



Central Ohio Grotto Squeaks

October 2025



Cover photo by Nick Wayne – Wind Cave, Jackson County Kentucky

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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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.

October 22	COG Regular Meeting	Worthington Presbyterian Church
Oct. 31-Nov. 2	GSP Halloween Party	GSP
Nov. 13-16	Sloansgiving	Wayne County, KY – currently full. See Joe Chaput for details
December TBD	COG Christmas Party	Details TBD

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, October 22nd 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, October 22nd · 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>

Currently, Wendy is firming up details for our October guest speaker. There is a program scheduled and it will be very exciting!

Note: The October meeting will be the final regular meeting at the church for the calendar year 2025. The November meeting will be held in person at Sloansgiving weekend (see above). A virtual option will be available for those unable to attend in person. There is no December meeting. We will meet for our Christmas party instead. Dates TBD.

Odds and Ends:

Grotto History

The October 1975 issue of the Squeaks had a another report about the exploration and survey of Newell's Spring Cave in Pulaski County, KY. A line plot was included. There was also a report about a survey trip to Zarathustra Cave in Fentress County, TN.

Elections

Grotto elections are coming up. If you are interested in running for office, let someone in the exec committee know!

Caver of the Year 2025

Please join in me in congratulating Kelly McNamara for winning this year's Caver of the Year award!



Photo Credit Unknown

Kelly McNamara's dedication to the Great Saltpetre Cave Preserve (GSP) has made a lasting, positive impact over the past several years. Her exceptional leadership, organizational skills, and commitment to volunteerism have consistently supported and elevated both routine operations and special events.

- Served as Open House Co-Chair for three consecutive years, leading volunteer activities with enthusiasm and precision.
- Created and maintained the Volunteer contact log, ensuring volunteers were informed on all Open House developments, and collaborated with department leads to fulfill staffing requirements.
- Achieved a substantial increase in volunteer turnout, boosting numbers from 50 to over 85 in the final week before the event, profoundly benefiting Open House operations – even when a tornado disrupted plans.
- Provided valuable support to both the 2024 and 2025 KOR events, overseeing Entertainment Committee logistics (bands, contest, MC, auctions), and offered hands-on help wherever needed.
- Actively contributed to the Hot Tub and Sauna fundraising team, helping transform 'the Point' into a major asset for GSP.
- Supported the GSP Scout Program over multiple years, assisting on numerous trips and helping inspire the next generation of cavers.
- Recognized as a knowledgeable, friendly and reliable member of the caving community.

Kelly exemplifies the qualities of a supportive, resourceful, and passionate caver. Her ongoing contributions have enriched the Central Ohio Grotto and GSP, making her an outstanding choice for Caver of the Year 2025.

Central Ohio Grotto Trip Report:
Bear Heaven Intro to Vertical Caving in
Elkins, West Virginia

Trip report by Terri & Shawn Madore

Vertical training & bonus rappelling
September 26–28, 2025

Trip Leaders: Jason Glancy, Andy Schofield,
and Wendy Orlandi

Objective

Our late September weekend was all about learning or practicing vertical caving skills. It turned out to be a rainy weekend, so we moved our basecamp from Bear Heaven campground to the posh cabins at SHACC. Kees Cave was our primary training ground, and we added a bonus rappel experience at the iconic Seneca Rocks.

Friday, September 26: Rigging Kees Cave & Day 1 Practice

The trip kicked off with a smaller group on Friday. Jason, Brian, Tera, and Mike arrived at Kees Cave early to rig a vertical obstacle course for our practice. The setup included several pitches and rebelay, two traverses, and a deviation to avoid a make-believe “pit of snakes” (or any other hazard on the pitch that would inspire you to rig it that way). Fantastic rigging work by Jason, Brian, and Tera made Kees Cave into a caver’s playground that reflected various scenarios one could encounter in a vertical cave. Jason’s master plan was to design the system so cavers of all levels could practice a range of vertical techniques in a learning environment and within eyesight of each other, so guidance could be relayed easily. The team capped Day 1 with dinner at Yokum’s Grill. After dinner, Terri, Shawn, Wendy, and Bob joined the group at SHACC camp. Andy helped the team create new cows tails and led a session of knot practice.

Saturday, September 27: Day 2 of Vertical Training in Kees Cave & Derigging

Saturday brought steady rain, but it did not slow us down at all underground in Kees Cave. Jason had the brilliant idea to bring ponchos for all so that we could stay dry while hiking to the cave entrance in the morning. Once we reached the cave entrance, there is an initial crawl to get into the cave system. Once the ceiling opens up and you can stand, there is some scrambling around the muddy passageways until you reach the first pitch. Once there, the team did a buddy check and then rotated through the obstacle course, honing their frog system techniques, passing traverses, and practicing changeovers. Jason, Andy, and Brian provided instruction and tips, making it a fantastic learning environment for our varying levels of experience. In between ropework, we took time to appreciate the cave’s geology. Wendy and Jason pointed out an array of fossils embedded in the limestone. As the day wrapped up, we derigged the entire course as a team while reviewing gear management and rope coiling technique. That night, we feasted on a dinner cooked by Wendy and Bob, and dessert from Mike.

Sunday, September 28: Day 3 of Rappelling at Seneca Rocks

The rain clouds moved out and we enjoyed brilliant blue sky for Sunday’s bonus adventure: rappelling Seneca Rocks. Jason, Andy, Brian, Shawn, and Terri geared up for the big drop, while hero Tera joined the hike up so that she could take photos of the rappelling team from her position midway up the cliff and overlooking the drop site. She was perfectly situated to capture everyone’s descent framed by the cavern. Jason took this opportunity to measure the distance of the rappel, hanging a measuring tape from the top of the drop. We recorded it as 143 feet. Andy hiked up the mountain a bit further to scout a potentially higher location for our rappel next time. Afterwards, Andy not only rappelled the

Seneca Rocks drop, but he also bravely ascended the rope too. It was a race to see if Brian could hike back up as fast as Andy could ascend the rope, and they derigged the system together. Who won? Only Andy and Brian know and they are not telling.

Thanks

Special thanks to Jason, Andy, and Wendy for organizing and leading the trip. Thank you, Jason, for generously arranging permission for us to stay at SHACC (the hot showers were especially luxurious). Thank you, Andy and Jason, for sharing your deep knowledge, upskilling us on everything from knots to equipment to technique to maneuvering with a safety mindset. Thank you, Tera, for creating incredible photos of our rappelling adventures. Thank you, Wendy, for cooking up a feast of delicious Santa Fe chili for dinner, plus pancakes and bacon for breakfast. Wow, we were spoiled.

Caving Team

- Andy Schofield
- Bob Rich
- Brian Staib
- Jason Glancy
- Mike Maddock
- Shawn Madore
- Tera Williamson
- Terri Madore
- Wendy Orlandi



Photo credit: Shawn Madore



Photo credit: Terri Madore

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Photo credit: Terri Madore



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Photo credit: Terri Madore

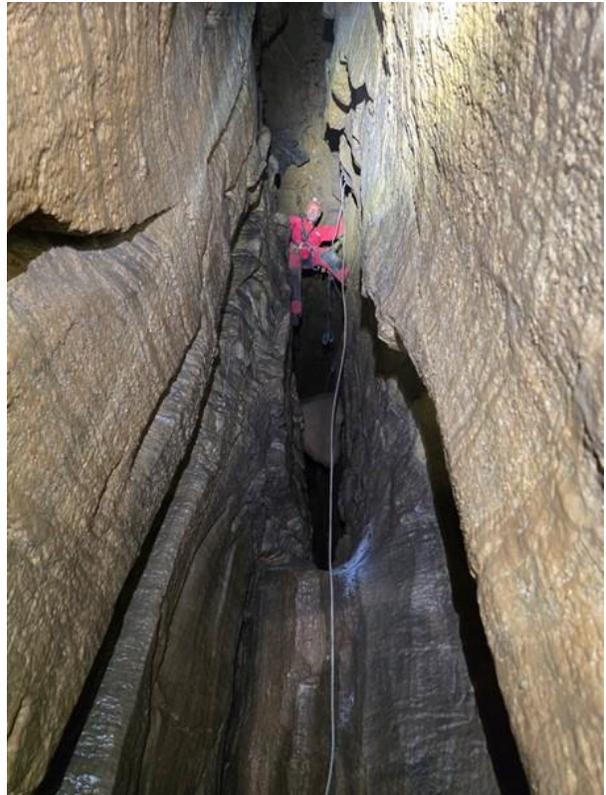


Photo credit: Shawn Madore

THE CENTRAL OHIO GROTTO (COG)



Photo credit: Andy Schofield



Photo credit: Shawn Madore



Photo credit: Tera Wiliamson



Photo credit: Tera Wiliamson



Photo credit: Shawn Madore

Wind Cave – Jackson County, KY – by Nick Wayne

When: 09/20/2025

Who: Nick Wayne, Tory Roland, Justin Turpin, Jack Stewart

I began my caving career in Wind Cave in 2023 when Mark Swelstad led a trip to the cave at KOR, it was my first experience with wild caving and I have been hooked since (thanks Mark!).

There is a decent hike through the woods that during the summer is lined with black Berries and during the end of summer has a lot of pawpaw trees (no fruits when we went through). The opening is massive and is a creek cave so expect to get wet! GCG mapped the cave in the 2010s and it has one of the most accurate maps I have ever seen. The highlight of the trip is a highly scalloped passage that even in the low water conditions we have had still had good flowing water. Overall this is a really fun cave with 3 different entrances along the hillside, only reason I don't think there are more trips is because it is around an hour away from GSP. If anyone is interested in going to this cave let me know as it is one of my favorites :)



Photo Credit: Nick Wayne



Photo Credit: Nick Wayne



Photo Credit: Nick Wayne



Photo Credit: Nick Wayne

Whiteside Mountain 2025 – by Rod Yost

On August 28, Jason Glancy led a trip to Whiteside Mountain to rappel the famous 700' sheer cliff. Rod Yost, also a COG member tagged along, traveling in Jason's adventure van. We left Columbus about 11 o'clock in the morning and drove until about 10 o'clock that evening when we parked in a roadside rest area for the night. The next morning we drove on into Highlands, North Carolina where Whiteside is located, then found our camping location at the Blue Valley dispersed camping area. After setting up camp and having a bit of lunch, we drove over to the

Whiteside parking lot, and hiked up the mountain to the rappel spot, marking the location so we can find it in the dark the next morning. Jason and I then met Jason's son Zach and we went out for a pizza in Highlands returning later to our dispersed camping spot on Blue Valley Road.

Jason had coordinated with approximately 10 other people to meet us at 5 o'clock the following morning in the parking lot. There were two ropes and two teams on this trip. Jason brought his rope on which four people rappelled, and Asa, from Glenford, Ohio brought his rope for another six people to use. Each rope was divided between two duffel bags separated by a short section so they could be carried by two people. Many of these people were longtime acquaintances of Jason, some were friends of friends. Kelly and John Boisbart and 2 of their children had traveled from near Erie, Pennsylvania for this trip. The trip had an excellent start in that everyone showed up at the parking lot by 5 o'clock in the morning and in short order, two teams were hauling ropes up the mountain.



*Jason Glancy rigging a rope pad to fence along the tourist trail.
Photo credit Matt O'Brien*

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Jason's morning rappel to the bolted ledge photo credit Matt O'Brien



Zach Glancy listening to my instructions to Rex about deploying two rope bags. Photo credit Matt O'Brien



Jason Glancy enjoying his ride down main 700'+ drop still looks the same over the past 30 years. Photo credit Matt O'Brien



Zach and Jason Glancy climbing whitesides mountain 2025, photo credit Matt O'Brien

It was a beautiful day, and at sunrise Jason was rappelling over the top on an approach rope to the bolts where the main rope will be attached. After lunch, Jason's rope turned into an ascending rope only. Seven of the eleven people on the trip ascended back to the top, some multiple times. We stayed at the drop location till around four or five at which time we left for supper at Highlands Brewery.

Jason and I spent the night at our camp and returned to Columbus the next day. The weather had been perfect, the logistics were well thought out and executed, and all of us worked well with each other, well done Jason!