



Central Ohio Grotto Squeaks

March 2025



Cover photo by Ryan Braga – Nick Wayne rappelling into an unnamed 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:

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chair@centralohiogrotto.com

Vice Chair:

Wendy Orlandi
vice-chair@centralohiogrotto.com

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Aaron Deal
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Secretary:

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Aaron.Deal@gmail.com

Member-At-Large:

Ryan Braga
ryanbraga1007@gmail.com

Member-At-Large:

Tera Williamson
trwilliamson84@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.

March 22-23	GSP Spring Warmup	See Ryan Braga for details: ryanbraga1007@gmail.com
March 27	COG Regular Meeting	Worthington Presbyterian Church
April 4-6	Sullivan Cave & More Indiana	See Wendy Orlandi for details.
April 23	COG Regular Meeting	Worthington Presbyterian Church
May 3-4	GSP Work Weekend	GSP
May 17-18	Open House	GSP
June 6-8	Karst-o-Rama	GSP

Contact Info for Questions regarding trips or meetings: exec@centralohiogrotto.com

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Join us for our next monthly meeting in the [Worthington Presbyterian Church](#) Youth Room on WEDNESDAY, March 26 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.



Our March speaker will be COG's own Jason Glancy! Back by popular demand, Jason will conduct a hands on workshop on webbing. Webbing is a vital part of a caver's pack, but what do we do with it? Jason will cover the essential knots used with webbing and how to effectively use it in-cave for emergency situations. You can find Jason "hanging" around a pit, a cliff or a bridge. He's on the safety team for the Bridge Day Rappel in Fayette County, WV and is involved as a project caver for Germany Valley Karst Survey, also located in WV. Jason is

also the proud father of vertical cavers, Zach and Bethany Glancy, who are following in their father's foot loops.

30 ft sections of John Howard Company webbing will be available for \$15 - Please bring cash.



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.

	Mail 	Zelle COMING SOON!	Venmo COMING SOON!	PayPal 
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 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:**Grotto History:**

50 years ago, in the March 1975 Squeaks, there was an article by Lou Simpson about connecting Humongous Pit and Firestone Cave, which brought the total footage of the Cave Creek system up to over 71,000 feet of connected passage. The system total was 16.6 miles (88,000 feet). Cave Creek is in the general vicinity of Sloans Valley Cave and is one I'd love to get into some time but it's probably closed.

Other articles included a report of some flooding-related deaths in an Indiana cave, a comparison of headlamps (the expensive ones were \$8.50!), and a trip report and accompanying map of an Ohio show cave up in Wyandot County.

Open House

Have you been to Great Saltpetre Cave Preserve (GSP)? If not, imagine a 300+ acre preserve of fields, woods, and caves. And also, a creek! Great for camping, hiking, playing in the water, and of course, caving. The main cave (Great Saltpetre Cave) is gated. It was used during the War of 1812 in the production of gunpowder. The cave has been a commercial cave for tours and music shows, and even a set for a movie. Every year during the 3rd week of May (the weekend after Mothers' Day), there is GSP Open House. GSP is open for guests to go on a cave tour, enjoy food, and purchase merchandise to support GSP. This year GSP Open House is May 17-18 and we are having a grotto blender! It's a great weekend to participate in Open House and co-mingle with the grottos who love GSP.

If you are interested in participating at the GSP Open House, please fill in the GSP Open House volunteer form at <https://tinyurl.com/GSPcave>

Thank you very much!
Kelly McNamara and Kevin Lorms
GSP Open House Coordinators

(Editor Note – I asked a few people to tell me in just a short 'blurb' what volunteering at Open House means to them. I've gotten a couple of responses so far and more to come!)

Joe Chaput on Open House:

"The event fosters great relationships with the local community (including landowners). It also helps to build a sense of community and teamwork within the caving community for the direct benefit and upkeep of the preserve. It's a small way to give back once a year. I would highly encourage anyone who regularly visits GSP to volunteer for this event."

Jon Swelstad on Open House:

"My favorite thing to do at GSP is invite and introduce new people to the experience. Open House is exactly that and it's an amazing experience to be able to volunteer with so many amazing people.

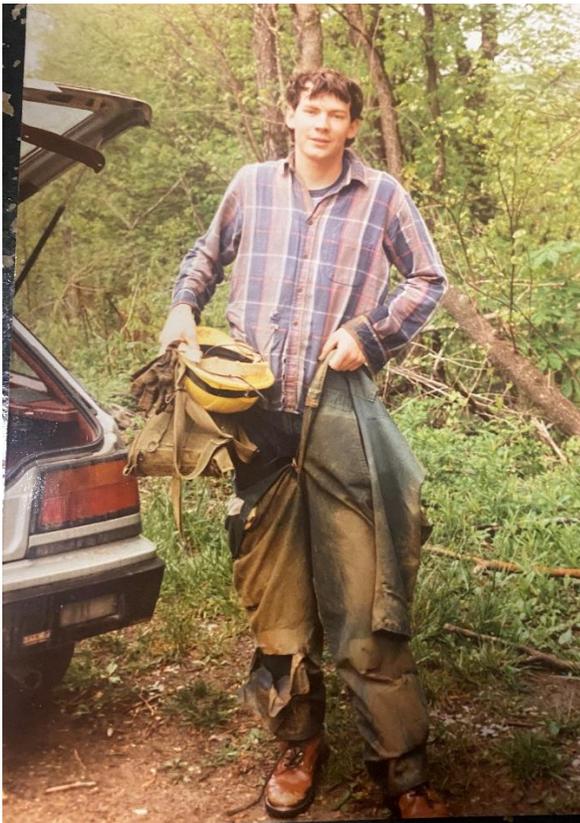
And Mark Swelstad gives all the volunteers free beer." (Only the ones who say nice things about me! - Editor)

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!



Mystery Caver?



Who is this guy?!?

Nate Iden – Shoveleater

Here is a photo of me expanding a passage last weekend. Jason Glancy, Paul Hetzer of WV, and I made a few feet of progress on a dig in Shoveleater cave in Germany Valley.



Photo Courtesy Jason Glancy

Moonshiners Chimney Project Trip

Nick Wayne

On Saturday, February 1st Ryan Braga, Joe Truskowski, and myself went up into the hills surrounding Wolf Creek to survey a new pit and potentially survey some inside Moonshiners Chimney upper portion. We got to the first objective of the day and started rigging off the tree that is right above the opening to the pit. I was given first dibs to descend, which was extremely exciting to drop into a cave for the first time, but also that no one had ever been in that pit before. It started with a 15 ft descent through a tight opening that had my descender pressed against a rock most of the way down and all the melt and rain making things muddy and dripping water on me. Once at the bottom I looked around and I determined that it was just a small sandstone room. There is a lead that will need a rock removed to allow passage on rope down another 10 ft into a slanted room I shot at around 15 ft long and a few feet wide. I need to return to finish the

survey of the pit (I just took a cross section of the entrance) but it's low on the priority list. Overall I was extremely excited to finally get to use my gear in cave after doing over 10 vertical practices, although this unnamed cave was very disappointing I am proud it was my first.



For the second cave of the day we made our way a few hundred feet away to Moonshiners Chimney. This is a project cave we as a grotto are working on exploring and surveying. It starts with rigging a handline down a 10 ft mud slope, this was particularly difficult this trip because of how slippery the slope was. Once in the cave we decided it was too dangerous to maneuver to the part of the cave we wanted to survey because of the exposure required to go to that side of the cave with how slippery the upper level was. We decided to continue onto the project side of the cave which is a complex mutli drop system. We initially rig the rope around a rock which then requires descending down a slope that turns into a 20 ft pit until about 5 ft down there is a little slit in the wall that, on rope,

you go feet first into. This room is extremely muddy and very cramped. We all three met up in this room before I pulled the rest of the rope through the room over the lip into a 30 ft drop. This drop is tough because the gap narrows to around 12 - 15 inches. Once at the bottom you have to rig into a set of rebelays because the floor is very holey and exists over a few small pits. You then rig into a 10 ft drop to the frontier of the cave exploration currently. We believe it is a false floor so you need to stay attached to rope but to describe the scenery there are three pits surrounding the floor, the one behind was shot at around 65 ft and the ceiling is probably 30 ft. There is another hole in front that we shot at 65 ft as well, and then there is the main attraction, what is being called Echo Canyon. This was again shot at 65 ft so we believe all of them are connected. Because of all the runoff above, there was a lot of active water flow on the far side of the canyon and it was pretty loud. We sat for a few minutes admiring how impressive the scale of the room is. We then proceeded to work on ascending back out of the cave. I struggled for a while on the tight 30ft ascent until I found a good foot on the wall to ascend past the restriction. One thing that practice did not prepare me for was how unbelievably muddy all the gear gets and how that complicates the process of ascending and descending as the gear is not working optimally. It took a while to get out of the cave with some of the hardest actually being the hand line at the beginning of the cave, always bring a handline in your pack folks! This cave has so much potential and I really hope there is going cave at the bottom of Echo Canyon. We then continued on to meet Mark (very late I may add) at Signature cave to work on some survey which was covered in last month's squeaks. I also want to thank Joe for his continued support of the grotto and allowing us access to his caves!

Photo credits to Ryan Braga



Central Ohio Grotto Survey Project: Tunis Cave

Ryan Braga NSS 72371

Back in January of 2024, I wanted our grotto to hone in on survey and grow our skills. While taking something on in our home away from home, Rockcastle County would be nice, the 4.5 hour drive down made it harder for members to commit to. That's why Tunis cave was chosen. Being 1 hour east of Columbus, Tunis would serve as a great learning opportunity for anyone and everyone to get involved in surveying in our backyard. While originally going into this cave thinking it would be 1 survey trip and done, I greatly underestimated that. 5 visits later and we finally have a finished map! There were many obstacles we had to overcome to get this project to completion from the cave being 75% flooded to forgetting to bring whiteout. Each visit ensuring we would have to come back for that last survey shot that kept ongoing. While I am sad that our survey project is getting closed out as I would like to

continue teaching survey locally forever, I am also excited at the fact that this year long project that I thought would take a month can finally be put to rest! This cave saw 17 different members learning survey and led to myself growing skills in cartography (I still have a LONG way to go!) and also realizing that managing multiple teams isn't as easy as I thought. While this was a small project measuring only 248 feet, the windy passage and complicated breakdown led to 27 stations set and 14 pages of survey data! While I don't have any larger caves on the agenda for local survey, (Would love for this to change!) I do have a project down in Rockcastle County, KY that is shaping up to be a great survey cave for the grotto and anyone looking to get involved with us. I hope to announce this and get it rolling once Summer hits. Thanks to each and everyone involved in the grotto survey and I hope to see each of you surveying soon!

Interested in survey or cartography? Reach out to me on Facebook or email: ryanbraga1007@gmail.com

(Editor: The Tunis Cave map is on the next page)

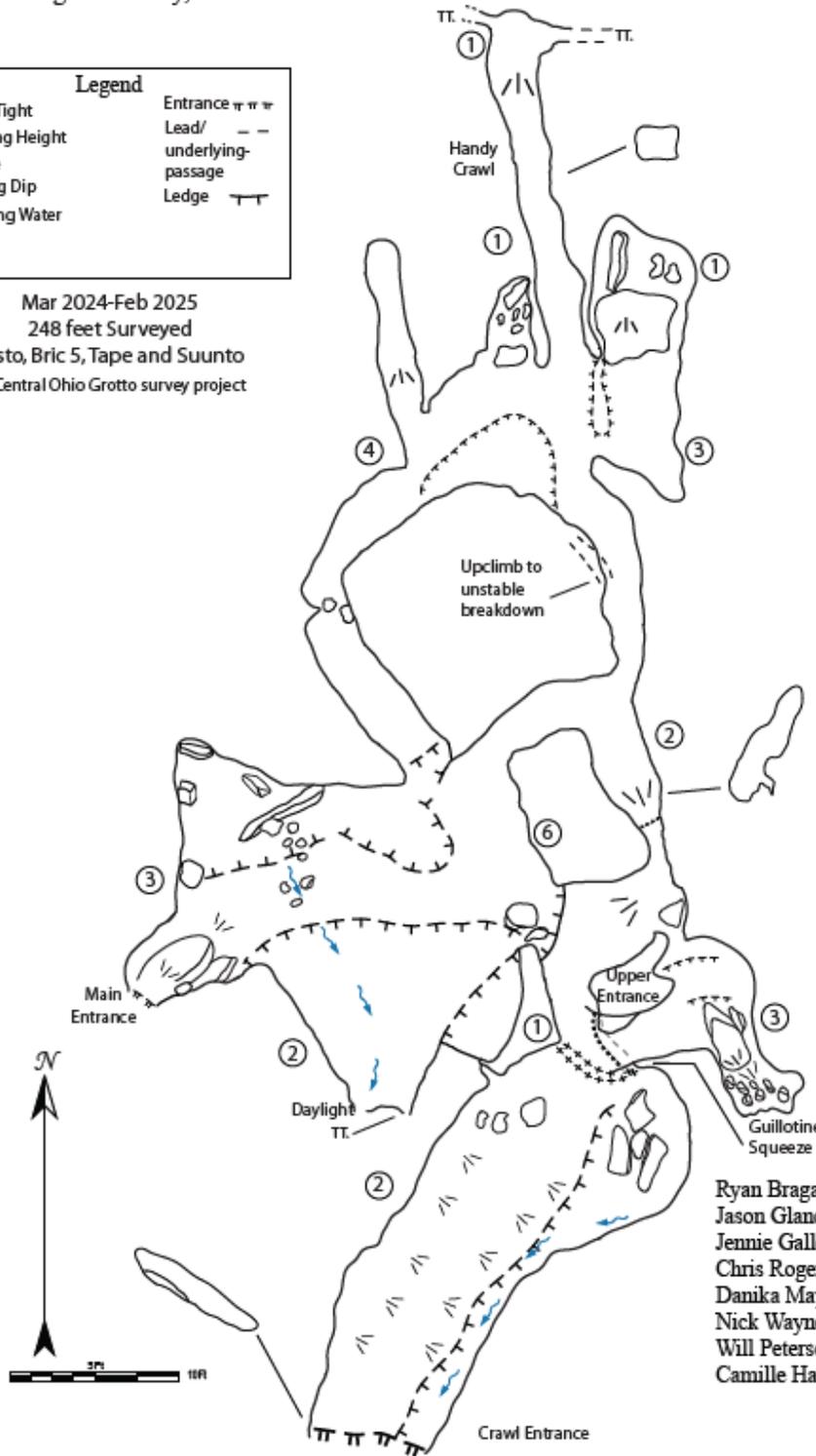


Ryan Braga emerging from 1 of 4 entrances to Tunis Cave. Mark Swelstad took this photo.

Tunis Cave (Dillon Cave)
Muskingum County, Ohio

Legend	
TT. Too Tight	Entrance
① Ceiling Height	Lead/underlying-passage
Slope	Ledge
Ceiling Dip	
Flowing Water	

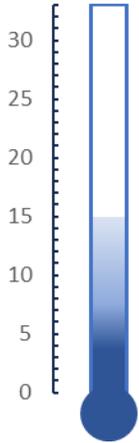
Mar 2024-Feb 2025
248 feet Surveyed
Disto, Bric 5, Tape and Suunto
Central Ohio Grotto survey project



- Survey Team:**
- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------|
| Ryan Braga | Tory Roland |
| Jason Glancy | Zach Glancy |
| Jennie Galletta Hawkey | Sanae Rogers |
| Chris Rogers | Andy Schofield |
| Danika Mayback | Mark Swelstad |
| Nick Wayne | Tera Williamson |
| Will Peterson | Joseph Hayes |
| Camille Hall Anderson | Wendy Orlandi |

Cartography:
Ryan Braga

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