

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

## **A Note from the Treasurer**

From Bill Roth, Treasurer for 2011:

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### A Note From Your New Treasurer

Please send your \$15 dues to new treasurer Bill Roth at Near Normal Grotto, P.O. Box 813, Normal, Illinois 61761-0813. Make checks out to the Near Normal Grotto. Save a stamp by bringing your check to the next grotto meeting. Why renew your NNG membership? Top 10 reasons to renew:

10. See your name on the Member Roster.
9. The annual Christmas party and summer picnic.
8. Vertical practice.
7. Monthly meetings.
6. Chances to hear fascinating accounts of past cave trips.
5. Chances to get clued in on upcoming cave trips.
4. Right to vote at meetings.
3. Help fund donations.
2. Receive the Near Normal News.
1. Snickerdoodle opportunities.

Thank you for supporting the grotto. Have a Safe and Happy New Year.

Special thanks to Dave Carson for his many years of service as our past treasurer.

Bill Roth.

## **Christmas Party Held - New Officers for 2011**

The Christmas Party was held at Todd and Laura McCartney's abode and was very nice indeed. A festively decorated home, good food, good company, and several caving videos and pictures of the past year's trips were shown on the big screen.

New Officers were elected and are as follows:

LJ Tognetti – President  
Todd McCartney – Vice President  
Ralph Sawyer – Secretary  
Bill Roth – Treasurer  
Jason Kern – Member at Large

Congratulations to the new officers!



Buckner Cave Entrance  
December 2010

## **Missouri Trip – Rimstone River**

Trips were sparse at the end of the year, but a trip to Missouri was arranged after Christmas to show the Pennsylvanian Near Normal Grotto member Marc Tiritilli a good time. If you consider an 8+ hour cave trip in water above your waist at least 50 percent of the time with deep water spots thrown in for good measure followed by an exit to the dark and a 20 degree temperature (thanks to Ralph's thermometer in his truck) to make wetsuit removal that much more enjoyable a good time... Ralph Sawyer, Todd McCartney, Bill Morrow, Marc Tiritilli, and James Middlemas met Missourians Chad McCain, Joe Nicolussi, and Tyler Allen for a trip that was both challenging and rewarding. The Southeastern Missouri people were excellent hosts and a pleasure to cave with, as usual. A filling breakfast at the Perryville Park-Et restaurant, followed by a hasty change into wetsuits in an inch or two of snow led to a beautiful cave system filled with rimstone dams and abundant cave wildlife, including fish, crayfish, frogs, sculpins, and salamanders. A good time was had by all.



Buckner Cave  
**Clean** (!) T-Room

## **Buckner Cave**

A family trip to Buckner Cave was also conducted before Christmas by grotto members Bill Morrow and Jim Duncker. They brought along their two 9-year old sons and 17 year old son, along with two caving neophytes from Peoria. The energy level and spirits stayed high throughout the trip, with everyone doing the Circle Route and Waterfall Passage (partial trip for the 9-year olds and fathers). Exiting the cave in great spirits, throwing snowballs and smiling was a joy to observe. It always amazes me what Buckner's Cave has become. The Blenz Conservancy has done a truly remarkable job with cleanup and management. The cave is a joy to visit once again. The next trip report is by Patrick Duncker, one of the participants.

## Buckner Cave Trip Report, December 19, 2010 by Patrick Duncker (age 9)

Five members of the Near Normal Grotto (Patrick, Ben, and Jim Duncker, Nicholas and Bill Morrow) and two guests (Dane and Gibbs) went on a trip to Buckner's Cave near Bloomington, IN. Bill Morrow drove. We left Champaign, Illinois around 6:45 A.M. We arrived at Buckner's Cave around three hours later. Once we arrived, everyone changed into their appropriate caving clothes. We then went to the entrance of the cave to take a picture. There was tons of snow. Then we entered the cave. The crawlway was much easier than I heard it would be. My brother, Ben Duncker did most of the route finding, with help from Bill. We stopped for a small snack in the Air Force room. We played glow in the dark Frisbee (*in the Volcano Room – ed.*). Before exiting the cave, we all went <half way> into the Waterfall passage. It was very narrow. Then Ben, Dane and Gibbs went on into the waterfall room. My dad, Nicholas, and I went back to the T- Junction (Bill went back to keep an eye on what was going on in the Waterfall Passage – ed.). They soon met back up with us. We then headed back towards the entrance of the cave. When we reached the entrance, we walked through the short and snowy trail back to the car. We then changed into our clean clothes. Maybe next time we will get to meet Dick Blenz, the owner of the property. Another successful caving trip.

### Near Normal Officers for 2011



LJ Tognetti  
President



Todd McCartney  
Vice President



Ralph Sawyer  
Treasurer



Bill Roth - Treasurer



Jason Kern – Member at Large

## 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/>

### ***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 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!



The Flaming River Exit to Rimstone River Cave. December 27, 2010. Self portrait by Chad McCain. The "Before" picture.