

# Central Ohio Grotto Squeaks

## September 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.

September 26	COG Monthly Meeting
October 5-8	TAG Fall Cave-In
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 75<sup>TH</sup> 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

Thanks to those who were able to submit material this month. Keep them coming!

Enjoy this month's Squeaks and as always, please send me material to [mswelstad@gmail.com](mailto:mswelstad@gmail.com).

Thanks!

### **From the Chair – Aaron Deal**

We had a very successful couple of days at Scioto Fest held by Columbus and Franklin County Metroparks at Scioto Audubon Metropark. The squeeze box was a great way to get folks to the booth and start a conversation. The general response to "Do you want to try our squeeze box?" was "What is it?" followed by "Why?" when they understood the concept. Based on the "Cave Approved!" stickers, we had over 110 people go through the box over the 12 hours we were open. Based on the response, I do think we could get several new members from the event.

Of course, the event wouldn't have been possible without volunteers, so I'm extremely grateful for everyone that made it out this weekend!

As we start to approach the end of the year, it means it's time for our election process. This month we'll review the available positions and appoint an election committee. In October we'll accept nominations for all of the positions with the elections held in November. If you want to vote in the November elections, you'll need to be both a COG and NSS member.

### **GSP Hot Tub – Pat Gibson**

Sustainability and longevity is always in the forethought for any project undertaken at the Great Saltpetre Cave Preserve. The Sauna area is no exception. I've lost track of how many times the current hot tub has made its nearly annual voyage down Crooked Creek.

A group of dedicated volunteers have organized themselves to begin executing

a vision of what that area could become. We envision the Sauna as a destination where cavers can enjoy each other's company and relax in a safe re-energizing environment. A place that lies in harmony with the natural surroundings as much as a man-made structure can be made to blend in.

Here is the vision:

- Build a low maintenance concrete hot tub with internal dimensions of 16'x8'x4' deep. It will have safe ingress and egress to reduce the possibility of injury when entering and exiting. Water quality will be paramount; continual filtering and treatment of water for warm weather use will allow use during none freezing periods of the year, not just a single annual event.

- Build an elevated structure to house the mechanical systems and equipment necessary for operation of the hot tub. Structure will have a green roof consisting of no maintenance plantings to further blend into natural surroundings.

- Plant natural screening plants to eliminate the need for a tarp system. This should also help stabilize the soil and reduce erosion. This will be a permanent feature reducing the time to install tarps for privacy.

- Future plans include relocation/rehabilitation of the heated sauna. More to come on this in the future!

It's important to note that this is a grassroots effort. Funds are not being taken from the GSP coffers to complete this project. That's where you come in. If you enjoy or might enjoy using the area, please consider supporting the project. A GoFundme campaign has been created to solicit donations. I will also gladly accept cash or check donations as well as any of

the other committee members: Kelly McNamara, Kevin Lorms, Jared Embree, Danielle Demaris, or Nina Soluski.

We view this as an investment in GSP where the area becomes an attractor of future visitors for KOR or other caving events. Thank you for your support!

GoFundMe link:

<https://gofund.me/0d841445>

### **A Trip to Mt Zinz 9-10-23 – Zach Williams**

*Participants:* Jason Glancy, Bryan Staib, Mike Shank, Zach Williams

After working on a dig on the day prior at Apex cave, Bryan and I were wanting to do a little bit of fun caving on Sunday. Mike Shank was also down for the work weekend and he wanted to see some more cave as well. We convinced Jason Glancy to lead a short trip into Mt Zinz. Having agreed to a plan I secured permission from the landowner and we were in the cave by a little after 9:00 in the morning. The cave begins with a 20 foot ladder down a culvert and then leads to a short spacious crawl. The crawlway oddly enough is shored up with road signs! At the end of the crawl one immediately begins a series of drops. After about 3 drops one comes to a short junction area with leads in multiple directions. We took the most obvious lead which then lead to two more drops.

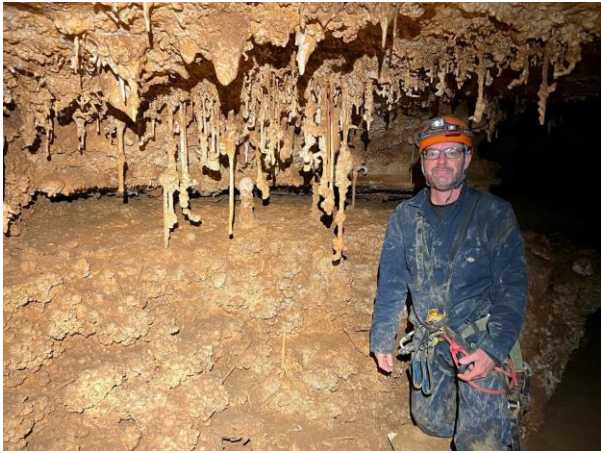
After the first five drops one comes to a nicely decorated walking passage. This passage had multiple stalactites, stalagmites and some helectites. We all were impressed with this passage and I wondered what the original diggers

thought when they broke into this section of the cave. We then dropped down a short rope and then came to a truly impressive clean washed pit with an active stream in it. We continued down a series of more drops and finally came to the very bottom of the cave. We checked out the leads at the bottom, had a quick snack and then started our way back out. The way up was certainly a little sweatier than on the way down! We took a small break again in the walking passage and I stripped off a layer to cool down a little. After a brief cooling off and water break we were back on the ropes again. We made good progress and the ropework was fun. To be honest I was a little disappointed when I heard Bryan yell “I see daylight”, I could have gone for a few more feet on rope but alas all good things must end. We all had an absolute blast in the cave. We were wanting to be out by around 1 and we arrived at the surface at around 1:15 or so. There were some rain showers coming that I wanted to beat. We parted ways with Mike and Jason at the surface who were going to Kisamore Pit to retrieve a ladder at the bottom.

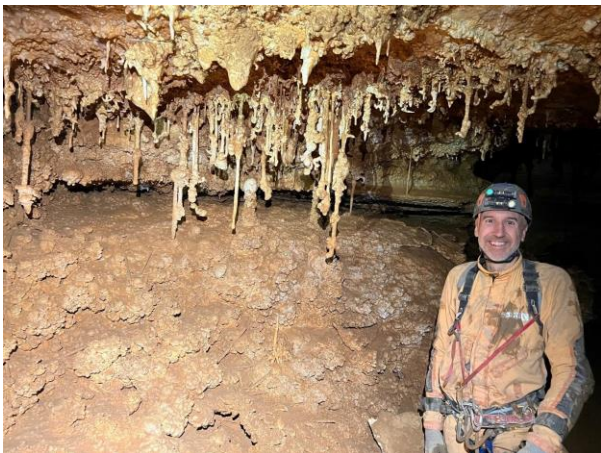
The goats were out in the field and all I can say is they are very curious! One almost jumped in the truck when putting some gear in. Bryan and I had a good lunch at the Mexican place in Elkins and had an uneventful ride home. After I got back home, I checked the survey data and found that we had bottomed out at around 350 feet below the entrance. I feel that we made good speed with it only taking about two hours to arrive back at the surface from the bottom. Mt Zinz is a wonderful cave and I can appreciate the amount of work that went into opening it.



Jason Glancy



Bryan Staib



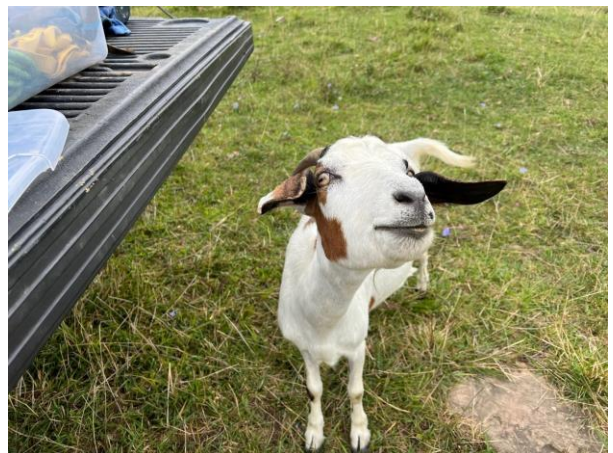
Mike Shank



Walking Passage



Bryan Staib on rope at 7<sup>th</sup> drop (I think)



GOAT!!

*~ All photos courtesy Zach Williams*

### **New Member spotlight: Nick Wayne**

As interviewed by Ryan Braga, Chess Champion of The World Boat Dock Springs Cave



*Vogue! Strike the pose...Nick modeling in Boat Dock Springs Cave – photo by Ryan Braga*

**Ryan:** How did you first get into caving?

**Nick:** I went to Mammoth cave in my childhood and always enjoyed walking through show caves. In 2016 after graduating high school, I did the wild cave tour at Mammoth and loved every minute of it. I didn't get back into it until this year when you (Ryan Braga) pulled me into KOR 2023 and I have been hooked since.

**Ryan:** What are some of your other interests?

**Nick:** I love rock climbing, chess, racing, camping, guitar, and many other hobbies.

**Ryan:** What are some of your favorite caving experiences?

**Nick:** My favorite caving experience so far has been a trip I took with you (Ryan Braga) to Boat Dock where we explored through the cave and at one point played a game of chess while eating our lunch (I lost spectacularly).

**Ryan:** What guided your decision to join COG?

**Nick:** I enjoy caving a lot and want to learn more about how to properly cave. This gives me the opportunity to support caving and bring more people into caving.

**Ryan:** What are you looking forward to learning or participating in?

**Nick:** I am really looking forward to surveying and project caving in the future to help contribute to the caving community

### **Cave spotlight – Boat Dock Springs Cave – Ryan Braga**

This month's cave spotlight is focused on Boat Dock Springs Cave; some may know it as Jennifer's Tight Hole. With the cave only being minutes away from GSP and a 5-minute walk from the car, it makes for a perfect Sunday trip. While the cave isn't setting any records for length, you can expect to spend 2-3 hours and see most all of the known cave. Starting with a fun down climb aided by a rope tied to a tree, this is a strictly horizontal cave meaning you do not need any vertical gear to access it. Once you've climbed down the 10ish feet into the cave, you'll be on a mud slope that hopefully you can keep your footing on so you don't slide into oblivion. A passage to the left once entering the cave will grant you a room with some nice bacon formations. Our focus will be to walk down the mud slope though and continue down and make the

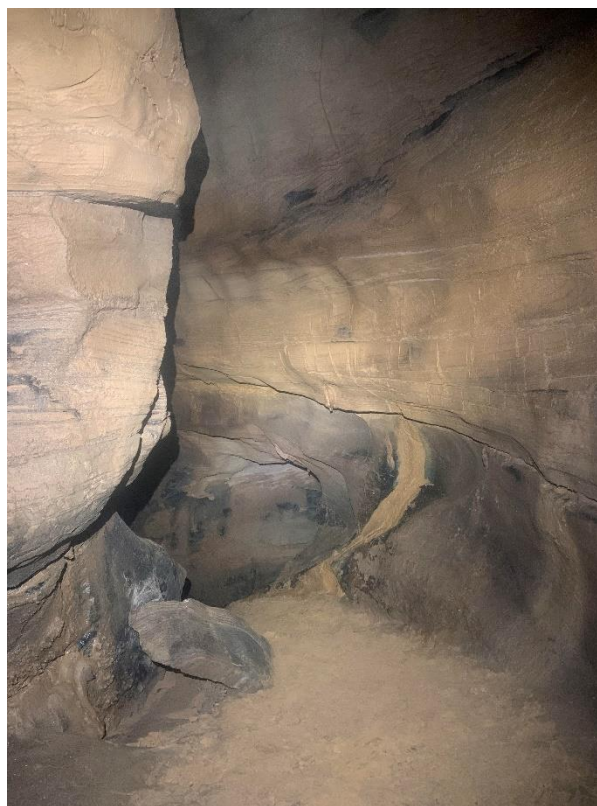
first right taking us past a dig and through a quick crawl. Once you make it through the crawl that shows to be dug out on the right side to slide through, you'll drop into the hole in the floor and go past the woman's hips formation to find a lot of cave with more formations. Down here you will find a gorgeous table formation along with many others. Coming back up to the main passage after the mud slope, you will continue going straight and run into 2 crawls to the left that have potential for digs in the future while if you go right you'll find massive columns and more formations before hitting another mud choke which is the story of this cave. Our main focus however is on the water level that you'll drop down to from the main passage. While this isn't an easy passage through, you'll be rewarded heavily with some of the most pure white and gorgeous flow stone you'll ever see if you follow the water for quite a ways. Tory Roland and I pushed this for quite a ways but once getting to the gorgeous formations, decided to turn around as others were waiting on us. I plan to return and get pictures on a future trip and push the water level further as it keeps going. As we began to return we spotted a 1990s flashlight submerged in hard to reach water so we decided to stop and squeeze down in the canyon to retrieve the flashlight. To my surprise the water was beyond frigid. Once sticking my arm into the 2 feet deep water to grab the flashlight, I realized the water seemed down my sleep in my caving jacket running down to my chest making me even more cold. We recovered the long-lost flashlight but at what cost? While there's one other upper-level passage that is a large chunk passage, I'll let you explore that on your own.

If you're looking for a quick trip and gorgeous formations, Boat Dock/Jennifer's Tight Hole is a great trip candidate.

Note: there is currently no known map for this cave

Second note: there is potential for a traverse to be set up to access a section of the upper passage that may lead to more cave. Someone has been to the other side as there are clay balls stacked however it would be a daunting and high-risk traverse without any protection. If anyone knows someone who has been to the other side of this upper passage, please let me know.

All photos courtesy of Ryan Braga.







### **Fletcher's Spring Cave – Mark Swelstad**

On Saturday of Caver Appreciation weekend, Janeen Sharpshair, her friend Synda, and myself visited this cave for about an hour. This is an easy cave with just a bit of water and makes for a fun, quick trip on a hot weekend. Near the entrance, we found an open hypodermic needle on the ground. Given the heroin epidemic in the area, it might be prudent to keep an eye out for these near popular cave entrances, or frequently visited springs.