

Central Connecticut Grotto

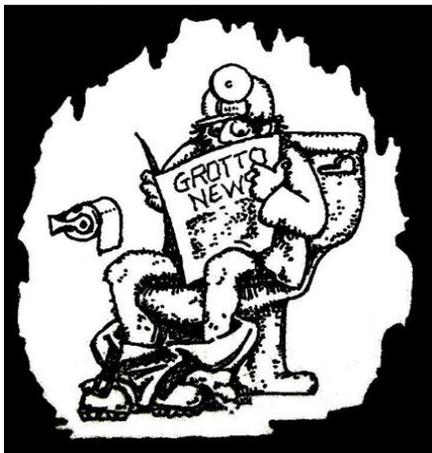
Underground Movement March 2005



Ray Keeler sitting 170 feet underground in a mine, sending and receiving digital pictures by portable radio (February 12, 2005 - believed to be a first in the US)

Photo by Jansen Cardy

The Central Connecticut Grotto (CCG) invites you to join us in the exploration, study and conservation of caves



The Underground Movement is published monthly by the Central Connecticut Grotto (CCG) of the National Speleological Society (NSS). Reprint permission requires the approval of the Author or UM Editor.

Editor: Jansen Cardy
c/o Central Connecticut Grotto
P.O. Box 57
Winchester Center, CT 06094
860-209-7789
editor@ctcavers.org

Anyone can submit articles, photographs, and other items for publication. Please contribute!

CCG Officers

Chair:	Bob Simmons	860-738-1176
	chair@ctcavers.org	
Vice Chair: (Program and Activities)	Steve Adams	860-643-1502
	vicechair@ctcavers.org	
Treasurer:	Norm Berg	860-621-2080
	treasurer@ctcavers.org	
Secretary:	Laura Ritter	203-241-8153
	secretary@ctcavers.org	
Communications: (Web-monkey)	Jeff MacDonald	860-826-7487
	communications@ctcavers.org	
Membership:	Cheryl Kenez	860-489-2621
	membership@ctcavers.org	
Safety:	Doug Truitt	860-298-8862
	safety@ctcavers.org	
Conservation:	Garth Varian	203-453-5639
	conservation@ctcavers.org	
Vertical:	Tom Oakes	203-888-7355
	vertical@ctcavers.org	

CCG Website

The CCG website is at www.ctcavers.org

This is an excellent way to keep informed about caving events that come up at short notice, and to review some of our Grotto history and photos.



CCG Meetings

Meetings are held the 3rd Tuesday of each month, starting at 7pm. These are reasonably informal, and generally consist of a short business meeting followed by a caving presentation. Summer meetings are usually held at a member's house in Southington; please contact any CCG Officer for further information. Meetings for the remainder of the year are held at HRP Associates in Plainville. Non-members are always welcome.

Meeting Directions

HRP Associates
167 New Britain Road
Plainville, CT 06062
Contact Bob Simmons on (860) 793-6899 ext 134

- From Waterbury direction, take I-84 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.

- From Hartford direction, take I-84 West (or Rte 72 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 (labeled Cooke Street).
As you turn left through the light, take an immediate right into the driveway by the HRP sign.

The front door is on your left. Ring the doorbell, enter the building when you hear the door buzz, and take the stairs up to the second floor.

CCG Dues

Regular Membership Dues: \$5 per year
(NSS members can opt to pay \$20 for a 5-year membership)

Associate Membership Dues: \$2 per year
(Non-voting – intended for family, youth, or full-time student members)

Institutional Membership No Charge – yearly renewal
(Open to educational, scientific and conservation organizations)

National Speleological Society

The National Speleological Society (NSS) is the national organization of which CCG is a part. CCG members are encouraged to join the NSS. The NSS website is at www.caves.org

2813 Cave Avenue
Huntsville, AL 35810-4431

Voice: 256-852-1300
Fax: 256-851-9241
E-Mail: nss@caves.org



NSS News submission guidelines can be found at www.caves.org/pub/nssnews/style.html

Calendar of Events

Events are not limited to what is on the calendar! Contact fellow grotto members to create your own trips. Please notify the Editor in advance about any new trips, or changes to trips, so the calendar can be kept accurate. Important CCG activity dates are noted in **bold**.

MARCH 2005

March 15 – CCG Monthly Meeting at the Stone Age Rock Gym 7pm
(Followed by vertical practice – see flyer on the next page)

March 19 – Trip to Onesquethaw Cave in NY with Steve Adams
(Horizontal, wet – if flooded, Clarksville is alternate)

March 20 – NCC Board Meeting at Cave House, Howe's Cave, NY

APRIL 2005

April 9 – Vertical Practice at Cathole Mountain with Tom Oakes
(Rain date April 10)

April 19 – CCG Monthly Meeting at HRP Associates 7pm
(Spring NRO planning)

April 23 – Vertical Practice at Cathole Mountain with Tom Oakes
(Rain date April 24)

April 28 to May 2 – OFMC III to WV with Bob Simmons
(Coincides with Spring VAR in Lewisburg)

April 30 to May 1 – NCRC Orientation to Cave Rescue training
(Hosted in Clinton, NJ by the NJ Initial Response Team)

MAY 2005

May 3 – CCG Planning Meeting at HRP Associates 7pm
(All members are welcome, pizza will be supplied)

May 14 – Trip to check out the NRO site with Bob Simmons

May 17 – CCG Monthly Meeting at HRP Associates 7pm
(Spring NRO planning)

May 20 to 22 – Spring NRO hosted by CCG - Port Jervis NY area

JUNE 2005

June 11 – Trip to Benson's Cave in NY with Tom Oakes
(Vertical gear required)

June 21 – CCG Monthly Meeting at HRP Associates 7pm

June 25 – Trip to Knox Cave in NY with Bob Simmons

June 25 to July 2 – NCRC rescue training in Huntsville, AL

JULY 2005

July 4 to 8 – NSS Convention in Huntsville, AL

July 19 – CCG Monthly Meeting at HRP Associates 7pm

AUGUST 2005

August 16 – CCG Monthly Meeting at HRP Associates 7pm



Minutes of the CCG Monthly Meeting

February 2005

2/15/2005

(Minutes are preliminary and will be officially approved by the membership, with possible corrections, at the next meeting.)

Meeting called to order about 7:30 pm.

Secretary's Report (Laura Ritter) – Minutes from last meeting not read, as secretary was absent.

Treasurer's Report (Norm Berg) – Treasurer presented a printed report of 2004 CCG financial transactions. This report is viewable on the CCG website in the Members Only area.

Membership Report (Cheryl Kenez) – Recent new members include James Batista, Jonathan Lemay, and Merrill Gonzales.

Communications/Web Monkey (Jeff MacDonald) – absent

Vertical (Tom Oakes) – Climbing practice (caving vertical and rope techniques) is planned for April 9 at a local area. Next CCG meeting will be at an indoor climbing gym in Manchester. Details will be sent to members.

Vice Chair (Steve Adams) – absent

Conservation (Garth Varian) – no report

Safety (Doug Truitt) – Would like to put together a rescue callout list. Also wishes to make a handout in the form of a label or business card that contains rescue contacts.

Past Trips –

There was some discussion of the rescue at Mystery (aka Surprise) Cave.

Future Trips –

February 16 to Bentley's Cave, led by Bob Simmons.

March 19 to Onesquethaw Cave, led by Steve Adams.

NCC board meeting on March 20.

Old/New Business –

The CCG will be hosting the Spring NRO. The location is Oakland Valley Campground in Cuddebackville, NY on May 20-22. Bob Simmons has set up an email account for the NRO event. The NRO exec committee will be doing the Saturday Dinner. Per request of the NRO exec committee, the NRO meeting will be held on Saturday evening, after dinner.

Meeting adjourned.

(Minutes submitted by Norm Berg, filling in for the Secretary.)



EDITOR'S COLUMN

This month, I would like to invite comments from readers about the future of the UM.

Should this remain as a monthly publication, or change to bi-monthly?

All grotto newsletters rely on regular submissions of trip reports, photos, news items, letters and so forth. While some excellent items have been published in the UM over the past 18 months, only a relatively small number of people contribute items – and even less do so regularly.

The result is an often “thin” newsletter, sometimes padded with extra material that either myself or the previous editors have come up with at short notice. If the UM does change to bi-monthly, it could potentially become a more substantial newsletter. (Note that many other grotto newsletters are either published bi-monthly or quarterly.) Of course, each issue would still rely heavily on YOUR input.

Please send your thoughts on this to me at editor@ctcavers.org.

Safe caving,



Jansen Cardy - NSS 50665 

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear UM readers,

I'm looking for titles of children's books related to caving, for my local library.

I donated a copy of Ron Kerbo's full color children's book "The Hidden World of Caves", which is available from the NSS for \$9 (member price). It was well received, and I'm hoping others know of more titles like it.

I feel the library is a wonderful place for children to discover the fascinating story our earth can tell.

Thanks.

Merrill Ann Gonzales NSS #55095
19 Conrad Park
Dayville, CT 06241-2141
snowbirdpress@netzero.net



Spring NRO 2005



Will be Hosted by Our Grotto on May 20-22

In The Port Jervis NY Area (Close to Mystery Cave)

Volunteers Are Needed - Contact Bob Simmons

CCG MONTHLY MEETING AND VERTICAL PRACTICE TUESDAY MARCH 15TH

NOTE THE DIFFERENT VENUE THIS MONTH!

Bring yourself and your vertical gear (if you have any) to the Stone Age Rock Gym on Adams Street in Manchester. The meeting will begin at 7 pm sharp, and the indoor vertical practice will be from about 8-10 pm.

There is a fee of \$15 per person to use the facility.

Observers may attend at no charge. Those participating should bring clean sneakers or similar footwear with minimal tread, to help preserve the floor mats. The gym also hires out climbing footwear for \$4 per pair.

Everyone needs to sign a waiver. Anyone under 18 must bring a signed waiver form from their parent or guardian if they intend to do vertical practice at the gym. Waiver forms can be retrieved from the Stone Age Rock Gym web site at

<http://www.stoneagerockgym.com/waiver/index.htm>.

You are welcome to bring food and drink to the meeting, and there is even a small refrigerator available. Bring ropes if you have them, and don't be shy either asking for or offering advice during the vertical practice.

Directions are on the Stone Age Rock Gym website at <http://www.stoneagerockgym.com/findus/index.htm>

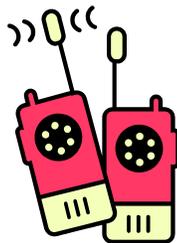
Contact Steve Adams if you need further details, or call the gym directly at (860) 645-0015.



The entrance to Morris Cave, Vermont
Photo by Chris Beauchamp, taken on February 16th, 2005

Radios Can't Work Underground... – Can They?

By Jansen Cardy



On a damp Saturday morning in mid-February, four suspicious-looking individuals met in a parking lot at Piestewa Peak Park in Phoenix, Arizona. Leading this group was Ray Keeler; experienced caver, new amateur radio operator (ham), and all-around nice guy. He was joined by fellow caver/ham operator Paul Jorgenson, local caver Chip Haldane, and myself (also a caver/ham operator).

Ray produced a couple of portable high-frequency radios, and began testing them by the vehicles. After making a few adjustments, we were ready to head for the hills. By this time, we had attracted the attention of a roving Park Ranger. Ray took care of the situation by brandishing his park-issued special-use permit, and explaining what we were doing. I swear the guy was shaking his head as he drove off.

Here's some background on this project. The company Ray works for has been awarded a government contract to develop a system for transmitting data and pictures over HF radio between the surface and underground. Connecticut's own cave radio guru, Brian Pease, is also lending his expertise to the project. This system, along with a voice communication mode, could be very useful in cave rescue situations.

Ray recently sat and passed his amateur radio operator exams, so he can legally operate the fancy new equipment. At this stage the project is still on a small budget, hence the recruitment of us volunteers. The four of us began our hike up the hill, carrying an assortment of bags and cases. We split up part way, and Ray and I climbed to a mine entrance while Paul and Chip headed to the back of the hill.

This mine was a straight horizontal tunnel, about 200 feet long. Ray and I unpacked the equipment by the entrance, and began experimenting. Initially, we had clear communications with both radios on the surface, one each side of the hill. This we expected. But communications were soon lost when Ray and I ventured underground. We did not expect failure to come so quickly!

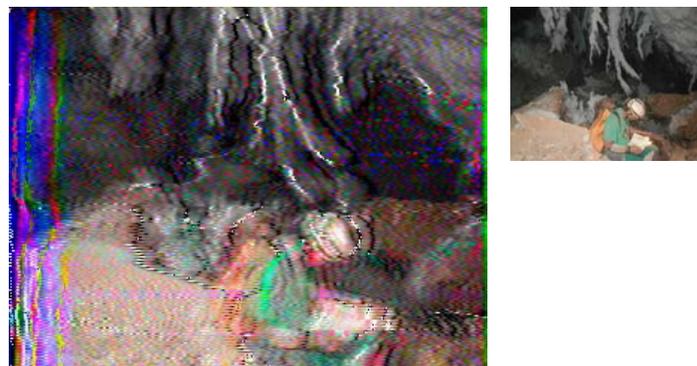
Eventually Paul figured out that he and Chip were not located just behind the hill, but were in fact a considerable distance away. They relocated to the top of the hill, about 400 feet from us. Testing began again, and once more ran into technical difficulties. We had grounding issues, loose antenna connections, and an intermittent microphone problem with Paul's radio. We also suspect that a type of rock found only at the back of the mine may have shielded the signal.

Finally, Ray and I were just starting to head out to the entrance and pack it in when we suddenly got clear voice communications with Paul. Ray could barely contain his excitement!

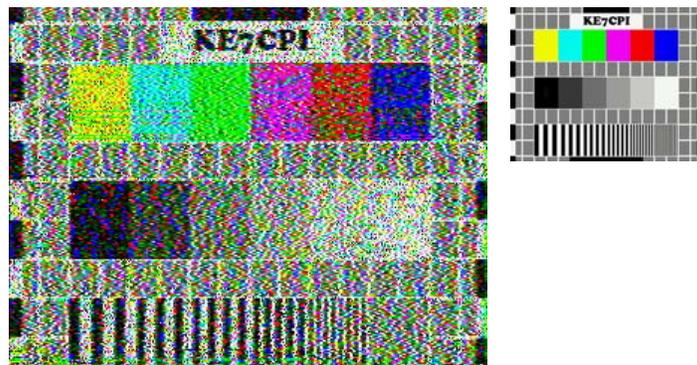
He whipped out the laptop we had with us, connected it to the radio, and instructed Paul to stand by to receive a picture. A shot I took of Ray in Lechuguilla's Chandelier Ballroom last year was selected, and transmitted to Paul in just over 30 seconds. Although the received picture was not a perfect likeness, it did prove we can transmit a signal through at least 150 feet of solid rock.

This event occurred at about 1:30pm Mountain Standard Time on February 12th 2005, and is believed to be the first picture in the US to be sent from a portable underground HF radio to a receiver on the surface. Shortly after that historic moment, Paul successfully sent a test-pattern picture back to us. We continued to send a couple more pictures back and forth, before packing up and heading back so Ray could buy us lunch.

The experiments will continue... ♡



The first picture received on the surface from our underground transmitter. The original version is top right.



The first picture we received underground from the transmitter on the surface. The original version is top right.



The Birth of CCG – 46 years ago this month!

On Tuesday March 31st 1959, at 7:30 pm, the first meeting of a group interested in forming a Connecticut chapter of the National Speleological Society was held at the Bristol Public Library in the upper conference room. Approximately 10 people attended.

Officers elected at that first meeting were:

Chairman – Joe Perkins

Vice Chairman of Administration – Ed Wellington

Vice Chairman of Activities – Dave Haas

Secretary – Jarvis Burrell

Treasurer – Lee Blackburn

Trips were planned to Tri-County Cave, between South Bethlehem and Clarksville, NY for “outdoor training”.

On May 4th 1959, a second meeting was held at the Bristol Public Library. The 6 members present unanimously adopted the name Central Connecticut Grotto. Annual dues were set at \$2 per person – \$1 for a subscription to the Boston Grotto Newsletter, \$0.50 for postage, and \$0.50 for the general fund.

Joe Perkins planned a trip to Howe, Secret, Knox and Schoharie Caves to take color movies. Also at about the same time, an NRO convention was to be held in Cherry Valley, NY.

*Editor's note – Norm Berg originally dug this from the archives and published it in the April-June 1982 issue of **The Underworld** (a previous CCG newsletter). If anyone has other interesting historical information relating to our grotto or regional caving, please share it with us.*

CAPTION CONTEST



I was at a loss for words when I snapped this one!

Please help me out by sending your caption suggestions to editor@ctcavers.org before the next issue.



CAVE RESCUE TRAINING



The New Jersey Initial Response Team (NJIRT) and the Eastern Region of the NCRC are running a weekend Orientation to Cave Rescue (OCR) on April 30 and May 1, 2005 in Clifton, New Jersey.

Weekend OCRs are an excellent opportunity for cavers to learn skills that could help in a rescue situation, or on any caving trip.

The cost is \$50 for the weekend, not including accommodation. Further details and an application form can be found on the NJIRT website at <http://www.njirt.org/links.asp>