

**MINUTES OF THE  
KANSAS CITY AREA GROTTO  
NOVEMBER 2019 BUSINESS MEETING  
HELD TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 19<sup>TH</sup>, 2019 – 6:30 P.M. TO 8:30 P.M.  
ANITA B. GORMAN CONSERVATION DISCOVERY CENTER  
4750 TROOST AVE, KCMO 64110**

The meeting was called to order 6:30 by President Pic Walenta. The following members and guests were present: David Ashley, Sharon Ashley, Mike Banks, Jeff Bowman, Tierney Bowman, Seth Colston, Kelly Ellston, David Foran, Ginny Friedrich, Bill Gee, J. Brent Gerling, Kristen Godfrey, Rick Godfrey, Thi Gorman D.J. Hall, Emily Hayes, Laura Jaynes, Gary Johnson, Jay Kennedy, Nick Kennedy, Don Meier, Jeff Page, Emily Rennek, Shannon Robinson, Melissa Shipps, Nathan Taylor, Sam Taylor, Pic Walenta, Houmin Zhong.

**Presentation: Dr. David Ashley, Missouri Cave Life**

Dr. Ashley taught biology at Missouri Western for 33 years, retiring in 2015. He now lives in the Springfield area. Cave biology holds a special spot for Ashley, he has taught numerous classes on the topic and continues to enjoy sharing his knowledge. Cave biology is the study of the factors affecting the distribution and abundance of cave species.

To start, there are four aspects of cave zonation: the entrance, twilight zone, zone of complete darkness, and zone of constant temperature. The entrance zone has lots of green stuff, ferns, flowers, moss, etc. The twilight zone varies in distance, depending on the path of a cave (straight shot, curves).

Dr. Ashley showed the temperature profile for a typical Ozark cave, and spoke on Mean Annual Surface Temperature—MAST. You might notice in a cave that some areas may be cooler or warmer than others. This affects organisms dwelling in the cave.

Accidentals: Some cave life isn't meant to dwell in a cave. Ashley spoke on insects and other animals that aren't supposed to be there, and if they can't get out, they won't survive. He shared an example from a trip in a cave in Perry County, where they found tadpoles that belonged in a pond. Inevitably those tadpoles would not survive. It's just not the right environment for them.

The entrance zone can host snakes and other critters. A variety of organisms are called troglaphiles, "troгло" meaning cave, "phile" meaning loving. They love cave conditions, but are not necessarily restricted to caves. An example is the Cave Salamander, which is often found on the surface as well. Stygophiles are the aquatic dwelling version. Troglonexes/stygoxenes are creatures who don't spent their entire life in cave, for example, bats. Bats leave at dusk to feed on insects.

Many older cave gates were not conducive to bats, forcing the bats to leave and find another cave. This is not as easy on the bats as it sounds. Not every cave is the same with cooler/warmer zones conducive to their needs. We've gotten better at gating in a way that allows bats to still comfortably use caves. You can sometimes find bear prints in caves; they don't hibernate like bats but will find refuge from the elements (that qualifies them as troglonexes!). Troglobionites and stoglobionites—a broader term for cave life.

Some organisms are cave adapted, an example being cave fish. They have minimal pigmentation, no eyes (it requires a lot of metabolic energy to produce eyes), and a low metabolic rate. Dr. Ashley shared photos of a planarian flatworm, and an incredibly small cave snail within his wedding band. Cave crayfish and grotto salamanders are also cave adapted, the salamander is born pigmented, but as it grows and leaves the water it loses pigment and eyes are fused shut.

When it comes to documented cave life, it matters a lot of who has been in/out, how they documented, and what they are documenting. It is easy to overlook small creatures such as the snail he showed.

In MDC's publication of Missouri Species and Communities of Conservation Concern from January, 2019, of the 70 species listed, 50% are karst species, 8% bats, and 83% invertebrates. Troglobionite community risk factors include: nutrient poor environment, few primary producers, decomposer communities. There isn't photosynthesis in a cave, but there may be a little bit of chemosynthesis.

Ashley shared a graphic of the cave food web. There are very few links in the cave food chain! Who is the "lion of the Serengeti" in a cave? Maybe a salamander or cave fish... there are so few links, so these little creatures are often at the top. Caves with high bat populations have higher biodiversity, because of a higher input of nutrients.

WNS has greatly affected bat populations and has spread across North America, inherently affecting the nutrient input in caves. Another invasive species is surface crayfish entering cave systems. A good effort is being made in working on removing them.

Anthropogenic factors are: us. What we do on the surface distinctly affects what happens underground, including how we use farmland, and how we manage wastewater. Cavers—watch where you go and what you do!

The "E words" of karst biodiversity:

Endemic— species that only live in certain areas (i.e. Ozark salamander), limited population

Endangered— in danger of being lost

Extirpated— gone from an area or areas, may be elsewhere

Extinct— gone

Expensive— Costs money to go caving, protect wildlife/cave life, protect the watershed, conservation

Dr. Ashley left us with a favorite quote of his:

"In the end we will conserve only what we love. We will love only what we understand. We will only understand what we are taught." -Nana Dioum, Senegal Conservationist

Dr. Ashley also brought some copies of A Guide to Missouri's Cave Life, an MDC publication. It is available online at:

<http://www.mospeleo.org/sites/default/files/Attachements/A%20Guide%20to%20Missouri%20Cave%20Life.pdf>.

The archived version of the March 2000 Missouri Conservationist spotlighting karst and caves can also be found here: <https://www.missouriconservation.org/conmag/2000/03/missouri-cave-life>.

## Officer Reports

**President:** Pic Walenta has renewed our contract/agreement with the Anita B. Gorman Conservation Discovery Center for another year for our meetings. She recognized Shannon for purchasing the masks and goggles for restoration projects, and the donation for rope.

**Vice President:** Jeff Bowman had no cave trip reports, but a couple weeks before had gone to the Archambault cabin at Allie Spring.

**Secretary:** Laura Jaynes distributed the minutes from the October meeting via email, they were accepted as written.

**Treasurer:** Bill Gee shared that membership dues are due at the beginning of the year! You are welcome to pay before then. Bill will have the treasury bag with him at the Christmas party, or you are welcome to use PayPal on the KCAG website. Bill mentioned an idea of changing the PayPal amount to be that of our actual dues and to absorb the fee rather than upcharge those who choose to pay with this method. This matter is on the agenda to be discussed in January. The DistoX2's are built and have been used! Still working out the kinks with one of them. The treasurer's report is detailed below.

October beginning balance = \$3575.25 (Commerce Bank)

Deposit = \$20.00

Checks = \$409.94

Debit card = \$0.00

Bank fee = \$5.00

End balance = \$3180.31

----- Activity:

Income:

Patches = \$20.00

Expenses:

DistoX2 boards = 409.94

Bank fee = \$5.00

=====

October beginning balance = \$162.14 (PayPal)

No activity.

End balance = \$162.14

=====

October beginning balance = \$62.00 (petty cash)

No activity.

End balance = \$62.00

**Carroll Cave Conservancy (CCC):** Rick Hines was not present, he was in Borneo! See Trip Reports for Bill's info on the bat census trip. Contact Rick at [rickhines@aol.com](mailto:rickhines@aol.com) for more information and visit [www.carrollcave.org](http://www.carrollcave.org) to stay up to date.

**Missouri Speleological Survey (MSS) & Missouri Caves and Karst Conservancy (MCKC):** The next meetings for both organizations will be January 25<sup>th</sup>. See Upcoming Trips for

opportunities with MSS/MCKC. MSS newsletters (i.e., “The Liaison”) are available at <https://www.mospeleo.org/newsletter>. Contact Jim Cooley at [coolstoi@kc.rr.com](mailto:coolstoi@kc.rr.com) for more information.

**Novice and Scout trips:** See Trip Reports. There was a trip scheduled for November 22<sup>nd</sup>. Contact DJ at [dj.hall@rangerdj.com](mailto:dj.hall@rangerdj.com) for more info.

**Hickory County:** See Trip Reports. Contact Gary Johnson at [gary.johnson@imagesjournal.com](mailto:gary.johnson@imagesjournal.com).

**Stark Caverns Survey Project:** See Trip Reports. Contact Bill Gee for additional information, [bgee@campercaver.net](mailto:bgee@campercaver.net).

**Mosby Cave:** No new information. Contact Pic Walenta, [picwalenta@aol.com](mailto:picwalenta@aol.com).

**Old Spanish Cave Restoration Project:** The next trip was set for the weekend of November 22<sup>nd</sup>/23<sup>rd</sup>, Seth and Kirsten were assigned to running tours, Jeff would be surface side doing cleanup. For more info contact Pic Walenta [picwalenta@aol.com](mailto:picwalenta@aol.com).

**MVOR:** At the beginning of the year we may start having designated committee meetings. Mark your calendar for the weekend of September 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020 at Eagles Nest Campground. The theme is Mudstock. There is plenty to work on! For more information, contact Pic Walenta, [picwalenta@aol.com](mailto:picwalenta@aol.com).

**MeetUp:** Use it! 😊 Sign up to and show you will be attending meetings and events; visit <https://www.meetup.com/Kansas-City-Area-Grotto/>. Contact DJ Hall ([dj.hall@rangerdj.com](mailto:dj.hall@rangerdj.com)) for more information.

**Cloud 9:** Lee Krout was not present, so there was no new report.

**Cave Spring Park Association:** Pic recently talked with Iz Groceman. They’ve hit a wall with funding. Things seem to be on pause for the time being.

**Devil’s Icebox:** See Trip Reports. The cave length has decreased to 6.8 miles, with the use of new surveys and equipment. The old map is from the 1960’s.

**Quartermaster:** Contact [picwalenta@aol.com](mailto:picwalenta@aol.com) for more info on who-has-what.

**White Nose Syndrome:** See <https://caves.org/WNS/> for the most current map of WNS’s reach.

**Fundraising:** Contact Pic at [picwalenta@aol.com](mailto:picwalenta@aol.com) for more information. T-shirts, coffee mugs, beanies and patches are available for purchase.

**Presentations:** Have an idea or topic for a presentation? Let Pic know! Can never plan too far ahead. See Upcoming Events for scheduled presentations.

## **Trip Reports**

**Bill Gee** shared he had done three trips in the previous four weeks. Seth and Hou joined him on the **Carroll Cave** bat census trip, they only did half of the trip because their fourth person couldn't make it (would prefer a full team for the more arduous full trip). They saw no live bats, saw many grotto salamanders. It was Bill's first time going to Carroll with the new gravel going to the silo, it's great! At **Stark Caverns**, Bill was joined by Jeff, Kristen, Jon Beard, and Martin Carmichael for survey. They split into two groups and used the DistoX2's. The next trip there is in January. The Carroll Cave census trip will be finished February 8<sup>th</sup>. At **Allie Spring**, Bill shared that Dennis Novicky and Dennis' son did some tight survey. The group surveyed 100-125ft that Friday, and ~200ft that Saturday. Allie Spring is near 2 ¾ miles now.

**Ginny Friedrich** went to **Onyx Mine Cave** in Fiery Fork Conservation Area with Jim Cooley and Julie Cottrell. The Onyx Mine map is finished.

**Seth Colston** had three trips, one was a scout trip to **Perkins**. It was DRY, no water! Everyone made it through.

**Jeff Page** had a meeting for the Devil's Icebox **Cave Institute**.

**D.J. Hall** shared that he explored **Roubidoux Spring**.

**Gary Johnson** shared on two trips into **Elkton Cave**. On October 23<sup>rd</sup> he went with Jim Cooley and three members of the landowner family; they got to the Bat Room where they saw about 2,500 gray bats. They went on and found more bats along the stream passage. Afterward, the landowner grilled them rib-eye steaks and potatoes. It was a GREAT trip! November 2<sup>nd</sup> was a more substantial trip, with 16 landowner family members, 12 from the sinkhole owners, four from the bluff entrance owners. The Sinkhole owners are "goers": they rappelled in, wanted to see everything and go everywhere. The bluff owners were a bit more hesitant. Seth Colston said it was a good time. Dr. Jay Kennedy said he was still cleaning harnesses from the trip and ended up with a carabiner that wasn't his. Nick Kennedy and Hou Zhong also enjoyed the trip.

**Pic Walenta** shared that Howie of **Howie Harnesses** is making harnesses and repairs again! Ask her for his phone number. Nick Kennedy said his harness from Howie is the best one he's ever had.

### **New Business:**

**2020 Officers and Chair Positions:** All positions will be voted on at our next meeting, January 21st, 630PM. Pic Walenta and Bill Gee have offered to continue in their positions of President and Treasurer, respectively. VP Jeff Bowman and Secretary Laura Jaynes will be stepping down. After the meeting, Seth Colston expressed interest in the VP position. We are still looking for a secretary candidate; if you have questions about the position, please contact Laura Jaynes, [sherman612@live.missouristate.edu](mailto:sherman612@live.missouristate.edu). Jim Cooley is willing to stay on as MSS Director.

**Membership Dues:** Jeff mentioned the idea of introducing a Lifetime Membership option. Often when organizations utilize this the fee is around 10 or 12 times the due amount. Something to discuss at the January meeting.

**Unfinished 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 libations, great food and even better company.

# # #

## UPCOMING TRIPS & EVENTS

**November 22nd** - Old Spanish Youth Resto Trip  
3.5 hour drive. Stone County, Reeds Springs MO.  
Camping and meals provided  
If interested contact Pic Walenta at [picwalenta@aol.com](mailto:picwalenta@aol.com)

**November 27th - Dec 1st** - Thanksgiving Expedition  
CRF Eastern Division, Hamilton Valley Research Center  
9 hour drive, Bunk house and meals provided  
Must be a CRF member to attend. to join CRF - <http://www.cave-research.org/MembershipInfo.php>  
If interested contact John DeLong, [mcthanksgiving@yahoo.com](mailto:mcthanksgiving@yahoo.com)

**November 28th - December 1st** - CRF Survey and Monitoring on the Buffalo National River  
Upper District, monitor and survey cave and karst features  
Working out of the Steel Creek facility, meals provided  
If interested contact Kayla Sapkota, [kayla.sapkota@gmail.com](mailto:kayla.sapkota@gmail.com)

**New - November 28th - December 1st** - Irish Wilderness Survey Trip  
About a six hour drive, Oregon County  
Survey Amphitheater Cave, short canoe trip and backpack  
If interested contact Jim Cooley, [coolstoi@kc.rr.com](mailto:coolstoi@kc.rr.com), 816-753-8111

**December 2nd - 22nd** CRF Ozark Region Work Detail  
Bio-inventorying, bat surveys and mapping survey  
Southern Missouri/Shannon County  
Bunks and meals provided  
If interested contact Scott House at [scott\\_house@hotmail.com](mailto:scott_house@hotmail.com)

**December 14th - Annual KCAG Christmas Dinner Party**  
**No Monthly Meeting**  
**Home of Rick and Kay Hines**  
**BYOB and a dish to share**  
**RSVP to Rick Hines at [rickhines@aol.com](mailto:rickhines@aol.com)**

**December 18th - 22nd** - Winter Monitoring and Mapping BNR

Buffalo National River - Steel Creek Facility  
Ponca, Arkansas

If interested contact Kayla Sapkota, [kayla.sapkota@gmail.com](mailto:kayla.sapkota@gmail.com)

**December 27th - 30th** - New Year's Expedition

CRF Eastern Division, Hamilton Valley Research Center

9 hour drive, Bunk house and meals provided

Must be a CRF member to attend. To join CRF - <http://www.cave-research.org/MembershipInfo.php>

If interested contact Ed Klausner, [Klausnere@gmail.com](mailto:Klausnere@gmail.com)

**January 11th** - Annual Carroll Cave Data Logger Trip

Camdenton County, Easy trip

If interested contact Bill Gee at [bgee@campercaver.net](mailto:bgee@campercaver.net)

**January 25th** - KCAG Monthly Meeting

Presenter Tom Grant

"Prehistoric Cave Art"

630 PM - Anita B. Gorman Building

4750 Troost Kansas City, MO. 64110

**New - January 25th** - Stark Caverns Survey Trip

Eldon, MO. 2.75 hours away

Continued re-survey of commercial cave

If interested contact Bill Gee, [bgee@campercaver.net](mailto:bgee@campercaver.net)

**January 25th** - MSS/MCKC Meeting

10 AM

Rolla, MO.

If interested contact MSS Director Jim Cooley [coolstoi@kc.rr.com](mailto:coolstoi@kc.rr.com)

or MCKC Board member, Nicole Ridlen at [cavingsiberians@yahoo.com](mailto:cavingsiberians@yahoo.com)

**February 8th** - Winery at Bluff Dwellers Cave with MoBat Census Bio Trips

163 Cave Rd. Noel, MO. Mc Donald County

More details to follow

If interested contact Nicole Ridlen at [cavingsiberians@yahoo.com](mailto:cavingsiberians@yahoo.com),

or Kirsten Alvey-Mudd at [cavechef@gmail.com](mailto:cavechef@gmail.com)

**New - February 8th** - Carroll Cave Bat Census Trip

Wet suit required. Long difficult trip

If interested contact Bill Gee, [bgee@campercaver.net](mailto:bgee@campercaver.net)

**New Extended dates - February 13th - 17th, 2020** - Mark Jones 60th Birthday President Day

Mammoth Cave Expedition

CRF Eastern Division, Hamilton Valley Research Center

9 hour drive, Bunk house and meals provided, fee attached

Must be a CRF member to attend. To join CRF - <http://www.cave-research.org/Membershipinfo.php>

If interested contact camp mgr. Pic Walenta, [picwalenta@aol.com](mailto:picwalenta@aol.com) or Expedition leader Mark Jones, [speleok9@gmail.com](mailto:speleok9@gmail.com)

**February 18th - KCAG Monthly Meeting**

Presenter Bill Gee

"Longest Rappel in the World"

630 PM Anita B. Gorman Building

4750 Troost Ave Kansas City, MO. 64110

**March 17th - KCAG Monthly Meeting**

Presenter Craig Williams

"C.A.I.R.N. - Cave Archaeology Investigations and Research Network"

630 PM Anita B. Gorman Building

4750 Troost Ave Kansas City, MO. 64110

**New - April 3rd - 5th - Boone County Novice Trip**

Co-sponsored with Chouteau Grotto

Camping and communal meals provided

More details to follow

If interested contact Pic Walenta, [picwalenta@aol.com](mailto:picwalenta@aol.com)

**New - April 17th - 19th - Food Foraging for Wild Edibles**

Boone County, close to Columbia

This is a pre-collecting hike for our Wild Edibles presentation at the April monthly meeting

Camping provided, communal meals

If interested contact [picwalenta@aol.com](mailto:picwalenta@aol.com)

**April 21st - KCAG Monthly Meeting**

Presenter Kirsten Alvey-Mudd

"Wild Edibles - Cooking and Eating"

630 PM Anita B. Gorman Building

4750 Troost Ave.

Kansas City, MO. 64110

**New - July 27th - July 31st - NSS Convention**

Elkins, West Virginia

If interested <https://caves.regfox.com/nss-convention-2020>

**Date Change - September 18th - 20th 2020 - OUR MVOR**

Hosted by KCAG and Missouri Bat Census

McDonald County Noel, MO.

If interested on serving on a committee contact Pic Walenta, 816-665-

5588, [picwalenta@aol.com](mailto:picwalenta@aol.com)



**If you have trips you would like to add, ideas for trips that you would like to organize and share with our members, please contact Pic directly, [picwalenta@aol.com](mailto:picwalenta@aol.com).**