

Chouteau Grotto Minutes from November 2, 2005

Present:

President: Marck Schneider, absent

Vice-President: Eugene Vale

Treasurer: Kevin Feltz

Secretary: Kathryn Devany DiFoxfire

Other Members: 6

CALL TO ORDER: Meeting called to order at 7:07 p.m.

REPORTS:

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Kat arrived late. Vince deMarco took minutes for the first 15 minutes until Kat arrived. A correction to the October minutes was noted: Eugene and Jo did not camp the night of the grotto picnic.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Account Balance: 1222.13 which represents a \$6 increase (decals sales) from the previous month. Some decals (all 15?) were stolen from Kirsten.

Membership Dues Reminder: Membership dues are to be renewed at the end of the year.

MSS LIAISON REPORT:

Rita Worden, MSS Liaison, was not present at beginning of meeting, but Kirsten reported on MSS activities.

MSS 50th Anniversary: Dates and Location

Kirsten Alvey is in charge of planning the 50th Anniversary celebration of the Missouri Speleological Society (MSS). It is currently scheduled for June 23, 24, 25 at Meramec State Park. MSS is the first and longest running survey of caves in the United States.

MSS 50th Anniversary: Lodging

One reason for the event being at Meramec State Park instead of Carroll Cave is that Carroll Cave does not have adequate lodging facilities, especially for older cavers. Check-in for the event will be at Cabin 19 after 4 p.m., Friday, June 23. Costs for cabins are \$100/night for a 6-person cabin, \$160/night for an 8-person cabin, and \$200/night for a 12-person cabin. Cabins include AC, full kitchen, beds, running water and toilets & showers. Two cabins have Murphy beds. Rustic campsites with electricity are available for \$12.00/night. There is an additional \$10/person charge for any persons staying in the cabin above the maximum number designated for that cabin. Check-out will be 4 p.m. Sunday, though the staff cabin may have a later check-out time.

Grottos are being asked to sponsor cabin spaces for "old-timers," or cavers more than 55 years old, who are current or former members of grottos. Kirsten asked if the grotto would be willing to sponsor a cabin. Kirsten knows of at least two grottos that are financially unable to sponsor a cabin.

Mike Morgan moved that Chouteau sponsor a 6-person cabin. Motion seconded by Steve Taylor. The deposit of \$100 would need to be paid by the January MSS meeting with the remainder paid by the May MSS meeting. If the grotto sponsors a cabin and cannot fill it with old-timers, then the remaining spaces can be used by grotto members under 55 years old. Those people would split the costs of their spaces. If we wish to sponsor a larger-sized cabin, we can let Kirsten know by the January MSS meeting.

Kirsten asked for names of old-timers which we may sponsor. Some of the people whose names were suggested may or may not meet the 55-year-old requirement: Jim Huckins, Dave Webster, Rick Walk, Mississippi Dan, Scott Schulte. Someone needs to contact these people and see if they'd be interested in attending.

Motion carried. Kirsten will put on a note on the MSS Admin website that Chouteau will sponsor a 6-person cabin. Pony Express Grotto also plans to sponsor a cabin.

MSS 50th Anniversary: Caving Kirsten said that she will have permits to all the caves in Meramec state park for that weekend, and keys to all the gates; all permit-required caves will be closed to the general public that weekend. If 16-30 people makes reservations ahead of time, the park will also offer half-price tours of Fisher Cave. The park may also offer one or two off-trail tours: Spelunker's Paradise Tour and/or Hugh Dill Tour. Onondaga Cave State Park will also offer half-price tours of Onondaga Cave and possibly Cathedral Cave. Kirsten is still waiting to hear from Meramec Caverns on whether or not they will offer discounted tours. Kirsten will also have permits for nearby MDC caves and is working on permits for other privately-owned caves in the area (such as Fencepost).

There will be caves available at all levels from easy walk-ins to belly-crawling and ones requiring floatation devices. There will also be 50th Anniversary maps available that show all the cave locations.

MSS 50th Anniversary: Other Events

There will be a bonfire and weenie roast Friday night, and a banquet Saturday evening for \$10/person. People will be making videotape recordings of oral interviews of old-timers. Presentations will also be given at the amphitheater, including proclamations from state and federal officials. There will be a geocaching competition with caches located on or only 10 feet off of the various trails. The conference center will be available all day Saturday and maybe Friday and include historical displays including collections of patches to show 50 years of MSS history). Paul Johnson is looking for slides from early trips (1952-1962) into Devil's Icebox and Carroll Cave. Other events include door prizes and trivia contests.

Mike Morgan also moved that Chouteau sponsor the recycling of aluminum cans from the event as a fundraiser. Eugene moved that we table the motion until we can do further investigation on state park policies on recycling.

MSS 50th Anniversary: Other

An article on the event will be appearing in the Missouri Conservationist, Columbia Tribune, Kansas City Star, and other publications including possibly National Geographic. Missouri Outdoors already has its 2006 calendar full but will do a feature in 2007.

Several different T-shirt designs will be available to purchase for \$15-\$20 depending on the number printed. They need to be pre-ordered. One will feature "Caving 1956-2006," another "Rolling an Old-Timer," and a third will be a "The Professional Caver."

Matt Nevels will put links to the MSS and Meramec State park websites on the new Chouteau Yahoo!groups pages and Chouteau's website. We should also put it on the calendar and send out an e-mail to let people know it's there.

FORESIGHT REPORT:

Kirsten Alvey, Foresight editor, reported that she has constant problems with her computer. Three issues are backed up that Kirsten can't get out due to technical difficulties. Eugene said if she could get it to him, he would convert the files to PDF and upload it to the Yahoo groups files pages and send out an e-mail so people can check it out. Current reports include Ernie Bhend's trip to Lost Turtle Pit, Kirsten's report on the grotto's trip to Lewis and Clark last March, and on the grotto trip to Spring Cave.

Kevin also noted that we used to send copies to the Missouri Historical Society, the Division of Geology and Land Services (DGLS) in Rolla, the NSS headquarters and also the geology library at MU though the latter seemed to keep losing them.

Reminder: Please continue to send trip reports to Kirsten or Steve.

QUARTERMASTER'S REPORT:

Mike Morgan, quartermaster, mentioned that Kirsten will be returning the compass and clinometer, and that he couldn't find her deposit check but when he does, he'll tear it up.

OLD BUSINESS

Grotto Organization

Yahoo group e-mail list is now up and running thanks to Matt Nevels, Eugene Vale and Marck Schneider. Not all of the participants on the new list are paying members, and if we wish to ask them to pay, we should develop a membership form. Matt Nevels said he would be willing to develop a form if someone would get to him what information should be included on the form. Eugene said he would send Matt some suggestions for the form.

Kat developed drafts of two brochures, one of which was passed around the room. Eugene and Kirsten said they could send additional pictures to be included. No comment were made on the brochure.

Kirsten asked if there was any criteria for joining the grotto as several people may have questionable caving practices / caving ethics.

Winter Campout: Yet again, the date we've set for an event has conflicted with an MSS meeting. The next MSS meeting will be Jan. 21 which is the 3rd Saturday of January. Apparently we need to check our calendars better before planning an event. Mike Morgan said that he plans to camp in Shannon County near Powder Mill Cave and at Little Blair Creek--adjacent to Blair Creek in the L.A.D. Foundation/Pioneer Forest area. The area is difficult to find, especially in the dark, and the campground area quite remote. Many of the nearby caves are gated and controlled. Mike is still asking for assistance on researching what caving opportunities are available in that area. Kirsten said she would contact Scott House to see what she could find out about caves in that area. We should also check to see if the dates conflict with any hunting seasons (it shouldn't). More detailed directions will be made available later.

Elections: Three offices will be open; the grotto is currently accepting nominations for President, Vice President and Secretary. Current nominations include Eugene Vale for President, Marck Schneider for VP, Kevin Feltz for Treasurer, Vince deMarco for Secretary and Rita Worden for MSS Liaison. The grotto will continue to accept nominations until elections.

No further nominations were made but will continue to be accepted until the December meeting.
ELECTIONS WILL BE IN DECEMBER.

Cave Cleanup/Stream Team/New Memberships: Bonne Femme Watershed Project members Scott Schulte (former superintendent at Rock Bridge Memorial State Park) and Terry Freuh (Urban Water Conservationist) expressed a desire for the grotto to assist with cave cleanups.. Amber Spohn was corresponding with Terry and Scott but as she was not at the meetings, we have no further updates yet..

NEW BUSINESS

Membership Listing: Yahoogroups has a database option in which members may list their personal information to be shared with other members. This would be set up as a voluntary option. Matt will set up a database.

Coollist will continue to be active for a few more months while the grotto is making its transitional phase to the new e-mail list.

Moniteau/Cooper County Caving: Rita had not yet set up any trips for Cooper / Moniteau. Kirsten, however, thinks that she can set up for Nov. 12 to Schoolhouse cave aka Morris Cave. This is different than Oakland Schoolhouse cave. Meet at 9 a.m. at the only convenience store at the Overton/Wooldridge exit off of I-70. The entrance is large then tapers down. Vince and Dave and maybe Eugene can go. Kat and Marck cannot make it that date.

Grotto Trip Scheduled for New Year's Day: We discussed several trip options including Kirby or Bump Ridge for a grotto trip on New Year's Day. January 1 is a Sunday. We decided to check out four caves in Cole County near Jeff City: Arch Cave, Crabtree, Crevice, and Loudmouth. We will meet at 11 a.m. (which will give people time to recover from their New Year's Eve activities) at the convenience store in Brazito: Take Hwy 63 south to Hwy 54. Continue about 10 miles west on Hwy 54 to Brazito and look for the Rt. E. turn off. The convenience store will be off of that turn off. This is the same exit for Missouri Wildflowers. Kirsten will bring maps.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **River Cave Tours at Ha Ha Tonka State Park:** Dec. 3, Jan. 7, Feb. 4 These free, hour-long tours of River Cave will require participants to wade through 40 degree chest-high water and climb up and down slippery terrain. Participants can expect to see a variety of cave deposits, grotto salamanders, hibernating bats and southern cavefish. Reservations are required and can be made after Nov. 1. Kat is planning to go Jan. 7 and would also like to get a few people to come along and check out Island Cave (4-10 people and a permit is required).

- **Next Missouri Caves and Karst Meeting:** December 10, 2005

- **Grotto Trip New Year's Day** (see above).

- **2007 National Cave Management Symposium** will be in Missouri hosted by Powder Valley Conservation Area.

CAVE REPORTS

• **Aktuchan Cave, Mexico.** Vince deMarco. A shallow cave with lots of sinkholes, with tree multiple roots coming down from common holes in the ceiling and forming columns of root systems with mushrooms growing on the roots. While there were big bodies of water in the cave that he went scuba diving in, there were also lots of dry areas. The cave is privately owned, and the tour cost \$22. Information on the cave is available at www.aktuchan.com/home_eng.html. Five people participated on the tour. Critters included huge cave-adapted isopods, crayfish, blind cavefish. The area had just finished recovering from Hurricane Emily in August when Hurricane Wilma struck.

• **Boone County, Connor's Cave and Rock Bridge.** Marck Schneider was scheduled to lead a group of Webelo Scouts through some caves in Three Creeks Conservation Area but found that the dates conflicted with hunting season. So he led them instead to Devil's Icebox and Connor's Cave and under the Rock Bridge. They saw a dark-sided salamander in Connor's cave. They also went over safety procedures and caving equipment. They will reschedule a trip to go to Tumbling Cave in TCCA later. Four kids and 2 adults participated on the trip.

OTHER BUSINESS

• **River Bluff Cave Museum opens Nov. 17.** This is the cave Kirsten reported on earlier that was discovered when a road crew blasted into the side of a bluff one Sept. 11. In SW Greene County near Springfield. Directions: from Springfield, take Glenstone to Cox Road near Wildwood Haven golf course.

MEETING ADJOURNED: at 8:50 p.m. Eugene gave a program on how to read UTM coordinates on topo maps.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Kathryn Devany DiFoxfire, 11/07/05