

Minutes of the Kansas City Area Grotto
April 2020 Business Meeting
Held Tuesday, April 21st, 2020 – 6:30 to 7:45 P.M.
Meeting Held Remotely on Zoom

The meeting was called to order by president Seth Colston. The following members and guests were present: Jen Bell, Kristen Colston, Julie Cottrell, Ginny Friedrich, Bill Gee, Kristen Godfrey, Laura Jaynes, Jay Kennedy, Nick Kennedy, Kate Knapp, Jesse Kovak, Jeff Page, Brandy Riggs (from Seattle! Hi, Brandy!), Seth Colston, Darla White, and Houmin Zhong. There were two other Zoom attendees who your secretary did not recognize and who could not be positively identified, a Jennifer Gleason and a Dr. Eli Morse. Whoever you are, WELCOME TO ALL!

Presentation: Unfortunately, no presentation occurred at this meeting due to last-minute cancellation by the intended speaker.

Officer Elections: Jim Cooley was nominated and accepted as Vice President. Seth Colston will update the NSS with the current officer list.

Officer Reports:

President: Seth reports that bat handling is currently on hold due to concerns of infecting bats with COVID-19. Additionally, the spring MVOR and the NSS convention have been canceled. The fall MVOR is still on.

Treasurer: Bill Gee reports that Pic will, at some point, need to be removed from the Commerce Bank account. Bill will wait to progress with this until the bank lobbies have been reopened, since the presence of Pic's name on the account has not caused any issues. Additionally, Bill presented the following information:

April 2020 meeting - Treasurer's report

March beginning balance = \$2915.31 (Commerce Bank)

Deposit = \$

Checks = \$

Debit card = \$98.94

Bank fee = \$5.00

End balance = \$2811.37

Activity:

Income:

Expenses: \$98.94 (Meet-up subscription six months)

Bank fee = \$5.00

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March beginning balance = \$355.02 (Paypal)

Dues - Zach Lavicky = \$22.50

Dues - Cliff Gill = \$22.50

Donation - Josh Bookout = \$15.00

Dues - Seth Colston = \$15.00

Fees = \$2.86

End balance = \$427.16

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March beginning balance = \$67.00 (petty cash)

End balance = \$67.00

Secretary: The February 2020 meeting notes were accepted. No meeting occurred in March.

Quartermaster: Seth Colston reports that Pic's house and belongings have been given to the bank; however, prior to this, he was invited to take anything he could use after Pic's family had been through the house. Seth took many pieces of caving and camping gear. The gear primarily consists of miscellaneous individual items, but there was a large number of hiking backpacks and camping utensils. Seth and Bill Gee intend to make an inventory with pictures for eventual use on the grotto's new website. For the meantime, the gear is being stored at Seth's house, and anyone who needs to borrow gear is encouraged to contact him.

Fundraising: No updates. Contact Seth Colston (swcy92@gmail.com) or Bill Gee (bgee@campercaver.net) for more information.

Presentations: Please contact Seth Colston at swcy92@gmail.com if you are interested in giving a meeting presentation or have a topic idea. See the Upcoming Events for scheduled presentations and future meetings.

Fall MVOR: Shannon Robinson has received some large items as donations for the auction. The t-shirts will be arranged by the person who had previously intended to make t-shirts for the now-canceled spring MVOR.

Carroll Cave Conservancy (CCC): A surface work trip occurred in February. The trip focused on updating the power layout, though some of this work is still left to do. The March trip was cancelled, and there are no trips currently scheduled, but on future trips, volunteers will dig a trench, bury lines, and run power cords.

Jim Cooley, CCC nominating committee chair, is looking for people who are interested in leadership roles in the Carroll Cave Conservancy. Help is needed to get the organization fully staffed. The next CCC meeting is scheduled for July 25th, place to be announced.

Missouri Speleological Survey (MSS) and Missouri Caves and Karst Conservancy (MCKC): Jim Cooley reports that all MSS and MCKC outreach activities have been cancelled. He expects that the May meetings will be canceled as well.

Novice and Scout Trips: Seth Colston led a novice trip to Perkins Cave in March. No other novice or scout trips are currently scheduled.

Hickory County: No report, as Gary Johnson was not present.

Cloud 9 Ranch: Jim Cooley reports that he is continuing to work on drafting the cave maps. He had intended to schedule a trip for map QC as well as new data in the spring, but this will be pushed back to mid or late summer.

Lee Krout had been interested in putting together a weekend cave rescue seminar at Cloud 9 in April 2021. However, due to current events, this is on hold. The eventual goal of the seminar is to train Cloud 9 rangers and Ozark County first responders in cave rescue, in case of any incidents occur at Cloud 9.

Stark Caverns Survey Project: Bill Gee led a trip to Stark Caverns on March 21, just before the stay-at-home order went into effect. The Grand Canyon area was surveyed, but some re-sketching is needed due to errors. No new trips are currently scheduled.

Old Spanish Cave Restoration Project: No updates.

Cave Spring Park Association: On hold indefinitely and will be dropped from the agenda. Laura Jaynes will update everyone if this changes.

Mosby Cave: No updates.

White Nose Syndrome: See <https://caves.org/WNS/> for the most current map of the spread of WNS.

Devil's Icebox: Jeff Page reports that the May trip has been canceled and all other trips are on hold.

New Membership Nominations: None.

MeetUp: Prior to the lockdown, there was a good response on MeetUp for novice trips. Seth Colston proposes a new policy that trips only be listed on the MeetUp page at the discretion of the trip leader.

Contact Seth Colston (swcy92@gmail.com) or DJ Hall (rangerdjhall@gmail.com) to add trips to the MeetUp schedule.

Trip Reports and Other News:

News: Bat handling is on hold due to COVID-19, and caving near bats is under review. Jim Cooley reports that since Chinese bats can serve as carriers for a variety of coronaviruses, it is possible that infected cavers could pass COVID-19 to American bats via droplet transmission. The bats could then serve as a disease reservoir, as they currently do with rabies, making it more difficult to completely extirpate the virus in the United States. Cooley says that the Fish and Wildlife Service and the U.S. Department of Agriculture have established an emergency taskforce to decide (a) if COVID-19 is detrimental to bats, (b) whether a reservoir could be established if the virus is passed to the bats, and (c) if infected bats can infect humans.

Cooley's cartography of the long-awaited Flippen Cave map is approaching completion. We started this project in 2010 and did additional surveying work in 2011 and 2012. Cooley will send the final map out via the grotto email list once it is finished. This will be one more step toward making Flippen Cave a permit-access, MCKC-managed camping and caving destination.

Bill Gee is designing a new website for the grotto, since the current website is very difficult to edit. The NSS offers all of its internal organizations (such as KCAG) free web hosting, and Bill has been

asking since September for permission to set up a site for us. He has now received permission and has drafted the site. Benefits of the new site include easier editing and options to submit trip reports and upcoming trips, while the primary negative is that only files 2MB or smaller can be uploaded, so the old issues of *The Guano* will not be able to be stored on the new site. The new site will be available for general use in one to three weeks. The change in website will not affect the email server.

Bill Gee, Kristen Godfrey, and Marcus Brown visited Stark Caverns for survey work, as previously described.

Seth Colston led a novice trip to Perkins Cave in March. Participants included Jesse Kovac and Jen Bell. All of the novices were athletic and enthusiastic, and they went through the entire cave in four hours.

Seth Colston took a trip to Buffalo National River on March 7th for cave monitoring.

Eight people, including Jeff Page, Kristen Godfrey, and Rita Wharton, took a trip to Skaggs Cave. Jeff recommends this cave for use on novice trips, as there is no hiking required and there are some good formations near the entrance of the cave. Some specifics, for future reference: Only three cars can park at the cave, so Jeff suggests that cavers park at the disabled veterans' store and carpool to the cave from there. Jeff can be contacted for more info.

Jim Cooley and Julie Cottrell, Jay Kennedy, Nick Kennedy, Zach and Stephanie Lavicky and their two kids, Martin Carmichael (president, Chouteau Grotto), Krista Bartel, and Stephanie Galloway (Chouteau) and her three kids went to Cleveland Cave on March 8th to do repair work on the ladders and ropes. Some of the folks camped. The ladders were affixed securely to the walls with bolts and ratchet straps to avoid sliding, and a worn rope was replaced with webbing, which will be significantly easier to use. In addition to the safety work, this trip served to train new people to be trip leaders for Scout trips to Cleveland Cave. The landowner wants only experienced grotto members to lead Scout trips, for several reasons, including that there is potential for cars to become stuck at the campsite if there is unexpected rain.

In the future, Jim Cooley will need substantial help with a cave gating project near Ozark County. The cave is a major gray bat site (potentially a maternity colony) that Ken Grush and Cooley began surveying in February. Government mitigation money has been directed towards gating this cave and Cooley (through the CRF) has been asked by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to design a bat-friendly cave gate. The most likely design candidate is a *cheval de fries*-style rigid fence gate around the small depression in which the entrance is found. Bad news: It's on a VERY steep hillside. Cooley is currently working out the details, but assuming nothing derails the project in the meantime, this gating effort will likely occur either in September/October 2020 or spring 2021.

New Business: Julie Cottrell has volunteered to revive *The Guano*, the grotto's periodic publication that gives updates on caving trips and other grotto projects. Due to our current volume of cave trips, *The Guano* will not be a monthly publication and will instead occur only when enough articles have been accumulated, with a goal of quarterly publication. **Cottrell is currently asking for article submissions (with pictures) from any grotto members who are interested in participating. Please send these to coolstoi@kc.rr.com.** Old issues are available as PDFs on the current KC Grotto website. Please check them out!

Unfinished Business: Seth Colston confirmed that there was no unfinished business. The meeting adjourned, and the members were returned to their regularly scheduled daily lives (or lack thereof!) with hopes and dreams of future in-person meetings over pizza.

Upcoming Trips and Events

If you have trips you would like to add or ideas for trips that you would like to organize, please contact Bill Gee, bgee@campercaver.net or Seth Colston, swcy92@gmail.com.

Meetup - Everyone is encouraged to get on board, participate, list your trips, and sign up for trips on our meetup page: <https://www.meetup.com/Kansas-City-Area-Grotto/>

COVID-19 update: Almost everything in April and May has been canceled or delayed. Check with the trip leader before you set out to attend any of these events. The entire Kansas City metro area, along with large parts of Missouri, are under stay-at-home orders at least through the end of April. Caving does not qualify as essential travel.

CANCELED: May 1st - 3rd - Spring MVOR

St. Clair Missouri

Lost Hill Resort on the Meramec River

Sponsored by Jessica Tygett-Self and others

ONLINE: May 19th - KCAG Monthly Meeting

Presenter - Mark Jones

Topic - Craters of the Lost Moon Project

6:30 PM

Zoom conference, details not yet determined

May 22-25 - Mammoth Cave Survey Trip Memorial Day Weekend

Must be a member of CRF- Eastern Operations to attend

Contact Kristen Godfrey at vogel_kris@yahoo.com

June 27 - KCAG summer picnic

All cavers and guests are welcome to our annual summer picnic. The date and place are not yet set, but it will be probably be some Saturday in June.

June 12-20 - NCRC Cave Rescue Operations Seminar

New York state just outside of Albany.

<http://ncrc.info/News/Additional%20Files/NCRC%202020%20National%20Weeklong%20Brochure%20-%20mailer%20-%20home%20print.pdf> for more information.

Boys & Girls Clubs (K-12) MDC Outdoor Programs - Need Volunteers

James A Reed Wildlife Area

Tuesday, June 23 through Friday, June 26, 2020 - 10:30am-3pm

Contact Wendy Parrett at Wendy.Parrett@mdc.mo.gov or 816/759-7305 ext. 1133 for additional details.

July 11 - Carroll Cave data logger service trip

A fairly easy trip for Carroll Cave. 5 or 6 hours in the cave.

If interested contact Bill Gee, bgee@campercaver.net

July 21st - KCAG Monthly Meeting

Presenter - Bill Gee - What happens to survey data after leaving the cave?

6:30 PM

Anita B Gorman Building

4750 Troost Ave. Kansas City, MO. 64110

July 24th - Iowa Grotto Picnic

Camping, Caving, Survey and auction fundraiser

Fayette County, Iowa

Contact klausnere@gmail.com for more information.

July 25th - Carroll Cave Conservancy annual members meeting

Time and place are not yet determined.

CANCELED: July 27th - July 31st - NSS Convention

Elkins, West Virginia

If interested <http://nsscon2020.org/>

July 30 - Aug 2 - HCRU Cave Rescue class

Union Grove, Alabama

<http://www.hcru.org/rescueclass>

August 29th - September 5th - 19th International Symposium on Vulcanospeleology

Catania, on the island of Sicily, Italy

<http://www.19isvetna.com/>

If interested contact David Foran, caver_skier@hotmail.com

September 18th - 20th MVOR

Hosted by MOBat Census, Bluff Dweller's Cave, and KCAG

McDonald County - Noel, MO

If interested in serving on a committee contact Kirsten Alvey-Mudd, cavechef@gmail.com or Nicole Ridlen nicoleridlen@gmail.com