



# Central Ohio Grotto Squeaks

October 2024



Cover photo by Ryan Braga – Salamander in Moonshiner's Chimney 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.

**COG Executive Committee:**

Email: exec@centralohiogrotto.com

**Chair:**

Andy Schofield  
chair@centralohiogrotto.com

**Vice Chair:**

Wendy Orlandi  
vice-chair@centralohiogrotto.com

**Treasurer:**

Suzanne Gagnon  
treasurer@centralohiogrotto.com

**Secretary:**

Bethany Widmayer  
secretary@centralohiogrotto.com

**Former Chair:**

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.

<b>October 6</b>	Survey Trip to cave in Ohio	Trip is full.
<b>October 19/20</b>	Survey Trip – Signature Cave	Trip is probably full. Contact Ryan or Mark if interested.
<b>October 24</b>	COG Monthly Meeting	Worthington Presbyterian Church
<b>October 26-27</b>	GSP Halloween Fundraiser	GSP
<b>November 21</b>	COG Monthly Meeting	Worthington Presbyterian Church
<b>December 14</b>	COG Christmas/Holiday Party	Location TBD

Contact Info for Questions regarding trips or meetings: [exec@centralohiogrotto.com](mailto:exec@centralohiogrotto.com)

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Join us for our next monthly meeting at Worthington Presbyterian Church on THURSDAY, October 24th at 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.



In lieu of a program in October, we will be reviewing proposed changes to our bylaws. The bylaw review committee will answer questions and listen to any suggestions, concerns, and comments. See the short article below for more information.



**Odds and Ends:**

**Dues**

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>

**Elections:**

COG holds its election for the executive committee every November. The positions and current committee members are:

- Chair – Andy Schofield
- Vice-Chair – Wendy Orlandi
- Secretary – Bethany Widmayer
- Treasurer – Suz Gagnon
- Members at Large (3)
  - Former Chair – Aaron Deal
  - Joe Chaput
  - Mark Swelstad

If you are interested in running for office, you must be a member of both the NSS and COG by the time of taking office (January 1, 2025). To vote, you must also be a member of both COG and the NSS. Nominations will be accepted up until we vote in November. Nominations require a second, and the approval of the nominee.

At the September meeting, the current Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer were all nominated again. Aaron Deal automatically remains as former chair, and Joe and Mark are both stepping down from at large positions. I believe Tera W. and Ryan Braga were nominated for those.

**Bylaw Review:**

The Central Ohio Grotto was founded in 1952, along with its constitution and first set of bylaws. Of course, the bylaws have been updated by COG Executive Committees throughout the years to meet the needs of ever-changing membership. As one could imagine, the bylaws developed inconsistent language over the years which, at times, could be confusing especially since the writers, along with their original intent and practice, are long gone.

This seventy-two-year-old document has served us well for many years in both lean and boomtimes but needed some updated language and consistency. To address these concerns, our Chair asked for volunteers to participate in a bylaws committee. This committee has met several times to review the bylaws, and to propose changes that the committee feels addresses the inconsistencies and vague areas. We also needed to make sure the bylaws did not contradict our Grotto Constitution, which was lost to us until recently. The last time the bylaws were updated was in 2017 when an appointed membership chair was added to the document. The current Bylaw Committee consisted of both executive and regular members as well as those of us who have been around for some time and also those with new perspectives. The Committee has finished its task and is ready to present its work to Membership for approval.

Next steps:

- September regular meeting: 2017 bylaws were distributed with marks ups by the Committee along with a clean copy of all changes. An email was sent to all grotto members with this information as well.
- October regular meeting: We've devoted the entire regular meeting to discussion, question and answer.

- Any suggested changes from the grotto are due 10/31. Send to Wendy at [wenlo0319@gmail.com](mailto:wenlo0319@gmail.com).
- November 12 – the bylaw committee will review all suggested changes and compile a final document. This document will be sent out again to the entire membership.
- November regular meeting – a vote by membership to amend the bylaws will take place.
- January 1, 2025 – the new bylaws (if approved) will take effect.

**Moonshiners Chimney Project Trip #2**  
**9/15/24**  
**-Ryan Braga**

After our first project trip to Moonshiners Chimney (published in last month's Squeaks) where we pushed the pit that ended up just giving us a few small domes, we planned another trip to continue the survey. Since most of the party from the prior trip were not able to make it, the trip ended up being just Andy Schofield and I. So after breakfast at Joes at the base of the hill, we checked out a cave named Crease cave which could serve as a future easy survey project. After this detour, we trekked up the steep opposite hillside of Wolf Creek and arrived at the cave around 11am. After hauling up the 150ft rope, vertical gear and survey gear, we took a short rest while tying the handline before entering the cave. The survey wasn't too eventful as we started to tie in from station A5 near the middle of the big funnel room to start shooting down to the pit, we ended up having issues where the shot just wasn't making sense. After checking the disto shot with a suunto, we continued to not understand and elected to start the survey from in the pit and survey out. This pit was the only known vertical in the cave and we did not want to have to haul up vertical gear and rope for the next trip so our #1 objective was to knock out the pit. After surveying the pit, I climbed out first and stayed on rope near the top as while on rope, I needed to set the station for Andy to shoot to mid way up. After Andy

took the shot and started to sketch, I decided to check out this little lead midway up the pit that seemed low promise but I figured was worth getting into to determine if we needed to do a shot in it or not. Once doing a tight belly crawl squeeze while on rope, you are able to come off rope in a little room that is maybe 4ft tall. While this seemed low promise, I will admit that Andy did mention that we should check this out at some point. When coming around a large ceiling dip in the center of the room, I saw a high mud saddle that I peaked over.



*Weird rock layer in the pit in Moonshiner's Chimney*

Expecting nothing, I looked straight into empty space. Being ecstatic, I call out to Andy saying that I found our way into potentially big cave. He then comes up the main 20 foot pit and squeezes into the side room and takes a look down. After doing a disto shot, I got roughly 35 feet to the first floor that I saw. After running the rope into this side room and down the pit, Andy gets on rope and stands onto of the currently small hole and as his weight and kicking of his feet, the hole quickly enlarges as it is all mud on the sides. Andy rappelled into the pit a big to check out what we are dealing

with and quickly realized we will need to haul our vertical gear up the mountain again. Sadly it was already 5pm and we decided to save this for another trip. Next steps will be to determine how to rig this as above the pit is all sandstone and determine rigging lower in the pit as Andy landed on a mud ledge that will potentially need a traverse line. This is an exciting discovery as this cave is 220 feet above the valley floor and has a lot of room to go in the cliff side.

**Barton Cave - Tory Roland 9/15/2024**

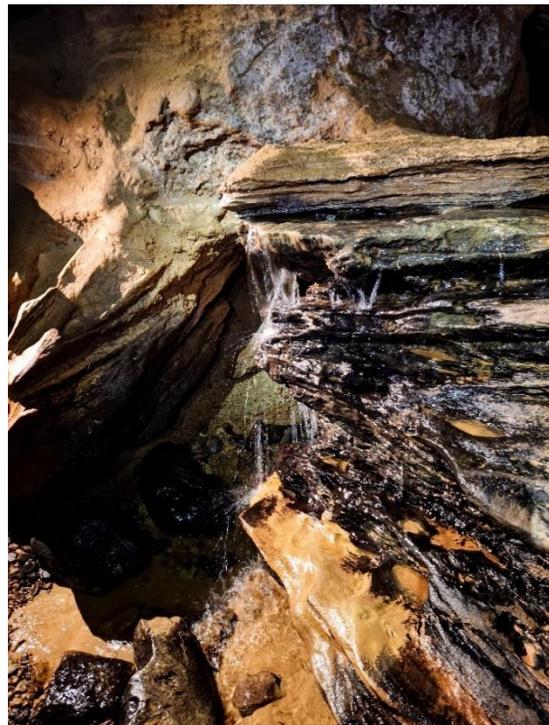


On Sunday following the Laurel Caverns trip with the Pittsburgh grotto, Kevan Matthews was kind enough to take a group of us to another cave nearby for a relatively short but fun trip before we made our way back. After parking on the side of the road and gearing up, we did about a half mile hike downhill on a path through the woods that eventually became lush with ferns amongst sparse forest and loose rock. We came to a spot where he believed the entrance was from memory, but after none of us came across anything referred to a dropped pin and found it was on the other side of the road and that we had passed it just a smidge. We all considered this part of the journey and were just happy to be brought along.



We all had entered the cave by about 10:30. One of the first things I noticed was a very small stream always following to the side of the passage, making just enough of a sound of running water to be tranquil. Not too far into the first passage we came across a small waterfall we stopped to admire, and then heading a bit further in the cave it opened up to a main room. The first place Kevan wanted to take us was to The Attic, which had a relatively awkward climb up that we needed to work together to navigate safely.

The entrance to The Attic was a sloped overhang above another lower passage that if you weren't careful would be easy to fall off of and then down into. Most of us rather than try to climb it head on took the approach of sitting backwards along the far edge of the slope and then scooting back until we could reach one of the hand holds to pull ourselves up. Some of the taller members of the party which this would be easier for stayed at the edge of the slope to make sure no one fell during the process before following us up. Once in The Attic we explored some of the short offshoot crawls, one of which had some interesting swirled stone that appeared yellow and pink.



After everyone descended from the attic and back into the main room, there was a left walking passage and then a right stream passage. First we chose to go left, walking through a canyon mostly just stepping over boulders until we came to what looked like a fissure. Here the passage took a sharp U-turn to the right, pinching out into a belly crawl. After a few people took a look, we determined it would likely not be comfortably passable for everyone in our group, and since Kevan had not been through this section we decided rather than split up that we would turn back. However, going back to the main room and choosing the right passage this was eventually what we came to shortly as well.



At this point knowing we would not spend much longer in the cave, Kevan asked if I would like to try to push quickly through the belly crawl portion with him just to get a glimpse of where it went. I happily obliged and set off to try to get as far as we could without leaving the group for too long. After following the same small stream I mentioned from the beginning, the crawl eventually opened up into a series of two small dome rooms, the second of which when looking forward had a short tunnel that let out on the other side of a wall that had a lot of rocks jutting out of it in such a way it would be climbable, and at the top you could overlook the previous dome room. We decided it was too much of a task for now and went to rejoin the group, leaving the rest of the passage for another time. All together we trudged back uphill to the cars and enjoyed lunch at a

nearby restaurant before driving back to our respective destinations.

Photos courtesy of Justin Dixon and Google User "Xtreme Cowgirl" AKA Barb

**Caver Appreciation – Some Photos: Mark Swelstad**



*Training on the new Zero Turn mower.*

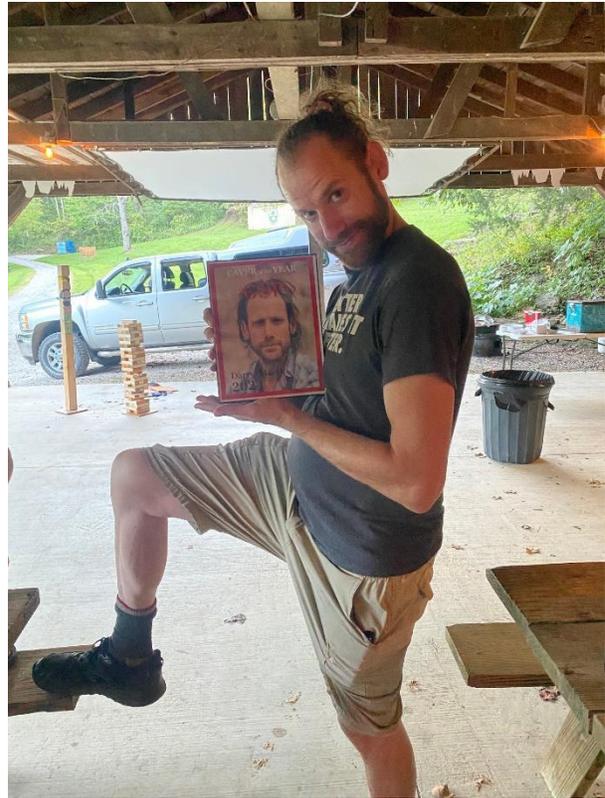


*Kelly McNamara on the Zero Turn, with Scott Pavey looking on!*

THE CENTRAL OHIO GROTTO (COG)



*Suz Gagnon on the Zero Turn!*



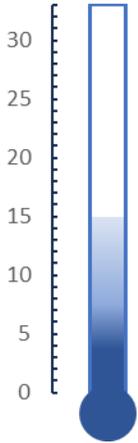
*Darryl Marsh, our GSP Cover of the year!*



*Mary, Synda, and Janeen causing trouble at GSP!*



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