

**MINUTES OF THE
KANSAS CITY AREA GROTTO
JANUARY 2018 BUSINESS MEETING
HELD WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 10TH, 2018 – 7:00 P.M. TO 9:00 P.M.
ARTHUR MAG CONFERENCE CENTER – 4920 CHERRY ST, KCMO**

The meeting was called to order at 7 p.m. by President Jack Peters. The following members were present: Josh Bookout, Bill Gee, Cliff Gill, Kristen Godfrey, Tom Grant, Laura Jaynes, Kyle Lewis, John McGuire, Jack Peters, Jax Peters, Nathan Taylor, and Pic Walenta. Guests present: Becca Marlin.

Presentation: Thomas J. Grant, PhD, PE gave an exceptional talk on Dark Zone Archeology. He shared about Patty Jo Watson, whose career was defined by her pioneering endeavors in dark zone archeology, and worked a great deal in the Mammoth Cave System. Dark zone archeology had been ignored for a long time; while caving and archeology certainly overlap, often the two interests take on slightly different cultures. Cavers tend to help make some of the most important archeological discoveries in the dark zones of caves, yet at the same time may easily overlook significant details in their eagerness to burrow further, searching for new cave.

Grant elaborated on some archeological finds in the dark zone, one place being at Salts Cave where the salts had desiccated archeological artifacts, preventing bacteria from decomposing them. From around 200-1000 B.C., Eastern Woodlands Native Americans had been extensively mining gypsum and mirabilite there. Soot from cane torches marked the ceilings along their path, and 2.2 miles in the cave were footprints in mud. Paleo feces have proven greatly important; these samples can be radio carbon dated, provide insight to their paleo diet, identify the time of year from pollen content, health status (parasites), DNA (gender—almost all were men), and cultivation practices (recognize whether seeds were cultivated or wild).

Mummies have also been found in the dark zone—Little Alice (who turned out to be a 9 year old boy), Fawn Hoof (found with “grave goods” or a ritualistic burial), and Lost John (pinned under a boulder after digging too deeply). Analysis of these remains are immensely helpful in discovering more about ancient peoples. Pictographs are also useful, and some of the best examples are from cave art. Pictographs tend to last in a cave, where they are sheltered from usual forms of erosion on the surface. The Cumberland Plateau contains more cave art than nearly all the rest of the U.S.

Officer reports: President Jack Peters and Vice-President Bill Gee had nothing new to report in their capacities as officers, this was their last meeting fulfilling these specific officer positions.

Secretary: Laura Jaynes had sent out last month’s minutes via email. There were no objections; a motion was made and passed to accept the minutes.

Treasurer: Pic Walenta reported \$848.50 in the treasury; this was her last meeting serving as Treasurer.

Officer Elections: As the first meeting of the New Year, officer elections were held as usual. President Jack Peters, Vice-President Bill Gee, and Treasurer Pic Walenta stepped down from their previous positions. The new officers ran unopposed and were elected unanimously: President: Pic Walenta, Vice-President: Jack Peters, Secretary: Laura Jaynes, Treasurer: Bill Gee, MSS Director: Jim Cooley.

Quartermaster: Remains the same, except Pic now has the projector.

Carroll Cave Conservancy: The future of cave access and land ownership has been in question the last few months. Bill Gee relayed that Rick Hines said there has been some discussion, but no additional meeting set up yet with the landowner, his attorney, or state affiliates. With Rick being out of town, probably nothing will happen until late Spring.

MSS & MCKC: Jim Cooley was not present.

Novice and Scout trips: A scout trip to Cleveland Cave is scheduled for the weekend of March 16th, 2018. Jack is looking to schedule Breakdown Cave.

Hickory County: Not much new to report. Gary Johnson was not present, but Bill reported on his and Laura's trip from November 28th. It was a productive trip. There is probably another hundred feet or so at the back of the cave that would be great to get surveyed, but it became incredibly chilly surveying in the very wet stream passage. Another trip was scheduled for December 28th, but the weather proved too cold to make the trip work. It is uncertain whether MDC will decide to extend the permits in to 2018.

Cloud 9: Lee Krout was not present. See Upcoming Trips for information on the annual bat survey.

White Nose Syndrome: It's everywhere. See <https://caves.org/WNS/>.

Fundraising: There is still plenty of opportunity to volunteer with the Grotto's anticipated fundraising concert and auction May 12th, 2018. If you are interested in helping with any aspect of this event, please contact Pic at picwalenta@aol.com. During the meeting, we were updated on a few details, such as the expected vendors, port-a-potties, event insurance, etc. Please keep watch for emails regarding planning meetings and opportunity for involvement. Apparel was available for purchase after the meeting.

Trip Reports

Carroll Cave November Photo Trip: Went well, some of Josh's photos turned out how he hoped, some not.

Carroll Cave Data Logger Trip, January 6th: Was a good trip. Serviced the data loggers, installed a new data logger below thunder falls. There were no significant flood events in 2017, and no power in the silo.

New Member Nomination: Kristen Godfrey has attended three Grotto sponsored trips, fulfilling the membership requirement. A motion was made and passed, we welcome Kristen as our newest member!

New Business: None.

Jack Peters verified there was no unfinished business. The meeting adjourned, whereupon members repaired to Minsky's Pizza, 5105 Main Street, KCMO, for speleofellowship, libations and cheesy comestibles.

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UPCOMING TRIPS

January 13th-17th: MTNF, Eleven Point Ranger District, contact Jim Cooley at coolstoi@kc.rr.com for information.

January 27th-29th: Allie Spring and Mill Creek Caves survey, Dixon, Missouri, contact Jim Cooley at coolstoi@kc.rr.com for information.

February 16th-19th: Annual Cloud 9 Ranch Bat Survey, West Plains, Missouri, contact Jim Cooley at coolstoi@kc.rr.com if interested. (Also see Jim's email sent to the Grotto on January 24th regarding this trip)

February 17th, 2018: Basic and Intermediate Survival Training hosted by Hiking the Ozarks. The event is \$30 and is held from 9a.m.-4p.m. in Ozark, MO. For more information and to reserve a spot, visit <http://hikingtheozarks.com/event/basic-and-intermediate-survival/>.

February 24th, 2018: Go Bats for Bats Family Workshop, Powell Gardens, Kingsville, MO, 1:00-4:00PM. Includes kit and construction of a plywood bat house, cost is \$85 per family. Visit <https://us.eventbu.com/kingsville/go-bats-for-bats-family-workshop/9166083> for additional information.

March 16th, 2018: Cleveland Cave scout trip. Contact Jack Peters at jack@peters2000.com.

April 9th-15th, 2018: Butler Hollow Cave Gating, Mark Twain National Forest, Seligman, Missouri. We will build two horizontal cave gates on mined caves, in an area where we have already built ten mine closures. If interested, contact Cooley at (816) 753-8111 or coolstoi@kc.rr.com.

April 20th-22nd, 2018: Spring MVOR, Indian Springs Campground, Steeleville, MO.

April, 2018: Big Piney Float, cave monitoring. TBD.

May 12th, 2018: KCAG Fundraiser Concert and Auction. At the home of Rick & Kay Hines, Stillwell, KS. Featuring Violet and The Undercurrents, and Casual Foodie food truck.