

# The Carbide Courier

The Dayton Underground Grotto  
*of the National Speleological Society*



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**GROTTO MEETINGS**

Grotto meetings are held the 2nd Sunday of each month. Meeting locations may vary, so check the DUG web and Facebook pages for details.

[www.dugcaves.com](http://www.dugcaves.com)

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/DUG.NSS>

### Find Us On the Web:

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- <https://www.facebook.com/groups/DUG.NSS>
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3 Annual membership is \$15 per individual, \$20 per family, or \$7.50 for full-time students. Memberships renewable on January 1st. Dues can be mailed to the membership committee chairman:

7  
John Cassidy  
414 Michigan Ave.  
Troy, OH 45373

**Cover Photo:** Logo for the 2017 NSS Convention to be held in Rio Rancho, New Mexico.

Please make check payable to:  
Dayton Underground Grotto

You can also pay with PayPal.



<http://www.dugcaves.com/membership-and-renewals.html>

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*The Carbide Courier* is on-line and available for download from the Dayton Underground Grotto website. The newsletter is published monthly. Submissions must be sent to the editor by Friday preceding the last week of the month. Send submissions to [mkhood@woh.rr.com](mailto:mkhood@woh.rr.com).

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## Calendar of Events

- June 11 Grotto regular membership meeting, 7pm, at Walter E. Stebbins High School.
- June 19-23 NSS Convention, Rio Rancho, New Mexico (<http://nss2017.caves.org/>).
- July 9 Grotto regular membership meeting, 7pm, at Walter E. Stebbins High School.
- July 21-23 Karst-O-Rama at the Great Saltpetre Preserve (<http://karstorama.com/>)
- August 4-6 Indiana Cave Capers, Harrison County Fairgrounds, Corydon, IN  
(<http://www.cigcaves.com/indiana-cave-capers/all-about-cave-capers/>)
- August 13 Grotto regular membership meeting, 7pm, at Walter E. Stebbins High School.



### Get Your Very Own Grotto Patch!

Designed by our very own Tom Cottrell, you too can own one of these handsome patches. They are \$5 each. Contact Tom to purchase one ([cottrell.thomas@att.net](mailto:cottrell.thomas@att.net)).

We are officially the 184th different NSS affiliated grotto to have produced a patch

**Winner of the 2016 NSS Convention Symbolic Emblem "Caver's Choice" Award**

### GROTTO IS IN NEED OF A VICE CHAIRMAN!

THE GROTTOS ARE IN NEED OF A VICE CHAIRMAN. PLEASE CONTACT CHAIRMAN TAMA IF YOU'RE INTERESTED IN THIS POSITION.

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## Grotto Committees in Need of Chairs

The following committee chairman openings are being advertised in accordance with Grotto Act 06-02.

- Conservation Committee
- Landowner Relations Committee
- Safety and Rescue Committee
- Youth Groups Committee



Members interested in chairing any of these committees should contact the grotto chairman.

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## Has Any of your Information Changed??

- Address?
- Telephone?
- E-Mail?
- Joined the NSS?
- Other?

If so, please make sure you update your information on the DUG web page. Go to the “Members-Only” section and click on the “Update Your Information” button. Don’t have the Members-Only password? No problem, just go to [www.dugcaves.com](http://www.dugcaves.com) and click on the “Request the Members-Only Password” button.

### From the Editor:

You’ll notice this month’s newsletter is a bit thinner than most. I need material to publish, and while I do have more old articles to reprint in recognition of our 25th year (and it has been fun reading these reports again after several years), it would be good to get some current stories. So, if you’ve been caving, please write up a trip report to send. For those of you going to the NSS Convention, send me a report on how it went.

Thanks for your help in keeping the newsletter going!

Mike Hood  
Editor

## Ergor's Stygian Music

By Ergor Rubreck

Cave sounds have always fascinated me, but I had no idea how varied and astounding such sounds could be. I had heard the drip of water from high vertical shafts. They plunk, plunk into pools at the bottom with an echo worthy of a large tile bathroom. Two or more can resemble voices heard indistinctly from afar in a cave.

But my first real introduction to underground music was in Steamboat Cave located in the limestone cliff on the east bank of the river just north of Natchez, Mississippi. I squeezed my way through a breakdown and discovered a two-mile extension of the cave. It paralleled the river. I heard an ear-splitting steamboat whistle, intensely loud and long in duration. A distress signal? Probably not -- distress is ten frantic blasts. After five minutes the deafening blast subsided, leaving my ears ringing. Upon investigation around a bend in the passage I spied two openings, one large, one small. I felt the breeze pick up

accelerating to a wind and the whistle blast assailed my ears again.

The next day I returned with my iPod loaded with an Accusti-Tek app. The whistle was the exact same note -- a low G sharp -- of the famous Robert E. Lee steamboat that blew up and sank in the Mississippi in 1897 with a loss of 11 crew members. Those two holes leading to daylight formed a natural whistle that when exposed to a wind of 8 mph created the G sharp blast.

I decided to investigate cave sounds further. I bought a lithium battery powered miniature amplifier and speaker. I visited Great Onyx Cave in Kentucky. Dozens of cave crickets crawled upside down on the ceiling of the entrance building. Imagine my surprise when I cranked up the amplifier to 40 db and heard...tap dancing! The crickets were doing an intricate time step in a call and response pattern, first the left batch, then the answering right batch. They stopped abruptly and

began an unmistakable clogging beat in 4/4 time. I have heard of synchronous fireflies, but these were the Rockettes of the underground world. I considered taking them with me and win Dancing with the Stars hands down -- or feet down. However, Great Onyx Cave is in Mammoth Cave National Park. If I removed the crickets I could face 30 years in Sing Sing.

Luray Caverns has a Stalactite Electric Organ. The management has rigged solenoids to strike various notes that naturally emanate from various size stalactites. It's entertaining to the tourists. A keyboard "plays" the notes when a skilled organist is seated at the console. Granted the pedal action is nil, but it is such an unusual instrument that it has been cited by Ripley's Believe it or Not. As the most famous and qualified caver in the world, I negotiated to spend the night in Luray Caverns to learn if electrical leakage from condensers might generate random notes. They might be so faint as to be

inaudible, but my amplifier would enable a truly scientific investigation. I set up my equipment in the silent cavern and prepared to spend the night, fully expecting to be disappointed. But hey, lack of music can be proved scientifically, no?

Around midnight I heard the amplifier buzz and a few faint notes, now amplified, issued from the speaker. Nobody was at the keyboard. The console was empty! The pregnant silence was punctuated by several bars of a song I recognized as "Lady of Spain." How could that be?

I climbed the scientific stepladder I had requested for the scientific test and peered at the lowest hanging stalactite. Its solenoid was in the retracted position. Suddenly, at the exact instant a note was required I saw a tiny orange appendage with black spots lash out and strike the stalactite yielding the required note. It retracted until that specific note was called for when it

again lashed out, hitting the note expertly.

To get to the bottom of this incredible performance, I moved the stepladder to several other stalactites that were wired through solenoids to the cave organ. Peeking with beady black eyes around each stalactite was a cave salamander. They ran through "Lady of Spain" several times, each salamander whacking his or her stalactite in perfect time. Since everybody knows salamanders cannot read music, I concluded that the phenomenon was due to Pavlov's Principle -- a purely animalistic response to a stimulus. The salamanders had spent their lives in the cave and simply reacted when they heard the stimulus -- the previous note. About the only sounds the salamanders had heard was the daily playing of the stalactite organ by one of the guide staff. There was nothing of the virtuoso about it, just a perfectly natural accidental "learning" by stupid animals.

My last musical adventure took place just before I set the "Most Diagonal Cave" record in Huatla, a Mexican cave. In a five day expedition I found my way up inside the mountain to a Toltec garbage dump and from there traversed diagonally down inside the mountain to Sump No. 13, apparently the terminal sump. Near the terminal sump is a tall room with twelve pools of varying sizes. As I neared it on a 532.4 m rappel, I distinctly heard what I thought were voices. Closer I heard the opening notes of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. When I popped into the pool room I saw that the twelve pools formed an octave and a half of musical drip notes. I heard nothing recognizable after that lucky sequence of drips into just the right pools. Coincidences can convince the uninformed of the validity of the supernatural. Unless, of course, you are a highly qualified cave scientist like me.



## Cave Capers '94

By Craig Ham, Sheila Gallogly, and Linda Johnson

Craig Ham, Sheila G., Linda Johnson, Mike Hood, Dave and Sandy Rice, Stephanie, Jason Stollard, Scott Sweet and family, Kim Good, Kenny Hedges, Jason (Mid Hoosier), Steve and Stacey (MHG), John Wisner, Mike Werth, Doug, Bill (where did he come from), the guy who camped near us and left real early.

Sheila, Linda, and Craig hit the road at 7:45 with a voluminous truckload of caving and camping gear. Thank goodness Sheila's request "don't [pack like Scott Sweet]" was headed or we would have had to hook up the trailer. As the sun began to set we headed south to route 50 and the unseen trails that lie ahead...

Indiana is actually an Indian word meaning "land of many foul smells." We passed through "Hamsterville" which smelled of cedar chips, Troutville which must have experienced a major fish kill recently, Pig City, Skunkville, and finally a town with a major natural gas leak which was just up the road from Sparksville. But don't think that effected our appetites, first Mickey D's then Baskin-Robbins in Seymour. Dinner was fairly

uneventful but the aftermath of the ice cream left quite an impression on the townsfolk. Sheila and Craig ordered harmless ice cream cones while Linda (her dark side awakes) gobbled down a dish of Chocolate Chip ice cream with hot fudge topping and nuts. We're not sure if it was the chocolate, the nuts, the dish or some other unknown ingredient, but Linda's quite demeanor suddenly changed. She began to talk rapidly and giggle, then began whistling and gesturing at pedestrians and other motorists, no one with in earshot was spared. Her evil, judgmental twin suddenly appeared leaving a mere shell of a man in her wake (after all it wasn't his fault if he had buck teeth.) The entertainment ceased as Linda regained control over the evil one and the sound from the back sat tapered off to its normal dull roar.

The short cut from 50 to Rivervale took longer than expected, partly due to our reappearance on 50 about 15 minutes after leaving it. Indiana's County Maps was a critical link to navigating the back roads when we read it right. In Ft. Ritner we toured

the rail yards using two single lane tunnels which looked more like part of a bike path than a road. After missing a left turn Sheila used a convenient front yard to do a very large K turn. While we were half in the yard and half in the road with traffic honking a toothless Everett cowered on the porch while wife Matilda brandished a shotgun demanding that he "act like a man." We got underway in short order leaving the road several times before regaining control.

Rivervale Methodist Camp appeared shortly and we proceeded to register, meeting Mike Hood, Kenny Hedges and Kim Good. Mike had selected a most excellent shaded camp site near the entrance however the girls frequently discussed and lamented about the distance from the rest rooms. The guys felt this was unjustified as there was a dense grove of pines very closed which served quite well. The DUG banner was well hung and displayed with pride.

The rest of the evening consisted of setting up, sitting down, and acting up. Mike

Werth, John Wisher, and Doug R. of GCG also contributed their two cents to the discussions of the evening. Monumental problems were solved and great plans for the future were laid - too bad we can't remember them. Several of us resolved to learn surveying in the near future, perhaps some work in Rock Castle Co. awaits us. Things wound down around 3:30 Dayton time.

5:30 am came awfully early...and if you think any of us got up then... The plan was to split up into two groups: a vertical trip to Gory Hole and a horizontal trip to Doghill-Donahue. Still others headed for Sullivan's on a Capers lead trip.

Mike Hood lead the Donahue trip starting at the culvert entrance, heading towards the Board Club. Along the way were opportunities to slog through the river canyon passage and play on the mud covered natural bridges above. Some time was spent in the upper levels then the return trip, Stephanie, while climbing the canyon ledges to avoid a soggy return trip, realized that she had gotten herself into a predicament. She couldn't reach the ledge above and couldn't back up with out

being off balance so it was just a matter of time before the fingers burned out. The silent 15 foot descent was followed by a resounding thud in the mud. Silence reigned as Mike waited for the screaming to begin. "I'm OK, i'm Ok" broke the silence and the mud coated caver began to arise. One nearby caver, concerned that she may be injured, told her to stay down (emphatically). As she continued to struggle to stand the conscientious caver (ensuring that she not insure herself further) forced her to the ground and twisted her ankle in the process. (Believe what you want.)

The swollen ankle needed attention by the time the group returned to camp. Stephanie was sure that amputation would be required but Linda Nightengale-Johnson was sure that Rest, Ice, Compression, and Elevation was all that was required for now. It was a good thing that Jason Stollard was around to assist her through her moment of need, providing massage therapy. It was interesting to watch the ice pack move from one leg to the other as the evening progressed - no on sure which leg was injured by the time the evening came to a close. Stephanie was in such pain...

The other group (remember the other group?) headed for Gory Hole after signing up for the 11:00 slot. We took the scenic route then consulted the county map and a guy in his garage. We finally located the parking area for the pat, there were cars everywhere and parking on the road did not look promising. We decided to bag that and head for Donahue. Then we decided to bag that and head for Cave River Valley. Then we decided to bag that and head for Buddha with a return to Gory Hole later when the crowd was down.

After consulting the map and chickening out of the short cut in the interest of arriving at the cave before dark we went up to Bedford and around the long way. We parked in this guy's side yard along with 7 other cars and headed to the entrance making it the fourth group in the cave. Buddha has a large entrance for an Indiana cave, somewhat reminiscent of a down sized Goochland. The passage begins as a 15 ft. free climb to a short crawl then opens up to a stoop way. Much of the cave that we saw is a fast water canyon which is well decorated and contains evidence of significant flooding. The many columns are tall and cylindrical with wedding cake-like layers, like a vertical Tower of Piza.

Kenny and Indiana Jason rigged a hand line to assist with the 20 ft. climb-down through a butt sized hole. The lower level was very wet but contained lots of flowstone, lots of stalagmites, and some bacon strips. Some found the need to take an optional swim while others chose the high road in one section. One again it was confirmed that jungle boots do not make good flippers. On the far side of a bathtub we found some brain formations and a salamander. On the way out we discovered that the fog that was screwing up our pictures was actually steam from our wet bodies not our breath.

While the other groups in the cave clumsily groped up their cable ladder the DUG Vertical Team and Mid-Hoosier Grotto purposely climbed the treacherous 20 ft. to the exit level. Steve's help for several during the climb was much appreciated. The land line proved to be a key piece of gear as well.

On the way out we noticed some sparkly flowstone so we paused a moment and praised its brilliance. It was also an opportunity to continue the psychological recovery from the recent climb. The trip out was fairly uneventful until the hot wet air hit Craig's glasses

and power fogged them just before the 15 ft. climb-down to the entrance. A blind descent was successfully completed with foothold direction from Kenny.

After a conversation about the cave with a relative of the landowner we packed up and headed for Gory Hole. There were gobs of cars there but we decided to check it out anyhow. We finally found the trail after a 10 minutes search through poison ivy and all manner of itchy plants. The 20 man mob was on their way out having just derigged. As we contemplated our assault the cavers from hell arrived and began rigging offering a couple of grunts to acknowledge our presence. Conversation proved pointless and we decided that we must have been invisible. Since we were used to battling caves and not cavers we decided to make unseen gestures on their behalf and think unsaid thoughts as we returned to our cars, relinquishing the pit for a more congenial day. Our resolve to drop Gory Hole has not diminished, plans will be made.

Back at camp we told stories (imagine that) and made our dinner (or went to the banquet) and drank beverages of choice. Finally we headed for the

program and learned how much of today's cave research is done with low tech supplies to answer questions like why are nitrates in caves and how do mineral balloons form.

Later the door prizes went out. Dave and Sandy Rice were both winners bagging a book American Caving and 25 ft. of webbing. Stephanie (who looked a lot like Sheila and limped only on the return trip after claiming her prize) won a Cave Master Helmet given by Bob and Bob.

The Sunday assault on Gory Hole fizzled and after everyone made their last purchases at the vendors we said our good byes and hit the road. Indiana still smelled on the way but the 3 1/2 hr. return trip was otherwise uneventful capping a most excellent weekend.

***Editor's Note: Craig, Sheila, and Linda were early members of the grotto (Sheila is still a member). To this day, I still call the canyon in the cave "Stephanie's Thud Passage." Cave Capers is a nice caving event put on by the Central Indiana Grotto. I plan to attend this year. Who wants to come along. The dates are in the calendar of events section of this newsletter.***



**The Dayton Underground Grotto**  
 Of the National Speleological Society  
**MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM**  
 www.dugcaves.com

**PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY**

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CITY:		STATE:	ZIP CODE:
E-MAIL ADDRESS:			
HOME PHONE NUMBER:	CELL PHONE NUMBER:	WORK PHONE NUMBER:	
I AM 18 YEARS OF AGE, OR OLDER: <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO			

MEMBERSHIP TYPE AND ANNUAL DUES (check one)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	INDIVIDUAL (\$15)(\$7.50 if after July 1 <sup>st</sup> )
<input type="checkbox"/>	INDIVIDUAL STUDENT (full time students only)(\$7.50)(\$3.75 if after July 1 <sup>st</sup> )
<input type="checkbox"/>	FAMILY (family members must reside in same household)(\$20)(\$10 if after July 1 <sup>st</sup> ) List family members:

**NOTE: Members who join and are not NSS members are associate members and may not vote or hold grotto office. NSS members are regular members and have all grotto privileges.**

WILL THE DAYTON UNDERGROUND GROTTTO BE YOUR PRIMARY NSS AFFILIATION? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
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DO YOU WISH TO SUBSCRIBE TO THE GROTTTO YAHOOGROUPS E-MAIL LIST? Send e-mail to <a href="mailto:dugcaves-subscribe@yahoogroups.com">dugcaves-subscribe@yahoogroups.com</a>
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\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent/Guardian if under age 18 Date

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