

## Chouteau Grotto Minutes from January 12, 2005

### Present:

*President:* Marck Schneider

*Vice-President:* Eugene Vale

*Treasurer:* Kevin Feltz

*Secretary:* Kathryn Devany DiFoxfire

*Other Members:* 6

**CALL TO ORDER:** Meeting called to order at 7:10 p.m.

### **REPORTS:**

#### **SECRETARY'S REPORT**

All minutes have reported to have been posted to the web except for July and August.

*Secretary's Notes:* In actually (after checking webpage) July-Nov. are missing from web page. July and Nov. were sent to Coolist, but Aug, Sept., and Oct. are still in limbo (I'll check my files and see if I can find them).

#### **TREASURER'S REPORT**

Current: 980.13 which represents an increase of \$80 in membership dues.

#### **MSS LIASON REPORT:**

*Discussion:* Apparently, to summarize a long discussion, there has been some confusion in our relations with MSS. In an e-mail from Jonathan Beard, forwarded to Coolist by Jo Schaper (who is the MSS Education chair), Chouteau was informed that some members of MSS were under the impression that Chouteau was no longer operating as a grotto.

1) *Submission of Annual Reports:* This stemmed in part from MSS reporting that they had not yet received our 2003 report and have not received other paperwork (such as articles for the *MSS Liaison* newsletter). The 2003 report was completed by past Chouteau president, Joe Dom; and our 2003 dues were hand-delivered by David Webster to Lisa McCann (MSS Treasurer) last year. We don't know why MSS didn't receive the 2003 report, but it will be hand-delivered along with the 2004 report by Rita Worden to the next MSS meeting Saturday, January 15, 2005. The 2004 report was completed by David Webster with help and input from other grotto members: Eugene Vale, Jo Schaper, Kirsten Alvey, Marck Schneider, Kevin Feltz, Kathryn Devany DiFoxfire, [any others?](#)

2) *Who is Chouteau's MSS Liaison /Representative?:* Another issue raised was that there was also some confusion on who was representing Chouteau's as our MSS Liaison. Rita Worden is our current MSS Liaison but Amber Spohn is mistakenly being listed on the website as the MSS Liaison. This confusion is related to the issue that Rita's schedule allows her to attend some but not all meetings. She managed to make all but one of the recent MSS meetings, but cannot always get to the Chouteau meetings to make timely reports, and she has difficulty sending e-mails from her home computer. Asking Amber last year to represent Chouteau was this group's attempt to find an MSS Liaison who could attend most of both group's meetings. Obviously, due to a lack of communication, this only compounded the problem.

*Secretary's Note:* Apparently, at the beginning of 2004, Amber (who was not present at the Jan. 2005 Chouteau meeting) had indicated a willingness to replace Rita Worden as the MSS Liaison but reported (according to the Feb. 2004 minutes) that "she didn't know she was the MSS liaison until last week of February."--and it was never confirmed. Amber also indicated in an e-mail to Coolist dated 1/11/2005: "I offered to be the rep way back when I was a member, but was never taken up on it. I don't know who put my name on [the website] because I was never informed that I was the rep. I apologize if people saw that and assumed that I was representing Chouteau, but I have not been. "

3) *Proxies need written authorization:* MSS requires that if we wish to send someone other than our current

MSS Liaison as a proxy, that person needs to bring a letter signed by the current president authorizing him/her to represent Chouteau. Kirsten Alvey suggested that the text of the letter read: "In the event that Rita Worden is unable to attend the Jan. 15 MSS meeting, I authorized \_\_\_\_\_ to represent Chouteau Grotto in her place. Signed, Marck Schenider, Chouteau President." Kirsten also indicated that a new letter is required each time; one cannot simply be kept on file with MSS. David Webster indicated that one person can only represent one grotto at a time. He was already representing MCKC and therefore could not represent us. Kirsten said she was going to the MSS meeting and could represent us if needed. Thankfully, Rita Worden showed up and eliminated any need for us to send a proxy. Rita reported that she had missed only one MSS meeting in the last year or two.

4) *Multiple Grotto Affiliations*: Chouteau's presence at MSS also sometimes goes unnoticed because our members who show up at the MSS meetings are often members of other grottos as well; people may be associating those members primarily with those other grottos and therefore adding to Chouteau's invisibility.

5) *Articles Not Being Submitted to Publications*: Another factor is that we lack a reporter, have not published an edition of *Chouteau News* or *The Foresight* for at least two years, and articles are not getting into the *MSS Liaison* newsletter (Jon Beard says he had not received any contributions since 2001). Eugene Vale pointed out that we used to send a copy of *Chouteau News* to Gary/Alberta Zumwalt who picked up some information from it to put in *MSS Liaison*. He and Kirsten are working on solving the computer problems related to *The Foresight*, so hopefully, we can get a copy to the Zumwalts and get some mention in *MSS Liaison*.

Rita also volunteered to pick up information out of the meeting minutes and edit them for submission to *MSS Liaison*. Kat will forward the meeting minutes to Rita's work e-mail, since she has difficulty receiving e-mail at home (she can read coollist but cannot respond to it).

Kirsten also pointed out that Chouteau members are listed in the *MSS Liaison*, but under other grottos submission. It would be nice if in parentheses are a name those person's other grotto affiliations could be noted so that Chouteau is not so invisible.

6) Eugene Vale also pointed out that much of this confusion could have been avoided simply by contacting the current officers. Not only do we have our own webpage (<http://chouteau.missouri.edu>), we also have our own chat list [chouteau@coollist.com](mailto:chouteau@coollist.com) and we are listed on the NSS web site at <http://www.caves.org/io/iolookup.php?state=MO>. If Jo Schaper wasn't on the MSS administration group list, we would still be ignorant of this problem.

7) *Thank you Jo*: Discussion concluded with many thanks to Jo Schaper for bringing matters to our attention and for writing e-mails on our behalf listing our accomplishments and offering explanations for why

## **FORESIGHT REPORT:**

Kirsten transferred all her data to a lap top computer and brought it to the meeting so that she and Eugene could work on it after the meeting.

*TO DO*: Ernie Bhend say he would compile a report with pictures for the 12-11-04 Hunter's Cave trip report and send it as a compressed file to Kirsten.

## **QUARTERMASTER'S REPORT:**

None. Mike was absent.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **GROTTO CAVE TRIP TO HUNTER'S CAVE:**

Marck, Mike (Morgan?), Jeff Roberts, Brent (last name?), Brett (last name?) participated. Juan (last name?) and his girlfriend (last name?) elected to not do the trip after reviewing the water crawl. Juan had brought rigging gear and perhaps expected a different kind of cave.

## **NSS REPORT**

Marck noted that he had received an e-mail from Keith Wheeland of NSS requesting our 2004 annual report.

## **GROTTO PICNIC**

Kat reported that she reserved Rock Bridge's Special Use Area for the third weekend in Sept. which is the 17th-18th (Sat-Sun). The fee is \$1 per person per night. If the grotto decides not to use it or to change the date, we can cancel.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

**CHOUTEAU'S WEBSITE:** Though it lists the current officers correctly (with the exception of the MS Liaison), some pages have not been updated in years. Many are last updated between 1999 and 2002. We discussed the need for a webmaster that regularly attends our grotto meetings. David Nevels offered to replace Mike O'Laughlin as the webmaster. Marck said he would check his e-mail on how to edit Chouteau's website and send it to David.

Kirsten reported that she could not find a link to Coollist on the website.

*Secretary's note:* I checked. It's listed under "Contact Us." I did not try the link to see if it worked. This page still lists Rita as President.

## **WINTER CAMPOUT**

Joe Dom pointed out (via Coollist) that Chouteau usually sponsors an annual winter campout around Presidents' Day Weekend (Friday-Monday, Feb. 18-19-20-21, 2005). Someone had suggested Meramac as a possibility. Kat spoke with Brian Wilcox, Interpretive Resource Specialist III at Meramac State Park (573-468-8155) to get more information.

These were the options:

**Green Cave:** Located in Hamilton Hollow Area. About a ½ walk to cave entrance, 90' high opening accessible via trail. Very wet cave, with cave spring. Some speleothems, 10' – 15' foot high ceilings, no side branches; estimated 45 minutes to explore. No permit required.

**Hamilton Spring:** Located in Hamilton Hollow Area, easy to get to. Three small side passages, waterfall, and some breakdown. Big fractured columns, back is muddy. No permit required.

**Paul Patrosky Cave:** Requires permit which can be issued same day. Wet, low crawl, small opening. Those under 18 need parent/guardian signature. Eugene added that there were very few places a person could stand upright in this cave.

**Lone Hill Onyx Cave:** Located in Meramac Conservation Area. Open recreation cave, no permit required. Some good sized room, some speleothems, but many vandalized. Stream passage has potential for new passage.

**Woodlands Lakes:** Privately owned by Greg Small of Meremac Valley Grotto. MVG found new passage including a new cavern. See their newsletter article for details. Kirsten said she would try to get in touch with Greg, possibly through a member of MVG at the MSS meeting.

*Closed Caves:* **Mushroom, Bear and Hamilton Caves** are closed. **Little Hamilton Cave** in Hamilton Hollow Area is open but not recommended for exploration this time of year due to presence of many bats.

*Camping:* Available on first-come, first-serve basis only. There may be problems with flooding in some campsites.

## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

**2005 Missouri Natural Resources Conference: Wed-Fri, Feb 2-4** held at Tan-Tar A near the Lake of the

Ozarks. For more info see: (<http://www.mnrc.org/index.html>) and follow the "Agenda" link to view the program. Note the special "Cave and Karst Workshop" on Thursday, organized by Dr. William Elliott and co-sponsored by the Missouri Department of Conservation and the Missouri Academy of Science Speleology Section.

Also note the special workshops on Friday organized by Dr. Carol Wicks of UM-C. Friday morning Dr. Wicks presents a session on "Missouri Groundwater Resources and Threats" and on Friday afternoon she will present a session on "Geology for Biologists".

**Mammoth Cave Restoration Camp: March 5-6** to kick off the year. For more info: <http://mcnprestation.com/rfc.html>

**Lewis and Clark Cave: March, date TBA.** Located along the Katy Trail. Kirsten has permission from landowner to set up a trip into the cave. Landowner wants cave resumes from those planning to attend. Preference was declared by several people for the date to be in early March (before March 19th).

**Spring Break, 2-3 day trip with Kirsten:** to Ozark Spring or Crocker, Dixon or Hancock quads. Spring break starts weekend of March 19-20.

**Spring VAR: April 29-May 1, 2005.** Greenbrier County, WV state fairgrounds, and hosted by Bubble Cave LLC. Some of the major caves in the area include Scott Hollow, Organ Cave System, McClung, Bone-Norman System, Portal-Boar Hole System (there's a tongue-twister), Friar's Hole System. A limited edition guide book is being prepared. There will be numerous trips scheduled including a kids rip and a teen trip. There is everything from horizontal beginner to advanced vertical caving. For information contact John E. Pearson at [jpearson@rcc.com](mailto:jpearson@rcc.com) or 304-497-3939 days or 304-497-3803 evenings.

**26th Annual Karst Field Studies program: June 5-25, 2005** hosted by the Center for Cave and Karst Studies, Western Kentucky University and Mammoth Cave National Park's International Center for Teaching and Learning. Eight week-long classes are being offered this year in Bowling Green, Kentucky, Mammoth Cave National Park and San Antonio, TX. All classes can be taken for college credit, continuing education credits or simply as a workshop. For more information, contact Annie Croft at [annie.croft@wku.edu](mailto:annie.croft@wku.edu)

**Missouri Academy of Science Speleology Section Meeting:** Fri-Sat, April 15 & 16, Lincoln University campus in Jefferson City, MO. If you would like to present a paper on April 16, submit an abstract by January 31. Contact David Ashley: [ashley@mwsc.edu](mailto:ashley@mwsc.edu).

**Spring MVOR?** Anyone know the date or if anyone is sponsoring it? Will there be a Spring MVOR? MMV is sponsoring the fall MVOR which may be the 50th anniversary date.

## **CAVE REPORTS**

**Twin Pits:** (County?)(date?) Marck Schneider, Jeff Roberts and Ernie Bhend ran into Rocky the Raccoon during an exploration of Twin Pits cave. Rocky, a huge cinnamon-bear sized beast who probably feasted on the last two cavers who entered the pit (only a slight exaggeration), had fallen into the first pit, after having already started to climb our previously. He fell in as they were starting to belay over to the second pit. He didn't hiss or growl, but his sheer size was enough to discourage exploration of the first pit. Marck, attempting to negotiate with Rocky said, "Hell, just climb out using the rope, You've got opposable thumbs!" Unfortunately, Rocky insisted on attempting a self-rescue the old-fashioned way thus forcing our cavers to move on to the second pit. Marck said he forgot how tight the squeeze was on the crevice of the second pit.

**Carroll Cave Survey:** (County?)(date?) Rita reported that Ben Miller, Bob Lerch, Amber Spohn and Andy (last name?) did a double overnight in the cave. Rita and others elected to sleep in beds and arrived fresh on Saturday the morning ready to go while those who had slumbered in the cave were still stumbling out of bed.

Rita reported Added perhaps 3000 feet to the survey almost to the Mountain Room pushing the total surveyed to about 40,000 feet so far. The Mountain Room will probably require an entire day just to survey that portion. Rita also noted that you only need be a member (of \_\_\_\_\_) in order to check out this cave. Memberships are \$15 per year.

**Hunter's Cave, Boone County, Dec. 10:** Ernie Bhend, Matt Nevels and one other person (name?) explored Hunter's Cave the week after Chouteau's trip.

Ernie reported that the repairs and changes made to the Hunter's Gate make it impossible to unlock the gate from the inside. The lock is a combination lock (rather than a key lock) and the numbers can't be read from the inside. This presents some major problems. Cavers with a permit to explore must either leave the gate unlocked or have someone on the outside waiting to let them back out. If the gate remains unlocked but the lock left on the gate, some concerned citizen might notice the lock was unlocked and lock it as a courtesy to prevent anyone from entering the cave and inadvertently lock cavers inside. If the lock is removed and brought into the cave, anyone could enter and permitted cavers exiting the cave may inadvertently lock in trespassers who wandered in after the original cavers began their trip. MDC needs to be made aware of these liability issues. A temporary solution suggested was for permitted cavers to bring their own key lock that can be operated from the inside and use it to lock the gate while inside the cave. I

During the trip, after the watercrawl, the cavers explored the T-junction to the R including Bad Acres and the Big Room. They saw some pips and some other bats (perhaps ½ dozen) that may have been grays. Their wings were further out than usual for pips, but they were too high up on the ceiling to see other distinguishing features. Eugene remarked that pips sometimes will hang with wings spread wider to dissipate heat if the weather turned unexpectedly warm. Rita said she noted bats flying by her house in December. Eugene pointed out that red and (hoary?) bats hibernate outside of caves.

**Tanyard Cave, Moniteau County, New Year's Day:** Landowner maps the cave mapped, sometime in March after trapping season ends. The landowner wants caving resumes on everyone who goes in. He has been sued in the past by a Boy Scout troop and wishes to avoid any further such incidents. The cave is located under a large sinkhole plain, one probably bigger than the Pierpont Sinkhole Plain over Devil's Icebox Cave. Kevin Feltz said he had visited that cave in the mid-'80s and it is a very wet cave with at least two sumps. The entrance is a collapsed sinkhole. Before the first sump, the water contains some deep and some shallow sections. Kevin had participated in creating some grooves to drain enough water from the 1st sump to allow a 10' long section with 3-5" of air space in dry weather. Past that sump, water continues to be at least waist deep to the second sump. Scuba divers have gone past the 2nd sump but only a few hundred feet.

**Brown Cave, County?, date?** Kirsten and Steve visited Bill Elliot regarding Brown's Cave and the possibility of setting up times to watch bats fly out of the cave.

**River Cave, Ha Ha Tonk State Park, Jan 8:** Kat DiFoxfire and Travis Smith (a Rock Bridge State Park volunteer and Devil's Icebox Wild Cave Tour leader) visited River Cave as part of Ha Ha Tonka's 1st weekend of the month River Cave Tour programs. Kat and Travis arrived early and explored a recently-opened trail outside the cave that highlights some of the karst features near the cave including a losing stream and some glades. Due to a very wet first week of January, the cave itself had experienced severe flooding as a stream flows into the gated cave entrance.

Since there were just four people (Kat, Travis and tour guides Larry Weeb and Alison who both work at Ha Ha Tonka) we were treated to a supervised exploration of the cave rather than a formal tour. Inside the cave, the tour guides noticed fresh graffiti. Someone must have climbed over the top of the gate. The main passage was cold and wet but tolerable: by the time Kat and Travis entered, the water level in the front half of the cave was only waist deep (instead of the neck-deep level from the day before).

They spotted about half a dozen grotto salamanders near the rimstone dams, and a newer deposit of gray bat guano (that had not been there the previous year) located in a crawlway behind the Christmas tree formation.

The main pile of bat guano, located about 15 feet above the cave stream, was covered with flood debris, and part of it was falling over the side of the slope into the cave stream which will make it difficult to get accurate guano estimates. The back half of the cave where the Ozark cave fish normally are found was too flooded to enter.

After the tour, they changed into dry clothes (Travis into the ones he brought, and Kat scrounging in her vehicle for spares as her nice pile of dry clothes was accidentally left at home on the couch by the door).

Fortunately, given the fact that her vehicle functions as either a giant purse or a mini-house, enough spare clothes were found including clean and dry socks and underwear. Afterwards, Kat and Travis checked out the park's castle, water tower, natural bridge, spring and boardwalk to the island. They decided to explore Island Cave on another day.

**Sinkhole Exploration:** Rita mentioned exploring some sinkholes near Jamestown. Some were new; some had opened up wider including one that had been covered about two years ago with a large rock that refused to budge. However, despite searching, instead of locating caves, the finds of the day unearthed only lots of junk cars and some old pallets.

**Big Lick Pit, Cooper County, off of Hwy 179 (date?):** Kirsten and Steve explored the newly-named Big Lick Pit. The landowner wisely decided to leave his name off the cave so that he won't be flooded with phone calls from strangers wanting to explore the cave. Though there was a contraption consisting of a beam and a bolt, Kirsten decided it would be safer to rig off a nearby tree. Once down in the pit, there was a way to explore further. However, you had to be small and be immune to the smell of something that had crawled into the passage and died.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

*None*

**MEETING ADJOURNED:** at 8:30 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Kathryn Devany DiFoxfire, 01/13/05

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