

# Central Ohio Grotto Squeaks

## September 2024



Cover photo by Tera Williamson – Flowstone in Fletcher's Spring 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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**Member-At-Large:**

Mark Swelstad  
[mswelstad@gmail.com](mailto: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>September 13-15</b>	Caver Appreciation Weekend	Members only. GSP
<b>September 26</b>	COG Monthly Meeting	Worthington Presbyterian Church
<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 TBD</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, September 26th 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.



Dr. Kyle Rybacki is our guest speaker for September and will speak on DEI-B in the caving community.

Kyle is the Bureau of Land Management’s Cave & Karst Subject Matter Expert where he oversees program administration, training, and provides technical assistance to BLM field staff and foreign governments. Kyle enjoys helping others learn and grow and utilizes inquiry-based learning

supplemented by hands-on activities. Kyle has a BS and MS in Geology & Geophysics from the Missouri University of Science & Technology, formerly the University of Missouri – Rolla, and a dual-title Ph.D. in Geochemistry and Astrobiology from Penn State.



## 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>

## COG History

The September 1974 COG Squeaks contained an article by John Agnew about snakes in Kentucky and how to distinguish them, and how to treat a snake bite.

There was also a small blurb about COG members at the convention in Iowa. Sounds like they had a good time!

Lastly, there was a short trip report from Eric Hovemeyer about a COG trip in Sloan's Valley Cave in which they entered via the Martin's Creek entrance and exited from Minton Hollow. The passage was full of water and they used inner tubes and a bucket (!) to float through the deep water. At one point, they attached a rope to an inner tube from each direction and ferrying people through the water one at a time. Everyone made it out fine, despite some people becoming nearly hypothermic.

## Misty Cave Cleanup – Jennie Hawkey

On August 24th, COG hosted a cleanup at RKC's Misty Cave Preserve in Jackson County, KY. A few of us have been talking about doing this trip for years and I'm extremely happy that we were finally able to do it. We presumed that it would be difficult to

get several tires out of the creek and up the ravine, so we brought gear to rig a pulley system.



*Photo courtesy of Jennie Hawkey*

We had 13 volunteers set out from GSP to the coordinates provided by the RKC on Saturday morning, including a few Scout volunteers whose trip got cancelled. After a few minutes of figuring out exactly where to park, we all started unloading the cars when a few ATVs stopped by. As it turned out, it was the landowner who owns the thousands of acres surrounding the preserve. He was very appreciative of what we were doing for the preserve and helped us out quite a bit by letting us use a trail on his land and bringing all the trash we collected up in his ATVs. While the majority of the volunteers collected trash around the creek area at the mouth of the cave, Ryan, Andy, and myself went in search of the tires to figure out what rigging would be necessary. Since we had help from the landowner, we only needed to get 1 truck tire uphill about 50 feet. With all the help we had, we completed the cleanup in around 2 hours. Since it was about 90 degrees out when we finished up, we were pretty excited to get underground in the cave. With a few maps in tow, we headed in to see which route we would take since we learned there would be a crawl with water. We decided to do the crawl route first and it was relatively dry due to lack of rain. The cave is pretty tricky with lots of unmapped paths which we are itching to go back and check out. There is a

corkscrew at the end which (depending on which route you take first) brings you up or down about 5 feet and this tiny little hole (which would be really easy to miss) is the only way to complete the route in the cave instead of turning back. Thankfully we found it, and mostly walked the rest of the way out of the cave. The Misty Cave Preserve is gorgeous (made even more so now that the trash is removed) and the cave was a fun one. I'd love to go back to check out more of it. After the cleanup, many of us headed to Ryan's favorite restaurant, Limestone Grill, and hung out at the shelter afterward where we enjoyed desserts and spirits.

### Sinks of the Roundstone – David Ryskamp

On Saturday, August 10<sup>th</sup>, Wendy Orlandi, Joe Truskowski, Justin Dixon, Wes Sedoris, Aaron and Kim Deal, their 4-year-old son Elliot, and I did a trip into Sinks of the Roundstone Cave. We departed for the cave at 10am. As we were donning our gear at the trail head leading to Sinks, we were greeted by a couple of friendly locals who strolled into the cave with nothing more than a flashlight. After suiting up, we made our way down the trail and entered the cave through a dry entrance adjacent to the main water entrance at around 10:45am.



Photo Courtesy of Jennie Hawkey



Photo Courtesy of Justin Michael



Photo Courtesy of David Ryskamp

Once in the cave we were impressed by the sheer size of the rooms we passed through. While many of the walls were tagged with

graffiti, they did not take away from the beauty of the high ceilings and wide passageways. Wendy led our group through the cave and provided helpful advice about how to lead scout trips through Sinks. We passed by the register and the main sump. The water was rather low on this day. The group stopped and Wes, Joe, Aaron, Elliot, and I crawled through preparation H. The group then made our way to the popcorn junction room and the girl scout dome. Wes, Justin, Aaron, Elliot, and I crawled to the end of the tunnel past girl scout dome. Or rather, Elliot casually walked to the end of the tunnel while the rest of us crawled on our hands and knees. The group then made our way back to the main passageway where we encountered Darryl Marsh who was leading a scout trip through the cave. Wendy then led us to the viking ship room where we were able to overlook the main passage. We went on to pass by the 80-foot waterfall and collectively made the decision to take the canyon passage out of the cave to the railroad entrance.



*Photo Courtesy of David Ryskamp*

From there Justin (who was having car problems), Kim, and Elliot returned to where we had parked. Wendy, Wes, Joe, Aaron and I returned to the cave to make a timed speed

run from the railroad entrance, to the main water entrance. I led the group back into the cave and through the pancake crawl. I nearly took a wrong turn when we got to the main passageway, but Wendy kindly pointed me in the right direction. We sped through the rest of the cave and made it out of the main entrance in about 30 minutes. For Justin and Wes, this was one of their first trips into a cave and they thoroughly enjoyed their time. Our group was lucky to have Wendy, who organized this trip, guided us through the cave, and shared her knowledge. Elliot was the MVP of the trip. Despite his young age, he fearlessly navigated the cave and maintained the same pace as the adult cavers. He is surely a legendary caver in the making. After exiting the cave, Joe returned to his home and the rest of us to GSP. Joe offered to show us some of the caves on his property and Wes, Aaron, and I got a quick bite to eat before taking him up on this offer.



*Photo Courtesy of David Ryskamp*



Photo Courtesy of David Ryskamp



Photo Courtesy of David Ryskamp

**Moonshiners, Goat, Tombstone Caves and a Natural Bridge with Joe Truskowski – David Ryskamp**

After our trip through Sinks of the Roundstone Cave on August 10<sup>th</sup>, Joe Truskowski offered to show Wes, Aaron, and I the caves on his property. Joe mentioned that these were shorter caves, so there was no need for caving gear. As we departed from GSP Wendy shared that there were several caves to hike to, but not to worry because there was no elevation change. That was a blatant lie.

We arrived at Joe's at 3pm and he enthusiastically led us on a half mile hike uphill to Moonshiners cave. Legend has it that the authorities were never able to bust the moonshine operation because the smoke would emerge from the other side of the hill, opposite from the cave entrance. The cave was maybe 300 feet in length, with tall ceilings about 20-30 feet in height. There were remnants of the old moonshining operation, pieces from old barrels, piping, and boards. Near one dome there was a large pile of charcoal and a trail of soot on the surrounding rock reaching up at least 20 feet. There are multiple domes in the cave, some reaching as high as 60 tall. At the ceiling there appears to be additional passageways yet to be explored. At the surface too there are several depressions which Joe suspects may lead into these upper passageways. We continued to the back of the cave where there was a short crawl through the water. Being the only one in coveralls, I made the crawl which led to a small opening. The cave appeared to go on at least 10 or 15 feet, but it was too tight of a squeeze to pass through. The high reaching domes of Moonshiner's are beautiful and its rich history makes it a fascinating trip.

After touring Moonshiner's, Joe led us on a hike to a cliff face made of two overhangs, one sitting on top of the other. We explored the cliff face which was maybe 40 feet in height. Joe then mentioned there was a natural bridge on his property, about a half

mile away. We set off for the bridge down a trail which cut through the heavy shrubbery. The trail climbed at a 45 degree angle for several hundred feet. At one point the hill seemed to plateau, but as the trail jogged around a corner, it inexplicably continued to rise at a 45 angle. When we finally arrived at the top of the hill, Aaron, Wes, and I were out of breath, covered in sweat, and disoriented from the aggressive climb. Joe, on the other hand, was still smiling and seemingly unfazed by the hike. We continued down the trail to the natural bridge. The bridge itself was maybe 60 feet long and sat between two large slabs of rock. Its archway was about 10 feet tall and supported a thick layer of rock. We stayed a while and admired the arch. Joe led us on the descent from the arch. It's entirely possible that I blacked out, but the descent seemed suspiciously shorter than the ascent. Joe bypassed the trail we had climbed up and led us off trail on the descent. His path cut straight through a patch of thorns. While I donned my coveralls to protect me from the thorns, Wes and Aaron's leg were cut up and bleeding when we emerged on the other side of the thistles.

We walked down the trail a bit further and arrived at a pond that Joe had constructed. Near the pond was Goat Cave, which Aaron, Wes, and I made a short hike up to. The cave stretches maybe 60 feet back with about a 3 foot tall ceiling. When we crawled in Wes noticed a pack rat which had nested just off to the left of the entrance. Deeper in the cave there was a lone bat sleeping. Aaron crawled deeper into the cave and spooked the bat which began flying around wildly. Concerned for Aaron's safety, I took a photo to capture what I assumed were his final moments. We departed from Goat Cave and met back up with Joe at the pond where he gave us an option. He pointed nearly vertically and said there were large blocks of rock half a mile up the hill. Alternatively, the entrance to tombstone cave was just up the road. Fearing another hill climb, we opted for tombstone cave.

We walked the road up to Tombstone Cave. The cave was mapped years ago; however, its entrances have since been blocked by breakdown and sediment deposit. Joe said that while there is about a mile of mapped passageways, no one has been in the cave in 20 years. Wes and I poked our heads into the Wolf creek entrances. We were not able to make it more than a few feet before our path was blocked by breakdown. Although, the right passage was blowing air. Joe then led us to the Insanity entrance. We were able to get about 15 feet into the cave, where we ran into a large pile of sediment. There was a small crack between the pile of sediment and the cave wall which was blowing a substantial amount of air. Additionally, Aaron was able to reach his hand up into the ceiling of the cavern and reach the outside. There is the potential for an exciting dig at tombstone. Its passageways are known, but haven't been visited in decades, and the sediment pile is close enough to the surface that it could be moved fairly easily.

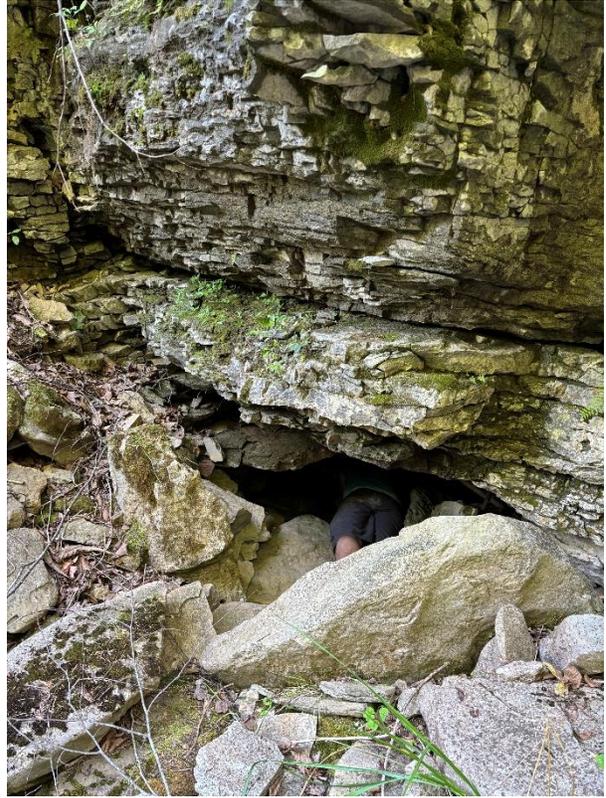
The four of us exited Tombstone and walked back to Joe's home. He kindly invited us in even though we were covered in dirt and some of us were still bleeding from the thorns. We enjoyed a glass of ice tea on his porch and looked through maps of the caves on his property. Joe gave us a tour of his home and shared the story about how he acquired the property. He has an impressive collection of arrowheads and is an accomplished bow hunter. His property is full of exciting caves to explore. While the trek to see them has significant elevation change, Aaron, Wes, and I valued the opportunity to spend time getting to know Joe. Our grotto is lucky to have him as a member. He is kind, generous, always smiling, with a knack for adventure.

All photos below courtesy of David Ryskamp:

THE CENTRAL OHIO GROTTO (COG)



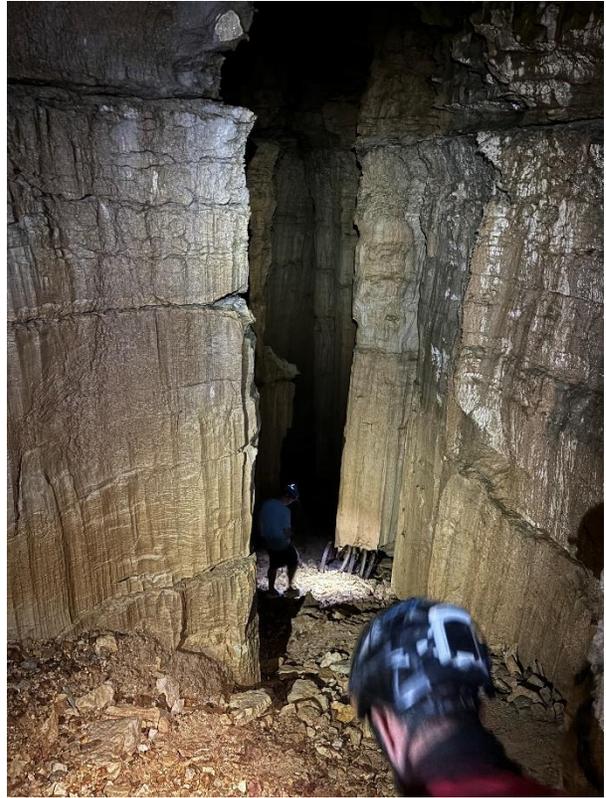
Aaron's final moments in Goat Cave



Exploring Wolf creek entrance to tombstone



Charcoal pile in Moonshiners



Wes near the remnants of a barrel – Moonshiners



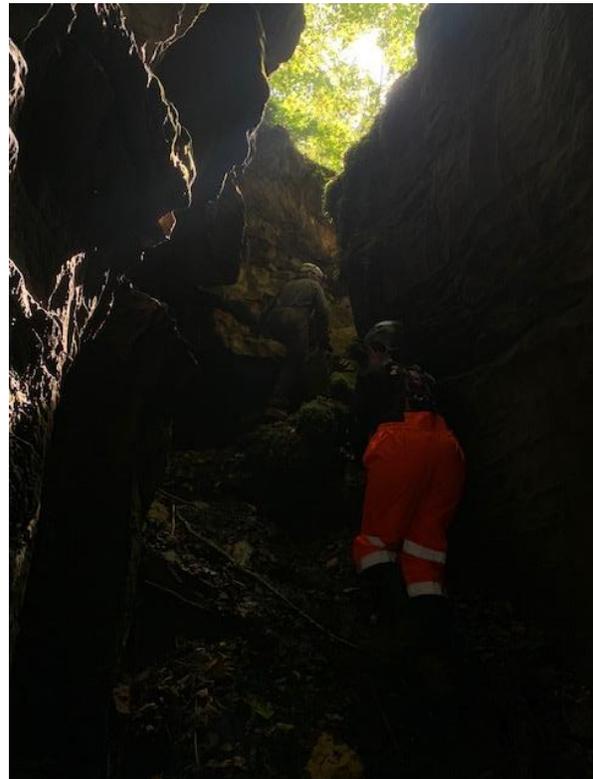
Wes standing on the natural bridge

**Moonshiners Chimney Project Trip 1**  
**8/25/24 – Ryan Braga**

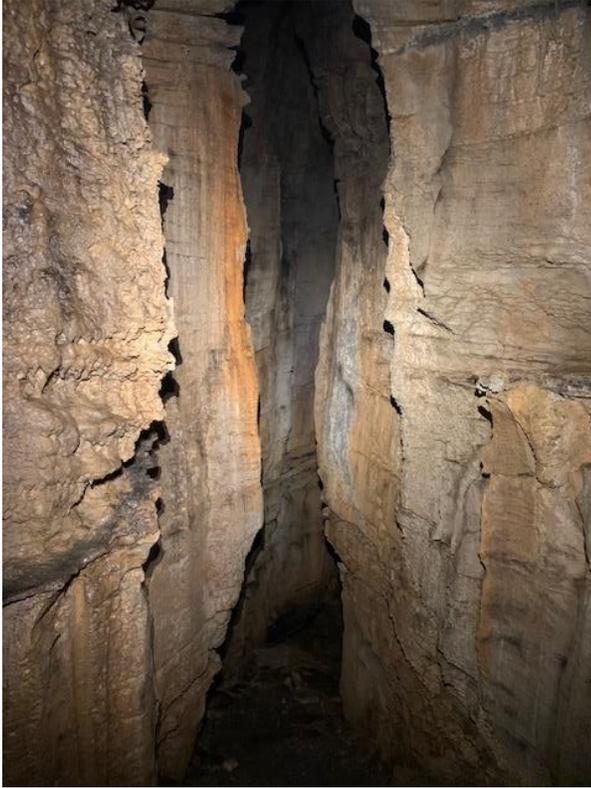
After leaving GSP at 8:30 a.m. on Sunday, a group of cavers drove over to Wolf Creek to meet up with Joe Truskowski and his wife Marsha at their home. After being greeted by the best dog you could meet and guided into the house, we saw that places for each caver were set out on the table. While all the plates were empty, mine contained the most beautiful sight you could lay eyes on: dinosaur chicken nuggets. A'dra Peterson, Nick Wayne, Jennie Hawkey, Andy Schofield, Tory Roland, and I sat down and enjoyed a delicious breakfast. After realizing that I had told Will Peterson the wrong time to meet us, he still showed up a bit early and got in on some good breakfast, which included eggs, sausage links, pierogis, and other items. After this great breakfast, we drove to the base of the hill and geared up to start our hike to the cave. Joe kindly carried some of our gear, including the rope and bolting equipment, to make life easier for us.

Deciding to show everyone another cave, we made a pit stop on the way up, where everyone got to see the magnificent Moonshiners Cave—a 400-foot canyon cave with very large ceilings. It's a must-see for everyone.

All photos courtesy of Ryan Braga.



*Cavers exiting Moonshine Cave*



*Large canyon passage of Moonshiners Cave*

After this pit stop, we continued on to Moonshiners Chimney, which is an additional 100 feet up the hill. For reference, the base of the hill where we parked is at 1,000 feet of elevation. Moonshiners Chimney is at 1,225 feet!

Once Will joined us at the top, he had to head out, so the six of us entered the cave. After negotiating the entrance handline over the dirt slope you slide down, we were greeted by the main room, which resembles a large funnel leading down to a pit. At the top of the funnel, there is a passage running off along the hillside. What's intriguing about this cave is that the top part is entirely sandstone, while the pit takes you into the limestone layer, making it a cave with both sandstone and limestone compositions!

Another notable feature of this cave is the large number of long-eared bats that inhabit it. As a result, the cave will be closed during certain months to protect the bats.



*long eared bat found at the bottom of the pit*

Once we settled into the cave, Andy and I began assessing the rigging for a rope to rappel into the pit and see where it leads. The others worked on calibrating the Disto and beginning the survey. After a bit, Brian Devine joined us and began sketching once the survey was underway.

After finding no limestone near the pit, we opted to wrap the rope around some large boulders that would stay in place and had Jennie monitor the first few rappels to verify their stability. Once Andy and I rappelled into the pit (20 feet), we discovered that we were now in the limestone. Along the way down, there are a few low-promise leads that should be investigated during the survey. At the base of the pit is a small slope leading to three accessible domes, each roughly 15 feet tall. In one dome, through a slim crack in a wall, we could see another dome that is currently inaccessible. Within an accessible dome, we uncovered a hole after moving rocks for 20 minutes, which connects to the inaccessible dome. While it was too tight for anything larger than a pack rat to push through, we made a light connection confirming it extends to the inaccessible dome.



*Andy Schofield looking into the slit in the wall to the inaccessible dome*

After A'dra joined us to explore the domes, we climbed back out and joined the survey team, as both Jennie and Tory had to leave. After derigging the drop, we heard someone entering the cave—it was Joe with gifts! He brought down tinfoil-wrapped dinosaur chicken nuggets and pizza rolls, a welcome sight after working in the cave for several hours.



*Surprise treats for the weary cavers*

The survey team finished most of the main room, and I sketched a few cross-sections before we called it a day. What remains is to continue the survey and sketch of the upper passage that extends for about a hundred feet, and then survey the pit and domes. We did not start a profile sketch, but this cave will need one, so that will be a future endeavor for the next trip. Overall, it was a great trip, and we look forward to continuing this project.

Ryan Braga  
NSS 72371

### **Adventuring around GSP!** **- Tera Williamson**

Photo Credit: Tera Williamson

As a new friend (BJ Pitcher) and I planned a weekend away at GSP for a camping trip, we had no set plans on what adventures we were going to get into. We arrived at GSP late Wednesday evening with plans to stay through Sunday morning. A couple days prior to the trip I ran across some information on both Anglin Falls and Fletcher's Cave that were both near by and I knew neither of had been to those locations before, so I did end up having a couple new adventures planned for our long weekend away. On the way down to GSP I was concerned if Anglin Falls would have enough water, as I knew it had been an overly dry and hot/humid summer but was willing to give it a shot and see if it was a dry or wet waterfall. We had some storms come through the area on Wednesday evening and some overnight so I figured we might have a good chance of having some water trickling over the cliff top of Anglin Falls after all. So, we made Thursday's adventure a hiking trip to Anglin Falls. Anglin Falls is about a 1.7 mile out and back trail that follows along steep slopes leading up to a rocky ridgeline and limestone outcroppings as you make your way to this beautiful waterfall in the John B. Stephenson Memorial Forest.

## THE CENTRAL OHIO GROTTO (COG)



*Anglin Falls*

On Friday morning after breakfast, we set off on our caving adventure to Fletcher's Cave. After arriving at the parking area and changing into our cave gear, we were both amazed with the view of the mossy covered rocks and stream flowing out of the entrance of the cave. After snapping a few pictures and soaking in the scenery we decided to enter the cave. From the entrance of the cave the first 30 feet or so of the cave was a water passage of knee to waist high water which led to amazing flowstone covered walls. From there we took a left hand passage which was a hands and knees crawl that led to another flowstone with some rimstone that ended the with a dome. From there we backtracked back towards the end of the water passage and did a short climb up to a passage towards the rear of the cave

that led to a passage covered in flowstone, drapery, stalactites, stalagmites, soda stows and amazing rimstones. After exploring around and "oohs and aaahs" we made our back through the decorative passage and followed the steam passage back to the entrance and excited the cave.



*Fletcher's Cave Entrance*



*Formation Explosion in Fletcher's!*

Saturday morning after breakfast we were sitting around camp talking about what adventure we wanted to tackle for the day. BJ made the comment that maybe we could find a hiking trail that had some scenery and nice views along the way. While doing some google searching, this led us to The Pinnacles located in a forest owned by Berea Collage. Once we arrived here, we decided to hike the Indian Fort Lookout trail which was about a 2 mile round trip and was noted as the easiest trail leading to a lookout. This trail ascended steadily over rocks and roots until reaching the lookout, which offered stunning views of rolling wooded hills and deep valleys.

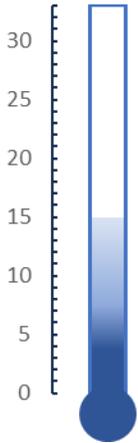


*The view from the top of the Indian Fort lookout*

All in all it was another wonderful trip to 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

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4211 Caswell Rd  
Johnstown, OH 43031