

Central Ohio Grotto Squeaks

May 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.

COG Executive Committee:

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Jennifer Hawkey

jcgalletta@gmail.com



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.

June 9-11	Grayson Gunner trip
June 9-11	Swelstad trip
June 26-30	NSS Convention
July 14-16	Karst-O-Rama – GSP
July 25	COG Monthly Meeting
August 4-6	Cave Capers – Indiana
August 22	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**

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 Chair – Aaron Deal

I personally didn't know Bob Dobbs but can see the mark he left on the caving community based on the moment of silence we had at Everything but the Squeal and the sign now hanging at the GSP shelter house. My sincere condolences to his friends and family.

Sunday morning of Everything but the Squeal we took a trip to Bob Dobbs Cave on the GSP preserve to honor his life. Based on Lyold Mullins and Ice Box, I was expecting a quick cave trip that may be shorter than the hike to the cave. However, I was pleasantly surprised as Wendy guided us through the various sections of the cave with much more to explore on a future trip. I can only imagine

the joy the cave brought Bob as he explored it for the first time.

Thanks to everyone that helped with GSP Open House where about 4000 guests visited the preserve. We had over 20 people represent COG for the weekend.

RKC Earth Day Cleanup at Sloans – Wendy Orlandi

On April 22nd, COG members Bethany Widmayer, and Kelly McNamara participated in an RKC spring clean up at the Crockett entrance of Sloans Valley. We were joined by some friends from Louisville Grotto, A'dra Peterson and Brylee Wyatt who camped with us at GSP the night before.

Mike Harrington with the help of some other BGG members had a tent set up when we arrived with all the supplies we needed and then off to work we went. Our main focus was the trail between Crockett and Scowling Tom's. In addition to the usual garbage one might find, the girls dragged a tire, giant inner tube, and shop vac back to home base. Mike was kind enough to have an awesome lunch prepared for us and gave us some sweet Sloans Valley swag.

Mick Harrington and his girlfriend Katie Sturgill rewarded our efforts with a cave through trip from Crockett to Scowling Tom's. This route had some beautiful formations and a lot of crawling stream passage, but the best part for me was walking back to the entrance on the pristine trail that we worked together to restore.



*Mike and Rhonda bagging plastic from the old greenhouse
Photo Courtesy Wendy Orlandi*



*The "fruit" of our labor
Photo Courtesy Wendy Orlandi*



Bethany Widmayer and her SWAG
Photo Courtesy Wendy Orlandi



Kelly modeling shirts for sale
Photo Courtesy Wendy Orlandi



Waiting for lunch on a perfect day!
Photo Courtesy Wendy Orlandi

Be Like Bob Dobbs – Mark Swelstad

I don't remember the first time I met Bob Dobbs. In a very real sense, it seems as though he's been a part of GSP forever. At some point in the early 1990's, he showed up unobtrusively, and he has been there ever since. That's how Bob was, in a way – always there but quietly, somehow. Even now, after his passing, he's still at GSP...there in the background...

Others will have more to say about Bob's life – being in Columbus, rather than his home city of Cincinnati, I didn't know him too deeply outside of caving. As has been the case for so many years, my memories of any person down there are really a collection of short experiences...many weekends stitched

together with the common thread of our love of caves and caving, and yes, even the Preserve itself. However, I have a bunch of fond memories of Bob – way too many to share here – but here are a handful that might shed some light on who Bob was.

Bob was one of the first people to take my wife caving – we weren't married then (this would have been sometime in the early 1990's) and Bob...Clem Bob, as my wife will always remember him, took her and a friend to Sinks of the Roundstone Cave. They had a great time - somewhere there are even pictures. My caving at this time in the early 90's was limited to events, largely due to job schedules, etc. Around this time is when Bob discovered the cave on the property that would later bear his name; he didn't name it, I'm pretty sure it was named by someone else who lacking a better option said....'it's the cave that Bob Dobbs found.... you know...Bob Dobb's Cave'.

Flash forwards a couple of decades, Bob took his granddaughter, Julia, my son Jonathan, and myself, through Climax Cave. He showed us some passage I'd not seen before. More often than not, I'm in a hurry to get through Climax Cave. That cave isn't for exploring, so I thought...it's for scouts and beginners...and times when it's too rainy to go anywhere else. Bob knew otherwise and showed me something new. My son still highlights that trip as one of his favorites. I'm sure Julia cherishes the memory of that time with her grandfather as well.

Bob liked the sauna at GSP and was what I would call a sauna evangelist. I'm sure that as he got older, the sauna helped with the aches and pains of caving, or

working around the property, but I'm certain that for Bob, that's not what it was all about. I believe that Bob saw the sauna as a way to connect with new members, building relationships and friendships beyond the work weekends and cave trips. Bob always made sure to include *everybody*, and not just at the sauna. The cave trips he led and his famous ridge walking expeditions were only partly about the caves. I believe that for Bob, they were about inclusivity and giving back to the community.

Community is a word that gets thrown around a lot but that's what GSP really is; it's a community of cavers who are like-minded enough to come together on weekends, put aside our differences, forget about our jobs, often even leaving our families at home, all for this a singular passion we all share. Bob knew that better than anyone I've known. Bob loved GSP. But I believe more than that, Bob loved the *community* of GSP. It didn't matter if one was a die-hard project caver, an arm-chair caver, or a party-caver, Bob made everyone feel welcome.

Cavers will continue to cave, the cave maps will get drawn, the pits will get dropped, and yes, even the grass at GSP will get mowed. Bob's legacy was not just those things; it was his love for the GSP community. It is the cave trips for new people, like my wife, that reminds us that a casual caver who doesn't know anyone can still have fun underground...it's the reminder that there are more passages to be explored, just around the corner. And most of all, it will be how we welcome and include new members into our fold. It's up to us. Let us all be more like Bob.

Rest in peace, my friend.

**Thanks
Bob**

**Oct 1, 1945-
April 22, 2023**



**Greetings from the Rockcastle Karst Conservancy
Support the Karst you Love!
Renew Your Membership Today**

It's going to be a busy year in the Karst region of Kentucky. The five cave properties conserved by RKC are continuing to improve and provide access for you and future generations to enjoy.

The Sloans Valley Cave Preserve is having a work party day on April 22nd starting at 10 am. So much work has been done here, people will wonder why it was ever called the "Garbage Pit" entrance! But a spring cleanup is necessary. There is already a safety fence and parking area, and plans for a kiosk are taking shape. See pictures below of the beautiful entrance and our new SVCP logo.

The Skylight Dome Preserve finally got its driveway road improvements, making it much more accessible for technical caving groups.

The Great Saltpetre Cave Preserve has a busy schedule hosting school and scout troops to introduce young folks to caving. The new on-site GSP caretaker Josh Heinbuch has moved in to what was previously Bill Carr's house, which is now owned by GSP as a permanent building improvement to the GSP property. The GSP Open House is scheduled for May 20-21, 2023, and Karst-O-Rama for July 14-16.

The Misty Cave hibernaculum survey this winter found no White Nose Syndrome. Welcome news!

A spring above the Cornhole Cave has been very active, and is eroding the cave entrance. Future attention will be needed here to assess the situation.

Please renew your membership for 2023 and stay involved. **If you are reading this, your annual membership is expired or expiring this month, on March 31st.**

Membership Options:

- Annual @ \$15
- Sustaining (see below)
- Life (one time @ \$300)

The Sustaining membership is a simple way to support Rockcastle Karst Conservancy. A small monthly amount (\$5, \$10, or more) charged to your credit card keeps RKC moving forward in its efforts to protect significant cave and karst resources. See www.rkci.org to set up your Sustaining Member Option and you won't have to remember next year to renew.

Renew your annual membership today at www.rkci.org or mail a check payable to:

Rockcastle Karst Conservancy
% Werner Jud, Treasurer
1044 Vacationland Drive
Cincinnati, Ohio 45231

Are you interested in a more long term approach to permanently fund the RKC mission? The RKC Legacy Endowment Fund has been established in conjunction with the Blue Grass Community Foundation to do just that. More details are on the www.rkci.org website.

Please help keep RKC growing. Cavers are losing access every day to the caves we love. The future of karst lands, its wise stewardship and ownership, are directly influenced by your renewal and donations.

Thank You for all you do,
The Board and Members of the Rockcastle Karst Conservancy



A preserve of the Rockcastle Karst Conservancy