



C.O.G. Squeaks
June 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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Upcoming COG Events:

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

June 28	COG Monthly Meeting – Worthington Presbyterian Church
July 8-10	Karst-o-Rama Great Saltpeter Preserve, Kentucky
July 12	Rigging 101 – Part 2: Prussics 7-9 pm 528 Selby Blvd Worthington
July 26	COG Monthly Meeting – Worthington Presbyterian Church
August 5-7	Indiana Cave Capers
August 23	COG Monthly Meeting – Worthington Presbyterian Church
September 27	COG Monthly Meeting – Worthington Presbyterian Church
October 25	COG Monthly Meeting – Worthington Presbyterian Church

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**



From the Chair – Aaron Deal

Thank you! Thank you! Thank you to all of the volunteers throughout the Great Saltpetre Cave Preserve Open House planning, setup, and actual event. We had a very successful event that saw over 3000 people visit the preserve after a couple years of not being able to host the annual event. Overall COG was very well represented and is something we should strive to maintain in future Open Houses (get May 20th and 21st 2023 on your calendars).

Looking back over almost the first half of the year, I'm pleased with the amount and variety of events that we've been able to host both locally or near caves (not so local). These events included caving, hiking, kayaking, training, or simple social hours with hopefully something appealing to all current and prospective members. I would like to thank anyone who has helped plan a grotto event.

I'd like to see this continue as we move forward and hopefully see more members step up to create events. Don't forget about upcoming regional events like KOR, Cave Capers, and Tag Fall Cave-in

On a personal note, Kim and I have purchased a home in Troy, OH and will hopefully be working on moving over the next month or two. This move won't affect our interest or commitment to the grotto, and plan to be at the monthly meetings moving forward. I grew up in Troy and have lots of family and friends in the area. Look out for a float on the Big Darby and camp out event to our cherished first home!



Title: Open House from the Gate

When: May 13 to May 15
Where: GSP
Who: Kelly McNamara, Kyle Rinehart, and Aaron Deal

"Welcome! Have you been here before?" brought on several different responses as Kelly, Aaron, and for a short spell, Kevin, greeted every car that came down the bumpy drive into GSP preserve. "No its our first time" or "It's been a long long time" or "It's been a couple of years" were all common responses that lead into conversation about where to park, free soup beans and cornbread, and cave tours at the top of the hill. Occasionally you'd have the frustrated person that would say they finally found the preserve after driving around the area for hours to which I would generally say "Well happy you found us!". Additionally we'd ask how many people did they bring, which sometimes had folks scrambling for their wallet thinking we had an entry fee. We'd remind them that it was a

completely free event although donations were gladly accepted at the shelter house or cave. Overall we had 1481 visitors on Saturday and 1754 visitors on Sunday.

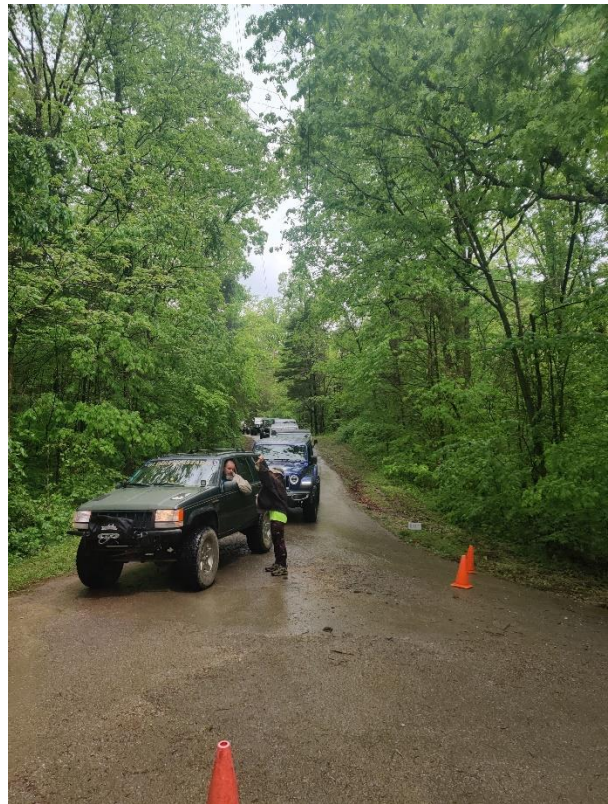
Saturday morning started off with quite a bit of rain, so eventually Kelly put on a hat. The very next car that pulled up had the exact same hat in the car, so we had to get a picture!



A big topic of conversation amongst the gate dwellers was the variety of vehicles that ranged from UTVs to 15 person passenger vans to the groups of motorcycles. We even had a group of lowered cars come through that made you cringe as occasionally you'd hear the cars scrape even though they were swerving to miss the potholes. The church van that showed up on Saturday blessed Kelly with some holy water from their windshield wipers. Kyle tracked the total number of cars each day which totaled 478 cars on Saturday and 547 cars on Sunday.

The Saturday morning rain led to some muddy conditions that made it hard for cars to pass each other as they entered and exited the preserve. Thankfully no one got stuck but the grass in front of the caretaker house and

near the turn for the senior parking turned into big ruts.



Overall it was a great weekend even though the drive down tried to ruin it as we got a late start, hit an accident just as we were getting on the highway, and hit construction in Kentucky that delayed us for seemingly hours with Kim and I finally pulling in after 1am on Saturday morning. A warm breakfast and familiar faces the next morning helped turn things around.

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## **Kees / Bowden – Wendy Orlandi**

We promoted the Kees/Bowden trip as an intro to vertical, but it transformed into a little bit of everything, including spending time with old friends and making new ones as well. Aaron Collier and I arrived at Bear Heaven Campground on Thursday night, a bit later than expected after removing a tree blocking the gravel road that led to camp. Jason Glancy, Harry Goepel and Tera Williamson were waiting for us with a welcoming, roaring fire. After catching up for a bit we set off to sleep to prepare for a busy day on rope.

Friday morning greeted us with sunshine and cool temperatures. We geared up and hiked a short distance to the Bear Haven Day Use Area. The sheer beauty of this part of West Virginia cannot be overstated. Picture dappled shade over massive sandstone boulders clothed in diverse species of moss, fern and lichens. Trails cutting through rhododendron and over rock crevices wound to the top of a 30 foot cliff covered in mountain laurel just shy of peak bloom. The view of verdant mountains and valleys stretched for miles before us.



*Bear Haven Day Use Area is visually stunning.  
Photo credit: Tera Williamson*

We began to rig by making a tensionless anchor around a tree with a figure eight and a carabiner. The next tree was wrapped in a loop of webbing secured with a water knot. Both ends were connected to an alpine

butterfly by two carabiners. Jason and Harry taught Aaron to descend and ascend using a rack and a frog system while Tera practiced using her ropewalker. Jason even rigged a perfectly timed drop for me in a tight, cave-like hole where the sunlight reached the bottom at the same time I did, just like some ancient Neolithic solar calendar.



*Jason Glancy ascends a sandstone cliff at Bear Haven.  
Photo credit: Tera Williamson*

Around noon, Shawn and Daniel Zurcher arrived. A traverse was set up between two thirty-foot boulders and over the chasm that had previously been rappelled into. Those brave enough to attempt the traverse used their cow tails and/or pulleys to drag themselves horizontally across the canyon. Shawn and Daniel also brought equipment to set up a rebelay to extend vertical practice for the group.

By late afternoon, Amos and Daphna El-Roy had arrived at camp all the way from New Jersey! They saw our trip posted on Facebook and decided to join without knowing a soul. They were a delightful couple and a highlight

of the trip for me. Daphna is clever, quick witted and convivial. Amos is reserved, thoughtful and unruffled even in the face of frustration. Both came to improve their vertical skills. Daphna uses a ropewalker and Amos is in the market for a new system. As we were fitting him in a borrowed harness, he mentioned that he was undecided in purchasing a brake bar rack or a bobbin, which is very popular outside of the US for shorter drops. At the mention of this Shawn immediately produces a bobbin for Amos to use in practice. We ended a perfect day with dinner, conversation, campfire and acoustic guitar.



*Aaron Collier descending with a brake bar rack.  
Photo credit: Tera Williamson*

The next morning we left early for a home style breakfast at the Gateway Restaurant before arriving at Kees Cave. After a short

crawl, we entered a narrow canyon passage and moved past a little exposure using limited footholds and friction.

At the end we geared up while Jason, Shawn and Daniel rigged the ropes. We all descended the drop using either of the two ropes. When everyone was at the bottom the shorter rope was repurposed as a traverse, so those who chose to, could put the previous day's practice into real cave experience. We then headed back to camp for a quick lunch, said goodbye to the Zurchers and Harry Goepel but hello to Bill Gort who had just arrived.



*Tera Williamson, Jason Glancy, Daniel Zurcher, Wendy Orlandi, Harry Goepel, Amos El-Roy, Shawn Zurcher and Daphna El-Roy preparing to enter Kees Cave.*

*Photo credit: Aaron Collier*

Our remaining party members, Jason, Tera, Bill, Daphna, Amos and myself headed into nearby Bowden Cave while Aaron unsuccessfully went fishing in the nearby Cheat River. After entering the cave, we followed a stream through a sizable walking passage until it terminated in a massive pile of breakdown. Just before the breakdown a ladder was placed for access to an upper level which contained an intricate water-carved dome of about 50 feet in height.

On the way back through the cave we entered a side passage from which icy, rapidly moving water spilled into the main trunk. Jason led us upstream which was filled with swirl holes of various sizes. The passage looked as if it had vaulted ceilings decorated with really unusual, yet extraordinarily beautiful scallops. We followed the passage about 300 feet until a barricade under the border of the Monongahela National Forest stopped us from going further. As we stopped to rest, Jason told us a story of how he carried steel as part of the effort to erect the protective barricade. We finished the evening off with dinner at CJ Maggies in Elkins and another late-night campfire.



*Tera Williamson waiting for her turn on rope in Kees.  
Photo credit: Daphna El-Roy*

Although it rained both nights before, we woke up to a sunny Sunday morning. We returned to the rocks at Bear Haven to get in one last vertical practice before saying our

goodbyes. Jason Glancy is an excellent vertical instructor and I'm sure I speak for everyone when I say thank you for enriching our lives with your knowledge. Also, thanks to Shawn Zurcher and Harry Goepel for lending their expertise to make this a memorable trip. Yay for Tera Williamson for completing her COG membership requirements this weekend! Finally, thanks to the El Roys for trusting us enough to be part of this adventure. We really enjoyed your company and hope to see everyone again soon.



*Amos El-Roy on Rope with a bobbin in Kees.  
Photo credit: Daphna El-Roy*

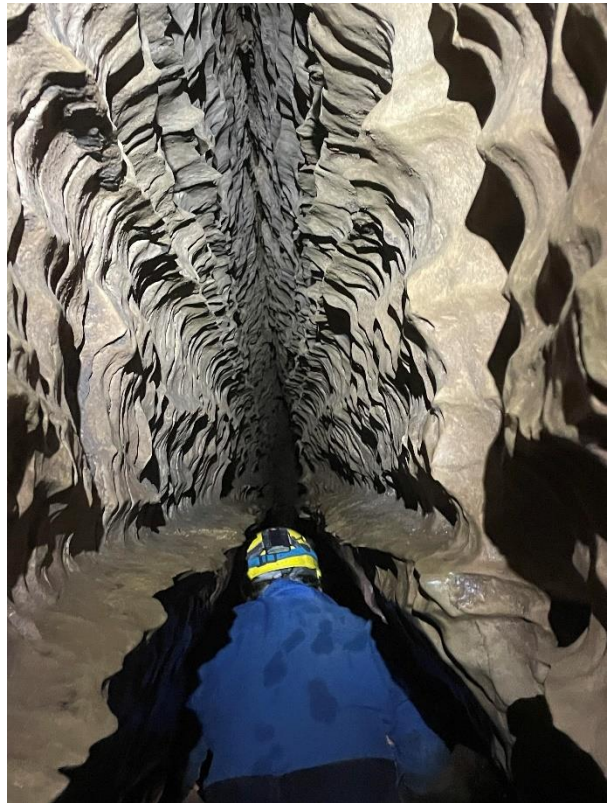




*Harry Goepel traverses the chasm.  
Photo credit: Tera Williamson*



*Entrance to Bowden Cave  
Photo credit: Daphna El-Roy*



*Bill Gort moving through a heavily scalloped passage in Bowden.  
Photo credit: Wendy Orlandi*



Jason Glancy rests near the barricade under The Monongahela National Forest.



Bill Gort also drops into the cave-like hole on Sunday while Jason Glancy coaches him.

Photo credit: Wendy Orlandi



Daphna El-Roy on rope at Sunday's Bear Haven vertical practice.  
Photo Credit: Amos El-Roy

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### COG June Speaker – George Veni

Why do you go to Central Ohio Grotto meetings? Of course, you attend to increase your opportunities to go caving, but isn't there something more? Most long-term cavers develop deep interests in just about everything involving caves, but they also develop a deep desire to protect caves from those who don't understand their value. While we tend to keep cave locations secret, we know that we must share at least general information about caves to keep them safe. That is the goal of the International Year of Caves and Karst.

The International Year is a global effort to advance the world's knowledge of caves and karst. While only 6 months are left in the

year, your actions now and in the years ahead will be seen and appreciated at international governmental levels due to the International Year. They will have greater meaning than ever before. You will be part of a growing wave of knowledge and support sweeping around the planet. This presentation will teach you about the International Year. More importantly, it will help you keep that momentum going far beyond 2022 and become tomorrow's leaders in exploring, understanding, and protecting caves and karst in the decades ahead.

Dr. George Veni is the Executive Director of the National Cave and Karst Research Institute (NCKRI) and an internationally recognized hydrogeologist specializing in caves and karst terrains. Prior to NCKRI, he owned and served as principal investigator of George Veni and Associates, conducting multidisciplinary environmental karst management studies for more than 20 years. He has conducted karst research throughout the United States and in several other countries. He has chaired many organizations and conferences and has served as President of the International Union of Speleology since 2017, organizing the International Year of Caves and Karst in 2021 and 2022. He has served as a doctoral committee advisor for geological, geographical, and biological dissertations at five universities in the US and Greece, taught karst geoscience courses as an adjunct professor for Western Kentucky University for 12 years, and taught karst science and management workshops internationally for NCKRI since 2011. He has published and presented over 270 papers, including six books, on hydrogeology, biology, and environmental management in karst terrains.

George Veni, PhD  
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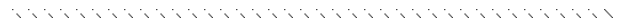
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## Rigging 101 – Dana Sutherland

On June 14, the Grotto hosted its first introduction to rigging clinic in Worthington. Eleven members attended with various levels of knowledge, and I am confident everyone learned something. We focused on the figure eight family of knots, (an 8, the follow through, 8 on a bite and double 8 on a bite) how to correctly dress and adjust them. After everyone was comfortable tying each knot, a demonstration how each could be incorporated into rigging an anchor was shown. Critical angles and load amplification was explained and demonstrated. Load amplification is a simple law of physics. It is possible to rig a rope in a fashion that the rope and anchors are subject to forces much greater than the weight physically hanging from it. Look for the written explanation and the mathematical formula to figure load amplification at the July Rigging 101 event.

Which brings me to the last topic. We will hold another 101 clinic on Tuesday, July 12 at 7:00pm. We will refresh on the figure eight family, then learn how to tie a prusik and a few of its uses. Afterward we will probably grab pizza or Mexican. If you couldn't attend the first event, but are planning to come in July, please be familiar with the above listed knots. There are many online sources that can teach you to tie knots.

Thank you, Jason Glancy, Matt Mezydlo, Brian Devine and Kay Jerene, for your help! The evening would not have went as smoothly without you.



## Kayaking & Caving – Blackhand Gorge

Report by Bill Gort

On Saturday May 21st of 2022, members and friends of the Central Ohio Grotto went on a kayak trip on the Licking River. The people who participated included Wendy Orlandi and her daughter Mia, Suz Gagnon and her friend Matt, Jillian Dyer and her dog Fox, Aaron Collier, Tera Williamson, Adam AsheRa, and myself (Bill Gort, or Bilbo as my caving friends know me.) Our put in point was at Staddens Landing near the iconic Longaberger building and our takeout point was at Blackhand Gorge. We arrived at Staddens Landing on a warm, sunny early summer morning.



Photo: Aaron Collier

A few of us launched our kayaks and paddled a short distance downstream where we parked on a sandbar to wait for the others to

join us. Looking back upstream I could see Fox running around and splashing in the water while Jillian tried to coax him into her boat. Fox was not used to riding in kayaks and preferred to swim in the river or run around on the bank. However, we had a long way to go and eventually wanted him in the kayak. Eventually we all got launched and headed downstream with Fox running or swimming alongside. Fox is a large white dog who weighs about 95 pounds. Each time he got in the kayak he would jump out again.



Photo: Aaron Collier

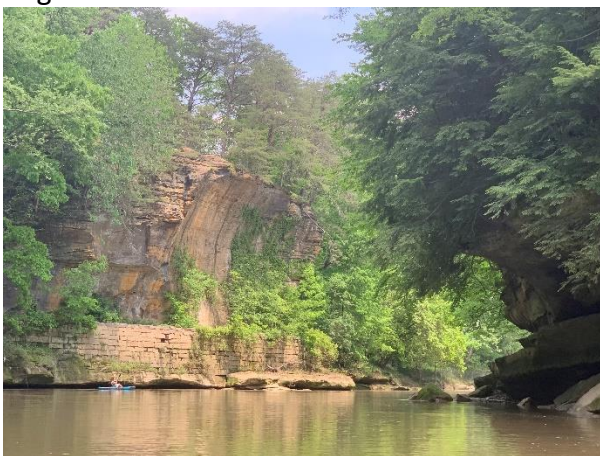
Once we got moving, the river took us through a midwestern landscape of forests and fields. The current was moderately fast with occasional small riffles and rapids. There were a few logs and strainers that needed to be avoided. Adam AsheRa chose to use a stand-up paddle board rather than a kayak. He was able to control the board quite well although sometimes he would take a swim in the refreshing waters.



Photo: Aaron Collier

At one point we heard a tornado siren coming from a nearby town. The sky didn't look particularly threatening, but the sound was quite eerie as there was no easy way to leave the river and seek shelter. Nothing further came of it, and we moved on.

Later on, I was paddling with Wendy and Aaron when we came to a bend in the river that formed a slow whirlpool-like eddy. By moving your boat into the lazy eddy, you could endlessly circle in a clockwise direction. Wendy started to wonder where Jillian was, and if she was Okay. After about fifteen minutes, Jillian and Fox came into view. Jillian told us that Fox got excited by a log and suddenly shifted his weight, making it impossible for her to steer the kayak, causing them to collide with the log and capsize. The irony of this is that, once they recovered and got back underway, Fox settled down in the boat and looked so placid and peaceful that everyone they passed on the river complimented her on how well behaved her dog was.



*Photo by Aaron Collier*

Downstream, towards the end of the trip, the banks of the river grew higher as we entered Blackhand Gorge. After passing some picturesque cliffs we came to the end of our

river journey. We loaded the boats back onto our cars and some of us decided to go look for a cave we had heard about.

We parked by the side of the road and walked up a steep embankment to search the woods. We were looking for large sandstone boulders beneath which could be found a cave. I was walking carefully to avoid tripping or getting poison ivy, so the others got a little ahead of me. Looking to my left, I saw an opening at the base of some boulders. I got down on hands and knees and immediately felt cool air. I turned my light on and crawled forward under a rock. Shining my light to the right I saw an old inscription in the rock. Most of the inscriptions in this cave were from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. One of them said C. Tunis 1908. I could hear the others voices and soon crawled up a short slope to join them. They later followed me back out to make a through trip of the small cave. Upon exiting we found some very small northern slimy salamanders that were black with white speckles.



*Photo by Aaron Collier*

Further research revealed that the cave belonged to the Tunis family who had been farming the area since 1815. The family farm is now on its seventh generation and family

members had visited the cave. C. Tunis was Charles Tunis. Wendy spoke with Jared Hindel who was featured in a Zanesville Times Recorder newspaper article about the history of the farm.

After leaving the cave we traveled over many miles of back-country roads until we reached the “Woolly Pig” Farm Brewery. This brewery had a complex of farm buildings, covered picnic tables, a food truck with very generous portions of Mexican food, and an enclosure with large woolly pigs. We got there just in time as a thunderstorm soon opened up. We sat and watched the storm while we satisfied our thirst and our appetites. We spent the night at Wendy’s log cabin before driving home the next day. On the way home, I stopped for an hour to paddle my kayak on Salt Fork Lake where I saw a snake and some birds.



*Photo by Aaron Collier*

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Bob Dobbs Cave – text by Wendy Orlandi;
photos by Suzanne Gagnon

After the throngs of visitors left GSP on Saturday of Open House 2022, a few of us

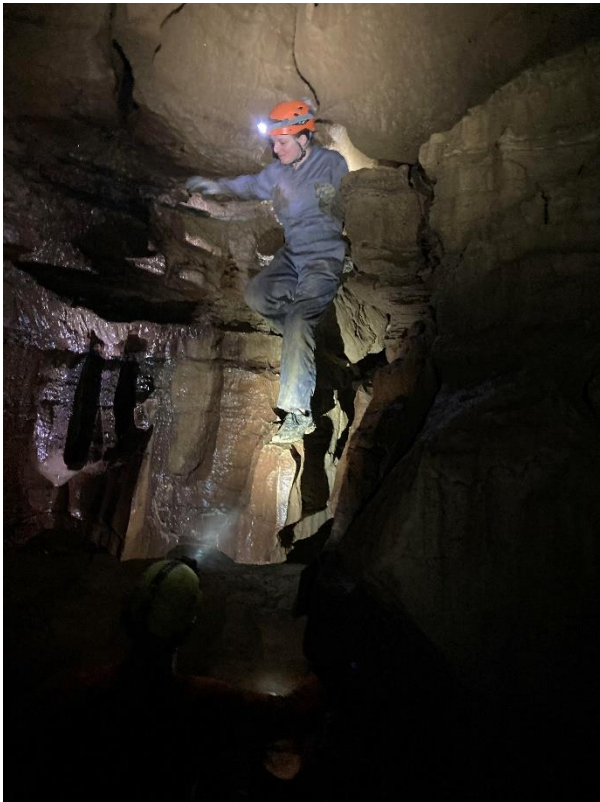
began plotting an evening trip to a cave discovered and named after Bob Dobbs located within the Preserve. After dinner we swapped and loaned gear to each other as most of us hadn’t planned on caving that weekend. Brian Devine, Suz Gagnon, Caroline Kuiken, Ava Kuperman and her brother Jed represented COG and Chris Bauer, Katlyn Coleman and Ethan Link from GCG joined us. It would be the first time in this cave for most of our party with the exception of Brian and I, and the first wild cave for Ethan ever!



Katlyn Coleman, Chris Bauer, Brian Devine, Jed Kuperman, Suz Gagnon, Ethan Link, Ava Kuperman, Caroline Kuiken

It didn’t take very long to hike from the back field, to the dry stream bed, crawl over fallen trees and scramble up the hill to find the entrance. After climbing in one by one we were greeted by a multitude of cave crickets which seem to frequent the same area, year

after year. Moving along through the doglegged passage we squeezed to the left of a series of columns that almost seems to function as a gate, or a strainer, to the cave beyond. That passage then dead ends overlooking a large pit, but there is a corkscrew like path to the right that winds over and through breakdown spilling out into the very bottom of the shaft. Suz, Ethan and I waited there while the rest of our party explored a canyon passage that opened to the left. From memory, I recall this canyon being richly decorated in horn coral and crinoids and has side passages that beg to be explored by folks thinner than me.



Caroline chooses a more challenging route to the bottom.

After climbing out of the pit, Suz and I worked our way over the large “pride rock” on the left to move into the passage that leads to the rest of the cave. It doesn’t have much

walking passage, but you can crawl forever. There are a couple more small pits and a lot of formation including columns and soda straws. The rest of our group, however, was ready to leave and exiting the same way we came was uneventful. This should be the end of the trip report, but there’s more. Once out of the cave it was dark. I thought it would be safer to continue up the hill to the Sara Corrie Trail than it would be to find our way down through the creek bed. I walked alone through the woods and the trail was exactly where I thought it would be so I walked back to the group to let them know I had found it. They followed me up the hill and slightly southeast thinking we would intersect the trail on the diagonal. We stumbled across a promising depression and Katelyn was ready to dive in and start clearing debris, but we decided to wait until the next day to explore more.



After cave group picture

We still hadn’t met the trail even after walking a considerable distance and I was worried I overshot the trail in the dark so I compensated by leading the group even more to the south where I knew the field would eventually come into view. On the way, we encountered a large, deep pit that looked like it led to more cave at the bottom. Two large

tree trunks were in the pit, perhaps purposely placed there so that folks stumbling around in the dark wouldn't take a nasty fall. This was a much more exciting discovery than finding the trail! We dropped a pin and planned to go back. I wondered if this might have been Bob Dobbs Annex, which I was never successful in finding.

When we finally reached the field we were only about 15 feet short of the trailhead. I led the group parallel to the trail the whole time! The good news is had we been on the trail, we would have never discovered the cave. The bad news is no one will ever follow me into the woods, at least in the dark, again.



Suz and Wendy happy to be underground together again!



Chris and Katlyn looking over the edge of the pit from the top.



Jed Kuperman crawling through the "gate."



Ethan Link admires a wall full of crinoids and horn coral on his first wild cave trip.

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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.