if you're adventurous, but either way I highly recommend adding this to your bucket list if it isn't already on it. I'd be happy to share our experience if you decide to venture to the Arctic!

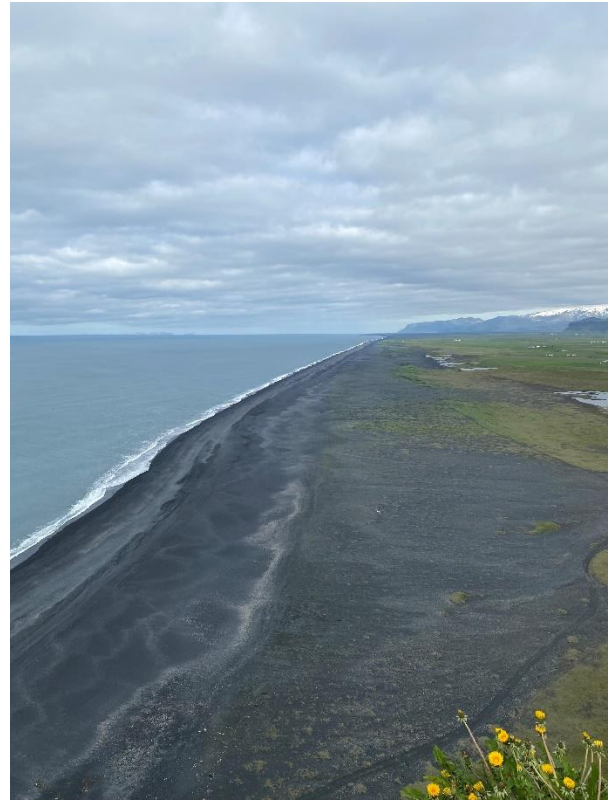
My wife and I are already making plans to go back and maybe we'll make time for an ice cave. If so I'll be sure to write up another report!



Hálsanefshellir Cave



Holtasoley – Mountain Avenas



Black Sand beach



Ferns inside Loftsalahellir Cave

Rigging 101: Part 3

Part 3 will review crucial knots such as the water knot, figure 8, double figure 8, alpine butterfly and prussik. The series will culminate in a field trip to Hocking Hills to rig your own drop. You do not have to attend every class to go on the trip, but you will have to show competency for what you've missed.

We will meet at Dana's house: 528 S. Selby Blvd. Worthington, OH at 7pm on August 16th.

Rigging 101: Part 3

Tuesday, August 16th, 7pm

*Top: Dana Sutherland demonstrates how an alpine butterfly can be used to isolate a section of bad rope.
Bottom: Aaron Collier prepares to descend from rigging partially composed of an alpine butterfly.*

