

# Central Ohio Grotto Squeaks

## April 2025



Cover photo by Mark Swelstad – Janeen Sharpshair outside a cave in Rockcastle County

## 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:**

Jennie Hawkey  
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**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>April 4-6</b>	Sullivan Cave & More Indiana	See Wendy Orlandi for details.
<b>April 9</b>	Vertical Practice	See Wendy Orlandi for details
<b>April 23</b>	COG Regular Meeting	Worthington Presbyterian Church
<b>May 3-4</b>	GSP Work Weekend	GSP
<b>May 17-18</b>	Open House	GSP
<b>June 6-8</b>	Karst-o-Rama	GSP

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

Join us for our next monthly meeting in the Worthington Presbyterian Church Youth Room on WEDNESDAY, April 23 at 7 PM in person or online. To join virtually, find Google Meet on COG's Google Calendar or facebook. You do NOT have to be a member to attend, everyone is welcome. After the meeting, we'll head over to Villa Nova Ristorante for pizza and drinks. Please bring cash to cover your share.

COG Monthly Meeting

Wednesday, April 23 · 7:00 – 8:30pm

Time zone: America/New\_York

Google Meet joining info

Video call link: <https://meet.google.com/zfc-wktg-wzz>

Or dial: (US) +1 662-674-1233 PIN: 431 213 899#

More phone numbers: <https://tel.meet/zfc-wktg-wzz?pin=8923801100058>



Our April speaker will be Danyele Green! In 2014, an in-cave accident jump-started Danyele and her husband Tymme's passion for adding wilderness medicine into their current knowledge base of caving and cave rescue. They both have a deep passion for sharing the knowledge learned with others and became Wilderness First Aid instructors for SOLO Wilderness Medical School in 2017.

Danyele taught Fundamentals of Search and Rescue for NASAR for 4 years and currently assists with the occasional Orientation to Cave

Rescue (OCR) course through the National Cave Rescue Commission. For SOLO, she assists with Wilderness First Responder courses and teaches Wilderness First Aid and CPR. In the coming few months, she will also be a Stop The Bleed instructor.



## Central Ohio Grotto Membership Dues

Active membership in the Grotto requires payment of yearly dues that help cover operating costs, memberships to other caving organizations, community outreach, events, and updating our book, gear, survey, and vertical libraries. Membership resets on January 1 of each year with members dropped from the active roster if dues are not paid by April 1.

To simplify the process of paying dues, several methods of payment are accepted although they vary in cost due to the transaction fees that are applied by the providers. The table below details the cost per provider including a link to pay where several have a short form to fill out for tracking purposes.

	<a href="#">Mail</a> 	Zelle <b>COMING SOON!</b>	Venmo <b>COMING SOON!</b>	<a href="#">PayPal</a> 
Member	\$20	\$20.50	\$20.50	\$21.25
Family	\$25	\$25.50	\$25.60	\$26.50
Member Lifetime				
Family Lifetime				

Once a payment is received a digital membership card will be sent from [treasurer@centralohiogrotto.com](mailto:treasurer@centralohiogrotto.com) including the Great Saltpetre Preserve gate code for the year.

New members joining after September 1 can pay a reduced due for the first year according to the table below.

	Cash/Check	Zelle	Venmo	PayPal
New Member Half Year	\$10	\$10.50	\$10.30	\$10.85
New Family Half Year	\$15	\$15.50	\$15.40	\$16.00

## Odds and Ends:

### Open House

#### **Support What You Love!**

~ Kelly McNamara

Those of you who know me know I love to be outdoors, go caving, and enjoy being with friends. {That probably describes most people reading this.} Some of you may also know that I love to volunteer. I volunteer at animal shelters, with the Red Cross, and for Great Saltpetre Preserve.

I was asked recently why I volunteer. To me, volunteering means supporting something that I enjoy, believe in, and want to improve. I volunteer at animal shelters, because I am a dog person. I really enjoy being with dogs (and other animals). I am a dog walker, adoption counselor, foster mom, and spay shuttle assistant. Heck, I have even been a dog; not just once, but twice! {Yep, I was the dog mascot in 2 parades.} When I volunteer at the animal shelters, I can improve several dogs' lives by caring for them, getting them out to poop, and finding them furever homes.

I also volunteer for Great Saltpetre Preserve (GSP), because I love to be outdoors, go caving, and enjoy being with friends. Sound familiar? Yep, just like you. For GSP, I have assisted with GSP Open House, Karst O Rama, and the 2024 hot tub build. During some previous Open House events I have been a front gate greeter, cave tour tail gunner, soup bean chopper, event coordinator, and preserve prepper.

All of this is not to get pats on the back. Thankfully, I am not alone in volunteering at GSP. Volunteering at GSP means making a difference and enjoying the rewards. In order to improve GSP and continue to have a great place to camp and cave, we all should support GSP by volunteering! There are lots of volunteer opportunities at GSP to be outdoors, go caving, and have fun with

friends. So I encourage (and very much appreciate) you to volunteer at GSP Open House and Karst O Rama (KOR).

This year GSP Open House is May 17-18 and we are having a grotto blender! It's a great weekend to mingle with others who love GSP. To participate at the GSP Open House, please fill in the GSP Open House interest form at <https://tinyurl.com/GSPcave>

KOR is happening June 6-8. You can select volunteer shifts at <https://tinyurl.com/KOR2025volunteering>

***Thank you for volunteering at GSP!!!***



*Echo Auditorium GSP – picture courtesy Kelly McNamara*



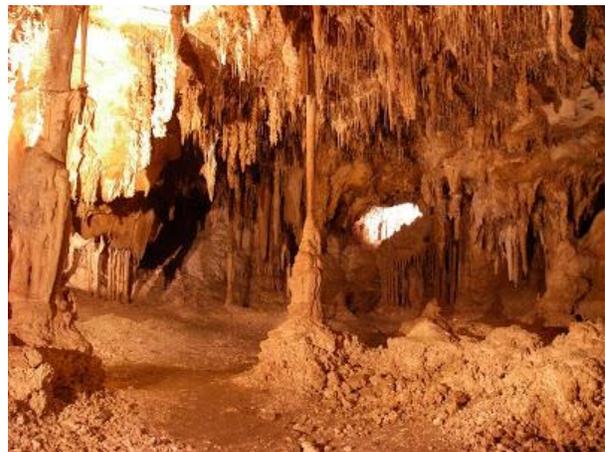
Bob Dobbs in GSP – photo courtesy Kelly McNamara



Open House parking at GSP - photo courtesy Kelly McNamara

### **Karst-o-Rama Update!**

From the Karst-o-Rama committee: We are happy to announce that KOR 2025 will be multi-grotto managed. If you are interested in volunteering, please reach out to [Matt Sumner](#) or [Meg Lee](#). More info to follow! Note: you don't have to sign up for an official position to help out. There will be plenty of opportunities to take a 2-hour shift at registration, in the kitchen, helping with garbage, security, cave trips, and so on. Many hands make light work!



### **Karst-O-Rama Request from Nina Soluski**

Please send caving photos in Rockcastle, Pulaski or Jackson Co. areas (caves frequented during KOR) or cute KOR-related pics (from years past) or ads to Nina if you want them in the guidebook! If any requests for specific cave maps in the guidebook, please request them to Nina as well, as she is a KSS member. Please reference the past 2024 guidebook as what cave maps she has (Howard's cave cartography site). Deadline is April 30th, 2025.

[Ninasoluski@gmail.com](mailto:Ninasoluski@gmail.com)

**GSP Wild Caving with Scouts****By Joe Truskowski**

If you believe there is value in sharing your caving knowledge and abilities so the next generation can be like-minded and realize the importance of conservation and protection of the great natural resources we are blessed with, then consider guiding or tailgunning on one of the GSP Wild Caving Outings. Check out the website for more information (<https://signup.com/client/invitation2/secure/6089069360126/false#/invitation>)

On Saturday, 3.08.2025, some Girl Scouts came down to the GSP for a tour of the main cave and possibly to do some wild caving. I was leading, with Nina tail-gunning and Mark and Dani Thomas from Dayton Underground (DUG) also in attendance making this a multi-grotto event. The tour through the GSP was done with headlamps only to give a feel of it being something a little less tame than the standard tour. The scouts and their leaders had a great time and were eager to learn a bit about the history, geology, and process of making potassium nitrate from the cave. Following lunch, the group had mixed feelings about doing a wild cave that would require crawling or doing something that would not. It didn't take long for the decision to be made to go to a cave where only shoes would get dirty. Other than Lloyd Mullins, I don't know of many other caves in the area where that is possible, so we shot over to do Moonshiners – an easy access canyon cave which provides a lot of high walls and a couple of high glory holes. The one girl that really wanted to crawl in a cave took a quick side trip to the Goat Cave with Mark and Dani and then easily caught up with the group at Moonshiners. The half mile walk up to the cave was handled easily and was followed by a short trek to the Cow Cliffs, a set of double decker cliffs with an undercut of almost a 100 feet indent between the levels. All the girls were able to make the journey up and enjoyed the view with the leafless trees. This seemed to be the limit of what the scouts wanted for the day and provided a good trip

on a beautiful spring day. For some, this was their first time in a cave and initial fears turned into an amazing adventure that will be long remembered.

Mark, Dani, Nina and I then did a little exploring. We started by going to the entrance of Tombstone which hasn't been used in over a decade. The cave has sand and a few rocks blocking the small passage after the initial entrance room. Mark didn't hesitate to stick his head in the opening and pulled away some of sand and debris. With a little work, it seemed almost passable but we didn't have the map with us and weren't geared up with knee pads and caving bags so we left it for another day.

We then went in to check with my wife and she said I could keep playing for a while if I wanted to. I did. So, we went up to the Crease Cave which is a small room with a lot of neat flowstone features but requires a short trek up a 60° hill. There are two species of cave crickets, the brown ones (*Hadenococcus subterraneus*) and the black (*Ceuthophilus stygius*), and both were present. After this exploration, we continued up to the top of the hill and then came down and bushwacked through to the large (40- 50 foot high) sandstone blocks near the top ridge which Dani was considering possibly climbing someday. We then went to three places where there is a possibility of holes opening down into caves. These were left for another day with some digging required.

All in all, it was a good time for everyone, building relationships, and enjoying the fellowship of fellow cavers.



## Red River Gorge – Frog’s Head Rappel and Backpacking

~Jennie Hawkey

After meeting up at Shawn’s house and stopping en route to buy a bottle of bourbon, Aaron, Shawn, and I drove down to Miguel’s in the Red River Gorge to meet up with Jason, Zach, and Brandon. We spent some time hanging out on the lawn at Miguel’s to inspect the rope we planned to use for the rappel, and several interested bystanders came to chat with us. We happily told them about caving and the grotto as we sorted out the rope and packed it back away. Afterward, we had pizza and hung out before heading off to bed. A little after 7 the next morning, we all met up for breakfast and got ready to head out to Frog’s Head. It was about a 45 minute hike up a mountain to get to the rappel site, and we got to go up the Indian Staircase along the way, which is a sandstone slope which the Native Americans carved handholds and footholds into. Thankfully, Zach volunteered to carry the rope for the group. We worked together to get the rigging set up and Jason measured the drop to see if this rappel would work as a qualifier for Bridge Day in West Virginia, with Shawn staying at the bottom and relaying to us by cell phone how big the drop was. Unfortunately, it is not a qualifying rappel, but still stands at an impressive 185 feet. Jason rappelled first and we each took turns rappelling. Jason ascended back up when it was my turn and coached me through getting over the edge, as this was a bigger drop than I’ve done before. I stayed at the bottom as the rest of the group ascended back up and rappelled a second time. Zach came down last doing a double rappel for rope retrieval. It was a record high for several of us; I would definitely like to come back to do this rappel again and try ascending. It is a gorgeous drop and a great area to hang out in.

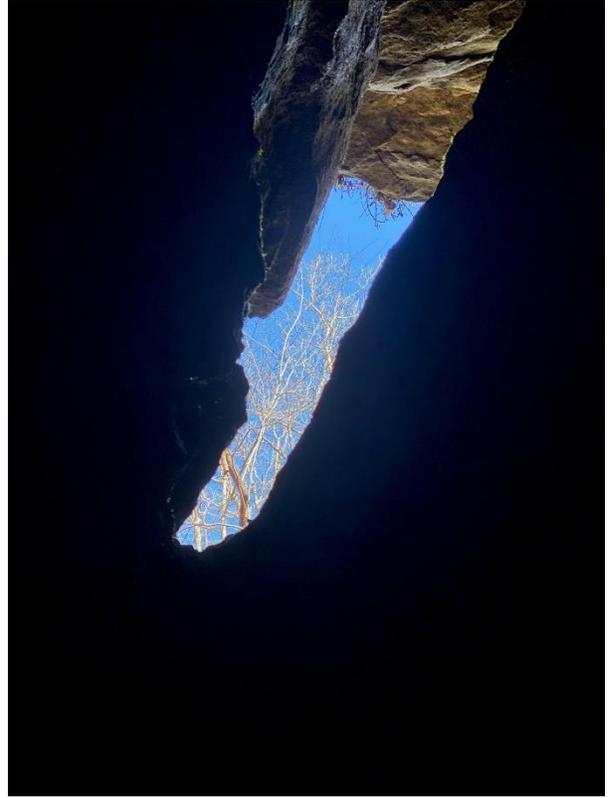
After we hiked back out, Aaron, Shawn and I drove out to the Pinch-em Tight Trailhead (part of the Sheltoewe Trace Trail) to backpack for a night. We started out around 5 pm and dropped our gear about 3 miles in, at

the second to last campsite before Hanson’s Point. We hiked the rest of the way to Hanson’s Point and hung out on the rock vista for a while. We hiked back to our camp, sampled some bourbon, made a fire, and set up camp. The weather was perfect for us the whole day and we enjoyed chatting around the fire. The weather turned for us in the early morning when it started to rain. Luckily, the rain held off on us as we woke up, made coffee, and broke our campsites down. As soon as we were wrapping up camp breakdown, the rain really started back up and it rained heavily for the 3 mile hike back out. Even though we were all prepared with rain gear, we were happy to get back to the car and to a hot meal.

**All photos courtesy of Jennie Hawkey**



THE CENTRAL OHIO GROTTO (COG)

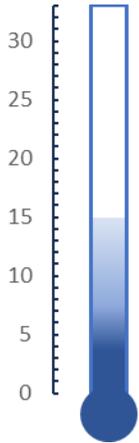


Looking out from a cave. Pic by Mark Swelstad



Janeen found a rock. Pic by Mark Swelstad

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