

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

## **Annual Picnic September 11**

The main purpose of this newsletter is to remind people that our annual grotto picnic is coming up September 11. This will be the first time we have not had the picnic at Alice Frederick's Clark Falls Farm in quite a long time. This year the picnic will be held at Comlara Park, which is a very pretty park just 8 miles north of Bloomington near Hudson, Illinois. We have the Spruce Shelter reserved, which is close to Evergreen Lake but far enough away to be safe for little bambinos. Spruce Shelter has two open areas with some shade to accommodate games, one raised grill and one in-ground grill. This is going to be a very family friendly picnic. No ropes, but both squeeze boxes will be at the shelter. Fishing is available at the lake, although a fishing license is required for those 16 years of age or older. If you don't already have one, a license can be obtained at the Casey's in Hudson.

Plans are to have the meal at noon, with a grotto meeting at 1 pm. Bring your own food. It's always nice to bring a dish to pass also. There are very nice hiking and mountain bike trails at Comlara, although there is a mountain bike race in the morning. If people would like to do a mountain bike ride after the picnic, Bill Morrow would be glad to give a tour.

Directions: From I-39, get off on Exit 8. Go west one mile and Comlara Park Road (with signs) will appear. Go south about 1/2 mile and turn into the main entrance. Veer left where the campground veers right. Continue on this road and veer right again on a circular park road. The shelter should be visible (the other shelters surrounding Spruce are Prairie and Osage Shelters).

Maps of area are available at:

<http://co.mclean.il.us/Parks/pdf/Directions.pdf>

<http://www.co.mclean.il.us/Parks/pdf/PicnicCampArea.pdf>

## **July Minutes**

Near Normal Grotto  
Minutes of the meeting July 8, 2011

Present: Makayla McCartney, Todd McCartney, Jacob McLeod, Bill Roth, David Carson, Matthew Carson, Justin Carson, John Walther, L. J. Tognetti, Matt Level, Jason Kern, Ralph Sawyer, Gerry Woltering, Laura McCartney

Vice President Todd McCartney called the meeting to order. President L. J. Tognetti presided.

Minutes of the previous meeting were examined and approved.

Treasurer's Report: We have a balance of \$923.06. Bill Roth will continue to pursue a 501(c)(3) status for our grotto. Bill shared newsletters he has received from other grottos. We still have plenty of tee shirts and patches in our inventory.

Old Business  
Vertical practice at ISU's rappelling tower August 14<sup>th</sup>.

Moved and approved no meeting in August. Someone will be in the meeting room to explain to visitors.

Moved and approved that we will have a business meeting at our September 11 Annual Picnic. Ralph will make sure to have someone at the hospital meeting room the previous Friday.

September 11 Annual Picnic: Ralph will reserve a shelter if possible. Members are encouraged to bring games. Grotto squeeze boxes will be at the picnic.

## Near Normal Grotto

P.O. Box 813  
Normal, IL 61761-0813

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/>

## July minutes - continued

TAG Fall Cave-In, Wednesday October 5 to Sunday October 9. The cabin reserved by Todd is full. Fall Cave-In features a big bonfire, vendors, bands, a rope course and competition, and caving.

### New Business

Ralph brought copies of his correspondence with the Center for Biological Diversity, an organization that recommends closure of caves.

John Walther suggested introductions with "What is your favorite ice cream?"

### Trip Reports:

Matthew and Justin Carson told about their visit to Jewel Cave in South Dakota. Dave Carson compared procedures for control of spread of White Nose Syndrome in Jewel Cave and Mammoth Cave.

Makayla McCartney told about her class trip to Sullivan Cave near Bedford Indiana.

Matt Level told about the Father's Day weekend family trip to Sullivan Cave.

Gerry Woltering tried out his new vertical gear at NNG Vertical Practice in June.

Meeting adjourned.

## ***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, engineers, geologists, mechanics, nurses, teachers, insurance professionals, and students, to 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!