

The Near Normal News

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

March Minutes

Minutes of the meeting April 8, 2011

Present: Billie Kerouac, Don Kerouac, George Mattson, Allen Caulkins, Kristin Bogdonas, L. J. Tognetti, Andrea Tognetti, Matthew Level, Jason Kern, Bill Roth, Gerry Woltering, Chris Haydel, Todd McCartney, Laura A. McCartney, Ralph Sawyer

The meeting was held at Main Street Café in Bloomington. President L. J. Tognetti called the meeting to order. Minutes of the previous meeting were examined. Bill Roth pointed out that donations cited in the minutes to Indiana Karst Conservancy, Richard Blenz Nature Conservancy, and Southeast Cave Conservancy Incorporated should be \$75.00 each, not 50.00. Bill moved we amend the minutes. The minutes with the amendment were approved. Bill brought issues of Suburban Grotto and Indiana Karst Conservancy newsletters to share. Each member and guest introduced themselves and gave the name of their favorite beer.

Treasurer's Report: Bill Roth reported a balance of \$1113.06 in Near Normal Grotto's account. Prices for NNG clothes and patches: XL green and blue NNG short sleeve tees are \$12 each. NNG patches and snickerdoodle patches are \$2 each. Bill described a possible donation of \$500 from State Farm Insurance. Ralph moved that Bill be approved to pursue the donation. Motion approved. We reviewed our dues structure: annual dues are \$15 plus \$5 per additional family member. Bill informed us that NNG must file a Not-for-Profit Corporation annual report to the state of Illinois. The report is due September 1.

Old Business

Vertical Day June 12 with alternate June 26

Vertical Day August 14 with alternate August 21

L. J. will contact ISU regarding use of the ROTC tower for Vertical Days.

Annual Picnic September 11 with alternate September 18

George Mattson is leaning toward Sullivan Cave for the Father's Day weekend family caving trip, (weekend of June 19).

New Business

George Mattson wondered about personally hosting a Scout Vertical Day at the ISU tower, asked for advice. Matthew Level updated us on camping at Crane Naval Base in Indiana. Campground rate is \$15. Open April 1 to October 31. Matthew is still trying to get information on cabins.

Trip Reports

Gerry Woltering caved in muddy, wet Binkley Cave in southern Indiana. The entrance is in a sinkhole and is tight and rocky. Dave Everton set up a special ladder to gain access to an upper-level dig. Sunday Gerry caved in Donnehue Cave, visiting upper levels and looking at the river entrance to the cave.

Ralph and Jason located and catalogued sinkholes on property adjacent to that owned by Karst Conservancy of Illinois near Waterloo, Illinois.

Meeting adjourned.

Binkley and Donahue Trip Report *by* Gerry Woltering

I recently had the opportunity to visit Binkley Cave. Binkley is Indiana's longest cave with approximately 25 miles surveyed. This Corydon, Indiana cave trip was arranged by Steve Frye, who is an Idaho caver currently working in the Chicago area. Steve had business in Indianapolis the following week and wanted to do some caving while he was in the area.

The trip was set up thru Dave Everton. Dave and members of the Bloomington Indiana Grotto work this cave and nearby Blowing Hole Cave every weekend with digs and surveys into virgin passages. They were in the process of digging into another wind-blown side passage, and I believe they had just broken through a trash filled pit to access some unexplored upper chambers, so it wasn't clear before we arrived if we would be digging, surveying, exploring, or a combination of the three. Dave had informed us ahead of time to expect a series of breakdown crawls, climbs, and slopes of more than 150 vertical feet from the surface, and mud and water everywhere, depending on what we ended up doing. A walking stick was recommended which I brought along.

Despite my best intentions to make this a leisurely trip and drive from Ottawa, Illinois to Corydon on the Friday before the trip, I once again found myself leaving late and driving all night. I arrived Saturday morning around 10:00 am and met a large group for breakfast at Frederick's Café in Corydon. As it turned out, six of us were going to Binkley, and the others were to visit Guy Stover Pit at Blowing Hole Cave to continue survey and exploration. The Binkley cavers for this trip consisted of our leader Dave Everton, myself, Steve Frye and his 21-year old nephew Michael (last name?) from Rochelle, IL, Kevin Prather from the Chicago area, and Tray Heinke from the Indianapolis area. Our main objective besides touring the cave was to erect a scaling pole to an upper passage dig that hadn't been worked for 10 years or so. We left breakfast, and our group followed Dave on a short drive to the edge of Corydon, and into a back farm pasture where the cave entrance is located. We parked at the cave entrance, suited up, and entered the cave around noon.

This entrance to Binkley Cave is a steep slope down to a small hole in the side of a caved in sinkhole. The sinkhole had been a pond before it caved in and created the entrance. Beyond the small entrance hole, the passage opens up and continues to slope downward on loose rock, before reaching the main stream passage.

Much of the main passage is filled with brown mud the consistency of modeling clay that slopes from the side walls to the stream. The stream was flowing in the same direction that we were traveling, and was clear until the first person stepped into it. Past that point we were walking blind in the stream in water averaging ankle to knee deep, and containing numerous, periodic waist-deep pools, and rocks to stumble over.

The walking stick I had brought along turned out to be a big help in keeping me from falling when tripping on submerged rocks, but the boots I had on, which had been fine in other caves, had no traction in the mud in this cave.

We continued into the cave for approximately 3500 feet to our first destination, known as Grunge Hall, where we assembled the scaling pole from parts left by others a few weeks before. All the parts were mud packed and had to be cleaned before assembling. After the parts were assembled, everyone pitched in and set up the pole so we could ascend to the upper passage where Dave could evaluate the dig known as the Peanut Butter Passage dig. The mud here was wetter and had the consistency and look of peanut butter. Dave went up first and followed the dig passage to the forward progress. He was optimistic that when work resumed, they would be able to use sleds to transport the material they dug out, instead of the former method of tossing mud balls.

While everyone was inspecting different parts of the crawl, I had located a portion having an overhead gap that wasn't large enough to get into. In order to see if there was passage above, I held my camera up into it to take a few pictures and WHAM!!!! I managed to dislodge a 2 pound rock from above me and got hit square on the nose! It must have been a soft rock though, as it broke in half, and luckily the only damage was a minor cut and bump, and a little blood.

Binkley and Donahue Trip Report - continued

After evaluating the dig, Dave had decided that he didn't have the desire to do any digging at that time, so we all exited Grunge Hall and continued through a section of breakdown climbs and crawling, known as the Big Break, which led us to the Mountain Room. The Mountain Room is a large breakdown pile. It has a dry upper level going out of it that you must climb a ladder to get to. We climbed the ladder and at the top is an area that used to be a base camp back in the 1960's. Now it's a bunch of rusty cans, candles, and odds and ends of trash. We followed the upper level passage for several hundred feet and stopped at a stream with two 35 foot high waterfalls known as Twin Domes. From there we returned to the Mountain Room and the main passage.

Continuing downstream in the main passage is some of the nicest, largest stream passage in the cave, which is not heavily decorated, but does contain some interesting features here and there. Dave said I wouldn't need the walking stick past the mountain room, so I left it behind, but I found that due to the poor traction of my boots I should have brought it along.

A little further down the main passage, we took a side passage a short distance to a water feature known as the Shower Room. The Shower Room is a shower of water coming out of a small hole in the overhead rock.

After exiting the Shower Room side passage, Dave informed us that if we continued we would see more of the same mud and water, so at this point, about a mile in, it was decided that we would turn around and exit the cave. Along the way, Dave dug some foot holes in the mud up one side slope he wanted to check out. While the others continued toward the entrance, Dave, Tray and I climbed about 25 feet up the slope to look for possible virgin passage. Tray determined it was only an area where the stream had washed the mud away from the main passage wall.

I had noticed that in some areas the stream had created knife sharp scalloped rocks on the floor of the cave. They had cut up my gloves pretty well after a little bit of crawling. Shortly after we climbed down the mud bank, I slipped and fell on one of those sharp rocks. That fall was due to my boots having poor traction, and resulted in a 4 inch slice on my wrist. Not somewhere you want to be cutting yourself, but luckily it was minor. The scab the next day made it look worse than it was.

When everyone had gotten past the breakdown and there was little chance to get lost, the rest of the group exited the cave while Tray and I did some side passage exploration, or at least Tray did. I found that due to the slick conditions, and having no mud traction, I wasn't able to get over a small 4 foot rise to get into one of the side passages, so I waited at the entrance while he found a waterfall and some interesting fossils. At another rise I was able to go part way, but due to a 4 foot drop, I wouldn't have been able to get back out if I had gone further. Progress was made by lying against the mud side slope and sliding along. We ended up exiting the cave about 45 minutes after the rest of the group.

After cleaning up, we had dinner at Beef 'O' Brady's family sports restaurant in Corydon. Unfortunately, Steve wasn't feeling well, and decided to skip supper to go get a motel room.



A muddy Gerry Woltering in Binkley Cave – photo by Kevin Prather

Binkley and Donahue Trip Report - continued

After dinner, Dave led Kevin and me to our accommodations at local caver Rand Heazlitt's place. He has a secluded workshop / art studio on a hill out in the woods. It's up a steep washed out drive and Dave wasn't sure if Kevin's car would make it, but we all made it. Kevin's car only hit one rock. The workshop was a combination of modern and rustic. It had electricity, but we never did find the water. Dave left us for the night and headed back to meet the rest of the group who were still in the Guy Stover Pit.

Sunday morning arrived, and Kevin and I headed into town to meet Steve and Michael at the Waffle House for breakfast. For a Sunday trip, we had the choice of Blowing Hole, Sullivan's, or Donahue Caves. The decision was made to go to Donahue Cave, and we headed north and eventually arrived at the cave after numerous wrong turns and a few stops.

After suiting up, we headed toward the cave entrance, and met a group of cavers from the Central Indiana Grotto (CIG). They were heading towards Berg's Squeeze and welcomed us to follow along. Their group hadn't all arrived yet, so we headed into the cave and decided to go to the Boat Club Entrance. Steve had been to Donahue Cave once, and Kevin thought he might have been there years ago. None of the group had been past the Ear Dipper besides me, so I led the way. After we made it to the Boat Club Entrance, we took a break enjoying the sun for a few minutes before returning to the cave.

After retracing our steps through the Ear Dipper, and heading back up stream, we entered the upper passage. We were headed towards Berg's Squeeze when we met the CIG group who had just returned from a short trip into Doghill Cave. They told us what they had found on the other side of the squeeze, and also informed us that the main closed entrance to Doghill Cave is supposedly now in the possession of a caver friendly owner.

We continued pushing toward the squeeze, but Steve realized that it was still quite a distance ahead. I mentioned the water and mud still to come, and it was decided to save the squeeze for another trip. Steve mentioned possibly doing a through trip entering one cave and exiting the other.

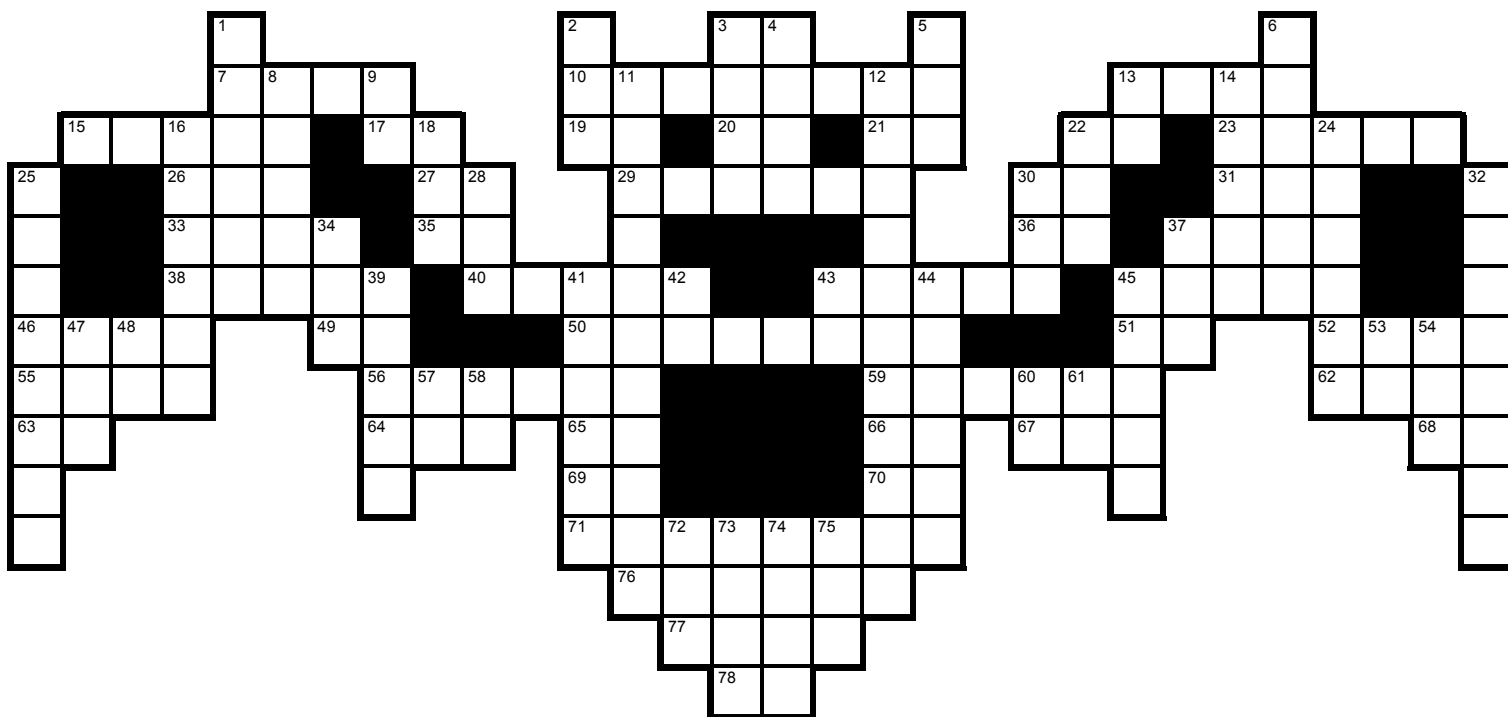
We started the hike back and along the way, Kevin, Michael, and I took the passage to the Hershey Crawl to see the pretties, and then we headed out of the cave to begin the journey home.

*Gerry Woltering, mud
connoisseur
extraordinaire, in
Binkley Cave. Photo by
Steve Frye*



Bat Cave puzzle *by* Bill Roth

- do you have what it takes to fill the bat???



Clues to Bill Roth's Bat Cave Puzzle

Across

- 3 Ascenders help you go here.
- 7 Exclamation prior to weekend cave trip.
- 10 Might describe either toughest caver or cave.
- 13 Rugose, another name for this old coral you could find in a cave. Don't blow this one.
- 15 The Danube, second longest European river, also known as this.
- 17 ___ttoral. Caves formed primarily by wave action of 30-down.
- 19 Abbrev. for country where Cape Peninsula Spaeleological Society meets.
- 20 Recurring Stephen King creature that was confronted in a cave by protagonists.
- 21 Abr___ion can be bad for your rope.
- 22 Coarse sediment, glacial ___ll.
- 23 Ancient language of Italy, change one letter and it's my balogna's first name.
- 26 What time will you get to the cave?
- 27 1800s tale of the Leatherman. He slept in caves in this state.
- 29 More likely to find one of a brachiopod than of a bear in a cave.
- 30 Cave ___ftly, please.
- 31 A ___d cave has no continued growth of formations.
- 33 This cave in South Dakota is one of the world's longest and most complex.
- 35 Get up there with a rop___alker.
- 36 Dom___it, includes shaft below plus one above that does not reach the surface.
- 37 Alabama cave that's historically had the largest wintering colony of gray bats in US.
- 38 KC (not Karst Conservancy) asked you to shake it in the 70s. Impetuous explorer might do this to it in a cave.
- 40 A language spoken in India. Add 1 letter and change another and you have tater tot maker.
- 43 Long Virginia cave system or the man Charlton Heston played in 1971 sci-fi flick.
- 45 Spend this currency if gearing up for a trip into Poland's Smocza Jama cave.
- 46 Might keep out people but not bats.
- 49 Rescue orgs, NCRC and ___SAR.
- 50 This speleological society is a non-profit membership org dedicated to scientific study of caves and karst; protecting caves and their natural contents thru conservation, ownership, stewardship, and public education; and promoting responsible cave exploration and fellowship among those interested in caves.
- 51 Say this to get another caver's attention.
- 52 _____-air pit, shaft with a large exposed surface entrance.
- 55 Call this on your friend's MRE dessert.
- 56 Drivers can lose more than this when a sinkhole opens up in a highway.
- 59 Wet part of this WV cave (dry part is Bone).
- 62 Cave mud might drive this kind of freak batty.
- 63 State with long lava tube called Lava River.
- 64 Exclaim this if you don't bring enough water.

- 65 Caves can be found in some of the 58 of these in the US.
- 66 An uppity knot was popularized by _r. Karl _rusik.
- 67 With a great deal of this, we respect a caver's endurance.
- 68 Cave acronym trio, ends in "G" and starts with these two.
- 69 One of Alaska's longest caves, __ Capitan.
- 70 Peel off the "SQU" and the "ZE" and what remains can just fit into this tight spot.
- 71 Look in this direction to find the sweep in your group of cave trekkers.
- 76 Eastern bluebird you might see in Mammoth Cave National Park. Change 1 letter and it's a special pharmaceutical aid.
- 77 1/16 ounce or 1.771 grams.
- 78 __trance, get into the cave here.

Down

- 1 Not as stretchy as a dynamic one.
- 2 Abbrev. for 50-across group.
- 3 Find a couple of these schools in KY to study karst. Brits might call them this.
- 4 Holes/shafts with significant depth.
- 5 Commonly misspelled 3-letter word.
- 6 Water rescue throw-bag might stay afloat thanks to this foam _____.
- 8 Busy bats make this.
- 9 Sheck Exley dove into caves in this state.
- 11 These candy-coated fruits are probably not the best snack to take into a cave.
- 12 Cave dwellers that may be brightly colored.
- 13 You could thank Pele for this state's tubes.
- 14 Cave Creek, AZ is probably more famous for decades of this event than for a cave.
- 16 ___man Skeets interviewed Floyd in Sand Cave, just a few mil__ from Mammoth.
- 18 Take a cable car to Eisriesenwelt, a large cave of this type in Austria.
- 22 String your rope through a device up above and have a belayer help you in ___-roping.
- 24 You might straddle a narrow one to travel along it.
- 25 Climbers who engage in suspended animation of a sort.
- 28 Take at least this many extra light sources.
- 30 Unlike advice in 28-down, you only need one if by land and two if by this, according to rhymer Longfellow.
- 32 First name of "Eye Cave System" in Tennessee or a room in Indiana's Sullivan Cave that you pass through to reach the emergence of the Sullivan River.
- 34 In *Cave Passages*, Michael Ray Taylor describes this well-known caver Coons as having "grace" both in his caving and in his driving of a Chevy Suburban.
- 37 Rare insect, the "terrible hairy ___", found in a cave in Kenya.
- 39 Steam caves are in this Hawaii city.
- 41 Smarter sounding version of *Dumb and Dumber* movie might end with this word?
- 42 Hopefully no soap-rings in our b__htubs from detergents in the water.
- 43 Padgett & Smith wrote __ *Rope*.

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

:



See us at:

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

Crossword puzzle clues - continued

- 44 Those married in caves could have done this.
- 45 Rodents and snakes in caves are mostly found in entrance _____.
- 47 Elevated levels of CO₂ or your friend's unwelcome bodily functions could contribute to a "bad" version of this.
- 48 Unsuccessful ___ hospital in Mammoth Cave. Moe told Curly he had this condition.
- 53 Fruit-shaped ___ar carabiner is narrower at one end.
- 54 Try not to drink or do this with things you find in a cave.
- 57 Expression of hesitation uttered if you're lost.
- 58 Initials for what one likely has after a wetsuit trip, or what *On Rope* says is the loudest one-syllable word you can shout.
- 60 ___D, gas-powered ascender by Nevin Davis. Plans for this appeared in 2/1969 NSS News.
- 61 Use an ___l to hand-sew your canvas or leather equipment.
- 72 Take these first items on your trip.
- 73 Describes the Texas blind salamander.
- 74 Don't count on subterranean signal strength for this or your cell phone.
- 75 Recl___ land after strip mining.

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!

Exiting the Peanut
Butter Passage in
Binkley. Photo by
Steve Frye.

