

## Chouteau Grotto Meeting Minutes

April 6, 2005

### PRESENT:

President: Marck Schneider

Vice President: Eugene Vale

Treasurer: Kevin Feltz

Secretary: Kathryn Devany DiFoxfire

MSS Liaison: Rita Worden

Quartermaster: Mike Morgan

Foresight Editor & Trip Coordinator: Kirsten Alvey

Webmaster: Matt Nevels

Members: 6

CALL TO ORDER: 7:08 p.m.

SECRETARY'S REPORT: Minutes still late due to personal time constraints.

TREASURER'S REPORT: \$1112.13

MSS LIAISON: No MSS since last Chouteau meeting. Next meeting will be May 14. Scott House is expected to release to the Associated Press news that Missouri has reached 6000 caves.

FORESIGHT REPORT: Kirsten's computer has had a power surge and is being rebuilt. Data previously should be able to be recovered. She has received reports on Turtle Pit, pictures of Hunter's Cave and the Chouteau trip to Lewis and Clark Cave. May need to split into two issues.

QUARTERMASTER'S REPORT: Lights and helmets continue to be popular items. They have been loaned out each month. However, it does not seem to result in any new members. A motion was made to charge a user fee of \$5 per item for non-members. Grotto members would still be able to borrow items free of charge. Rather than being simply a revenue enhancement, the fee is intended to help cover the eventual costs of replacing the items due to inevitable wear and tear. Motion was seconded passed unanimously. Non-member borrowers will therefore need to submit two separate checks, one for the deposit, and one for the user fee. FYI, Play It Again Sports on Business Loop in Columbia continues to have great deals. Ernie Bhend acquired a snowboarding helmet there for only \$10 (60% off retail price).

### OLD BUSINESS

Grotto Picnic is still scheduled for Sept. 16-17-18 with an overnight campout at Rock Bridge Memorial State Park.

Fall MVOR: Usually in October, usually right before TAG

Spring MVOR will be May 20-22 at the Tick and Chigger Ranch in southern Missouri west of Ava.

Grotto Trip to Lewis and Clark Cave March 13:

Nine people participated. They were in the cave from about 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and explored to the end of the mapped passage. The cave passage continued at least another 600 feet through a low, sandy water crawl, opening once into a 25-30' dome and then later into a room 10' by 10' with some minor graffiti (initials). The passage continued but the floor composite changed from sand to chert. Kat went back the furthest but did not continue into the cherty area as no one else wanted to venture that far back.

The group counted about 80 bats (almost all pips and 2 little browns), and lots of aquatic life in the pools.

Raccoon tracks were also noted through most of the mapped passage. The cave is also a summer maternity colony for gray bats and some guano piles were noted though none appeared to be fresh.

While somewhat sparse in speleothems, the ones that did exist were pleasing and included some spathite (sp?) soda straws.

Kirsten will arrange for a thank you card to set to the landowner who gave the grotto permission for the trip and to Jim Gast, Superintendent of Rock Bridge State Park who participated in the trip and gave permission for the group to access the cave via driving on the Katy Trail.

#### NEW BUSINESS:

St. Louis is sponsoring its 2nd annual Clean Water Celebration at the St. Louis Science Center October 7 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.. They are seeking submissions from organizations to participate in the event. We may wish to consider doing a karst flo model, a portable cave, or some other program. Deadline for submissions is Sept. 16.

#### UPCOMING EVENTS:

Grotto Trip: Kirsten is planning another grotto trip on May 7 in Holt's Summit area to check out a string of caves along route OO. Some of the larger ones have maps; most of the smaller ones don't. In addition to exploring the cave, the intent is to take GPS readings for the cave files. Foliage may be up so wear boots for protection from snakes. Directions: From Jefferson City, take Highway 54 E to Holt's Summit and meet at the shopping center by 10 a.m.: you'll see a Dollar General and a movie theatre.

Adopt-a-Cave: Mississippi Valley Grotto is sponsoring an Adopt-a-Cave weekend at Powder Mill Nature Center April 22 in Shannon County. Contact them for more details.

#### CAVE REPORTS

Carroll Cave, March 13. Rita helped with a bio survey in an area beyond the mapped passage from Upper Thunder area of the cave. It included crawling through a stream passage squeeze that was about 2' in diameter. As you crawled through, your body would block the flow of water flowing toward you and it would begin to fill the passage. Good motivation to crawl through quickly. Rita found and carried out a crowbar—a remnant of the 1st dif through a sinkhole. Rita volunteered to exit early with Andy and Jay, as they needed a 3rd person in order to move through the cave in accordance with Carroll Cave policies. She noted what appeared to be a gossamer gypsum beard several feet long and about 20 feet above the water level in passage U53 or U83.. The slightest air current would make it move. On the way out, their group also found some old-looking wood that they need to get to Charlie for carbon dating.

Amber Spohn also visited Carroll Cave, twice, and checked out some side passages.

Pulaski County: Kirsten Alvey and Steve Taylor checked out 13 caves and every ridge and valley recently in Mark Twain National Forest in Pulaski County. Six of those caves are new to the list. Some of the names include Purple Paint Shelter so named because of all the purple paint inside and Hidden Crevice which starts out as a crack and opens into a much larger cave. There was also Portal Cave, Fairview Cave, Lower Hooter, Davis I and Davis II and several others. Adventures included burying their vehicle so deep in mud in a farmer's field that it required a tractor attached to the ball and hitch to pull them out, and the tractor nearly got stuck, too. Nonetheless, they preserved and even continued caving once tempers settled somewhat.

\_\_\_\_\_ County: Amber, Kirsten and Steve checked out Osage River Cave on the weekend of March 2. The cave had obviously had few visitors and was loaded with biota. They surveyed the first 300 feet. Amber returned next week with Bob and mapped a section they dubbed "Flea Alley" for all the bites Amber acquired that weekend. Eugene asked if they were sure the critters were fleas, instead of caelembula (aka "snow fleas" or "spring tails.") which can be white and can dwell in lower temperatures. Amber is returning again with Andy Lerch. The landowner may give permission to do an annual bio survey.

Also in Pulaski County, Ernie Bhend, Jeff Roberts and Adam Perkins explored Grempczynsky Cave which is

a big cave with a single stream passage and some side passages. They came to a junction in the cave where one could trellis up rock on the left or wander through knee deep red clay on the right. The cave opens up into a formation area that goes on and on with a belly crawl area to avoid breaking the soda straws. They found a broken flash bulb and some carbide in the back, and the water passage kept going. Saw no graffiti or scratch marks. MSS through the Missouri School of Mines is re-mapping the cave, though the land owner may not be aware of the survey crew's presence. Animals included a dark-sided salamander, isopods and other aquatics, and lots of bats, mostly little browns and pips and maybe a few grays. Some were in pairs, none were in clusters. They also saw a big brown bat with noticeably chestnut colored furway in the back.

\_\_\_\_\_ County: \_\_\_\_\_ checked out a new pit on Forest Service Land near Paddy Creek. It was 20' deep and dead-ended both ways but a draft could still be felt. May have potential for digging.

\_\_\_\_\_ County: \_\_\_\_\_ checked out Buzzard Cave, a shelter cave visible along the bluff from a bridge. The back of the cave has quite a draft and may have potential for digging. Also saw another shelter, though it was less significant. Rita asked about a possible blowhole in the area, saying that one of the people responsible for establishing the wilderness area used to keep a slab of rock over a blowhole to prevent casual explorers from finding it.

Stone County: Amber Spohn and Ben Miller explored Dogwood Canyon and Hobbs cave in a section of the Arkansas border they could stand on a ridge and look 360 degrees and see no signs of civilization. They mapped 500 feet.

Last spring they found Joy Valley Mud Tunnel, but it ended in a sump. After periodically checking back, they noticed recently that the water level in the entrance which had previously been too high to allow them to enter, was now only a puddle. Naturally, they decided to explore. They were about 100 feet in when it began to rain. Amber noticed a seed floating down, and stuck a rock in the stream which was quickly covered with water. Within 10 minutes, the water had risen 7 inches. After some heavy persuasion to get Ben to abandon his mapping, they exited the cave. Water which had been 6 inches when they went in had risen to 2.5 feet by the time they exited. They decided mapping should continue, but only on dry weather days.

Other Caves: Some folks from Rolla and Amber explored Tunnel Spring which may surpass Smittle and Tumbling in length.

## OTHER BUSINESS

Alpine Shop Discounts: Paul Lowry, a caver and general manager of the local Alpine Shop sporting goods store approached Marck and asked if the grotto would be interested in a special day next month where grotto member could get 20 percent off any item in the store. More information will be available later.

Cave State License Plates: Missouri Cave Association (MCA) and Missouri Caves and Karst Conservancy (MCKC) have been working on getting the state to license plates that say "Cave State" instead of "Show Me State." In order to work toward approval of this project, they need people to state their interest and willingness to buy such a plate. They would be \$25 and could be personalized, though it is possible that personalizing them would include an additional fee. To respond with a "Yes, I would buy one of these plates," send an e-mail to caversquirrel1 at aol.com or call Alicia Lewis at 314-892-4351.

Chouteau Grotto voted to make Rimbach an honorary life member on April 6, 2005, and Eugene was to make him a card to that effect.

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Minutes respectfully submitted (in a reasonable amount of time this time)  
by Kathryn Devany DiFoxfire on April 10, 2005.