

Central Ohio Grotto Squeaks

April 2024



Cover photo by Mark Swelstad – A'dra Peterson in the entrance of Signature Cave.

THE CENTRAL OHIO GROTTO (COG)

The Central Ohio Grotto (COG) of the National Speleological Society meets at 7:00 p.m. the fourth Thursday 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:

\$20 per individual or \$25 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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Aaron Deal
Aaron.Deal@gmail.com

Member-At-Large:

Joe Chaput
jchaput@gjpepsi.com

Member-At-Large:

Mark Swelstad
mswelstad@gmail.com



Upcoming COG Events – Note: Details of our events can be found on [our Facebook page](#). You do not have to be a member to be in our Facebook group.

April 8	Solar Eclipse	Contact: Wendy Orlandi
April 19-21	PGH/COG Combine - WV	Contact: Wendy Orlandi
April 25	COG Monthly Meeting	Worthington Presbyterian Church
May 4-5	COG/CIG Weekend	Contact: Wendy Orlandi
May 4-5	Open House Work Weekend	Contact: Pat Gibson
May 18-19	Open House	Contact: Pat Gibson
May 22-28	Speleofest	Hosted by the Louisville, KY Grotto
May 23	COG Monthly Meeting	Worthington Presbyterian Church
May 31-June 2	Bear Heaven and Kees Cave: Intro to Vertical (or not)	West Virginia – contact: Wendy Orlandi
June 21-23	Karst-o-Rama 2024	GSP Preserve – hosted by Greater Cincinnati Grotto
June 27	COG Monthly Meeting	Worthington Presbyterian Church

Contact Info for Trip Organizers:

- Wendy Orlandi - wenlo0319@gmail.com
- Ryan Braga - ryanbraga1007@gmail.com
- Pat Gibson - patrickgibson@yahoo.com

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Join us for our next monthly meeting at Worthington Presbyterian Church on THURSDAY, April 25th, 7pm in person or online. To join virtually, find remote meeting information in the Discussion in Facebook. You do NOT have to be a member to attend, everyone is welcome. Contact Wendy Orlandi if you need help with the link.

Our April presenter will be Jim “Crash” Kennedy, bio below. After the meeting, we head over to Villa Nova Ristorante for pizza on 5545 N High St, Columbus, OH 43214.

COG PRESENTS
JIM “CRASH” KENNEDY
I HATE GATES!
ENSURING A NECESSARY EVIL PROTECTS,
 NOT HARMS FRAGILE CAVE RESOURCES
APRIL 25, 7PM



Jim “Crash” Kennedy is the founder and principal scientist of cavegators.com. While gating is an often controversial subject among cavers, Jim will explain the importance of their use for cave and karst conservation.

Jim began caving in 1973 as a Boy Scout, and soon learned about vertical caving, cave conservation, cave rescue, and cave mapping as a member of the Nittany Grotto. After graduating with degrees in Biology and

Environmental Education, he moved to Texas in 1995 to take a position with Bat Conservation International. There, he worked for 18 years as Cave Resources Specialist, studying and protecting caves across the US and other countries. In 2013 he left to found his own small consulting firm, Kennedy Above/Under Ground, LLC. He currently specializes in the design and construction of particularly large and difficult cave and mine gating projects across the United States. His background and experience in cave microclimates and the restoration of cave ecosystems altered by human actions makes him one of the top cave conservationists in the country.

Jim’s caving philosophy is that identification and protection of the cave resources require good data and careful planning. You can’t protect what you don’t know. And people don’t care about things they don’t understand. He enjoys surveying and is more than happy to take new cavers along to teach them the tricks. Jim eats, sleeps, and breathes caves, much to the chagrin of his wife.

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!

Odds and Ends:

Newsletter Editor

I have been the newsletter editor for over 10 years now and am interested to see if anyone else is willing to take it over for me. I will keep doing it for the rest of 2024, or until we have a replacement. If you're interested, let me know. No experience is required! Thanks!
~Mark Swelstad

Dues are due!

It is that time again – caving and Grotto dues!

Dues were restructured and approved by members at the Grotto meeting on January 18, 2024. If you are paying for Family dues, please list your family members with your payment.

Individual Dues	\$20
Family Dues	\$25

Dues may be paid during the Grotto monthly meeting, mail, or Venmo and should be paid by the end of March.

Suzanne Gagnon
10548 Elderberry Drive
Plain City, Ohio 43064

Venmo: @suzgagnon (Suz with red helmet)
<https://venmo.com/u/suzgagnon>



COG History

Since moving the library into my house, I've had the job, and pleasure honestly, to read through some old newsletters. Now that they are at my fingertips, I'd like to share some of the grotto history with all of you. I hope you find this interesting and valuable. – M.S.

60 Years Ago

In the April 1964 Squeaks, a trip report written by John Bridge details some exploration of Cow Cave in Carter County, KY. There is mention of pushing some tight leads that required some shirt removal to get through. John says he "didn't have to take off his shirt, [but] he found button impressions on his chest the next day!" In that same trip report, John mentions that the group found another cave in a nearby valley which contained significant going cave.

Another trip report, this one written by Jerry Boynton, describes a grotto trip to Big Bone Cave, a well-known historical cave in Tennessee. There is now a state park at this location. A map of the cave is included in the trip report.

50 Years Ago

The April 1974 Squeaks included a trip report, and some additional writing, about a trip to Crump's Cave. There is a short story, written by Paul Rowley, and a blurb by Joe Saunders about pushing into a newly discovered spring, only to discover that it opened into a mine.

20 Years Ago

Most of this issue of the Squeaks was dedicated to April Fool's jokes and stories, but Lacie Braley posted one trip report about surveying an unnamed stream cave in Wayne County, KY. I'll see if I can find out if they ever named it!



SAVE THE DATE!
Washington, DC Grotto Presents:

SPRING VAR 2024

The DC Grotto Turns 85!
Celebrate by getting down and dirty with us!

EVENT HIGHLIGHTS
Led Caving Trips
We need trip leaders! If you're interested in leading a trip in Pocahontas County or the surrounding areas, please email Donnie Hammond at theglobetrottingdonnie@yahoo.com

Saturday Night Dinner
Catering provided by the local Elks Club

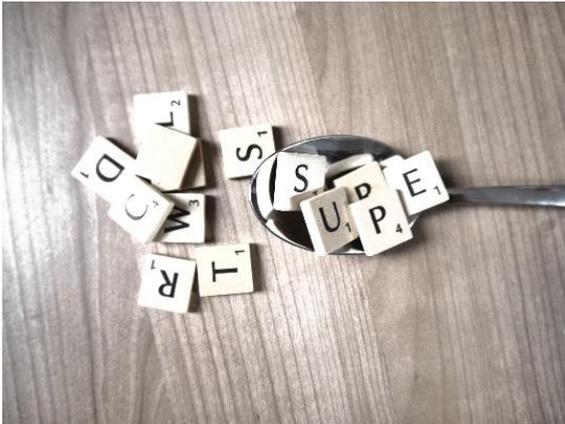
Birthday Party
When DCG has a birthday, we do the surprising! You won't want to miss the epic activities we have in store.

PRICING AND REGISTRATION To Be Announced
Mark your calendars!

MAY 3-5 2024
EAST FORK CAMPGROUND
RT 250 MAIN STREET
MEADOW LANE DRIVE
DURBIN, WV 26264



Alphabet Soup – Mark Swelstad



You're a new caver...you muster the courage to come to one of our meetings...you listen carefully to the stories of people who have recently been caving...and suddenly you're met with a confounding series of acronyms.....GSP? COG? DUG? KOR? What in world are these cavers even talking about?!? This article is intended to help sort out some of the more common acronyms, as well as help you understand the relationship between them. Hope this helps!

NSS – National Speleological Society. The National organization of which COG is an internal organization.

Grotto – a local chapter of the NSS.

RKC – Rockcastle Karst Conservancy – the owner of GSP and a handful of other caves near GSP.

GSP – Great Saltpetre Preserve – a 300+ acre preserve in south-central Kentucky used by many cavers as a campground and where we often stay when we go caving.

GSPC – Great Saltpetre Preserve Committee – the management committee for GSP. The committee is comprised of members of 4 grottos (GCG, COG, DUG, BGG).

GSC – Great Saltpetre Cave – the former show cave that is located within the GSP.

COG – Central Ohio Grotto

GCG – Greater Cincinnati Grotto

KOR – Karst-o-Rama – the annual caving event that is a fundraiser for GCG.

DUG – Dayton Underground Grotto

BGG – Blue Grass Grotto – the grotto located in the Lexington, KY area

TAG – Tennessee, Alabama, Georgia – refers to the tri-state area where there are a ton of caves. Also refers to an annual caving event down there.

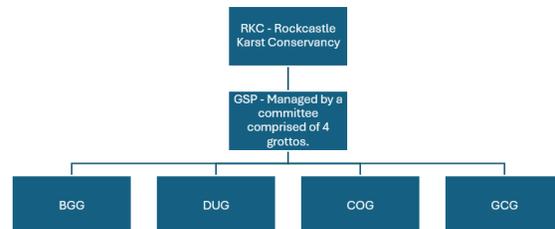
CIG – Central Indiana Grotto

I/O – Internal Organization. A 'legally' defined organization within the NSS. Includes grottos but can also include other organizations (sections, regions, other). I/O also refers to a once-a-year requirement that all internal organizations must fulfill to basically report status up to the NSS.

SOR – Sinks of the Roundstone Cave – a popular cave down in Rockcastle County.

Did I forget a common acronym? Let me know!

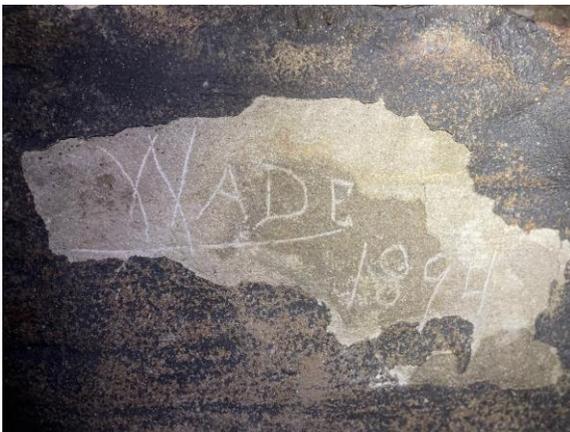
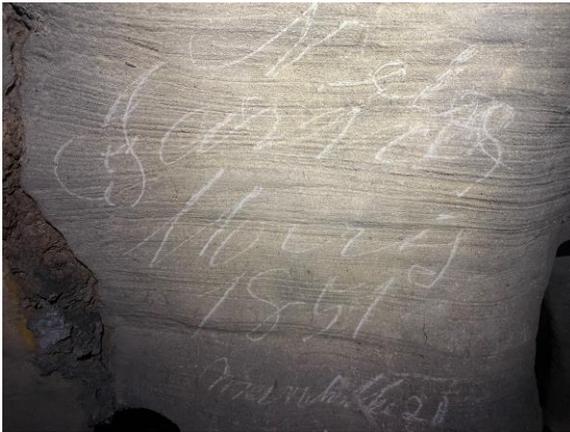
The image below shows at a high level the relationship between RKC, GSP, and the 4 grottos the committee is comprised of. If this is still confusing to you, don't be afraid to ask!



Signature Cave -

Report and Photos by Wendy Orlandi

On a recent sunny spring day, Darryl Marsh, Tera Williamson, Eon Silha, Fred Ball and I checked out Signature Cave in Rockcastle County. It owes its name to the historical graffiti found within. This cave offers a little bit of everything - high ceilings, tight crawls, maze-like loops, canyon passage and at least three different levels to explore.



Signature has varied speleothems. I'm particularly fond of the formation next to Tera. Look closely and it brings to mind layers of forest complete with lush canopy.

We also found this stunning Cave Crayfish hanging out in one of many rimstone pools.



This cave is also notorious for the ample evidence of pack rat activity, although fortunately for me, I didn't see one while navigating through their midden at every turn. No rats were spotted, but we did find an unexpected surprise - a small colony of what is most likely Rafinesque's big-eared bat (*Corynorhinus rafinesquii*). This group was quite active, unlike many of the myotis species we usually encounter in the area at this time of year.



There are three general seasonal behaviors in this species. The bats swarm outside the cave entrance in September-October to mate, followed by a relatively short hibernation period from November to February and can be found in groups of 2-100. Some remain solitary, like the lone Rafinesque that can frequently be found near the north entrance at GSC. Males and females are observed roosting together throughout the year until May to August. At this time reproductive

females share a maternal colony of about 15-20 bats to bear and care for their young.

Interestingly, WNS has been detected on the skin of Rafinesque, but this medium sized species has not shown any symptoms of the disease. Scientists speculate that the absence of the characteristic lesions that dramatically affect other species might be attributed to their shallow torpor and higher activity level over winter than the smaller myotis bats. It's also possible they could spread the disease to others such as the Tri-color bat which can often be found in the same cave.

WNS is responsible for the death of an estimated 6 million bats. While Rafinesque are fortunately naturally resistant to the disease, they still suffer from disruption, the destruction of lowland habitat near water and through hardwood deforestation.

After snapping a couple photos, we headed back toward the entrance. Fred, Tera and I headed north and had dinner at the Limestone Grill and simply relaxed after a thoroughly enjoyable trip.



Left to right: Darryl Marsh, Tera Williamson, Eon Silha, Wendy Orlandi and Fred Ball



Cave but now called Dillon Cave. I ended up having seven cavers join that were interested in learning survey so that's exactly what we did! While we only ended up completing 80 feet of the roughly 140-foot cave in the 2 hours we were there, everyone learned how to survey or improved their survey skills and had a good time! While Ohio isn't known for having caves, to have a 100+ foot, 4 entrance cave only an hour west of Columbus is quite special! After the survey we elected to grab some pizza at a local pizza place called Buckeye Piez. Let's just say it was quite an experience and we all know the owner quite well now... I look forward to the coming month when some of us will head back to the cave to finish the survey and hope to publish my first map! Look for it to be featured in a future Squeaks!

References:

https://animaldiversity.org/accounts/Corynorhinus_rafinesquii/

<https://meridian.allenpress.com/jwd/article/51/2/519/193888/Molecular-Detection-of-the-Causative-Agent-of>

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/23185427/>

<https://fw.ky.gov/Wildlife/Pages/Rafinesque's-Big-Eared-Bat.aspx>



Ohio Caving Intro to Survey – Ryan Braga

On March 10th a group of Ohio cavers along with a single West Virginia Caver went to Muskingum County to practice survey of a fascinating cave named Tunis

Members involved: Jennie Hawkey, Nick Wayne, Ryan Braga, Wendy Orlandi, Tera Williamson, Sanae Rogers, Chris Rogers, Ayub Mohamed



Photo by Sanae Rogers



Photo by Sanae Rogers



Photo by Ryan Braga



Tygart Gorge Hike & Cave Trek

– Jennie Hawkey

During Winter Adventure Weekend at Carter Cave State Resort Park, several COG ladies participated in the Tygart Gorge Hike & Cave Trek trip. The trip was slightly altered for us to spend more time at Skyscraper Cave which is considered one of the more beautiful caves in the area. We parked in the landowner's driveway and he came out to greet us and talk to our trip leader, Stephen Bishop. The hike itself was a bit of admiring the nice view of Tygart Gorge and the creek running through it, but also there was a bit of scraping up the side of the gorge and trying to avoid tumbling down into the creek. Skyscraper starts off with a very narrow passage that was somewhat challenging to squeeze through. Once through, you are greeted by a dome with flowing water and gorgeous formations. Though it was a short trip in the cave, it's definitely worth the trek to get there. We also visited some other karst features in the area and heard a story of a past participant that



Photo by Sanae Rogers

THE CENTRAL OHIO GROTTO (COG)

needed to be medivaced out of the gorge after taking a bad fall off some icy rocks (note to future participants... don't go near the edge of the downward sloping cliff!).



Photo by Jennie Hawkey - photo below also by Jennie. (editor – not sure why it won't let me add that below the image!)



Photo by Jennie Hawkey



Photo by Jennie Hawkey



Photo by Jennie Hawkey

Walnut Woods COG Hike

- Jennie Hawkey

Some may have noticed more hiking and backpacking trips popping up in the COG Calendar. It has been a deep wish of mine to someday do the Havasupai Falls backpacking trip which requires winning a permit in the lottery run by the Havasupai Tribe in Arizona and doing a great deal of training and preparation to be able to do the trip. The stars aligned for me this year because I decided to enter the lottery and I won 8 permits in my choice month of October. In order to train for this trip, several of us have been doing regular hikes to increase our endurance and there will be some future backpacking trips as well. On February 18th, I led a hike for COG at Walnut Woods with a goal of doing a fast-paced 5-mile trip. It was bitterly cold and windy, with snow cover from the previous day's snowfall. I believe the chill in the air made us walk pretty fast because we blew through 5 miles and everyone wanted to keep going, so we did the Tall Pines section (my

favorite) again and we totaled 7 miles in 2:23 hours. Be on the lookout for more of these trips, whether you have training in mind or not. It was really nice to plan future trips and talk about caving throughout the hike!



Photo by Jennie Hawkey



Ohio Cave Hunting – Ryan Braga

On March 21st I set out to find some local caves in the area to document for the Ohio Cave Survey database and make a note of what could get surveyed or re-surveyed. After sneaking out of work at 4pm from downtown, I drove over to Dublin where I found Briggs Dam caves 1, 2 and 3. While these caves are heavily graffitied, 1 and 2 had a nice bit of passage for Ohio standards along with both containing very interesting entrances. Walking out you pass by Briggs Dam cave 3 which is

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maybe a 20ft tube and that's being generous. After these 3 caves, I went over to the gorge just north of downtown Dublin that contains Shaft cave, Rattlesnake cave and a few others. These caves couldn't have a more beautiful hike to get to them. The way I came in has you climb down back-to-back dry waterfalls that must be spectacular when running. After climbing up to the natural bridge where Shaft cave is located and assessing the "pit", a 15-20 foot slanted shaft that has a "handline" (a hammock tree strap), I opted not to go in as I was solo and wanted to save the magic for when I come back with friends. After this I found Rattlesnake cave next door which has some fascinating fossils and across the gorge was an unnamed cave that I found some strange rope with crappy knots and crappy carabiners. I've heard that there are more caves in this gorgeous gorge so I plan to make another trip back when I survey to identify if there are any others. With sunlight starting to drain, I made the gorgeous hike back to the car and called it a day while entering in my GPS coordinates into Gaia to save the locations to return in the future. Overall, it was a great afternoon with multiple caves being found and documented with many more to come!



Photo by Ryan Braga



Photo by Ryan Braga
Photo by Ryan Braga





Photo by Ryan Braga



Photo by Ryan Braga

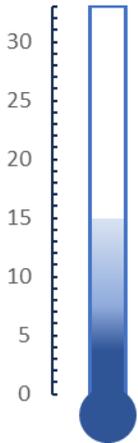


The 2024 NSS Convention will be held in Sewanee, Tennessee July 1-5. Check the website for more information and to register.

<https://caves.org/convention/2024-nss-convention/>



Be a part of History, Join the GSP 33!
We Need 18 more people to meet our goal!



Will you be one of the 33 who will commit to supporting GSP with a small \$25 monthly donation over the next 5 years?

Proceeds are used to pay off the loans used to purchase the Caretakers Residence.

Are you interested in a free family camping pass for the next 5 years, a free polo shirt, and a celebration at the end of the commitment period?

Please contact Patrick Gibson for more details!
614.496.5345, kd8ion@gmail.com

Payment Options:

1. Mail a check Monthly or some other defined period such as quarterly/yearly
2. Pay once in Full
3. Paypal as a recurring payment with GSP 33 in comment

Payments should be made out to "Great Saltpetre Cave Preserve" and mailed to

GSP 33
% Patrick Gibson
4211 Caswell Rd
Johnstown, OH 43031