



Central Ohio Grotto Squeaks

August 2023



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 22	COG Monthly Meeting
Labor Day wknd	OTR
September 26	COG Monthly Meeting
October 24	COG Monthly Meeting
November 16-19	SloansGiving (see FB)
November 28	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**

COG Shopping List



COG is in the process of adding wetsuits to our equipment library. We are planning a wet trip in the Spring and would like everyone to prepare for it ahead of time.

Buying Tips:

- Buy second hand. They can be found for as little as 5 bucks.
- Buy big. You will need room to flex your cave moves.
- Buy thick, 3-5 mm will be warmer if you tend to run cold.
- Buy ANYTHING. Farmer John's, shorties, it's all good!
- Buy extra. I'd like to build a library, so donate an extra if you find a good deal!

From the Editor – Mark Swelstad

I'm excited that this month we have some contributions from people 'new' to the grotto, that haven't submitted content before. This is really encouraging, and I hope we see more! I am also encouraged to see content from members who do normally submit things – please keep it up!

Enjoy this month's Squeaks and as always, please send me material to

mswelstad@gmail.com.

Thanks!

From the Chair – Aaron Deal

Camping in a Metro Park?! On September 15th you'll have that opportunity for FREE during the Scioto Fest held at Scioto Audubon Metro Park. There are many fun activities planned including Try It! climbing wall programs, river floats, food trucks, Nocterra and Land Grand beer, plus a DJ and live bands. Would love to see a group of COG camping out with the banner! You can find more information about the event at <https://www.metroparks.net/scioto-fest-at-scioto-audubon-metro-park/>.

Also, we've signed up to run a vendor booth where we plan to have the squeeze box along with knot tying activities. I'm planning to be there most of the time but would be great to have others helping out. There is a Facebook event to coordinate for everyone planning to attend with a sign up sheet at <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/10nB9P4Vpl8RMxOEP9E3gUSYOYuuYLNnOEnCMNT9Cp8/htmlview>. This event is a great opportunity to outreach to the local outdoor community and work towards our 75 member goal. Hope to see everyone there!

First trip as Guide in Sinks - Brent Smith

On the heels of a 5-day, weekday trip to GSP in weather that can only be described as insufferably hot and humid in the high 90's, I was able to guide my first every Scout trip into Sinks. I have tail gunned a few times, but this would be the first time I would lead a group and it a count of 18 (including guides) that was insistent on staying together as 1 group, it proved to be a long trip. The group probably averaged about 14 years old for the kids, but with a large variety of athletic capabilities.

So, in the heat of the day we trudge through a short hike to the cave entrance and opt to take a small climb to the top entrance

which would be dry, relatively tight, and full of critters. This would allow the faint of heart to turn back quickly rather than halfway through the cave. Immediately the youngest of the group began to struggle with practically every aspect of what caving is: dark, tight, and cave crickets. His parents were both present and practically pushed him through the initial crawl into what I've heard everyone call "The Playground" which is out and back in both directions and allows for people to get their caving legs and explore at their own pace. During this time the young caver in training that struggled continued to do so in greater intensity. Luckily, as we moved into the larger, main truck of the cave, he began to enjoy the experience.

We made our way over to the beach area for a quick drink and allowed the scouts to orient themselves on their map and talk about how they would navigate the cave. We quickly moved on to H-climb where about half of the kids and a few of the more adventurous adults would attempt to complete the climb. If you haven't done H-climb before, it starts innocuously enough traveling up a hole in the wall and into a valley where you must chimney across far enough that when you drop to the ground, you don't lodge yourself between the walls. This is made more complicated by a turn and rock sticking out of the wall making the chimney climb more difficult. On my first and only other attempt, I was left to make that judgement call myself and as you might have guessed... I misjudged it and got myself rather stuck for a while. Everyone, including myself, was able to make it through and walk our way towards "mouse hole" and towards girl scout dome.

Girl scout dome requires a small climb to get up to it, but the trouble with this climb is that it's a bit awkward if you have too short of limbs or too long. You'll either not be able to get your knee up high enough to put yourself up top, or your legs are too long and won't fit in the just-narrow-enough passage leading up.

For an experienced climber this wouldn't be an issue; however, experienced climbers we are not. I had only done this climb once before and struggled mightily to do it and knew that these kids would struggle as well. In fact only about 5 of the 15 were able to make the climb. At this point we made our way out of girl scout dome, regrouped at "mouse hole" and took a count, "20" we haven't lost anyone... We actually added two! A father and daughter joined our trip with no gear, no helmets which left me feeling a bit uneasy but we continued on regardless. We went up the hill at "mouse hole" towards Viking ship, then back into the main trunk of the cave once again.

The rest of the trip, including the "pancake", was slow and tedious because of the size of the group. Yet, this trip is special to me because it was the first group I led, which would not have been as good an experience if it wasn't for Wendy and Rai. I'm excited to lead another trip and start learning more caves to lead!



Rai in the Mouse Hole – photo by Brent Smith

Karst-o-Rama – Nick Wayne

As a child, I had previously gone to Mammoth on show tours and have always wanted to get into wild caving. That is why I was so excited when I started talking to Ryan Braga about KOR. After a long, arduous journey through blackberry bushes (delicious) and log clearings we eventually made it to Wind Cave.

Thanks to Mark Swelstad for risking his life and limbs to get us there! (*Editor – I didn't pay Nick to say that!*) Once inside we were almost right away into a crouching stream passage. This was pushed until we reached a dead end, the carving this stream made through the rocks was so beautiful and alien like. On the way out, Ryan Braga, Brent, and I made our way away from the group, left our packs, and started exploring up through a breakdown pile. They let me lead looking around and there were so many paths to explore that we didn't have time to push. Overall, it was a great first true caving experience, and I looked forward to a Pine Hill trip led by Jon Swelstad.

The trip to Pine Hill was amazing, the initial hands and knees crawl through the stream was a good warm-up (or cool down) to the cave. We went through the meat grinder into tower domes where we saw huge domes that tower above us. After exploring for a bit, we made our way back to the Y junction and made our way towards skylight and the hardest part of the journey. After climbing up through breakdown and crawling over a ledge we were met with the birth canal. I was not prepared for how long it was. After finally squeezing out and sliding down the mud we made our way to relax at the bottom where we could see sunlight from the top and the vertical trips rope that they repelled in on. On the way out, the birth canal was much faster, and we made our way out of the cave to make it back for the banquet.

While in the cave we crossed paths with the vertical trip and an additional group from Cincinnati unaffiliated exploring at the same time, we met them as they were coming back from the waterfall. Overall, I had such a great time at the event, everyone was so welcoming and kind and I am so excited to continue with caving and expanding my knowledge and friendships.

Warm Springs Cave region – Jason Glancy

This a report on a dig with Keith Sweeney and myself in Alleghany County, Virginia

Keith has been working new caves in the Warm Springs Cave region, today I was invited to help dig in this 23' pit . Something very interesting about this Karst Valley is in the southern end is Warm Springs Cave that has a water temperature of 100 degrees, there is a very good YouTube video of Warm Springs Cave, look it up!

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o4SYod9pZXA&ab_channel=NationalSpeleologicalSociety



Photo courtesy Jason Glancy



Photo courtesy Jason Glancy

KOR – Jason Glancy

KOR was a great time met up with my Kentucky project covers the whole time my mind was in WV where my friends were breaking into a new cave called AC cave we had dug on for several years. Of course they succeeded and started to survey so the following Saturday I made to the cave where we were greeted with 11 surveyors – gee, how word travels fast these days. We broke into three teams and surveyed approximately 1,500' with no end in sight! So, this last weekend 8-5-23 we surveyed another 1,000' and our team started to ascend into better rock we turned around in 20' tall 12' wide intersection with two leads there still no end in sight and I forgot to mention the cooler temperatures in this cave is remarkable 40 degrees quite cooler than most caves in this region. The COG disto x worked very well

here! Too many caves, not enough time!



The COG Disto – photo courtesy Jason Glancy

We will return soon to continue to survey.
Anyone interested should reach out to me.



photo courtesy Jason Glancy



photo courtesy Jason Glancy



photo courtesy Jason Glancy

How many toes is the right number of toes? – Pat Gibson

From the annals of deep questions, one 2023 KOR attendee once asked the question, “Why do we have five toes?” You see, this person was in a state of deep philosophical reflection at the moment. Pondering the fundamental processes that make up our whole being.

“Why not four or six toes?” The big toe is commonly known to be the most important of the set, whereas the little piggy on the end is responsible for crying “Wee! Wee! Wee!” all the way home. Was the nursery rhyme written by an author that had five toes? What if the author was polydactyl? What would have been the last piggy’s story? These are things that make you go, “hmm”.

Doing some basic internet research led to some interesting revelations on the subject. Michael Coates, associate professor in the department of Organismal Biology and Anatomy at the University of Chicago, notes in a Scientific American article, <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/why-do-most-species-have/>, that we are in a subgroup of jawed vertebrates with evolved complex and sophisticated wrist and ankle joints. This led to limbs bearing no more than five digits. This led me to think about songs about toes. I knew of a few songs that referenced toes but had no idea that there were at least 47 songs that had the word “toes” in the song title! Some will know “Tiptoe through the Tulips” by Tiny Tim while others may know “Toes” by the Zac Brown Band. There are songs about “Pretty Toes” (Nelly), “Bubbletoes” (Jack Johnson), and “Popsicle Toes” (Diana Krall). Like what in the world are Bubbletoes and Popsicle Toes?!?! I’ll let you figure that one out!

COG Goes to Cave Capers

August 3rd-6th, 2023

By: Tera Williamson

Early Thursday afternoon I arrived at the Harrison County Fairgrounds in Corydon Indiana. This was the home of the 70th Indiana Cave Capers event. Upon arriving, I checked in at registration and made my way to the COG camping area to get set up for the weekend. Shortly after arriving, I met up with Jonna Cartwright and her son Joe. Since everyone else was arriving later Thursday night or Friday, the three of us decided to go to Hemlock Cliffs which is part of the Hoosier National Forest. Hemlock Cliffs is a box canyon with some sandstone rock formations and a few waterfalls that sits along about a 1.5-mile trail. After spending a couple hours hiking and exploring Hemlock Cliffs, we stopped at Lazy Cow Creamery for some ice cream.

On Friday morning Jonna Cartwright, Joe Cartwright, Ryan Braga, and I signed up for a led trip to Langdon’s Cave (led by Scott Frosch with Central Indiana Grotto) which is located on Harrison Crawford State Forest property. This cave is primarily a horizontal cave with a dome/pit complex near the back of the cave. After about a 15-minute walk towards the cave we found the entrance. The entrance was a medium sized hole at the top of a slope. From the entrance the cave continued as an easy walking passage for about 150 feet. At this point there was about a 15-foot climb-down, which we rigged a hand land for assistance as needed, but more so for coming back up the climb-down. From here the passage continued as a large canyon passage which ended in about 600 feet at the breakdown area. Along this passage there were numerous pretty formations. At the breakdown there are many holes that could be explored within the breakdown that leads to the additional shallow pits, but ropes would be needed. Once we all had a short break and explored around the

breakdown for a bit, we made our way out of the cave.

Once we were out of Langdon's Cave, we were told that there was another nearby cave in Harrison Crawford State Forest that was just across the valley and within about a 20-minute walk. This cave was Mauck's Cave, which was a well decorated cave with delicate formations. This cave was situated along a wooded hillside and the entrance was about a 6-foot diameter 12-foot-deep free climbable pit. Once inside the cave we took a right-hand passage which was an easy walking size passage for about 200 feet before ending at a flowstone choke. This main passage contained massive flowstone, stalactites, and soda straws. At the end of the main passage was an optional 20-foot-long belly crawl over the flowstone and through the stalactites leading to an additional 50 feet of passage ending in a small room. Most of the group continued down the optional belly crawl and explored for a bit, while a few people admired the pretties outside of the crawl. Once everyone returned from the crawl, we exited the cave and returned to the cars.

On Saturday morning Wendy Orlandi, Jonna Cartwright, Joe Cartwright and I signed up for a led trip to Wolfe Cave (led by Chris Bell), which is nestled away on private property in the Harrison County Indiana area. This cave was just a short walk through the field from the property owner's drive way. The entrance into the cave was tucked away behind a couple boulders and was a small odd shaped opening that dropped down about 4 to 5 feet into the cave. Once inside the cave it opened up into a decent sized room. From this room, it was a fairly easy cave that had a couple short crawls and a low army crawl that led to a larger room with some breakdown at the back end. On the trip out, some of us took a side crawling passage where the ceiling was covered in stalactites and helictites. Once everyone made it out of the cave, we posed for a post cave photo.

All in all, it was a great weekend for caving and look forward to attend the 71st Cave Capers in 2024.



Hemlock Cliffs – photo Tera Williamson



Hemlock Cliffs – photo Tera Williamson



Flowstone Wall in Langdon's Cave – photo Tera Williamson



Columns in Langdon's Cave – photo Tera Williamson



COGsters posing in Langdon's Cave – photo Scott Frosch



Ryan Braga entering Mauks Cave – photo Tera Williamson



Mauks Cave – photo by Tera Williamson



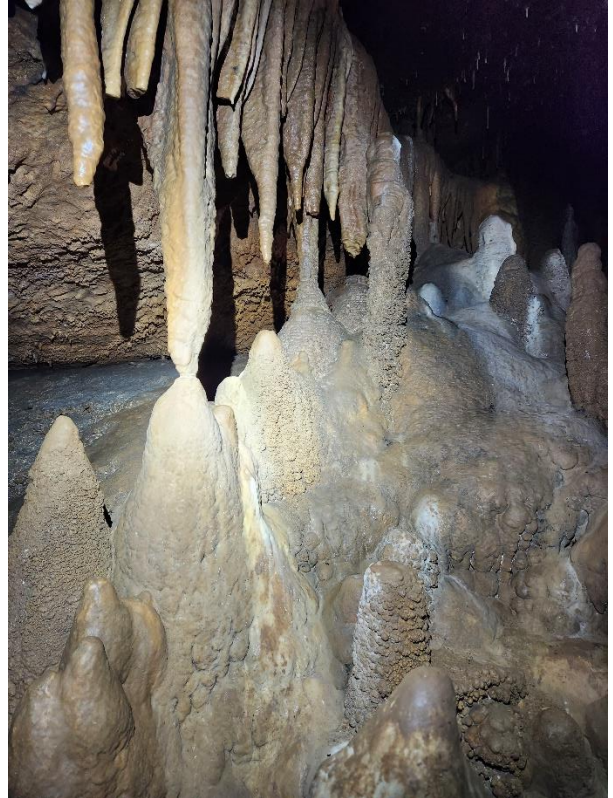
Mauks Cave – photo Tera Williamson



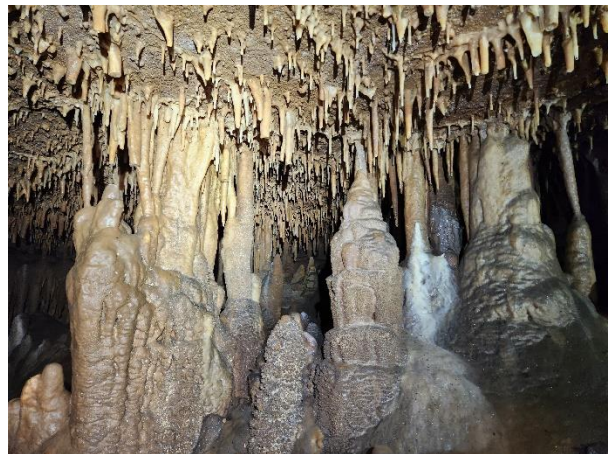
Mauks Cave – photo Tera Williamson



Mauks Cave – photo Tera Williamson



Mauks Cave – photo Tera Williamson



Mauks Cave – photo Tera Williamson

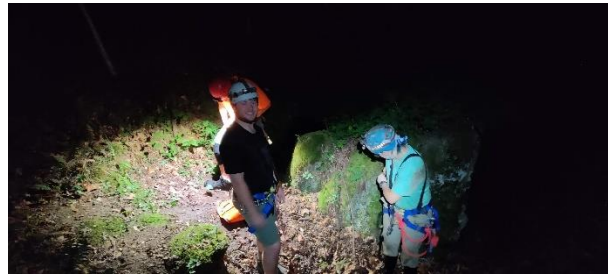


Wendy Orlandi crawling in Wolfe Cave – photo Chris Bell

Cave Spotlight – Sinks of the Roundstone Pit – Ryan Braga

Sinks of the Roundstone Pit which is just up the hill from Sinks is a great pit to drop. With the pit being only a 20-minute drive from GSP and a short hike up the hill, it's an easily accessible pit to have some fun in. Once you find the gorgeous pit entrance, you will be greeted with a great rigging tree to set up your backup to, and then once entering the entrance to the pit, you will have a nice rock with two bolts that you can rig from. When we bounced this, we used a rope pad near the top to protect from rope rub over the ledge and only needed it at that one spot. While the map pictured below says the drop to the bottom is about 100 for the part you will rappel, it is more realistically around 70 feet. The only challenge to dropping this pit would be the ledge at the top that takes a little bit of negotiating to get over. However, it shouldn't

be too bad and may just result in you banging your knee against the wall (battle scars). Once getting over this lip you have roughly 70 feet of free rappel and will have a nice view on the way down. Once you reach the bottom of the rappel which will be on the sloped hill, you will be able to walk down the slope and see the bottom of the pit but be ready for the climb back up the hill. If you look to your right as you start to go down the hill, you will see passage that is a part of a current dig that is hopeful to connect to sinks. Besides this lead to the right, there is not much else to this pit besides a great 70 foot rappel followed by a not so fun 70 foot climb out. On the bright side, your hike back to the car is all downhill!



Outside Sinks of the Roundstone Pit – photo by Nick Wayne



Dropping Sinks of the Roundstone Pit – photo by Nick Wayne or A'dra Peterson

Sinks of the Roundstone Pit

Rockcastle County, Ky.

C&T Survey 1972

J. Blum and J. Rebmann

Cartography by James R. Rebmann

