



Central Ohio Grotto Squeaks October 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.

October 25	COG Monthly Meeting
October 29	GSP Halloween Party
November 22	COG Monthly Meeting
December TBD	COG Christmas Party

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**

From the Chair – Aaron Deal

Well, I'm another year older and got to spend my birthday caving (see "Helmets Maiden Voyage")! I arrived at GSP midafternoon on Friday and had the

preserve to myself which was very peaceful with all of the fall colors and even saw three deer go past the tractor shed.

There are several opportunities to enjoy and support GSP in the upcoming weeks. Oct 28th to 30th is Halloween weekend to raise funds for the caretaker's residence. There should be plenty of things to do on the preserve along with caves trips. Then the first 3 weekends in November there are scout trips where volunteers would be appreciated. Volunteering for scout trips allows you to learn caves in the area, network with other cavers, support GSP, introduce youth to caving, and free camping at GSP. Upcoming trips and sign ups can be found at <https://tiny.cc/volunteercaving>.

Just a reminder that elections will be taking place in November with nominations occurring in the October meeting. To vote you need to be a regular member, which means a current member of both COG and the NSS.



Autumn at GSP – Photo by Aaron Deal

GSP Rescue Call Out List Updates

The rescue call-out list for GSP was last updated in 2017, so an update is in progress to keep the list current and accurate.

If willing to help in a cave rescue scenario please fill out the easy 9-question survey, <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NT28PTG>.

Questions can be sent to Stephanie Suen (sksuen@gmail.com).

GSP School Field Trip October 13, 2022 – Aaron Collier

Upon arriving at GSP to assist with the school field trip, I couldn't help but notice how sparsely populated the preserve was. However, Werner and Neena Jud, Josh, and Ethan made for good company. Neena had the tarps and screen down in preparation for the movie and Werner set up the projector. Obvious signs of a Kentucky fall were noticeable in the hills and evidenced by the leaves I blew away from under the shelter. Two busloads of 7th graders arrived in a timely manner and staff members ushered them to the picnic tables. It was pleasing to hear the students speak in my native tongue. Neena gave a brief introduction and in no time we split into groups for the tour. As tail gunner, I helped Ethan Link. Werner and Josh took the other groups and Neena showed the film. A sweet smell of the forest was unmistakable as we ascended the steps to the show cave. Teachers requested a focus on geology and Ethan was on point with his delivery. Fortunately, the tours were relatively uneventful. Two parents and a preschooler managed to crash our group claiming that they got lost. I later

discovered that one of the ladies had a grandson in our group. Go figure. One of the ladies reported that she swore off caves after being lost in Sinks of the Roundstone for five hours. It was an entertaining story and reaffirmed my fear of getting lost while caving (lol). Highlights for the students included, a bat, a salamander and signature alley. With the leadership of knowledgeable and competent tour guides students were eating lunch and playing football in the field by noon. The school offered the volunteers a lunch sack as well. Needless to say, I stopped for food on the way home.



GSP School Field Trip – Photo by Aaron Collier

Helmets Maiden Voyage – Aaron Deal



Photo by Dave Huggins

Scout Troop 14 from Chillicothe, OH arrived at the GSP preserve late on Friday evening but was eager Saturday morning to get into a cave. After equipping the 19 scouts and parents using some of the newly acquired COG helmets, we set off for the Sinks of the Roundstone with Peebles in tow (Josh's 4-legged caving companion). We entered through the railroad entrance slightly before 11am with Josh and Peebles leading with a hoard of scouts close behind with the parents in back with Bill and Aaron.



Photo by Dave Huggins

The low water level in the cave allowed us to drop into the stream passage and explore the upstream areas of the cave. A slippery mud slope was the first obstacle that led to lessons of providing space for

people in obstacles, which was a challenge for the eager scouts throughout the cave. We continued on to observe where the 2 stream passages combined and heading back to where we entered the stream passage.

Climbing up a slope we had an option to crawl through a small hole or over the boulder. Then the scouts were set with a decision to either take a pancake passage or a canyon. Patrol leader Austin had the troop stand on either side of him to cast a vote for which route to take. A split decision was leading to a political debate, so we stopped them since we had decided to split into 2 groups. Aaron led the pancake route with Josh leading the canyon route and met up perfectly where the routes rejoined each other.



Photo by Kory Lambert

Continuing through the cave the scouts spotted a hole to crawl through that lead

to a small dome, which managed to fit all of them. After a head count, we continued on until we ran into the stream passage where we did a lights-out minute. Next, we headed towards girl scout dome through a couple small constrictions that had the adults concerned, but everyone made it through the 1st one with a few dropping out for the 2nd one. Once explored we headed back out taking a different route back to the main passage.

Back at the main passage we explored the stream bed and went through a small passage Josh referred to as preparation "H". The passage is narrow and requires a small climb up that had the scouts struggling and Josh wondering what was taking so long. Once all of the scouts were through an adult timed himself making it out in less than 2 minutes. We continued on following the stream to the cave entrance.

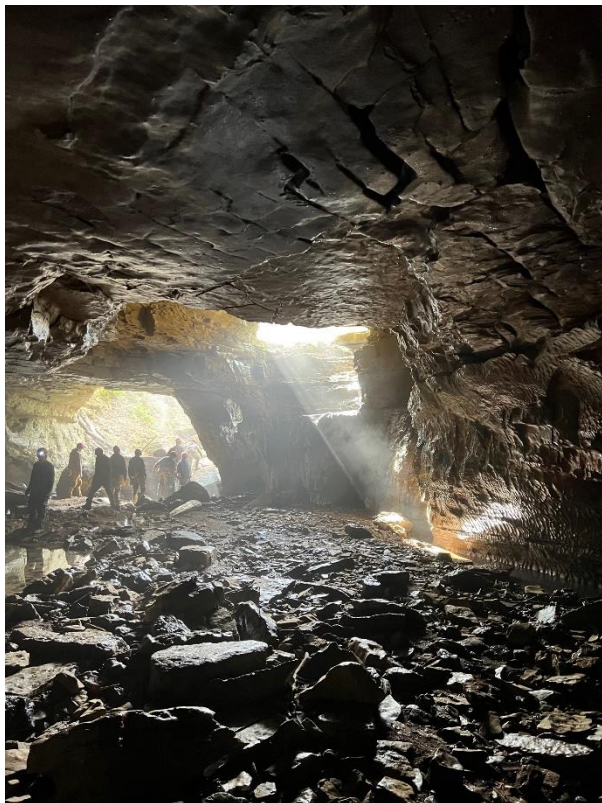


Photo by Kory Lambert

In the evening Josh gave the customary tour of GSP where one of the scouts was able to mostly describe the chemical makeup of saltpeter. Afterwards the scout leaders served a nice meal of tacos, rice, and pies.

In the morning we met up again around 9:30am for caves on the GSP preserve with about half the group joining us. We first hiked to ice box cave that is a short cave with a waterfall in the back. We then hiked back to the field and went into Lloyd Mullins cave, which was a little longer and allowed the scouts to self-explore. Then we hiked back to the shelter for everyone to pack up and head home.

Overall, a great cave trip.

Kisamore pit trip report 10/12/22 – Jason Glancy

Participants Jason Glancy, Zach Glancy, Paul and Gavin Hetzer, Mark and Vonny, and Rick Lambert .

Today we met at the Gateway for breakfast before heading to Kisamore pit with one of Rick Lambert's air control gates. To our surprise it only took 2.5 hours to install so that left plenty of time for Zach Paul and Gavin and I to work on the dig. We lowered a ladder down for checking a few upper leads later. Meanwhile Paul continued his forward progress before running out of time. We are now an arm's length away from a pit! On our way out we repaired the farmers gate by removing the previous attempt by other GVKers pit-rope hinge with real gate hinges.

The following photos by Jason Glancy – installing the air flow gate.



Zombies Invade Well-Known Cave at GSP!!! – A Horror Story by Wendy Orlandi

I was alone, without a cell phone and no call out when I decided to take a solo trip into Lloyd Mullins. Lloyd Mullins is a small cave nestled in the hillside on GSP property. It's located on the far side of Barton Field and across Crooked Creek. In the past, it's been a popular spot to let one's children play while adult covers babysit the entrance with a cold beverage and a lawn chair to escape the overbearing heat of summer. Little do parents know that this "safe" one entrance cave in which they've turned their little adventurers loose is infested with organisms that have committed unspeakable horrors to the gentle troglobites that call this place home.

After winding through the canyon passage, I stopped to assess the water height of a low section of passage. Usually, I'm able to hop from rock to rock to avoid the water, but it was particularly high this day. As I scanned the pool, my light caught something writhing awkwardly through the water. Upon closer inspection this seemed to be a living being, although no discernible mouth or anus was present. I'd never seen anything like it! If it wasn't for the occasional jarring flicks of its body, I would have assumed it was a thick, dark piece of string about a foot and a half in length and moved on without giving it another thought.

In the days that followed I was haunted by what I had seen in the cave and took to google to help me explain the mysterious creature thrashing about Lloyd Mullins. As an avid forager, I often find myself trying to identify a new flower, mushroom, etc. using an internet search, and more often than not, I quickly find success. Not so with this elusive little worm. Searches including "cave" and "worm" yielded nothing that resembled the bizarre creature I had found. Since I didn't have a photo, I couldn't post to sites where an experienced biologist could have helped me identify it. I eventually stumbled onto a publication named *A Guide to Missouri's Cave Life* by William R. Elliot. Within its pages I found my answer, but also the nightmarish details of this deadly predator.



Photo Credit – Carlsbad Caverns National Park

This particular Horsehair Worm is one of about 350 species of Gordian worms of the phylum Nematomorpha; this particular species targets cave/camel crickets. This ancient parasitoid (parasites intend to keep their victims alive) spends its adult form in the water, mating and laying its eggs. Other minute insects then ingest

the eggs which are in turn eaten by the intended victims, cave crickets. Once inside, the larvae bores through the gut wall and consumes the victim's flesh from within. This process can take months before the worm sends neurotransmitters to the cricket's brain to turn their six-legged hosts into zombies, complete with instructions to commit suicide by jumping into a nearby body of water.

Not unlike an *Alien* movie, the Horsehair Worm then violently bursts through the crickets body into the water forming a knot with other worms as they take part in a frenzied orgy that would make Dionysus blush. This "Gordian Knot" is named after the Phrygian legend of King Gordius, the father of Midas, tying an ox cart to a post with a knot so complicated that the one who could unravel it would become ruler of all Asia. A young Alexander the Great became obsessed with untying the knot, but to no avail before cleaving it in two with his sword.

I've shared this true story with many other cavers and with scouts who beg for a spooky cave story. I also tell them I have visited Lloyd Mullins since that day but haven't seen another horsehair worm there or in any other cave. But I will say that since that day, I have more compassion for zombies, I keep my eyes open near water, I tread more lightly through cave pools, and I NEVER drink the water.

Member Interview – Hannah Baker



Hannah Baker with Scott Ford – Photo credit unknown.

How did you first get into caving?

~ My boyfriend talked about his past caving experience, and I was like, that sounds insane, I wanna have that experience!

What are some of your other interests?

~ I help run a community a cappella group called InCommon.

What are some of your favorite caving experiences?

~ I liked going in GSP, it's an amazing cave.

What guided your decision to join COG?

~I want to cave more with these awesome people!

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

~I think the scientific side of things is interesting, so I hope to help with the

global warming study they'll be doing in local caves!

7 Deadly Sins – COG Halloween Party – Wendy Orlandi

We had another great year at the cabin in Guernsey County! Kevin Lorms, Ana Scherschel, Patrick Gibson and Bethany Widmayer joined the party early to help decorate the pavilion for the band on Saturday night. Other guests included Aaron Collier, Jennie Hawkey, Scott Jones, Kara Bond and Alexis Eleanor. Scott started the party off by pressing four gallons of cider in his antique apple press while guests and members from the campground enjoyed the demonstration.

Our theme was the Seven Deadly Sins. I went as pride with a flapper styled peacock dress, black cocktail gloves, t-straps, a turban adorned with peacock feathers and a gilded hand mirror in which I gazed upon my great beauty and elegant ensemble all night long, but enough about me! Aaron chose to embody greed by dressing as a gangster with fedora, pin stripe suit, gold pocket watch and cash oozing from his vest. He also had a smoking hot lady by his side, but enough about me!

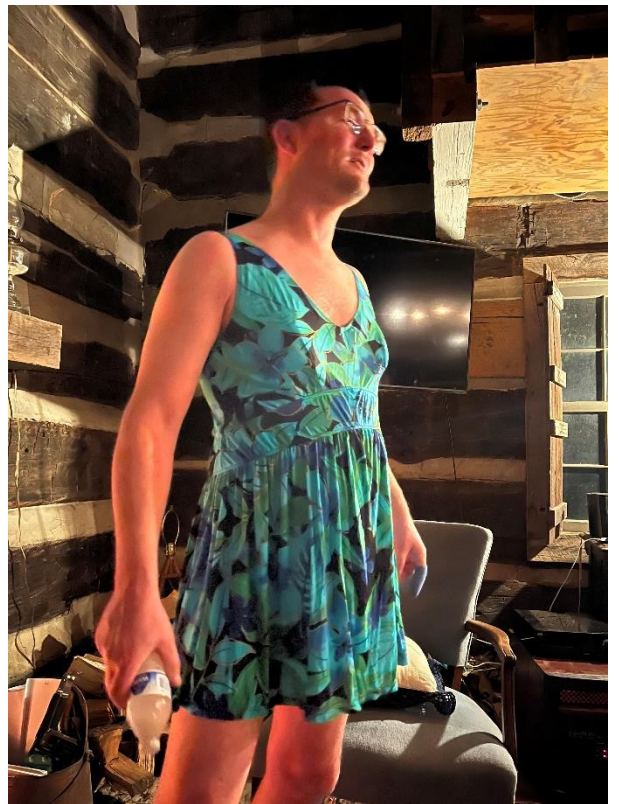
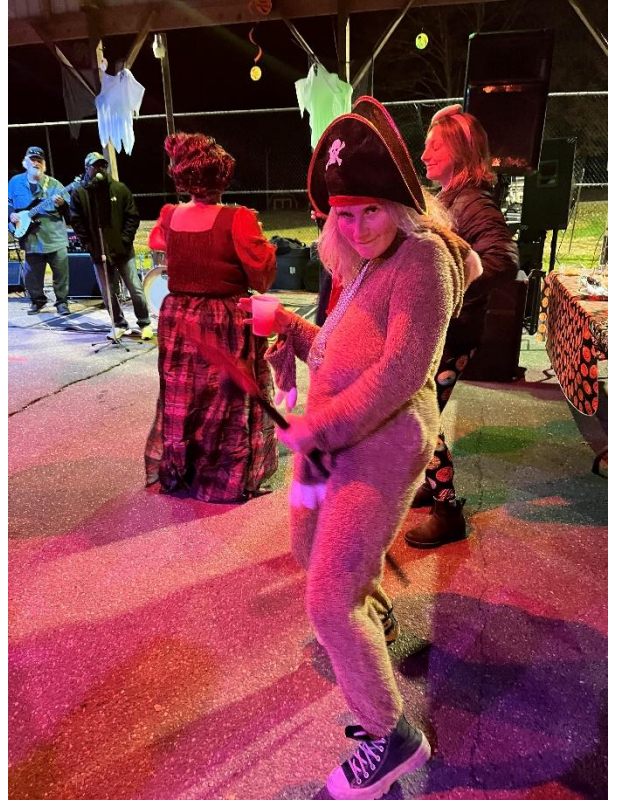
Kara was the spitting image of the wrathful and well-endowed pirate, Anne Bonnie, who once killed a man for forcing himself upon her. Jennie was cute as a button by channeling gluttony with an adorable donut costume. Kevin also chose to go with excess in a costume I can only describe as indescribable. Bethany was dressed in green, threw on a cape, wrapped a snake around her neck and was the picture of envy. The smartest of us Ana, chose a stylish bathrobe to

keep warm in the chilly temperatures as sloth. Not to be outdone, Alexis Eleanor went as all seven deadly sins but she had to remove the dangling "lust" portion of her costume after some disgruntled parent complaints, but she received the most compliments for her devil may care attitude and boldness from other campers attending the adult party.

Scott was dashing in his highlander kilt and Patrick came first as a Christmas elf, next as a bathing beauty in Kara's swimsuit left behind at the Christmas party and finally as Chewbacca. We danced, made merry and kept cozy by a roaring fire until morning. Another great COG/OCC Halloween party in the books. See you next year!

Photos by Wendy Orlandi & Aaron Collier – see if you can guess who is who!







CENTRAL OHIO GROTTO



www.centralohiogrotto.com

Walnut Grove – Mark Swelstad

Saturday – early morning

I woke to the sound of children laughing.

I quickly realized that here in the back field of the Great Saltpeter Preserve in early November, there were no children for miles around...and certainly not in the middle of the night – I must have been dreaming. I smiled to myself, remembering the time I camped alone after watching *The Blair Witch Project*. That night, many years ago, every noise in the dark became a creeping witch, or worse, something dark and unknown. When dawn finally came, I awoke and laughed at my primal fears, safe and...there it is again. Shit – that WAS a young girl giggling.

I fumbled around in the dark for my flashlight – God, it's cold, I thought as my fingers searched the cold tent floor. But then...did I really want to turn the light on? Come on, Swelstad, you're the rational one...the skeptic. You probably heard a bird of some kind, or maybe someone came into GSP and they're playing a trick on you. I might as well get out and take a look – I have to pee anyway.

Nothing is louder at GSP than the sound of your tent opening in the middle of the night. And nothing is darker than GSP in the middle of the night either. Somehow sound and light just seem to get absorbed by the night and it's like a dead room. Even the animals go silent after a certain time. Stepping out into the cold, crisp air I did a quick scan of the area, the flashlight beam shining against the walnut trees, a small grove of maybe 20...their limbs twisted and bleak in the darkness. I stepped a few steps away from the tent to relieve myself. I thought about the nature of fear; if something scary was standing 20 feet away from me, would it be better to not know it was there, or to look upon it and deal with whatever it was? Not looking is like closing your eyes – I can't do that...I HAVE to see what's around me.

Finishing my ill-timed call of nature, I took a deep breath and shone the light around the backfield again. The grass was still tall, not yet having been flattened by the snows and general decay of winter. Nothing. Silence. That incredible GSP darkness. I took a quick glance behind my tent towards the trail that leads up to the old homestead. I will not think about the homestead right now, I will not think about the homestead right now, I will... I climbed back into my tent. Shutting off the flashlight, I listened to the sound of my breath for who-knows-how-long....and slept.

The next day, Saturday, was a fine day. The blue skies and cool air smacking a sense of reality into my brain that was missing the night before. I chuckled to myself as I drove out towards the shelter, thinking of all the possibilities of what I thought I had heard the night before. As the day wore on, and I found myself around other people, mostly other cavers who had driven down that morning from Cincinnati, I forgot about it altogether.

Sunday – early morning

I woke up facing towards the wall of the tent, the cold air seemingly colder and creeping into my sleeping bag. Waking up in the middle of the night is fairly normal for me and I've found the best way to get back to sleep is to try and say awake. So, I opened my eyes and of course it being totally dark could only make out the dark odd shape of the tent wall. I didn't hear anything so I must have just woken up naturally. I laid there, thinking about how traffic might be driving home later in the morning when I heard it. I froze in position...my eyes now wide open and my brain completely alert. Oh my god...there's something in here with me. Over the sound of my heart racing I could hear the sound of someone behind me breathing. Oh shit, I can feel their breath on my neck. I turned around as quickly as I could, thinking that my flashlight would be on the other side of whatever, or whoever, was laying next to me. My hands searched the space where I should be feeling that person but there was nothing. And looking now I could see there was

nothing there but the other dark wall of the tent. I was sure I had felt something behind me. At this point I KNEW I didn't want to turn on my flashlight – I had changed my mind about facing the unknown. I risked the night-blindness by looking at my phone to see what time it was. My cell battery must be completely dead – wasn't it full last night? – what could have drained the battery that quickly? And my flashlight...it's dead too now – what the hell. I'm out of here, I thought, as I unzipped my bag and pushed myself up. I stood, or rather crouched uncomfortably, and found the zipper to the tent door. Quickly pulling the tent flap open, I found myself staring at a young boy staring back at me. His eyes seemed empty and as black as the night, and his mouth was open and moving as if he was trying to say something. I quickly and instinctively closed the flap, sort of pushing it forward as if to reject what I was seeing. I heard the breathing behind me again and turned around to see that my sleeping bag was bunched up; did I do that or was there someone hiding underneath? Realizing I was either losing my sanity, in a horrible nightmare, or about to be the victim in a horror film, I mustered whatever bravery I still had left and slowly peeled the tent open...the boy was gone. Glancing back into the tent, I could see that my sleeping bag had returned to its previous shape.

I stepped out again into the cold air, shivering less from that from the horrific apparition I had just seen. In disbelief, I looked around the area and didn't see anything, THANK GOD. I dove back into the tent and recovered my car keys and wallet, and sort of dragged everything else out of the tent. Of course, my electronic car key was also out of charge and I had to fumble with the old-school key to open the trunk of my car. My hands were shaking so badly it took a few attempts to get the key in. Crap – I should start the car and warm it up, I thought, it's so cold. Leaning into the car, I quickly found that it was not working either. I was stuck in the back field.

Weighing my options, I knew that I could not stay back here in the walnut grove. I would have to walk to the shelter where I hopefully could get some light and maybe hide out in the kitchen. I started to walk across the field, cutting directly through the tall grass rather than following the rutted roads along the perimeter. I got about to the middle of the field when I started hearing whispering. It was loud enough that I could hear it over the crunching sounds my feet made walking through the frozen grass. I kept going, mostly out of sheer terror and a desire to get the hell out of the backfield. Glancing back towards my tent, I could see a strange and faint glow further up the valley behind the walnut grove, about where the homestead is. I turned and kept moving in the opposite direction.

I was approaching the far end of the field where the road turns into the woods and begins following the valley. I kept walking, almost running. The valley narrows here, with the creek on my left and the dark wooded hillside on my right. "Please play with us" – a girl's voice behind me. I turned and they were there again...a boy and a girl, perhaps 8-10 years old, dressed from around the turn of the century. The boy was holding one of those old hoop-rolling toys they used to play with, using a stick to push the hoop around. He began turning the hoop in mid-air, a strange smile creeping onto his face. I backed away from them, shocked at what I was seeing, and they seemed to slowly dissolve into nothingness as I moved further away.

The walk back to the shelter was full of creeping shadows and secrets hidden behind rocks and trees. The whispering followed me most of the way back and every time I turned to look to see if the children were following me, I realized that I would have to turn back around, which somehow seemed more terrifying. Realizing I couldn't stay on this road of terror forever, I chugged along as quickly as I could, the hairs on the back of my neck...hell, all of them if I'm honest, standing up, and I eventually saw the welcome beacon of the kiosk light. I made it to the shelter and

turned the lights on and sat there shivering until the sun came up.

Sunday morning

I had no choice but to walk back to my car and see if it would start. The walk to the back field was uneventful and my car started just fine. My cell phone had the same amount of charge as it had when I went to bed. I opened my tent – it was in the same half-open disarray I had left it in just a few hours before – and peered inside. Everything looked normal. As I began to work my way around the tent to tear it down, I turned the corner to the back and saw a hoop leaning against my tent.



Source: <https://www.liveabout.com/little-girl-ghost-with-deer-2594142>

Top Ten Scariest Caving Movies

How many of these have you seen?

10. The Cavern (2005)
9. Beneath (2018)
8. Caved In (2006)
7. The Descent 2 (2009)
6. Devil's Pass (2013)
5. The Pyramid (2014)
4. Catacombs (2007)
3. As Above, So Below (2014)
2. The Cave (2005)
1. The Descent (2005)

Source: <https://morbidityintrovert.com/10-scariest-cave-movies-that-will-fuel-your-nightmares/>

Happy Halloween!!

