

The Near Normal News

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A synopsis of what is going on in the world of the Near Normal...

More News – Less Filling!

We are going to try a different tact here. Instead of putting out an extravaganza of a newsletter edition on a longer, more irregular schedule, we are going to try to put out a more timely, but shorter newsletter. This newsletter will try to keep the grotto members who are not always able to make it to the monthly meetings aware and abreast of what is occurring at the meetings by including a 'minutes

report', trip reports of recent cave travels, and trips that will be going to happen in the near future. This will hopefully keep more members aware, and hopefully enthused, to go caving!

Please feel free to email in any trips that you have been on so we can keep our grotto aware of what each of us has been doing and to keep that caving spark!

Christmas Party Bash Scheduled for December 11

The annual grotto Christmas Party will happen this December 11 at the Brommen Medical Center in Normal. To get to our meeting, go north on Main St. (a primary north/south street with interstate exits), then east or right on Virginia Ave. Go two blocks on Virginia, then turn right or south on Franklin. After turning right on Franklin pull right into parking deck of BroMenn Medical Center. Building is back across Franklin on right. Go through revolving doors and down escalator. At bottom of escalator turn left and follow signs to cafeteria/conference center. Here's what's planned:

1. Sharing of pictures and videos. Bring any caving pictures and videos you have from the past year's adventures. We will try to have a

laptop and projector for sharing digital media, but of course hard copies are welcomed as well. If you want to share slides, please bring a slide projector.

2. Sharing of your favorite snack, desert, appetizer, etc. Please bring something to share, such as chips, dip, cookies, brownies, cake, cider, etc. Paper plates, plastic utensils, and cups will be provided. Standard soft drinks (or pop according to Todd) will also be provided.

3. White elephant gift exchange. Bring a tasteful gift (Less than \$10) all wrapped up for a fun filled gift exchange.

BE THERE!

November Meeting Minutes



Laura Pierce coming out of Echo Pit

Several people are not able to make it to meetings on a regular basis, or at all. Part of this newsletters goal is to give a timely synopsis of the meeting. The following are the secretary's (Ralph's) notes from the meeting:

Minutes of the Meeting November 13, 2009

Present were Ralph Sawyer, Bill Roth, Jason Kern, Matt Level, Todd McCartney, L. J. Tognetti, Bill Morrow, Chris Haydel, Gerry Woltering.

President Todd McCartney called the meeting to order. No introductions, as everyone knew each other. No Treasurer's report. No minutes. Previous meeting we did not have a quorum.

Trip Reports.

TAG (Tennessee-Alabama-Georgia) Fall Cave-In was attended by L. J. and Andrea Tognetti, Bill Morrow, Todd McCartney, Jason Kern, Matt Level, and Ralph Sawyer. This convention of cavers featured good food, hands-on shopping, and a giant bonfire. Continued on last page...

Recent Trips

Where to start when there has been so much going on? A short incomplete synopsis of the last few months.

Several grotto members took the 8-day long National Cave Rescue Commission course. Ralph Sawyer, Todd McCartney, Jason Kern, and Bill Morrow all took Level I. LJ Tognetti earned his Instructor Qualifications and Roy Becker instructed. The training took place in Bedford, Indiana and was extremely informative and exhausting.

Ralph Sawyer, Todd McCartney, Jason Kern, Matt Level, Bill Morrow, LJ Tognetti and Andrea Tognetti also attended the annual TAG Cave-In along with about 1,090 other cavers. Many caves were enjoyed, with highlights including Stephens Gap, Sinking Cove, and Richards Cave. A video from the trip is available at:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bmY0I1VAA9HI>

Most recently, a group (Ralph Sawyer, Todd McCartney, Chris Haydel, Laura Pierce, Bill Morrow, LJ Tognetti, and Matt Level went down to Missouri to visit the Little Egypt Grotto and South East Missouri grotto members. These fine friendly cavers introduced the NNG cavers to Rimstone River Cave with a 10 hour wetsuit tour, followed by an introduction to Echo Pit, at 130', the deepest pit in Missouri. A Youtube video of this trip can be seen at:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CHaLJww0vc4>

This is just a short compilation of trips I know about. Please send in a short synopsis of recent cave trips – from Maquoketa Caves to Lechuguilla – we want to know!



Ralph Sawyer is dashing and debonair at Echo Pit

Near Normal Grotto

Meeting at Bromenn
Medical Center,
Normal, Illinois.
Second Friday of the
month.

E-MAIL:

nngwebmaster@yahoo.com



We're on the Web!

See us at:

<http://www.caves.org/grotto/nng/>



LJ Tognetti at Echo Pit

Meeting Minutes Continued...

Jason Kern reported on a trip to Stephen's Gap, a picturesque open air pit with a second, horizontal entrance. Matt Level reported on a trip to Sinking Cove Cave. This was a wetsuit "pull down" trip, meaning the cavers, on a one way trip through the cave, pull down the rope after each drop. Sinking Cove featured six drops with a 457' difference in elevation from entrance to entrance. Todd reported on a trip to Richard's Cave. The hike to the cave was along and in a stream with small waterfalls and trees uprooted in a recent flood. We had to stop at the third drop in the cave because of too much volume in the waterfall. We might have rappelled through, but frogging up through the waterfall would have been too dangerous. On the way home from TAG we visited Foster Falls, a surface waterfall/rock climbing area.

We talked about our recent Near Normal Grotto Picnic at Clark's Falls Farm, owned by NNG Life Member Alice Fredericks.

A recent eight hour through trip in Crevice Cave in Missouri featured great formations as well as the stinkiest crawl some of us had ever experienced.

Ralph Sawyer described an experience with bad air (this time a higher than normal level of carbon dioxide, we think) in an unnamed cave in Pike County Illinois. No one could catch their breath, so we exited the cave sooner than we normally would.

New Business

Gerry Woltering showed a magazine article about a ranger in Mammoth Cave National Park. The ranger's ancestor was a slave explorer in Mammoth.

About Our Organization...

The Near Normal Grotto is a non-profit organization dedicated to the study, exploration and conservation of caves and cave life. Our members come from all walks of life – landscapers, camp counselors, carpenters, geologists, mechanics, teachers, and students, to

Nomination of officers:

President:	Todd McCartney
Vice President:	L. J. Tognetti
Treasurer:	David Carson
Secretary:	Ralph Sawyer
Member At large:	Bill Roth

We will elect new officers at our December meeting. Absentee ballots may be sent to NNGwebmaster@caves.org.

Announcements

Christmas Party December 11th. Bring snacks. White elephant gift exchange. Bring your photos/videos for inclusion in a slide show. Dig into your shoeboxes for old school prints too. L. J. and Andrea will supply paper plates etc. Todd will supply drinks. We will elect new officers.

Dues are coming due: \$15.00.

November 20-21st – long wetsuit trip through Rimstone River Cave in Missouri.

December 12 – Chris Haydel's Scout Troop visits Buckner's Cave in Indiana. Want to go? The Scouts will feed you.

February – let us know your preferred dates for a trip to Sullivan Cave in Indiana. Sullivan Cave offers moderate to tough caving routes. A good cave for new cavers.

Bring your calendars/preferred dates for 2010 Annual NNG Picnic and two vertical training days.

National Cave Rescue Training in Mentone AL May 15-22, 2010. www.caves.org/ncrc/national/

Meeting adjourned.

name a few. In other words, people like you. Our interests may vary from exploration to conservation to photography, but we all share a passion for caving. If this interests you and you would like to know more, feel free to attend one of our monthly meetings!