

Minutes of the Kansas City Area Grotto
October 2020 Business Meeting
Tuesday, October 20th, 2020 – 6:30 to 8:00 P.M.
Meeting Held Remotely Via Zoom

The meeting was called to order by president Seth Colston. The following members and guests were present: Jen B, Seth Colston, Jim Cooley, Julie Cottrell, Ginny Friedrich, Bill Gee, Jennifer Gleason, Kristen Godfrey, Matthew Hernandez, Rick Hines, Kay Hines, Gary Johnson, Jay Kennedy, Jeff Page, Shawn, Houmin Zhong

Presentation: No presentation occurred at this meeting.

Officer Reports:

Treasurer: Bill Gee reported that there was essentially no bank activity in September.

September beginning balance = \$2676.37 (Commerce Bank)

Deposit = \$0.00

Checks = \$0.00

Debit card = \$0.00

Bank fee = \$5.00

End balance = \$2671.37

Activity:

Income: \$0.00

Expenses: \$0.00

Bank fee = \$5.00

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September beginning balance = \$427.16 (Paypal)

End balance = \$427.16

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September beginning balance = \$67.00 (petty cash)

End balance = \$67.00

Vice President: Nothing to report.

Secretary: Nothing to report. The September meeting minutes were accepted.

Quartermaster: The digital quartermaster's list will be available in the future. Until then, contact Seth Colston or Bill Gee to borrow gear.

Due to some previous issues with reserving gear, specifically the DistoX2s, Bill suggests that a website be set up to manage reservations; one of the various free websites for equipment reservation could be used. In addition, Bill suggests that in order to reduce complexity, there should be a central point of contact for reservations, most likely Seth, since he has the gear.

Novice Trip Coordinator: Kristen Godfrey recently led a small novice trip (see trip reports below). No other updates.

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

Presentations: A fair number of people have postponed presentations until they can be held in person, so KCAG is in need of presenters for future meetings. Please contact Seth Colston at swcy92@gmail.com if you are interested in giving a meeting presentation or have a topic idea. Since all meetings will be held remotely for the foreseeable future, Seth suggests that future presentations should be in the half hour range rather than an hour long.

Carroll Cave Conservancy: Jeff Page reported that the gate to enter the property has been moved fifty feet off the road and has been altered to open in rather than out. This is a major safety improvement and will eliminate the danger of parking in the blind spot on the main road while unlocking and opening the gate.

Rick Hines reported that the landowners' trips that he arranged and supervised were all successful. There were five trips, two led by Taylor on Saturday, two by Seth on Sunday, and one by Martin Carmichael of the Chouteau Grotto on the following Saturday. Terry Wayne was brought out of the cave via the winch, but all guests did well. The trip report is on the CCC website.

A work trip to Carroll Cave will be scheduled for later this year. There is no definite date yet, but there may be work days on two separate weekends. Cleanup of the aboveground land is needed, with some metal that needs to be hauled off to salvage and some detritus that needs to be burned. The cleanup may involve a "reward trip" into the cave.

Bill Gee reported that the CCC email lists (one for the board of directors, and one for all other CCC members) are both currently hosted on Yahoo Groups, which will soon be permanently shut down. Bill has created two new email lists hosted via groups.io and has sent out invitations to everyone on the old email lists. Anyone who receives an invitation should sign up for the new email list(s).

Missouri Speleological Survey (MSS) and Missouri Caves and Karst Conservancy (MCKC): Ken Grush attended the MSS meeting at Berome Moore Cave as Jim Cooley's proxy. Krista Bartel has replaced Scott House as vice president. The next meeting will be held January 23rd at 1:00 p.m.; this meeting is usually held at the MO Geological Survey in Rolla, but there is no information yet on whether the meeting will be held in-person or remotely this year. An MSS-hosted restoration trip will occur either November 7th or 14th to scrub graffiti.

International Year of Caves and Karst (2021): Contact Seth Colston if you have ideas presentations or want to lead a trip in 2021.

NSS update: None.

MVOR: Jeff Page attended the MVOR hosted by the Daedalus Grotto and reported that the spring 2021 MVOR has already been scheduled, but no one has yet committed to hosting the fall 2021 MVOR. The KCAG will not sponsor an MVOR in the foreseeable future.

Novice and Scout Trips: Seth reported that there has been a lot of interest lately in novice trips. He intends to hold a novice trip in November, potentially on the 7th or 14th, though he may push it back closer to Thanksgiving. Others are encouraged to lead novice trips if they feel comfortable doing so.

Hickory County: Gary Johnson reports that he has been lying low due to the pandemic. He was contacted by the family that owns Elkton Cave to see if he would lead a trip in November as he usually does, but he responded that he'll be skipping this year due to safety concerns.

Jim Cooley and Julie Cottrell visited Nemo Cave #1 on Pomme de Terre Lake to start a survey. They spent two days in the area and reported that the back half of the cave had standing water about a foot deep, and the whole cave was "chock-full" of pickerel frogs. The cave contains no formations, though it does have some crystals. Nemo Cave #1 is 135 feet long and will require one more trip to complete the survey.

Cloud 9 Ranch: Jim has not talked to Lee Krout yet, but the plan is still to hold a biosurvey trip in February.

Stark Caverns Survey Project: Bill Gee reported that, as in September, no surveys have occurred, and no new surveys are scheduled due to the increase in coronavirus infections in Missouri.

Old Spanish Cave Restoration Project: No updates.

Cave Spring Park Association: No updates.

Devil's Icebox: No KCAG members have yet made it into the cave. Kristen had one trip and Seth had two trips planned, but all were cancelled due to rain. There may be a trip scheduled over the winter, though, and Roxy does regular surface trips to remove invasive species.

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

MeetUp: Seth is currently the head organizer of the MeetUp account, since DJ Hall is moving and Pic Walenta has been removed from the account. He suggests keeping the account for the future since it has been bringing in new members for the grotto. Contact Seth (swcy92@gmail.com) to add trips to the MeetUp schedule.

New Membership Nominations: Matthew Hernandez was nominated and accepted as a new KCAG member. Matt attended the September meeting in-person and quickly attended three grotto trips between then and the October meeting. Welcome, Matt!

Trip Reports and Other News:

Jim Cooley, Bill Gee and Jason White went on a trip to Hellmuth in October, from Monday through Saturday. Bill was present Monday through Wednesday; Jason, a caver from southern California, was present from Monday through Friday, and Jim was present for all days.

On Monday, the three cavers surveyed 51.5 feet of the lower stream passage in Cave Spring Cave before becoming cold from the water. After lunch, they returned and surveyed into the upper passage. There are multiple upper-level leads still to be surveyed in this cave, plus additional leads at the end of the cave.

On Tuesday, the cavers went ridge walking in search of a hole "in the middle of nowhere." Unsurprisingly, after several hours of searching, they were unsuccessful in finding this vaguely described potential cave. They then visited Devil's Hole Cave, a cave with a thirty-foot drop,

which Jim intends to resurvey in the future. Devil's Hole Cave connects to Upper Cascade Caverns.

On Wednesday, the three cavers surveyed in Enloe Cave. This cave has a low entrance that opens into a room 200 by 300 feet large and 40 feet high. This room, which is full of chocolate pudding mud, has a side passage with an upper and lower part. Jim, Bill, and Jason surveyed the upper portion for thirty survey stations to a non-climbable pitch and reported that the lower portion is full of mud.

On Thursday, Bill departed and Jim and Jason drew line plots for Enloe Cave, did a QC check on Quarry Cave, and visited Quarry Ballroom Cave.

On Friday, Jim and Jason visited Lost Silver Cave. They pushed a side lead, measured guano, and started a survey from back to front. This cave is 2000 feet long and, based on the guano, contains up to 41,000 gray bats in the summer.

Finally, on Saturday, Jason departed, and Jim spotted four deer. Cooley and Gee intend to return in early December to continue the survey projects.

In the third weekend of September, after the Carroll Cave work day, Jim, Matthew, Bill, and Seth visited Joe Cave. Line plots were previously drawn for this cave, so they did some sketching in the upper and lower passages. The upper passage survey is halfway finished, and they paused the lower passage survey due to the presence of a nest of six to seven hundred gray bats.

Seth, assisted by Bill, is beginning a new survey project at Geronimo Cave (also called Geronimo Spring Cave) near Mack Creek, MO. Bill began the survey of this cave more than ten years ago and was forced to stop when the landowners changed, but now that a new set of caver-friendly people own the land, the survey project can start again from the beginning. This cave has a very tight initial entrance, 12-14 inches square, which opens into a 120-foot belly crawl in a stream, followed by a hands-and-knees crawl into the first room. The cave is not incredibly decorated, but it does have some formations and a waterfall and is around two to three thousand feet long in total. The first survey trip was scheduled for November 1st.

Ginny Friedrich (myself) went on a four-day trip to the Devil's Backbone Wilderness in mid-October with Shawn Williams, Rita Worden, Corey Maize, and several day-trippers, including Jessie Bridges and Kayla Sapkota. The group collectively visited five caves: Phlox, Columbine, Freeze-Ur, Maidenhair, and Forbidden Caves. Surveys were begun on four of the caves and completed for the fifth, Columbine, which had previously never been entered due to a large boulder blocking the entrance. Freeze-Ur and Forbidden Cave had previously been mapped very cursorily in the 1970s, while Phlox and Columbine were both recently discovered caves. During the whole trip, only one bat was spotted.

Gary Johnson found a new cave in Jackson County along the Blue River. The entrance lies near to a hiking trail, and the cave goes fifteen feet into a bluff before hitting a joint that leads fifteen vertical feet to an entrance in the top of the bluff. Counting this vertical entrance, the cave is around thirty feet total in length.

Kristen Godfrey led a small group of four novices on a trip to Perkins Cave.

Zach Lavicky, assisted by Seth Colston and Matt Hernandez, led a scout trip at Cleveland Cave the weekend prior to the meeting. The novices were a very slow yet enthusiastic group from Blue Springs, and the group did some rappelling afterwards.

New Business:

Rick Hines proposed an alternative to the cancelled Christmas meeting: a bonfire at his and Kay's home in early December. A date of December 5th was decided upon, with December 12th as an alternative in case of inclement weather. Participants can bring desserts to share. There will be a smaller fire for roasting s'mores.

Jim Cooley proposed that the KCAG use some of its funds to purchase a bolting system, including a drill, bolts, hangers, and other equipment, for the grotto.

In addition, Jim is currently searching for volunteers to be regular scout trip leaders at Cleveland Cave.

Unfinished Business: Seth Colston confirmed that there was no unfinished business, and the grotto members returned to their day-to-day lives, anticipating the upcoming December bonfire.

Upcoming Trips and Events

COVID-19 update: Check with the trip leader before you set out to attend any of these events. Many of the “stay at home” restrictions have been lifted. Restrictions or not, please make your own decision regarding your health. The caves are not going anywhere.

November 7 or 14 (not decided yet) - Restoration project
Washington State Park in DeSoto, MO
Camping is available at the park
Contact Alex Litsch alitsch6@gmail.com for more information

November 13-15 – Backpacking and cave survey on the Devil’s Backbone Wilderness
This trip is currently full, but there is a standby list
Contact Shawn Williams by text at 314-583-7039 or via the event listing on the CRF Facebook page

November 17, 2020 – KCAG grotto meeting. 6:30 pm
Zoom URL: <https://us04web.zoom.us/j/268089722>

December 5, 2020 – 5:30pm - KCAG bonfire at the home of Rick and Kay Hines. Bring your own drinks. Bring masks and chairs. We will be outdoors around a very large bonfire. The fire will be lit at 6:15pm. Rick will have some apple cider and a table for shared snacks and desserts. There will be a smaller fire for s’mores. In case of bad weather, the alternate date is December 12
Email rickhines@aol.com for more information.

January 9, 2021 – Carroll Cave data logger service trip
Contact Bill Gee bgee@campercaver.net for information
Attendance is limited due to coronavirus protocols.

January 19, 2021 – KCAG grotto meeting
Zoom URL is <https://us04web.zoom.us/j/268089722>
This meeting includes our annual election of officers.

February 2021 – Biology trip at Cloud Nine Ranch

February 16, 2021 – KCAG grotto meeting

Zoom URL is <https://us04web.zoom.us/j/268089722>

2021 – NSS National Convention in Weed California