

Central Connecticut Grotto

February 2004
The Underground Movement



Tom Oakes in Entrance of Not Federal Offense Cave, CT.

Photo Chris Beauchamp



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The **Central Connecticut Grotto (CCG)** is a happy bunch of folks who enjoy the exploration, conservation and science of caves.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

The **Underground Movement** is published monthly by the Central Connecticut Grotto of the National Speleological Society (NSS). Reprint permission is granted to the NSS and to other grottos, with Author or Editor permission.

CCG Editor: Ray Keeler 2 N. Main Street P302
Beacon Falls, CT. 06403
203-720- rkeeler@pcslink.com

All cavers are welcome and encouraged to submit articles, photographs, and other items for publication in the CCG. Your contribution would be very much appreciated.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Chair: [Bob Simmons](mailto:Bob.Simmons@ctcavers.org) 860-738-1176

chair@ctcavers.org

Vice Chair: [Steve Adams](mailto:Steve.Adams@ctcavers.org) 860-558-9248

(program and activities) vicechair@ctcavers.org

Treasurer: [Norm Berg](mailto:Norm.Berg@ctcavers.org) 860-621-2080

treasurer@ctcavers.org

Secretary: [Cheryl J. Kenez](mailto:Cheryl.J.Kenez@ctcavers.org) 860-489-2621

secretary@ctcavers.org

Communications Chair: Jeff MacDonald 860-826-7487
(web monkey)

communications@ctcavers.org

Membership Chair: [Norm Berg](mailto:Norm.Berg@ctcavers.org) 860-621-2080

[Laura Ritter](mailto:Laura.Ritter@ctcavers.org) 203-241-8153

membership@ctcavers.org

Safety: [Doug Truitt](mailto:Doug.Truitt@ctcavers.org) 860-298-8862

safety@ctcavers.org

Conservation: Carl Carmony 860-995-4022

conservation@ctcavers.org

Vertical Chair: [Tom Oakes](mailto:Tom.Oakes@ctcavers.org) 203-888-7355

vertical@ctcavers.org

CCG Meetings:

Meetings are the 3rd Tuesday of each month at 7PM. In Plainville CT., just off route 84 near the junction of route 72 at HRP Associates, 167 New Britain Ave. (rt. 372) Plainville, CT. For info call 860-793-6899 x134. Non Members welcome.

Meeting Directions to HRP Associates:

From Waterbury direction on I-84 travelling East:
Take Exit 34 (Crooked Street). Turn left at the end of the ramp. At the next light, take a left onto Rte 372 (New Britain Ave). Proceed straight through the first light. **Immediately after the second light, turn right into the first driveway by the HRP sign. THE SIGN IS NOT LIGHTED.**

The front door is on your left, ring the doorbell and when you hear the door buzz - go upstairs.

- **From Hartford direction** on I-84 travelling West (or Rte 72 travelling West):

Exit 33 puts you on Rte 72 West. Move to the right lane and take the first exit - Exit 2 (New Britain Ave Plainville).

As you approach the lights, move into the second lane from the left (labelled Cooke Street).

Turn left at the lights, then immediately turn right into the first driveway by the HRP sign.

The front door is on your left, ring the doorbell and when you hear the door buzz - go upstairs.

Dues:

Regular Membership Dues: \$5 per year
NSS members can also pay \$20 for 5 year membership

CCG Website: The Grotto website is:

www.ctcavers.org

This is an excellent way to find out what other caving things are going on that come up on short notice as well as review some of the history.

NSS Information:

The National Speleological Society (NSS) is the national organization of which CCG is a part. The NSS can be contacted about other caving or national caving information at

www.caves.org

National Speleological Society

2813 Cave Avenue

Huntsville, AL 35810-4431

Voice 256-852-1300

Fax 256-851-9241

E-Mail nss@caves.org

NSS News submission guidelines may be found at

<http://www.goodearth.com/nssnews/style.html>

Calendar of Events:

Trips are not limited to what is on the calendar! Contact fellow grotto members to create your own trips. Let the CCG Editor know in advance to post your trip on the calendar. Also, **check the website** calendar and

February

17 CCG Meeting

2/17 Grotto Meeting

2/21 Cave Survey Class – Indian Oven Cave, Ray Keeler
rkeeler@pcslink.com apartment: 203-720-0038

March

3/16 Grotto Meeting

3/20 SATMT L: TBA Loc TBA

3/27 NCC Board Meeting Cave House in quarry

3/27 KWI award for Art Palmer at Howes Cave

April

4/15 to 4/17 Cave Conservancies Forum Lewisburg WV

4/20 Grotto Meeting

4/24 SATMT L: Tom Oakes: Vertical Practice at Cathole Mountain.
Rain date Sunday April 23rd.
and

May

5/8 Vertical Practice: Tom Oakes at Cathole Mountain. Rain date Sunday May 9th.

NEWSLETTER CORRECTIONS and RELATED ITEMS:

OFMC = Old Fat Man's Caving ... it doesn't mean it's an easy trip. It does mean it will be fun.

Ray

MORE UPCOMING EVENTS:

5/14 to 5/16 Spring NRO Arlington VT hosted by VCA

5/18 Grotto Meeting

5/22 SATMT L; Bob Simmons Loc Mystery Cave, NY

6/15 Grotto Meeting

6/19 SATMT TBA

MINUTES FROM DECEMBER MEETING (12/13/2003):

01/20/03

Secretary's Report – (Cheryl J. Kenez) minutes accepted after correction of lava not lava tube.

Treasurer's Report – (Norm Berg) the balance the end of Dec was \$1043.00. Norm also opened a savings account for the grotto.

Membership – (Laura Ritter) we have 5 new members.

Vice Chair – (Steve Adams) talked about the executive planning session last week.

Web Monkey – (The Jeff) absent for the business meeting.

Safety – (Tom Oakes) is planning vertical practices for the end of April and again in May.

Conservation – (Carl Carmony) 9 members of CCG attended the Howe Cavern cleanup. There were about 80 to 100 people total attending this year.

Newsletter – (Ray Keeler) – will send hardcopies of the newsletter to the NSS. Talked about the problem with the print quality this time and sent the December issue to the webmonkey to list it on the site.

New Business

Bob Jacobs will lead a trip to Onesquethal on Jan 24th. No last minutes attendees will be allowed on the trip. E-mail him if you are interested.

February 7th – Schoharie with Steve Adams.

Bob Jacobs will lead a trip to Onesquethal on Jan 24th. No last minutes attendees will be allowed on the trip. E-mail him if you are interested.

(January meeting minutes continued)

February 21st – Indian Oven with Ray Keeler for a mapping exercise.

New Zealand with Jansen Cardy the end of March to April 2nd with caving from March 24-29th. Local guides will lead the way.

March 27th another NCC board meeting and following that a testimonial dinner for Art Palmer.

April 14-18th OFMC2 with Bob Simmons in West Virginia.

April 24th lava tube hunting in Ct. Ray Keeler rkeeler@pcslink.com 203-720-0038.

May-14-16th the NRO in Arlington , VT.

Saturday May 22nd. Mystery mapping with Bob Simmons. Ray Keeler sent a proposal on "Resource Impact Mapping" on the Chandelier Ball Room, Lechuigilla Cave that will be a possible future trip for the CCG.

Carl Carmony reported he noticed the NCC website and conversation forms. He will look into that.

Steve Jansen wants to do mapping and document caves in Cherry Valley.

The meeting was adjourned to Brian Pease could do his presentation and we could watch the DVD he starred in titled " Water's Journey, The Hidden Rivers of Florida."

Help Jansen and Stacey Move, Sunday Feb. 15th

Hi everyone,

OK, so it's not really caving - but it does involve some caving gear. I spoke with a few of you about our upcoming move **next Sunday** (the 15th). Any one who is available to help will be welcomed with open arms.

Basically, our 3rd floor apartment in Rocky Hill is getting emptied into a nearby storage facility with a few items being siphoned off to Stacey's parents house (about a mile away). Getting a few furniture items down the stairs will be the biggest challenge. Notably, our large fold-out couch. Most other items like the bed and kitchen table will be disassembled. Many of our boxed belongings will already be in a storage area on the ground floor, making it a little easier to get them out to our rented truck.

We pick up the truck at 8:30am, and plan to start moving by **9:00am**. Early start, early finish (we hope). Refreshments will be provided, there will be pizza, munchies, beer, soda etc for lunch (and dinner if necessary). We also have a few items that are free to a good home, including a small computer desk and entertainment center wall unit (while stocks last). We have an old working VCR too, and plenty of other junk (sorry, I'm keeping my hoard of caving gear).

As time is short, there will be no delay date due to weather, so keep your fingers crossed! If you can make it, please let me know. Stacey and I would be most grateful.

Jansen

Not Federal Offense (NFO) Cave

Tom Oakes NSS 22141

(Ed. The project consumed several weekends in the spring and summer of 2000.)

A year or so after The Central Connecticut Grotto was reformed, Bob Simmons lead a trip to the Lime Springs area to show off **Bonnie's Crack** and some of the interesting karst features in the area. One of these features was especially attractive. When I first saw it I was convinced I was looking at a cave.

Now you need to understand that, what we in Connecticut call caves, simply aren't considered caves in most other states. Take for example **Three Judges Cave**, which lies atop West Rock in New Haven Connecticut. Three Judges is nothing more than a fractured boulder that was deposited on top of the cliff when the glaciers receded. Although there is an alcove created by the fracture of the rock, there is no place you can go in the "cave" to escape the sunlight. Now, I'm not as bad as some of my compatriots. In my opinion (open air pits excluded), if you can't escape the sunlight, then it's just not a cave.

Anyhow, this particular feature was a slot in the bottom of a shallow sink. I was able to get my entire body in the hole and turn around. Extending off at about a 90-degree angle to the entrance slot was a second slot. It looked like it went, but it was too tight to enter. Sliding further down to the left I could see the passage continued, but again it was too tight, so I turned around to head out and discovered one last lead trending back upward in the direction of the sink. At this point this hole in the ground didn't meet my criteria for a cave. I could still see the sunlight. But everywhere I looked I saw promise, and I was pretty excited about that.

When I got home I talked to Cramp and Gary about what I had seen and they immediately agreed to check the lead out. A short time later, cramp, Gary, Steve, Eddie and myself took a trip back to the springs to check it out. Everyone was excited about the potential of the area and we planned our first dig for the following weekend. Eddie and I arrived late that first day and Steve was already hard at work inside the cave breaking up rocks with cramp and Gary on the surface hauling them out. I was completely surprised at how much room they'd created already in their first hour of work. It looked like this dig would be easy. We worked all day, alternately high on the certainty that we'd be breaking into open passage at any moment, and depressed with the realization that what looked promising before, now seemed destined to become a dead end. But the evening ended on a high note. As dusk began to settle over the woods and we finished packing up our gear, a bat flew out of the entrance! From that moment on, I was addicted to the dig.

During subsequent work weekends alternating highs and lows were the norm as we continued to work the dig. One rock in particular got our attention. It looked as though, if we could slide past it, the cave opened up to the right. We tried chipping away at the rock with a hammer, but there wasn't enough room to get a good swing in. While some were working on the rock, others tried digging around it to the left. This seemed promising at first, but the lead kept getting smaller and harder to work in. We had to give up for the day.

We decided that the only way to get into the cave was to get past that rock. Gary got his hands on a drill and I got a hold of some rock splitters and on our next trip we tried splitting the rock. We managed to chip off a few flakes, but the marble we were dealing with was tougher than our wedges. It seemed our only hope was to dig our way underneath the rock. This was an enormous effort due to the space limitations. And it almost worked. Unfortunately, once we'd dug past the rock, we found it impossible to turn around and stand up. It was all rock at this point and digging wasn't going to help us. With this roadblock, it was realized that the dig could go back the way we had originally come, but on a lower level, so we started digging in that direction. We didn't get very far that day, and the dig had to wait for another weekend.

When we returned we picked up where we left off the level of excitement was low. The passage was tight and only one person could dig at a time. That left a few people bored and attention turned to the slot that had once looked so uninviting. On close examination it looked as though the slot was widening as it went down. The Jeff started working the slot while Gary worked the lower lead. Progress was slow but steady in both directions. The level of excitement started to climb. I can't remember exactly who broke into cave first, but I'm guessing it must have been Gary. His low dig led him into some tight passage that was difficult to turn around in, but there wasn't the slightest hint of sunlight. He had real cave. The slot too gave way to our efforts. About 12 feet in length it led to a small room. To the left we could see the rock that had given us so much trouble; to the right was a four-foot drop into a fifty foot long room! Our efforts had finally paid off. The afternoon culminated had with two breakthroughs within minutes of each other and Connecticut had its first new cave since the opening of Glawackus cave in Salisbury.

Acclaimer:

Participants: Bob Simmons, Tom Simmons, Steve Janesky, Eddie Gonzalez, The Jeff, Cramp (Chris Beauchamp), Gary Burns, Tom Oakes.

Disclaimer:

This report was written three years after the original discovery. If you know me, then you know that this could be a problem. I apologize in advance to those people involved in the project whose names were not included in this account. Some of the "facts" reported could be in error and are open to amendment. If you have information that would make this account more complete, please let me know and I will make the appropriate corrections.

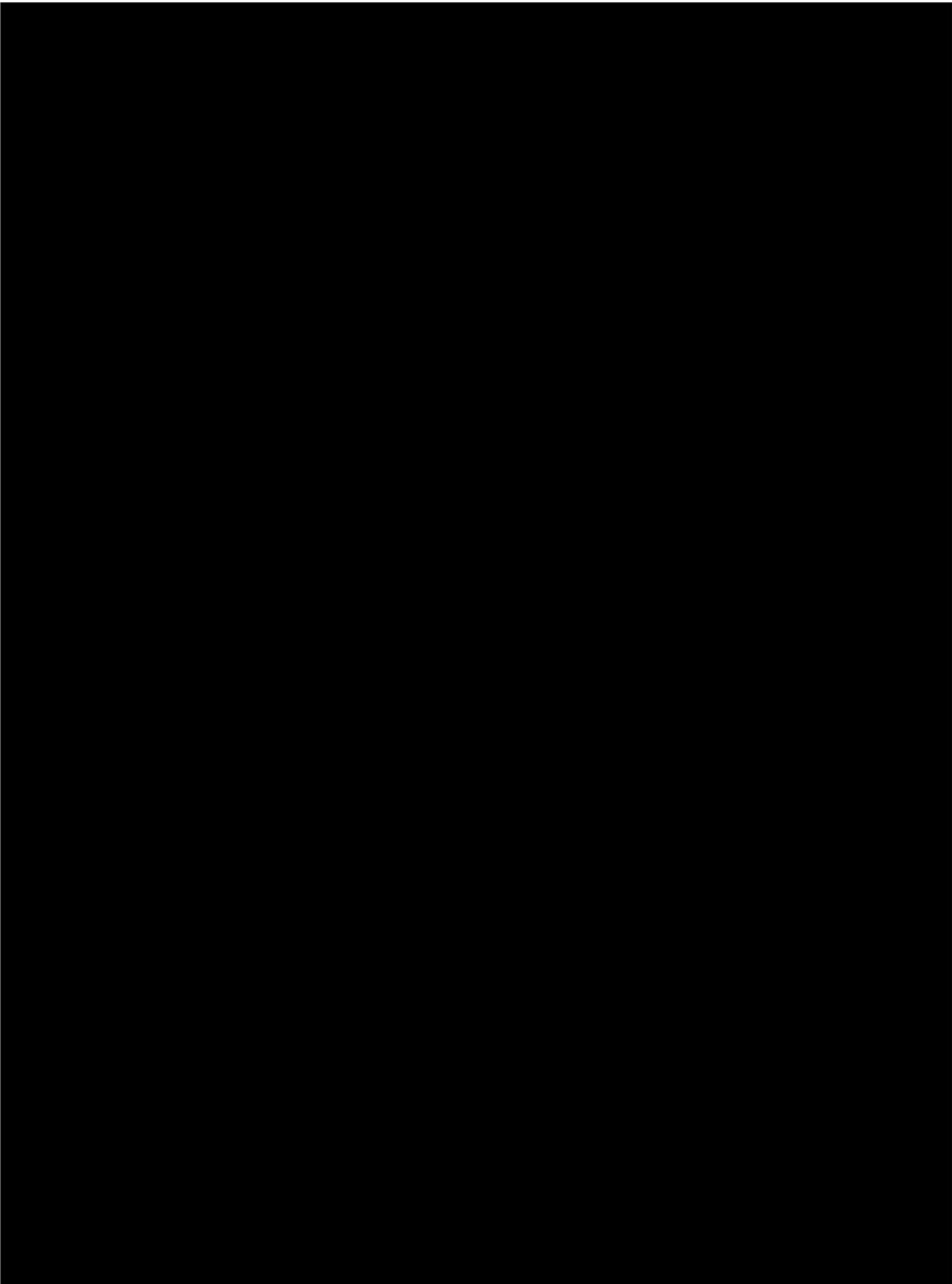




Photo Chris Beauchamp

Tom Oakes in Not Federal Offense Cave



Photo Tom Oakes

Dave Oakes On Compass

Howe Caverns Cleanup 2004

Jansen Cardy, NSS 50665

This year's annual Howe Caverns Cleanup was held on Saturday the 17th of January. CCG attendees included Norm Berg, Carl Carmony, Steve Adams, Laura Ritter, Jeff MacDonald, Ray Keeler, Steve Janesky, Gretchen Hug, Nichole Biamonte, Ken Nichols, and myself.

Sorry if I missed anyone.

After the usual pot luck dinner and briefings, a large group of volunteer cave cleaners donned appropriate attire and made their way below. Most of the workers began the main task of spraying and scrubbing mold from around the lights located throughout the cave. Proof that damp caves and artificial lighting make a great growing environment - we pulled out "weeds" several inches long in some places!

Carl decided to take on the job of wading in the stream and fishing for coins. Further downstream, Jeff and Ray were busy scooping stream silt into a wheelbarrow to relocate elsewhere. Us "scrubbers" spent most of the evening wandering in small groups, climbing and scrubbing, locked in conversation. Before long, it was 10pm and we were all politely evicted.

After a quick change, 7 of us made our way over to Gage Cabin. Despite a great fire-stoking effort, the efficiency of the wood stove is not all that wonderful. We wrapped up warm and settled in for the night. There was much talk of caving on Sunday, but when the morning came everyone seemed content with breakfast at the Alley Cat and a quick visit to Schoharie before heading home.



Photo Jansen Cardy

Weeds in one of the lighting placements



Gage Cave Fieldhouse

photo Jansen Cardy



Carl Carmoney sifting Coins In Cave Sediment
photos Ray Keeler



The Orange And Round Objects Are All Coins

ANOUNCMENTS

The Resource Impact Mapping proposal was approved. We have a project.

