

MEETING NOTES

September 16, 2018

Program: GAG caver events 2018 – Convention, GAG picnic, OTR, RCC, Crystal Cave cleanup, and the search for Funks Cave.

Discussion: 1) No recent mail; we only receive an occasional caver newsletter. 2) The web site was updated with some new information and a few glitches were fixed. 3) There was no meeting in August because of the annual picnic at Onyx Cave. Approximately 35 attended and Ed and Kim were thanked for hosting the event. 4) Vince reported on the fall NRO. Fall MAR will be the last weekend in September. Bridge Day will be third weekend in October. 5) Dean and Vince visited RCC and found a large tree had fallen across the entrance. There didn't appear to be any damage to the newly built retaining walls. The gate was intact and easily unlocked and locked. An informal plan was discussed to cut up the tree and finish the concrete roof. Dean will contact the owner for permission and best date(s) to do the work. Although the property is usually closed for hunting season we should try to remove the tree before winter.

July 15, 2018

Program: Assignment Underwater (1960 TV show about an underwater cave rescue)

Membership: After numerous requests for members to pay their dues, twenty-two names were removed from the official membership roster.

Discussion: 1) 2018 OTR flier was circulated and will be posted on the web site. 2) Dean volunteered to edit a sporadic newsletter if any articles are sent to him. The number of caver newsletters has diminished drastically. Most IOs are issuing online versions and GAG only receives one newsletter from a former robust exchange program. 3) Dwight reported on the recent spring MAR at Bear Cave Preserve. The fall meet will be at Rupert Cave. 4) 31 cavers participated in an Orientation to Cave rescue held at Piper Cave.

June 17, 2018

Program: R L Ripley's 1939 Visit to Carlsbad Caverns.

No formal actions/discussions.

May 20, 2018

Program: Hydro-shot as a tool in cave conservation.

No formal actions/discussions.

April 15, 2018

Program: Black Guides of Mammoth Cave

Treasurer: 1) IRS paperwork filed before due date. 2) GAG is recognized as a donor to the Wildlife Conservancy in their most recent donors report.

Membership: \$240. Collected for 2018 dues. There are many members who have not responded to email requests to renew their membership and meeting consensus was that the membership roll should be culled

Discussion: 1) The annual NSS IO report was completed. 2) NSS is revamping their internet services that are available to IOs. There may be some changes but we should get advance notice. We currently pay the NSS \$12 per year to host the GAG website. 3) Dean was advised that the NSS Library collection of PRS newsletters was incomplete. Dean located and copied all missing issues and sent them to the library. The PRS collection is now up to date. 4) Should GAG purchase a pressure washer for use by GAG when they work on cleaning projects in the two commercial caves? No decision was made.

February 18, 2018

Program: Dean demonstrated speleothem repair and explained the different techniques used to stabilize repaired formations including use of stainless pins and wire, the various epoxies used, and securing the repair until cured.

Membership: Dues reminder was sent before the holiday party. Several members mailed their dues, 14 paid at the party, and 5 paid at the meeting. A second reminder will be sent urging members to renew.

Discussion: 1) Cave rescue at Wind Cave, Lancaster Co. on 2/17. 2) Dean's search for photos of Guthsville Cave, and a lengthy discussion of the caves in that immediate area. 3) Ed completed a gate for Powerline Cave and suggested the owner may be receptive to allowing visitors after the growing season. The cave is in a cultivated farm field. 4) MAR/PCC winter meeting will be on 2/24. At least 5 members plan to attend.

Events:

Spring MAR – date location TBD
Convention – 7/28-8/4/18
GAG Picnic – 8/19/18
Fall MAR – Nittany Grotto 50th at Ruppert. Date TBD

December 17, 2017

Program: Mammoth Cave NP (vintage video)

Discussion: Members reviewed grotto expenses (web site and post office box rental) and donations (Wetlands, NSS, NSF) for 2017 which totaled approx. \$587. Although the expenses were not confirmed (Treasurer was absent), the consensus was that dues for 2018 would remain at \$10. per year. Vince will send email reminders to 57 members and we will continue to offer free membership to children.

November 19, 2017

Program: Doug and Dean attended the NSF and NCKMS in Eureka Springs, AK. Doug showed PowerPoint of activities.

Treasurer: GAG is a Founding Member of the new NSF Permanent Endowment Fund

Announcements:

Annual GAG Holiday Party will be 1/6 with 1/13 the snow date.

There will not be a meeting in January

Membership: 2018 dues are payable to Vince

Discussion: 1) Four members worked on the RCC project. The gate is easier to operate, a partial rebar/cement roof was constructed, and a sign recognizing the support of the PCC for entrance stability and security was posted. Another work day is needed to complete the roof. 2) Ed reported that there were quite a few trips to Piper Cave this fall with many cavers reporting seeing bats.

After the regular meeting there was a closed meeting of the Directors to appoint Officers for 2018.

September 17, 2017

Program: GAG at Convention, Picnic and OTR

Discussion: 1) No one offered to host the fall MAR so the event was cancelled. 2) A PCC is scheduled for 10/1 in Carlisle. 3) Four members worked on a cleanup at Lost River.

May 21, 2017

Program: Overview of the MAR/PCC winter meeting and discussion/pictures of Cold Air Cave.

Treasurer: Required IRS forms have been completed and mailed. Annual payment was made to NSS for hosting our web site.

Membership: Received two inquiries about the grotto, cave trips and joining. Both received replies and were invited to attend a meeting. Christine, GAG # 83, re-joined the grotto; she first became a member in 1983.

Discussion: 1) Tom Metzger announced beginner cave trips on 5/28 and 7/1 to Bear Cave and anyone interested should contact him. 2) Doug is going to Mammoth Cave area to work on a cricket study. 3) Ed visited the owners of Big Ridge. There is a potential dig site and other numerous sinks in the area.

The June 18 meeting is cancelled.

Ed and Kim will host the Annual Grotto Picnic on August 20. Details to follow. There will not be a formal August meeting.

March 19, 2017

Membership: 25 members are up to date with their dues. Vince will email reminder to others.

Discussion: 1) Dean and Dwight attended the winter MAR/PCC meeting. A cleanup is planned for McAlisterville Cave in the spring. 2) GAG is listed as a corporate sponsor of the Wetlands Conservancy in their latest newsletter. 3) NJIRT will hold an NCRC training weekend at Leigh Cave in May. 4) Joint MAR/NRO will be held in Pattersonville, NY, 6/2-4/17. See <http://caves.org/grotto/ccg/spring2017nro/spring2017nro.htm> for info. 5) GAG will do a late spring inspection of RRC to determine any needed work.

The April 16, 2017 meeting has been cancelled.

February 19, 2017

Program: *Odds and Ends* a collection old pictures and news articles about caves in the LV area.

Membership: Vince has collected \$210 in 2017 members' dues. 24 members are up to date and reminder emails will be sent to others.

Discussion: 1) Dean has submitted the required IO forms to the NSS. 2) Dean and Dwight plan to attend the MAR-PCC winter meeting on February 25 near Harrisburg. 3) The spring joint MAR-NRO was discussed.

December 18, 2016

At the closed meeting of the Directors on October 16, the incumbent slate of officers were reappointed for 2017.

Correspondence: The grotto received a thank you letter from the Wetlands Conservancy for the recent GAG donation.

Discussion: 1) Dean paid the annual USPS mail box rental fee of \$66. 2) Dean had RCC sign made and will be checking with MAR on the availability of a PA Cave Protection Law sign for the cave. 3) There will not be a meeting in January. The annual Holiday Party will be at Dean and Val's home on January 7.

October 16, 2016

Program: Timpanogos Cave

Membership: One new member since the September meeting. We now have 59 members. 2017 dues will be collected beginning at the December meeting.

Discussion: 1) GAG had a good representation at the MAR meet held at Woodward Cave. Total attendance was approximately 95 cavers. 2) Indian Caverns will cease operations at the end of October. Rumor has it the property will be owned by a local land conservancy and the cave will be protected as a bat hibernacula. 3) Vince and Dean visited Red Church Cave (RCC) on 10/6 and found the entrance almost completely filled by soil that washed down the steep bank. They spent several hours digging it out but it was not completely cleared. They also met with the owner and discussed the possibility of constructing something to protect the entrance. The owner was very supportive of the project and urged us (the grotto) to work up a plan. 4) Mike S, Ed and Mike G. visited the site on 10/9 and finished the dig. They also took some measurements to build block retaining walls. 5) Mike S prepared a sketch and estimated materials for the block walls project and presented it at the meeting. Ed is going to secure the materials and supervise the project. Dean was to contact the owner advise him of the plans, schedule work dates, and best time(s) to drop off materials. A tentative work schedule was discussed and will be suggested to the owner.

Motion: Doug moved to request a \$500 grant from the NSS to help fund the cost of the work at RCC. Motion passed unanimously. Mike S will take lead on the grant application.

Announcements: 1) The annual holiday party will be on January 7, 2017. There will not be a meeting in January. 2) Spring MAR will be a joint MAR-NRO held in upstate NY. Philly and CCC grottos are hosting.

A closed meeting of the Directors was held immediately after the general meeting to appoint officers for 2017.

September 18, 2016

Program: Dean's photos from the Ely convention and OTR.

Correspondence: GAG received a thank you letter from the NSS for participating in the 404 Headquarters Fund program.

Membership: GAG now has 58 members; Lisa joined in July. Vince received four emails asking about the grotto and available cave trips. All inquiries were answered and each was invited to attend a meeting to get some insight as to who we are and what we are about.

Discussion: 1) Doug and Lynn received NSS Awards at convention. Doug earned the Victor A. Schmidt Conservation Award and Lynn was named a Fellow of the NSS. 2) Ed and Kim were thanked for hosting the grotto picnic. About 25 members attended, the weather was bad but the food and conversation was good. 3) Upcoming events: MAR will be held at Woodward Cave 9/22-25; Bridge Day will be the third weekend in October; Dean and Doug are working on projects in Crystal Cave and Lost River and if interested contact them for available dates.

June 19, 2016

Program: Mammoth Cave – Away to Wonder, Part 2.

Correspondence: GAG received the OTR 2016 update from the Robertson Association. Follow the links on the web site for the latest information and current fee structure.

Discussion: 1) Mike sent a message suggesting a work detail for Red Church followed by a grotto trip to the cave. The owner will be contacted about good dates to schedule and circulate to the members. 2) Ed had pictures of new passage discovered in Frasier Cave and provided an overview of his ongoing efforts to follow the wind.

The Annual Grotto Picnic will be held at Ed and Kim's home on August 21, 2016. Please see the announcement on the web site for details. There will not be a formal GAG meeting in August.

May 15, 2016

Program: Mammoth Cave - Away to Wonder, Part 1.

Treasurer: We have \$2719.50 in the grotto checking account. The recent bill from the NSS for hosting our web site was paid.

Membership: No changes since last report.

Discussion: 1) Dean and Doug reported on the recent NSF meeting which was held in the Allentown area on April 23. The NSS President and Fundraising Committee Chairman both spoke to the NSF Board during public session on the on financial challenges facing the NSS. 2) Doug updated the grotto on efforts to build an underwater vacuum to be used to collect coins from the pools and stream in Lost River Caverns. 3) Doug agreed to represent GAG at the Congress of Grottos meeting in Ely, NV. 4) There will not be a July GAG meeting because many members will be attending convention. The annual grotto picnic will be held in August; there will be no formal meeting. 5) We had two visitors at the meeting who had some experience caving in the NE but since moving to the Leigh Valley have drifted away. They are interested in getting started again.

March 20, 2016

Program: *GAG Visits Cuba* by Doug Soroka. Doug and Lynn joined a group of cavers for a two week caving trip to Cuba. The program featured many caves with fantastic formations and historically significant pictographs. The group also visited with several Cuban Speleological Clubs and attended programs on the history and major cave discoveries found in Cuba.

Correspondence: Most grottos only publish e-newsletters therefore the actual exchange of hard copy newsletters has decreased dramatically.

Membership: GAG membership remains steady at 57. A few have not yet paid their 2016 dues and Vince will send reminders. \$240 in dues has been collected.

Discussion: 1) The GAG newsletter exchange files have been donated to the MAKC Library along with duplicate copies of some cave books. 2) The Spring meeting of the National Speleological Foundation will be held in the Allentown area on April 23, 2016. The meeting's general session is open to interested cavers. Contact Dean if interested in attending and learning more about the mission and responsibilities of the NSF.

February 21, 2016

Program: 2015 NSS Convention by Dean Snyder

Treasurer Report: GAG received a \$150 donation from Lost River Caverns; out account balance stands at \$2,571.50.

Membership: We have 57 members on the roster and most are current with their dues. \$240 in dues has been collected so far this year. Vince will send reminders this month urging people to continue supporting the grotto.

Discussion: 1) MAR business meeting will be held on 2/27/16. Dwight, Ed and Dean plan to attend. 2) Spring MAR will be sponsored by Franklin Grotto. Fall MAR will be at Woodward Cave. 3) Ed discussed the possibility of a future meet at Piper Cave.

December 20, 2015

Program: NSF Work Weekend at NSS HQ Dec. 11-14/15

Treasurer Report: IRS requested Long Form 990 be submitted this year. Form was completed and mailed. GAG donated to the Pool Sanctuary and paid our 2016 404 donation to the HQ fund.

Membership: GAG had 56 members for 2015 and Vince collected \$70 toward dues during the year. 2015 was a “dues free” year and most of the money collected was for 2014. 2) \$120 has been collected to date for 2016 dues.

Discussion: 1) Ongoing work projects at NSS HQ. 2) Doug’s upcoming trip to Cuba where he and Lynn will be among a group exploring caves in the central highlands. Doug suggested GAG members consider donating caving tee shirts and he’ll pass them on to the expedition’s Cuban hosts.

Reminder: GAG party at Dean’s house January 2 at 5:23 PM. Snow date will be the following Saturday.

November 15, 2015

Program: by Doug S.... Calvados – a visit to the apple brandy aging cellar in Normandy

Treasurer Report: \$2000. in account. IRS Form 990 submitted.

Actions: Current Directors were reappointed by unanimous vote of members present. A closed meeting of the Directors was held immediately after the regular meeting to appoint grotto officers.

Reminder: grotto party will be at Dean’s house, Jan. 2.

September 20, 2015

Program: The Death of Floyd Collins (2015 movie)

Membership: 1) We now have 56 members; Rachel and Dana Elizabeth mailed in membership applications (GAG #s 319 and 320). Vince will welcome them (via email) and offer a collection of introductory caving brochures and remind them to check the web site for meetings and events information. 2) The grotto will send dues notices for 2016 beginning about mid-November.

Old Business: 1) Kathy Campbell sponsored the grotto picnic held at Ed and Kim’s residence in August. The grotto thanks Kathy for her generous support and Ed and Kim for hosting the event. 2) At Convention, the COG supported Mike’s proposals for NSS Board action regarding the publication of cave locations by KIP. The NSS Board has a set time period to address the issue.

Discussion: 1) Doug reminded the grotto that there will be a closed meeting of grotto directors immediately after the October meeting. All current directors are encouraged to make special effort to attend. The annual directors’ meeting is a requirement of our Bylaws and state/federal regulation. 2) Dean will attend the PCC meeting being to be held on 9/27. 3) Dean, Doug and Vince visited RCC cave to assess any damages caused by the winter closure. The hillside above the entrance has eroded and digging is required. A more permanent solution needs to be found to ensure the cave remains accessible. 4) The Holiday Party will be held on Jan. 2, 2016. Watch the web site for time and a snow date. 4) Vince announced that almost all NCC caves will be closed (Sellecks Cave being the only exception) from October 1 through April 30. The closure is being mandated by the NY-DEC because the Northern Long Eared Bat has been classified as endangered. Previously, the NCC closed a few caves because of WNS but the most popular caves remained open all winter.

Actions: 1) Doug moves and seconded by Vince - GAG will support the NSS 404 Building Campaign. After much discussion the motion was approved with the stipulation that the grotto would mail one check for our total 2016 donation and that we would review continued participation before the 2017 donation was due.

June 21, 2015

Program: History of Schofer Cave

Membership: Andrew and Clay joined the grotto (GAG #s 317 and 318). We now have 54 members. There was one email inquiry about caving opportunities for a boys camp located in far northeast PA. Vince suggested they contact the NSS Youth Groups Liaison, MAKC, and NCC for information about youth group caving.

Old Business: 1) Mike needs one additional signature before he can send the KIP protest letter to the NSS. He expected to have it mailed this week. 2) The GAG letter has been shared with several grottos as a template for their own letters to the NSS.

Discussion: 1) Dwight attended the recent PCC meeting and gave a report. 2) Ed recommended August 16, as date for annual picnic in lieu of the regularly scheduled meeting. He will prepare a flier to circulate to members and post on the GAG web site. 3) Cavers have been going to Piper Cave without contacting Ed for permission. He asked that we spread the word that all visitors must contact him in advance of any trips there. 4) Mike reported some new and promising research has shown to be effective in controlling WNS. It would likely be a long time before studies are completed and a formal announcement is made that a control/cure has been found. 4) Vince gave a quick overview of the research conducted in an NCC cave that proved anthropoids from Ellenville Ice Caves are genetically the same as those found in an NCC cave in Albany County, NY., about a hundred miles distant. The Ellenville caves freeze and the anthropoids survive the freeze/thaw cycle. The Albany Co. cave does not freeze yet those critters also survive the freeze/thaw cycle. More research is planned.

Actions: 1) It was agreed that Dwight would serve as the official GAG rep to PCC meetings whenever there was a need. 2) The July meeting was cancelled because several members would likely be still traveling from convention and a few others had a conflict. Next meeting will be September 20.

May 17, 2015

Program: Older promotional video for Lewis and Clark Caverns

Membership: We have collected \$50 year to date for dues and anyone who was a member in good standing for 2014 was credited for 2016 dues. We have 52 members. There was one email inquiry about the grotto and he was invited to the meeting.

Old Business: 1) Mike presented the grotto protest letter to the NSS Board re: KIP posting cave locations. The letter had been previously circulated and comments solicited. The available directors signed it. Mike will get the remaining signatures and mail it. 2) Frank and Dean received replies from the NSS President when they sent protest emails about the KIP situation. The President assured them that he was working on a solution and agreed that cave locations and other sensitive information found in grotto newsletters should not be posted on the web.

New Business: 1) Grotto moved and approved: GAG formally protests the posting of sensitive cave information on the KIP site and approves sending a letter to the NSS Board stating we request the NSS Board remove current postings and implement policies to prevent future postings. 2) Grotto moved and approved: GAG will share the final version of the KIP protest letter with other interested caving organizations. Other groups may use our letter as a “template” if they agree with our position and decide to launch their own campaign to remove caving info from the unregulated KIP site.

Discussion: 1) Some members are formulating plans to speak against the current policy of placing caving info on the KIP web at the convention board meeting. 2) Stephanie is working with the DaVinci Science Center on a new National Geographic Display that will include a section on caving. She has been asked to lead a non-caver trip for DaVinci staff members so they can “experience” a real cave.

April 19, 2015

Program: Minerals from Crystal Cave

Treasurer: GAG is now listed a Corporate Sponsor of the Wildlands Conservancy which is the parent group of the Pool Sanctuary where we hold our meetings.

Discussion: 1) Ed reported on discovering new passage in Fraiser Cave and a new cave in Berks County. 2) Doug is working on plans to build an “underwater vacuum” to collect coins from the deep crevices and tight spots in Lost River.

March 15, 2015

Treasurer: \$2461.50

Membership: Collected \$30. for past due 2014 memberships; we currently have 52 members.

Discussion: 1) Mike provided an update on the controversial practice of KIP scanning and posting publications containing cave locations. KIP has removed some materials but the NSS Board did not formally address the issue at their March meeting. It was postponed until the convention BOG meeting. Apparently there is some discussion of requiring a password to access sensitive materials. Meanwhile, GAG will offer a motion to the Congress of Grottos to formally discuss and recommend a solution and Mike will draft a letter from GAG to the NSS Board. 2) Doug proposed using up to \$100. (from an anticipated donation) to build a pump system to gather coins from hard to reach areas in Lost River Caverns’ stream and pools. The grotto approved the expenditure. 3) Ed attended the MAR/PCC Winter Meeting and reported a) Nittany Grotto is still working to gain access to J-4 but they are hindered by the spiraling costs to meet the owner’s insurance and safety requirements. Negotiations will continue. b) No group has stepped forward to host the spring field meet but the following three are sponsored. c) PCC sends Christmas Cards to friendly cave owners. This is a good PR practice and GAG should consider doing the same. Members agreed that is worthwhile and the grotto should discuss doing something similar. 4) Caving – not much going on over the winter however Ed said that recent digging in Onyx has extended the cave to over (an estimated) half a mile. Meanwhile, new passage with some nice formations has been found in Frasier.

December 21, 2014

Treasurer: \$2461.50

Discussion: 1) Mike contacted GAG re: the NSS allowing KIP to post cave location info found in Bulletins and newsletters. The grotto will formally oppose this practice and will propose a resolution to that effect at the next Congress of Grottos. GAG will also send a formal request to KIP requesting PRS be removed from open access. 2) The grotto will offer a dues "holiday" for 2015 for members in good standing through 2014. Members who already paid through 2015 (and later) will be credited accordingly.

October 19, 2014

Program: The Cave episode from the TV show *MASH*

Discussion: 1) We have 3 votes in the Congress of Grottos; votes are based on the number of NSS members that claim GAG as their primary affiliation. 2) Long discussion on how to stimulate interest in caving and the grotto. WNS impact on caving access seems a primary issue but caving interest in general seems to be waning while special project and some conservancies seem to be able to maintain and even grow membership. 3) We still need someone to take over as editor. 4) Doug submitted GAG conservation info to the NSS. 5) Dean reported on Fall MAT at Ruppert; 195 people. Ed attended a concert in Crystal Cave.

September 21, 2014

Program: Capturing Coins at Crystal Cave – Deans and Doug's work gathering, cleaning and cashing in the coins they collected from Crystal Cave.

Treasurer: \$2636.50

Membership: Collected \$410 year to date for dues. 62 members.

Discussion: 1) Good turnout for grotto picnic. Ed lead multiple trips to the cave and several members worked on the dig while the rest enjoyed the good weather, food and fellowship. 2) Grotto approved a \$100 donation to Poole Wildlife in appreciation for using their meeting facilities. 3) Doug reported on his trip to Ireland and caves he visited.

November 17, 2013

Program: 1950's vintage advertising film on Oregon Caves

Treasurer: \$831.50 in checking account

Membership: Three visitors attended the meeting: Dan, Rowan and Josh

Discussion: 1) Report of three hikers finding a "new" cave near Durham. Suggested a review of grotto files to find if it is known and whether a regularly visited cave. 2) Vince and Dean did some maintenance on RCC gate and a Feb 2014 bat count was suggested. 3) News reports of high rate of bat kills by windmills especially along migration paths during spring and fall flights. 4) The NCC may acquire Bensons Cave and is monitoring proposals to put certain species of bats on the endanger list which could impact cave visitation year round. 5) Grotto project: Caves of Leigh Valley, should GAG start a concerted effort to update information and document new findings for publication. 6)

Cave trips: Dutch and Roger attended RASS Fall Event and Ed and Roger lead a group of scouts to Durham and Carpenters.

October 20, 2013

Program: Schofer Cave – Roost of the Purple Bat, vintage movie on early bat migration studies.

Membership: Vince has collected \$240. in dues year to date. Received 4 emails inquiring about the grotto and how to join; three were via the web site.

Discussion: 1) The picnic was well attended with many participating in the rope practice run by Ed and Dutch. 2) General discussion of liability and how owners and conservancies use waivers and insurance to keep caves open to qualified cavers. 3) There was general agreement that the grotto should sell its carbide lights and possibly invest in electric as loaners.

June 16, 2013

Program: Variety of PA caving slides, current and vintage

Treasurer: Total of \$1987.50

Membership: 60 members on roster, Vince contacting those not current with dues and will purge membership list before it is published.

Discussion: 1) George would like to step down as editor. 2) Doug was appointed grotto rep to the Congress of Grottos at convention. 3) Motion to donate \$250. to the Dwight's Angels Rescue Fund was approved unanimously.

There was a closed meeting of the Directors immediately after the general meeting.

December 16, 2012

Program: A 1978 promotional video of Fantastic Caverns, MO

Treasurer: \$1200. checking account and approx \$1000. in our investment account

Membership: Roger and Kira joined the grotto in the past month. Vince reminded members that 2013 dues are payable.

Correspondence: Several newsletters were received and circulated at the meeting. PRS v.122 was distributed.

Discussion: 1) The Lehigh Valley Tourism Expo is being revitalized. Dean asked if there was interest in getting a booth to promote the grotto at the next expo. As a non-profit, GAG may be able to join without paying a fee. He will check into the event for more details. 2) Bat count at RCC – Doug asked if it would be possible to do a radio location survey in conjunction with a bat count. The survey would attempt to locate prominent cave points on the surface to get an overview of the cave relative to surface features. The conversation continued on the logistics of the project and it is generally agreed that if weather is good, permission is obtained and enough cavers help out, the bat count and a

cave-to-surface survey could be done at the same time. Dean will check with owner for a date in mid-January and a snow date. 3) A Lehigh Valley Cave Survey would be a good project for the grotto - GPS know caves, ridge-walk potential karst areas, and compile the information into a new publication. Several members are interested and have begun casual searches through known karst areas. 4) Crystal Cave clean-up has started for the winter. Contact Dean or Doug for dates. Dean talked about another work trip to Lost River to retrieve, sort, and clean coins from the stream. 5) Trip reports: Dwight and Dutch reported on a six hour trip in Pipers. Ed led 4 cavers on the trip and they probably covered the known cave. A good blowing lead was found and would be a good potential dig. George was on a survey trip in the Binkleys – Blowing Hole connection. He described the entrance - through the bore hole to the top of Bone Mountain - and the very wet crawl that they surveyed. He also told the group about the large bone deposits that accumulated when animals fell into a natural trap and of the progress on efforts to commercialize the cave.

New Business: Vince moved that the grotto donate \$100. to the Pool Wildlife Sanctuary and thank them for the use of their facility for meetings. Dwight seconded. Vote to approve was unanimous.

November 18, 2012

Program: Video - Discovery commercialization of Tuckaleechee Caverns, TN

Treasurer: Emailed report - \$1083. In checking account

Membership: Vince distributed membership renewal forms and will be collecting dues beginning in September. Roger Moore became the 311th member to join the grotto.

Correspondence: Several exchange newsletters were circulated. Dean reminded members that the grotto library is stored at his home and members are welcome to look through the files for cave information maps, back issues of PRS and exchange newsletters.

Election: Ed (President), Doug (Treasurer), Dean (programs), Dutch (Website), George (newsletter), and Vince (membership) were unanimously approved as Directors and will serve for the next year. Annual elections were held.

Discussion: 1) Dan (visitor) introduced himself and was welcomed to the meeting. Vince gave him a packet of information containing pamphlets and handouts on caving, the grotto, and the NSS. 2) Nittany Grotto is reportedly close to an agreement with the owners of J-4 Cave. Cavers are reminded that the cave is closed and they should not make any contact with the landowners until Nittany completes its negotiations. 3) Dutch asked about doing an official bat count in RCC this winter. RCC was re-opened in the fall of 2010 after over 30 years and a few bats were observed there at MAR in September. The cave was reported to have a large colony of bats in the early seventies and this would be a good opportunity to document the (possible) return of hibernating bats. Dean will contact the owner about scheduling a mid-winter count. 3) Dean and Doug continue to work on cleaning the coins collected in Lost River. Cleaning the coins and cashing them in is an intensive project. Some coins are so corroded that they are planning a trip to the Philly Mint to exchange what the banks won't take. 4) Trip reports: Ed, Dutch (and other members) reported on a trip to TAG where they visited Surprise Pit in Fern Cave and Mystery Falls. Dutch also reported on a through trip he and others made through Kookan

Cave. 5) Ed and Dutch discussed and upcoming trip to Peiper Cave to be held the Sunday after Thanksgiving.

Web site: Dutch reviewed his progress on updating the site, asked for input, old and new grotto photos and content material.

October 21, 2012

Program: 16 mm film of an episode of *Death Valley Days* featuring Colossal Cave, AZ

Treasurer: \$873. in checking and \$1100. in our NSF fund.

Membership: New member William Eyrich is 310th caver to join the grotto. Current membership is 57 and Vince collected \$400.00 in dues this calendar year. Membership is based on a calendar year and Vince will begin collecting renewals at the November meeting.

Correspondence: 1) GAG received a letter from the 2013 Convention Committee requesting the grotto consider hosting a pre or post convention camp. Group consensus was that the Allentown area did not offer any significant caving experience for convention goers so we would decline to host a camp. 2) Dean received multiple exchange newsletters and they were circulated.

Discussion: 1) 81 cavers attended the MAR. Everyone seemed to have a good time and Dean received compliments on the event especially the food service and the number and quality of the door prizes. Many caves took the opportunity to visit long closed caves. Several groups reported seeing bats in Red Church Cave which had been closed for almost 30 years. 2) Trip reports: Ed – over night trip into Butler with a scout group. They covered about 5 miles of cave. Dutch and Dwight (and several other members) - attended the Bridge Day event. Doug – Fall NRO, about 110 people attended and he visited several caves as well as kayaking and hiking. 3) Upcoming trips: Dutch has organized a trip to TAG (Surprise Pit and Mystery Falls) and ED offer to organize a grotto trip to Butler.

Web site: Dutch is working on updates to the grotto web site and requests reviews and comments on content and layout.

Elections: Annual elections will be held in November. The grotto elects directors and the directors appoint officers. Current directors are Dean, Doug, Ed, George, and Vince.

Dean distributed handouts to the Holiday Party on 1/5/12.

There was a closed meeting of the Board of Directors immediately after the regular meeting.

July 15, 2012

Program: View Masters on Caves – a few recently discovered “old” view master reels

Correspondence: 1) GAG received a thank you note from the NSS for our donation to the building fund. In recognition of our donation we have the “naming rights” to the women’s restroom. 2) Dean reported a significant reduction in the number of exchange

newsletters. This is likely due to the impact WNS has had on PA caving and the trend toward e-publication.

Discussion: 1) Dean reported that MAR plans are progressing well and that additional volunteers for registration, food service, grounds setup and cleanup would be helpful. 2) Trip reports: Dutch – Sites Cave. Ed - Carpenters and Big Ridge Caves.

June 17, 2012

Program – Crystal Cave: overview of the grotto cleanup and restoration with special emphasis on pressure washing and a microscopic study of lint vermiculations.

Discussion – 1) GAG will sponsor the Fall MAR Met at Chrystal Cave on Sept. 28-30. All information is on the MAR web site and cavers were urged to pre-register. Special arrangements have been made to have trips to Dragon, Dreibelbis and Red Church available for the weekend as well as caver led tourist trips into Crystal. 2) Options to prevent the entrance of RCC from filling in were discussed again and Dean will contact the owner to get his input on the several options discussed. 3) Doug, Dutch, and Ed provided details of upcoming trips they've planned.

April 15, 2012

Program – Cave of Forgotten Dreams: a documentary film by Werner Herzog on Chavet Cave in France

Treasurer - \$1346.40 checking and \$659.35 in our NSF account.

Membership – We have 4 new members for a total of 49. A final dues notice was sent in March and the membership list have been updated. \$340.00 in dues (as of meeting date) has been collected and transferred to the Treasurer.

Discussion – 1) Dean and Doug have been sorting and cleaning the coins that were collected from the pool in Lost River. 2) Dean discussed tentative plans to host the fall MAR. 3) Vince and Dean checked Red Church Cave entrance and found that the steep bank has slumped quite a bit. Options for a retaining wall were discussed.

March 18, 2012

Program - Video on the early history and commercialization of Cathedral Caverns, AL.

Doug Soroka was appointed GAG rep to the Congress of Grottos.

Discussion: 1) Crystal Cave has opened for the season therefore the cleaning crew will revert back to their regular schedule and will plan trips for after the cave closes for the day. 2) Doug suggested that GAG contribute to the NSS headquarters fund. There was general agreement and we will wait until the formal fundraising effort is launched.

February 19, 2012

Program - Four historic films from Crystal Cave, PA; Mammoth Cave, KY; Floyd Collins Crystal Cave, KY; Howe Caverns, NY.

December 12, 2011

Program - Doug demonstrated radio location equipment and techniques. Doug, Dean, Lynn and Catherine have been radio locating points in Crystal Cave on the surface.

Membership - Vince reported that we have 47 members and that he collected \$410 in dues for 2011.

November 20, 2011

Program - Bob and Carolyn's trip to Romania.

Discussions: 1) Dean paid post office box rental for the grotto. 2) Doug reported on the new NSS Headquarters fundraising efforts.

There was a closed meeting of the Board of Directors after the regular meeting. The current slate of officers was unanimously reappointed.