



Central Ohio Grotto Squeaks September 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.

September 20	Rigging 101 – Part 3
September 27	COG Monthly Meeting
October 15	COG Halloween party
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**

From the Chair – Aaron Deal

Did someone say Ohio State Football? That's right the year has already flown by which means Ohio State Football, Pumpkin Spiced Lattes, and COG elections. September

officially starts our election process with a review of the positions, announcement of the election committee, and the start of nominations. This year I'm happy to announce that Kim Deal, Jennie Hawkey, and Andy Schofield have agreed to coordinate elections. So, if you are interested in helping guide the future of COG be sure to join the September meeting.

Kim and I spent Labor Day and the week after in Los Cabos, Mexico on the southern tip of Baja California Sur with Hurricane Kay. We did have to spend a couple days in a boarded-up house, but overall was a great time in San Jose del Cabo and San Lucas del Cabo. Most days were spent at the pool, beaches, or walking the local stores. On our last day there we took a boat tour to the famous "Arch" in San Lucas del Cabo where the Gulf of California meets the Pacific Ocean. The Arch and surrounding stone cliffs are made up of 90% granite and were once home to famous pirates like Thomas Cavendish. These pirates and the long-buried treasures gave "Pirates Cave" tucked behind the arch its name. We weren't able to get close and explore, but the interesting history made for a good caving note.



Sulphur Mountain System/Bowman's Pit 6/11 — Brian Devine

This trip ended up getting a good bit of valuable project stuff done, although it was really intended to get more exploratory — out to where rigging exists up into a fissure in a shale ceiling. That's in a place called the Walden Room, where there is still 100 feet of 9mm rope stashed that I had designs on using up, plus a mason's hammer and some webbing down the crack we dropped them in on past trips. The webbing I remember knowing the instant I threw it to Nathan in 2017 that it was a goner. Back then you used to slog through crummier passage to the Walden Room than we have available now, since some aid-climbing work done in the last few years ties in an approach with less low crawlway.

This was an overnight camp trip for Adam Mathis, Katlyn Coleman, Chris Bauer and myself. We were simultaneously filming our activities across multiple helmet cameras for video to put towards a Karst-o-Rama presentation I'd been asked to do. Ask me about my cinema-director alter-ego Irv Glasscock sometime! We got a lot of footage starting as early as the preparatory packing of gear phase back at the field house pre-trip. When we entered Bowman's Pit & arrived after ~3 hours at camp, the high moldiness quotient of various bagged supplies suggested we repack the sleeping bags with new desiccant we packed in since it was vintage 2019, so that was a housekeeping objective. Other than a fair amount of food that went bad, stock back there is pretty solid in terms of hand warmers, rigging supplies, water & cooking gear and the like. The inventory Abigail Mack did last time we went in 2020 was exhaustive, and I'm a convert to the value of being fussy on meticulous inventory — there was zero 'gambling' over whether we

might need to bring extra water/how much cooking we'd be able to do/enough sleeping pads for 4; it was nice to know exactly what & what not to bring in.

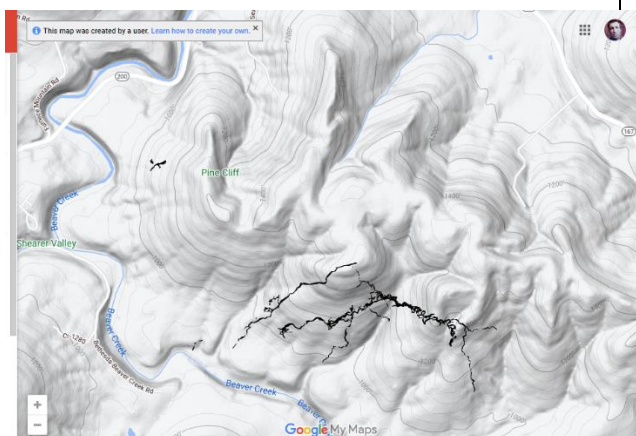


Photo — Brian Devine

Anyway, so we get in with 3 GoPros on the 3 heads not belonging to me, and just took boatloads of footage. Later I found enough to have a quarter of the KOR show be embedded videos. The idea for my particular approach to presentation storytelling was a little off from the usual caving event show. I wanted less year-over-year explanation of the progress in Sulphur Mountain and more deep storytelling just on this one trip. To cut to the story's 'chase scene', here's some background — at some point in 2019 passage was rigged to get to the Walden Room with less effort. Only, we had never laid eyes on that rigging, and we ended up at that last connecting passage to find the rigging was the sort of

provisional stuff characteristic of push trips to just establish an access toehold. To be specific, dynamic rope was pressed into service at a point that dropped the last ~60 feet into the Walden Room. That pretty much scuttled the shale layer plans. It's a rig that was OK to make the breakthrough yet really needs swapped out for pit rope. We didn't have consensus considering it safe and are desirous of a later trip to re-rig some of that whole area.

We did end up with survey that meant to tie in the new drop-in route to the Walden Room, although the survey data reduction there has some screwy shots that might need redone. And it was just a nice long trip, with fellow cavers that I really enjoy doing stuff with. After our alpha-objective was scuttled, we got back to camp I want to say after midnight and ate. That last phase returning to bed down it's crucial for me to dial in my hydration so I don't have to evacuate my bladder overnight. Great success! Not only didn't I have to unwrap all the bedding layers to pee, nobody asked for an alarm to be set — it was well after 11am before the first of us woke and started rousing the others. Slept like a baby. We continued to gather video footage, and exiting came off without a hitch. In fact, on the exit climb I got extremely aggressive with how high my pantin got cranked up underneath me before the 'stand' cycle & I beat the pants off my record for number of sit/stands by something like 26 cycles! But honestly this Walden Room shale layer is becoming like the Great White Whale in my personal Moby Dick project lore, where I obsess over getting back there but the last several trips just keep blowing up in some fashion. Hard-headed to the end, I'm already planning a trip within the next 6 weeks to climb through the shale. The passage beyond better be good or I'll be one pissed off caver :)



Sulphur Mtn System - Screen Grab by Brian Devine

Caver Appreciation Weekend – Mark Swelstad

Caver Appreciation was on September 9-11 this year and it was mostly dry. I didn't do much caving but did go into Mullins Springs Cave (the famous and dreaded entrance to entrance trip – 15 minutes of water torture!). Water levels were low and the ear dip was easily navigable this time. Went with Jamie Thompson, Kevin Lorms, Ana Scherschel, and Jeremy. Good times!



Photo by Mark Swelstad

Virgin Sinkhole in Randolph County, WV –
Jason Glancy

Trip date 8-28-22 coldest cave air I've ever felt!

TFW LTE

12:01 PM

76%

The AC cave dig continues to make progress. Today we measured the temps in the 3 ripping air blowers and the 2 coldest are blowing 46 degrees, very cold for a cave. The most exciting discovery was the noise coming from the flo... See more



Photos by Paul Hetzer



Kayaking the Big Walnut – Part One
– Wendy Orlandi

All photos in Part One by Wendy Orlandi

COG member, David Long, posted an event scheduled for Saturday, August 13, Kayaking the Big Walnut. It's always fun to explore Columbus as we are so often driving to surrounding states to cave or backpack. The plan was to put in at Woodside Green Park in Gahanna at 11 am and take out at Pizzuro Park. As Aaron Collier would say, Jamie Thompson and I "got a wild hair" to extend the trip a couple of hours on the front end by putting in just below the Hoover Dam and meeting the rest of our party at the scheduled time on the Big Walnut. I highly recommend this section, the water is deep enough even in dry weather and there are some sporty rapids that are safe enough for recreational kayakers.

We met at the Hoover Dam Reservoir Parking Lot #2 on Central College Road. You have to cross the footbridge to the right of the lot and then turn left to drag your kayak past hole #9 of the disc golf course and on to the creek bank. Aaron, Jamie and I were met with a Blue Heron shortly after putting in and Jamie soon cruised past a family of mallards. Wildlife was abundant, waterfowl, deer, and turtles. We passed a couple of anglers who had spied a bald eagle earlier in the day but no such luck for us. (Editor – see pictures below)

The rapids eventually gave way to deep slow moving water. Jamie knew we were close to the dam at Cherry Bottom and it would be time to take out. Sure enough, it wasn't long before the warning signs came into view. We decided to take out near the remains of what appeared to be an old pier, that was a mistake.



Blue Heron taking flight



Jamie Thompson and the Mallards

Since the water was so deep, I stepped out as close to shore as possible. My left leg immediately sunk into the mud up to my calf and I completely lost the yellow croc I was wearing deep below. I managed to push/drag my kayak up a steep, poison ivy covered bank with one shoe. About halfway up, I spotted a pipe sticking out of the ground and grabbed it to hoist myself up. I immediately heard a crack and can only remember falling backwards down the bank seeing the sky above me while

clenching a piece of rusty iron pipe in my right fist. Of course, my other shoe also flew off and tumbled back down towards the water. Luckily, my croc resurfaced, and Aaron was able to retrieve both my shoes and help get my kayak up to the road.



The Big Walnut deepens and widens before the low head dam at Cherry Bottom

This was my least favorite section of the trip. We had to portage along a very busy, very dangerous Cherry Bottom Road to get past the dam. As we were walking, I noticed there was a rickety staircase further past where we took out by an old wooden shed along river left. In the future, I would hazard those steps before taking out where we did and avoid a little more portaging as well. If you attempt this, please be careful and go with a buddy. Soon we crossed an empty lot and we were back in the creek once again.

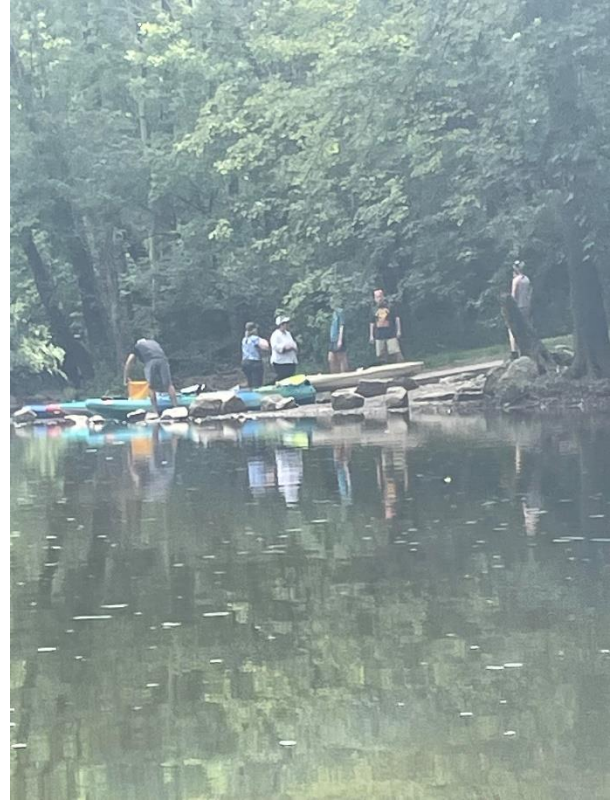
This section of the creek was much lower and was filled with vegetation. It was often a puzzle to figure out which way to go. Should we shoot the rapids and possibly get hung up on the rocks? Or take the meandering path through the tall grass? One of these paths took us past a most foul smell. Then we saw about 30 buzzards hanging out on a fallen tree. I dared the guys if they got out to see if it

was a dog, deer or human body, I'd give them a 100 bucks, but there were no takers. I snapped a quick photo of the birds, and in the picture below there seems to be a deer carcass which we did not notice as we passed by the stench as quickly as possible.



The smell of death

Other than the portage around the low head dam at Cherry Bottom, we didn't have to portage once until we closed in on our rendezvous point with the rest of the group. As we approached Woodside Green we could see a lone figure standing in the middle of the creek watching our approach (Bilbo) and another group of spectators on river right. Embarrassingly and with all eyes on us, we all got stuck and had to get in and out of the kayaks to reach them. We were about 20 minutes late, but Dave assured us that's exactly how long it took to unload the kayaks into the water.



Rendezvous at Woodside Green

Kayaking the Big Walnut – Part Two

– Dave Long

All photos in Part Two by Dave Long

A group of us waited for Wendy, Aaron, and Jamie at Woodside Green Park. Once you enter the park, you go to the left. There is an easy entry to put your kayaks in. Our group consisted of me, my wife, daughter, her boyfriend, another married couple, a single woman, and Bilbo. Not everyone had been caving before, but it was a nice group and we had a great time. We headed down the Big Walnut. We got along mostly okay, some low spots but we managed. Some rapids, which was the fun part. What's nice about the Big Walnut is you never know what you're going to get as you meander down the creek. Some of us ended up turned around by the rapids, had to manage low lying tree branches, large

rocks in the creek, and divided paths. What one do we choose!!?



We stopped halfway to catch our breath and grab a snack at Creekside in Gahanna. The next big attraction was passing by John Glenn International Airport. We were hoping to see a plane fly by overhead but no such luck. The plane passed by but we could only hear it and not see it as we got further down the creek. Sometimes our whole group was together but often times we were spread a part in small groups which gave a nice chance for personal conversations and getting to know each other.



Having lived in Gahanna all my life, I was very familiar with the sights we passed by. I enjoyed telling stories of different views. I hope to do another trip in the future, maybe a longer one!

