

**MINUTES OF THE
KANSAS CITY AREA GROTTO
FEBRUARY 2018 BUSINESS MEETING
HELD WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 14TH, 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 Pic Walenta. The following members were present: Heidi Fletcher, Bill Gee, Cliff Gill, Kristen Godfrey, Laura Jaynes, Kyle Lewis, Jack Peters, and Pic Walenta. Guests present: Felicia Beard, Jon Beard, and Becca Marlin.

Presentation: Our guest was Jon Beard, long time caver from Springfield, MO. He gave an excellent presentation on Cave Restoration; Jon has used Breakdown Cave essentially as an underground laboratory and classroom, learning what works in different areas of cave restoration. Jon elaborated on several aspects such as trash, graffiti, and mudstain removal, as well as stalagmite and stalactite repair. He emphasized it's important to think first and be prepared, determining what kind of restoration will be done, what supplies will be needed, the necessity of landowner approval, and to document before and after. He shared photos with each project type. Many restoration projects require much of the same equipment, but each situation may have unique needs.

Trash removal is not just about aesthetics; wrappers and cans can alter the delicate ecosystems of caves and may attract the wrong critters. Determining whether to remove wooden beams and boards is often a judgement call. With some old rotten wood, the ecosystem may have adapted to it by that point. Any CCA (chromated copper arsenate) treated wood is certainly toxic and wise to remove.

Grffiti removal too is not just aesthetic. A big warning before removing graffiti: look for petroglyphs or pictographs under the spray paint. The least invasive tools should always be used first, working along the grain of the rock or in a circular motion. One controversial method is the use of muriatic acid, a partially diluted hydrochloric acid. Many cave managers do not allow it. Jon dilutes it further and uses it sparingly. There are some situations where nothing else has worked, but muriatic acid removed the paint. Mudstain removal (from hands on formations and such), requires just about the same supplies and processes as graffiti removal.

Stalagmite reattachment—where gravity is your friend! Find the matching piece, clean and dry them, then basically glue them back together with a thin film of epoxy. When Jon worked for 3M, he would receive adhesive samples allowing him to test what worked best in repairing cave formations. Jon shared the story of “Big Boy” from Meramec Caverns, a stalagmite that ended up being over three feet tall once repaired. The nearby “Big Girl” ended up a foot taller.

Stalactite reattachment—where gravity is *not* your friend. This requires the additional supplies of clamps, and possibly tripods. Then determine whether it can be drilled into to be secured. For instance, draperies are typically too thin to drill holes.

For floor Restoration, consider, is it capable of repairing itself? These projects may include caver quagmires, looter dig pits, and stream crossings. Ecosystem restoration, which includes sinkholes, involves removing trash, helping air flow, and protecting biology (Ozark Cavefish).

Occasionally these repairs fail, either naturally or due to vandalism; Jon is usually able to tell which one. Jon plans to continue working in Fitzpatrick Cave, where he has 700 pieces cleaned and ready to match, 16 done so far. Breakdown cave has had 954 successful reattachments in 34 years.

Officer Reports

President: Pic Walenta reported she was leaving the next day for Mammoth Cave, to join an expedition with the CRF Eastern Operations, and cook for the camp.

Vice President: Jack Peters had nothing new to report.

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: Bill Gee reported \$1825.50 in the treasury as of the end of January; the PayPal balance is \$196.14. Dues are due if you have not paid them. Bill also brought a tub of freebie items left by Josh Bookout. Apparel was available for purchase.

Quartermaster: Remains the same.

Carroll Cave Conservancy: Bill Gee shared there will be an upcoming trip to re-anchor the new data logger and to rehang the rope light in the shaft.

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; more volunteers are needed to help with repelling. Breakdown Cave is set for April 14th. June 5th will be a trip to Cleveland with Heidi and a girls group.

Hickory County: Gary Johnson was not present.

Cloud 9: Lee Krout was not present.

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

Fundraising: Pic recapped the current plan for our May 12th fundraiser. Tickets are \$25 each, with 150 to be sold. BYOB and bring your own chairs. If you are interested in helping with any aspect of this event, contact Pic at picwalenta@aol.com. Pic has sent out information for the event via email, please continue to keep watch for emails regarding tickets, opportunity for involvement, etc.

Trip Reports and Other News

Allie Spring: Bill Gee reported that two weeks ago (relative to the meeting), he joined a survey trip where the team worked in some quite tight, wet portions. A 2nd entrance was found; they came up in a cave that Jim Cooley and Ken Grush had been working in called Shifty Rock Pit. Also during that trip, the landowner's brother entered Cascade Caverns on his own; when he had

not returned, the landowner asked Bill, Brenda Goodnight, and Rita Warden to investigate. They found the brother had gotten stuck, and thus helped him get free and return to safety.

Pony Express Grotto (St. Joe): Kyle Lewis had attended their Christmas Party/Meeting, Kyle shared with them about our fundraiser. They also have some float trips coming up that we may receive more information on.

MO Western: Bill shared that Steve Potter is teaching a Caving 101 class at Missouri Western State University; they are planning to visit Skaggs Cave on March 17th.

Unfinished Business

Meeting Place after 2018: We will no longer be able to meet at our current location upon the end of the year. We are in search of other viable options near the area, suggestions are welcome.

New Business: None.

Pic Walenta verified there was no further unfinished business. The meeting adjourned, whereupon members repaired to Minsky's Pizza, 5105 Main Street, KCMO, for good food and a great company.

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UPCOMING TRIPS

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

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

March 20th, 2018: Raytown Rotary Club, Pic and Laura speaking about the grotto.

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 14th, 2018: Breakdown Cave, Springfield, MO. Contact Jack Peters at jack@peters2000.com.

April 20th-22nd, 2018: Spring MVOR, Indian Springs Campground, Steeleville, MO. The Grotto has reserved a group camp spot right on the river.

April 22nd, 2018: A group will be leaving from MVOR to backpack the Ozark Trail, Courtois Section II, hiking about 10 miles. They will be camping on the trail that Sunday night. Contact Pic Walenta at (816)665-5588 or picwalenta@aol.com, or Shawn Williams at (314)583-7039 or sosifrk@yahoo.com.

May 11th-19th, 2018: NCRC week long training in Mentone, AL.

May 12th, 2018: KCAG Fundraiser Concert and Auction. At the home of Rick & Kay Hines, Stillwell, KS. Featuring Violet and The Undercurrents. Tickets are for sale now!

June 5th, 2018: Cleveland Cave trip with Heidi Fletcher and a girls' group.

July 30th-August 3rd, 2018: NSS convention, Helena, Montana.