

GREATER ALLENTOWN GROTTO MEETING NOTES

Greater Allentown Grotto
December 15, 2024 Meeting
Wildlands Conservancy Emmaus, PA & Zoom

Meeting called to order at 7:05 pm by Grotto President, Mark Walter

- Attendees were, in person (5), Mark Walter, Dwight Kempf, Vince Kappler, Bert Ashbrook, and Simon Varner. There were 3 Zoom attendees, Steven Satcher, Dean Snyder, and guest Elena Ruzekova.

Minutes read from November 17th Members Meeting (Dwight Kempf)

- Motion to Accept by Simon, seconded by Mark
- Accepted

Treasurer report (Doug Soroka not present, balances read by Dean)

- Motion to accept by Dwight, seconded by Mark
- Accepted

Membership report (Vince Kappler)

- There are 67 members, with 11 folks on inactive list.
- Six new members joined in 2024
- Dean asked Vince to send him the latest membership list for inclusion in PRS
- Motion to accept by Mark, seconded by Simon
- Accepted

Correspondence report made by Dean Snyder

- Received NSS news and advertisements
- Motion to accept by Simon, seconded by Mark
- Accepted

Newsletter (Co-editors Bert Ashbrook and Dean Snyder)

- Dean noted that he finished the January issue of Journal of Spelean History.
- Dean stated that he needs one more article; Bert volunteered to write and submit a Sarah Furnace Cave survey article
- Likely Dean will publish Newsletter in the next month or so
- Motion to accept by Dwight, seconded by Simon
- Accepted

Website (Rick Kehs)

- No report
- Dwight sent Rick an updated minutes file with October 2024 final minutes included for placement in the website archive.

Old Business

- Proposed Crystal Cave Grotto Event
 - No report; Pat Richard did not attend
- 2025 Holiday Party Details
 - Dean graciously volunteered to hold the party at his home
 - Date will be Saturday January 4th, with snow day on Sunday, January 5th
 - Dwight did send out an email and posted event on Facebook in November
 - Our thanks to Dean for hosting this event
- 2025 Grotto cave trip scheduling:
 - Butler trip to be scheduled. **Ed Kehs** to set date in Feb/March with BCCS.
 - Onyx Cave: **Ed Kehs** available to run trips for folks at a mutually agreed upon time.
 - Onyx new section: No trips until water recedes.
 - Peiper Cave: Trip planned for January 18, 2025 **Mark** to set up second cave (Coffee, Cleversburg Sink, Carnegie)
 - Rupert Caving Weekend set for July 18-20. Dwight arranged access to Rupert. As Grotto decides on which caves they are interested in, permits will be arranged through property managers.
 - Heston, Hall and Tytoona: **Simon** to look into scheduling a trip (central PA)
- Spring MAR May 9-11 2025 Spruce Knob, WV (Near Seneca Rocks). Sponsored by Out Of Bounds Grotto.
- NSS Convention June 21 to 28 2025 in Cobleskill, NY (Schoharie County)
 - Lots of caves in the area. “NRO” land.
- Member Trips:
 - None discussed
- Sarah Furnace Cave Survey Update by Project Leader Bert Ashbrook:
 - Cave nearing end of survey project; only tight section leads remain
 - Cave length at 9.94 miles, within 300' of the magical 10 miles
 - Limited cave trips remaining due to mining remediation activities starting in January.

New Business

- MAR Business Meeting February 22, 2025 in West Hanover Twp, Dauphin County. Bert Ashbrook asked to be nominated to represent the Greater Allentown Grotto.
 - Motion to nominate by Dwight, seconded by Mark
 - Accepted
- In November meeting, Ed Kehs proposed that the Greater Allentown Grotto host a Fall 2025 MAR at Peiper Cave.
 - In Ed's absence, Grotto agreed to discuss this at Holiday Party or February meeting
- Guest Elena Ruzekova introduced herself; from western Pennsylvania, lives in Texas, potentially relocating to Allentown. Nittany Grotto alumnus.
 - The Grotto welcomes her and invites her to consider joining the Grotto
- Member Steven Satcher described his cave and rock shelter search
 - 450 caves and rock shelters visited with daughter in nine states!
 - Fascinating discussion

Formal meeting was closed by unanimous vote at 7:58 pm.

Attendees enjoyed freshly double chocolate biscotti and pizzelles Thank you Jill!

There was no program tonight.

Greater Allentown Grotto
November 17, 2024 Meeting
Wildlands Conservancy Emmaus, PA & Zoom

Meeting called to order at 7:00 pm by Grotto President, Mark Walter

- Attendees were, in person (10), Mark Walter, Dean Snyder, Dwight Kempf, Ed Kehs, Rick Kehs, Mike Kehs, Pat Richard, Jessica Nogradi, Vince Kappler, and Simon Varner. There was one intermittent Zoom attendee, Steven Satcher.

Minutes read from October 20th Members Meeting (Dwight Kempf)

- One name spelling changed. Motion to Accept by Vince, seconded by Pat
- Accepted

Treasurer report (Doug Soroka not present, balances read by Dean)

- Motion to accept by Simon, seconded by Vince
- Accepted

Membership report (Vince Kappler)

- There were 12 folks on inactive list; 1 person is paid, 11 still inactive. Vince notes that he sent 5 emails to the people on the inactive list in 2024.
- For the 11 inactives, we decided as a group to continue to send meeting notices and the next newsletter, and reevaluate after the newsletter is issued.
- Motion to accept by Ed, seconded by Mike
- Accepted

Correspondence report made by Dean Snyder

- Received NSS news and advertisements
- Yearly PO Rental fee of \$72 was paid by Dean who will submit to Doug for reimbursement
- Motion to accept by Dean, seconded by Jessica
- Accepted

Newsletter (Co-editors Bert Ashbrook and Dean Snyder)

- Dean noted that he finished the next issue Journal of Spelean History.
- Due to workload issues, there will be no trip report on the Grotto BCCS weekend
- Likely Dean will publish Newsletter soon
- Motion to accept by Mark, seconded by Rick
- Accepted

Website (Rick Kehs)

- Rick updated website.

- Dwight will send Rick an updated minutes file with October 2024 final minutes included.
- Rick is working on formatting the pictures Dwight sent him so that they will be appropriately displayed on the website

Old Business

- Proposed Crystal Cave Grotto Event
 - Pat Richard working details
- 2025 Holiday Party Details
 - Dean graciously volunteered to hold the party at his home
 - Date will be Saturday January 4th, with snow day on Sunday, January 5th
 - Flyers were distributed at this meeting, and Dwight will send out an email and post on Facebook in November
 - Our thanks to Dean for hosting this event
- 2025 Grotto cave trip scheduling:
 - Butler trip to be scheduled. **Ed Kehs** to set date in Feb/March with BCCS.
 - Onyx Cave: **Ed Kehs** noted that he is willing to run trips for folks at a mutually agreed upon time.
 - Onyx new section: **Ed Kehs** noted that he doesn't know when flooding will subside, but that it is still flooded when he recently checked on it.
 - Peiper Cave: Trip planned for January 18, 2025
 - Rupert Caving Weekend tentatively set for July 18-20. Dwight to arrange access to Rupert. As Grotto decides on which caves they are interested in, permits will be arranged through property managers.
 - Hall and Tytoona: **Simon** to look into scheduling a trip (central PA)
 - **Ed Kehs** checked with new owners of Red Church Cave on access, etc. No trips allowed during hunting seasons.
 - **Dwight** attempted to check with owner of potential cave at undisclosed location on update of status. He did not receive reply to texts.
- NSS Convention June 21 to 28 2025 in Cobleskill, NY (Schoharie County)
 - Convention motel was supposed to be Ramada, but renovations will not be completed in time, so NSS moved to nearby Super 8 at a \$120/night rate. Limited rooms available, so make your reservations quickly. Cavers may also camp for free on Fair property near convention activities.
- Member Trips:
 - None discussed

New Business

- Ed Kehs is proposing that the Greater Allentown Grotto host a Fall 2025 MAR at Peiper Cave.
 - Members had lots of comments on the process and what is needed to be successful.
 - Need committee and assigned jobs
 - **Ed Kehs** will find or develop a list of jobs, including:
 - MAR Cave Book (Guidebook)
 - Arrange with MAR officers for date; ensure date does not conflict with VAR and NRO
 - Logistics of camping, water, bathrooms
 - Designate leaders for cave trips
 - Get PCC lined up for Sunday breakfast
 - Logistics of Saturday dinner; Mike Kehs to check on caterer used on previous event.
 - Procure a speaker for Saturday night, and address logistics of presentation (amplifier, projector, screen, location, tent)
 - Determine if large tent needed for weekend
 - Tee shirt design and order
 - Logistics of pre-registration and collecting money
 - Insurance
 - Logistics (wood, etc) of Saturday night bonfire
 - Grotto agreed to discuss this in December meeting
- Election for the Greater Allentown Grotto Board of Directors was held
 - Dean made a motion to keep current BOD members for 2025
 - Ed seconded motion
 - The BOD members that were present agreed to serve for another year
 - Vote was taken, and was unanimous to retain current BOD members for 2025
 - The people elected to the Board will have a meeting following this meeting to assign roles for 2025.
- At Bert Ashbrook's emailed request, Vince read Bert's email about the NSS Vertical Section Training that he took (in WV?). Although Bert is a longtime vertical caver with a lot of experience, he learned a great deal at this training.
 - Bert stated that he talked to the trainers, and that they offered to come to a GAG event and team FROG techniques this winter.
 - Members discussed and there was some skepticism whether we could field enough people to make the event worthwhile

Formal meeting was closed by unanimous vote at 8:23 pm.

Attendees enjoyed freshly prepared butterscotch treats and pizzelles Thank you Jill!

Greater Allentown Grotto
2025 Board Of Directors Organization Meeting
November 17, 2024
Wildlands Conservancy Emmaus, PA

Meeting called to order at 8:23 pm by current President Mark Walter

Attendees: Mark Walter, Dwight Kempf, Dean Snyder, Vince Kappler, Ed Kehs, Rick Kehs

Absent: Kim Kehs, Doug Soroka, Bert Ashbrook

The following BOD members were elected by a quorum of members during the November 17 2024 Greater Allentown Grotto meeting:

Mark Walter
Dwight Kempf
Vince Kappler
Dean Snyder
Ed Kehs
Kim Kehs

Based on a motion by Dean Snyder, seconded by Ed Kehs and unanimously adopted, the 2025 BOD roles will be the same as the current 2024 roles:

President: Mark Walter
Vice President: Ed Kehs
Treasurer: Doug Soroka
Secretary: Dwight Kempf
Membership: Vince Kappler
Member at Large: Kim Kehs
Spiritual Advisor: Dean Snyder

Appointed members:

Newsletter: Dean Snyder and Bert Ashbrook
Webmaster: Rick Kehs

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm

Greater Allentown Grotto
October 20, 2024 Meeting
Wildlands Conservancy Emmaus, PA & Zoom

Meeting called to order at 7:01 pm by Grotto President, Mark Walter

- Attendees were, in person (9), Mark Walter, Dean Snyder, Dwight Kempf, Ed Kehs Pat Richard, Doug Soroka, Lynn Kleina, Vince Kappler (!) and visitor Christine Peng, a medical resident at LVHN. There were no Zoom attendees, although Zoom was available.
- It is great to welcome Vince in person!

Minutes read from September 15th Members Meeting (Dwight Kempf)

- No changes to minutes; Motion to Accept by Doug seconded by Lynn
- Accepted

Treasurer report (Doug Soroka)

- Motion to accept by Dean, seconded by Pat
- Accepted

Membership report (Vince Kappler)

- Vince indicated 69 members, and one inquiry by Lauren White.
- There are 12 members out of the 69 who do not pay dues:
 - One life member
 - Three commercial cave owners
 - Eight students
- \$350 collected YTD
- From last month's dues received, Matt is Grotto # 363, and Simon is #364
- Motion to accept by Lynn, seconded by Ed
- Accepted

Correspondence report made by Dean Snyder

- Dean checked mailbox last Wednesday, with nothing received for GAG
- Motion to accept by Lynn, seconded by Dwight
- Accepted

Newsletter (Co-editors Bert Ashbrook and Dean Snyder)

- Dean noted that he wants to publish soon, although he is working on the NEXT Journal of Spelean History. He finished the JSH he was working on last month.
- **Mark** to write trip report on the Grotto BCCS weekend; will check with Ed K on specific routes they took during the trips around the cave.
- Likely that with the Butler Cave trip report, Dean will publish.
- Motion to accept by Lynn, seconded by Vince
- Accepted

Website (Rick Kehs)

- No report; Rick was not in attendance

Old Business

- Proposed Crystal Cave Grotto Event
 - Attendees agreed that the event will be for Greater Allentown Grotto members and guest only
 - Cave is closed for the season December 7th
 - If cave is closed, only way to get GAG access is via a work day event
 - Proposed date is February 15, 2025 for a combined work day and get together/tour.
 - Cleaning will be done without the power washing; no pumps, hoses, etc; will be done manually with brushes and 1-2 gallon pump sprayers
 - Pat Richard graciously volunteered to coordinate
- Zero Greater Allentown Grotto dues holiday proposal for 2025
 - Vince noted that in the past, GAG has had dues holidays occasionally, in which paid up members from the year before were given credit for the following year at no cost to the member.
 - Discussion focused on:
 - How members who were behind on dues would be treated; currently 12 members are in arrears
 - Whether this is the best use of the roughly \$380 (five year average from Vince) that would be foregone by having a one year holiday
 - Vince proposed that the Grotto have a one year dues holiday for 2025 with no amnesty for members that are behind on dues. Dwight seconded
 - Was approved by 7 yeas and one abstention
- 2025 Holiday Party Planning
 - Dean graciously volunteered to hold the party at his home
 - Date will be Saturday January 4th, with snow day on Sunday, January 5th
 - Flyers will be distributed at the next meeting, and Dwight will send out an email and post on FaceBook in November
 - Our thanks to Dean for hosting this event
- 2024 Grotto cave trip scheduling:
 - Onyx Cave: **Ed Kehs** noted that he is willing to run trips for folks at a mutually agreed upon time. Ed and Christine discussed a time to explore the cave

- Onyx new section: **Ed Kehs** noted that he doesn't know when flooding will subside
- Peiper Cave: **Ed Kehs** also noted that trips to Peiper may be scheduled with him at any mutually agreeable time
- Fall VAR September 27 to 29 at Hungry Mother State Park in VA, was canceled due to the hurricane
- Bridge Day: Oct 19, West Virginia
- **Ed Kehs** to check with new owners of Carpenter's Cave and Red Church Cave on access, etc.
- **Dwight** to check with owner of potential cave at undisclosed location on update of status
- NSS Convention June 21 to 28 2025 in Cobleskill, NY (Schoharie County)

Old Business, Continued

- 2025 GAG cave trips/activities: Mark noted that he would like to start earlier to line up trips and activities, examples:
 - Convention, end of June
 - Maybe hosting MAR in September
 - Rupert weekend in May instead of June/July
 - Set date for Butler camping in the cave trip
- Member Trips:
 - None discussed

New Business

- Ed Kehs is proposing that the Greater Allentown Grotto host a Fall MAR at Peiper Cave. To be discussed at the next meeting
- Election for the Greater Allentown Grotto Board of Directors will be next month
 - Dwight to send out email to members and place notice on FaceBook reminding members of election and asking for folks to run for the Board
 - The people elected to the Board in November will have a meeting following the regular November members' meeting to assign roles
- Vince noted that there are lots of caving related activities available while caves are closed for bat hibernation in the winter.
 - Examples include working on the stairs into Knox Cave (NRO land), and the cabin on another cave in NRO land that was built last year
 - Volunteer!

Formal meeting was closed by unanimous vote at 8:07 pm.

Program was presented by Doug Soroka on his and Lynn's visit to Antarctica to explore for caves. The program was Fantastic! Seals, penguins, whales, ice bergs and lots of wonderful scenery. Our thanks to Doug for his presentation.

Program ended at 8:20 pm

Attendees enjoyed freshly baked pumpkin biscotti, dark chocolate bats, and dark chocolate enrobed brownies in the shape of bats. Excellent food; Thank you Jill!

Greater Allentown Grotto
September 15, 2024 Meeting
Wildlands Conservancy Emmaus, PA & Zoom

Meeting called to order at 7:10 pm by Grotto President, Mark Walter

- Attendees were, in person (7), Mark Walter, Dean Snyder, Dwight Kempf, Ed Kehs Simon Varner, Jessica Nogradi and new attendee Mathew Gano. Zoom attendee was Vince Kappler.

Minutes read from July 21st Members Meeting (Dwight Kempf)

- No changes to minutes; Motion to Accept by Mark seconded by Ed
- Accepted

Treasurer report (Doug Soroka)

- In Doug's absence, Dwight presented report
- Motion to accept by Dean, seconded by Jessica
- Accepted

Membership report (Vince Kappler)

- Vince indicated 67 members, with Simon added today via dues given to Mark, for a total of 68 members.
- \$330 collected YTD for dues plus \$10 from Simon.
- Motion to accept by Dwight, seconded by Simon
- Accepted

Correspondence report made by Dean Snyder

- Dean checked mailbox two weeks ago, with nothing received for GAG
- Motion to accept by Ed, seconded by Mark
- Accepted

Newsletter (Co-editors Bert Ashbrook and Dean Snyder)

- Dean noted that he wants to publish soon, although he is working on the Journal of Spelean History. He is about half way through the JSH.
- **Mark** to write trip report on the Grotto BCCS weekend; will check with Ed K on specific routes they took during the trips around the cave.
- Motion to accept by Jessica, seconded by Dean
- Accepted

Website (Rick Kehs)

- No report; Rick was not in attendance

Old Business

- 2024 Grotto cave trip scheduling:
 - Onyx Cave: **Ed Kehs** noted that he will run a trip on September 18th; Simon and Ed plan to attend.
 - Onyx new section: **Ed Kehs** noted that he doesn't know when flooding will subside. Although the water level in one part of the cave is very low, not sure it translates into lower water at the new section.
 - No 2024 Fall MAR has been scheduled
 - Fall NRO September 20 to 22 in Rosendale, NY
 - Fall VAR September 27 to 29 at Hungry Mother State Park in VA, hosted by Out of Bounds Grotto
 - Bridge Day: Oct 19, West Virginia
- NSS Convention June 21 to 28 2025 in Cobleskill, NY (Schoharie County)
- 2024 GAG Picnic:
 - The annual end of summer picnic (and replacement for the August GAG meeting) was held at Ed and Kim Kehs' home in Berks County Sunday Aug 18th. Three onsite caves and lots of great food and friends are usual again were highlights. Leads in Frazier Cave were again dug. Dean took a group into the cave and gave a history talk. The Grotto thanks Kim and Ed for their hosting of the picnic.
- Member Trips:
 - Dean visited Diamond Caverns this past week, along with Coach Cave, Slave Cave, and James Cave, all in Kentucky.

New Business

- Ed Kehs is proposing that the Greater Allentown Grotto host a Fall MAR at Peiper Cave. To be discussed at the next meeting
- Red Church Cave, the only discovered cave in Schuylkill County, has a new owner. Ed as one of the keepers of the key, attempted to visit the new owners. He went to the home, but the owners weren't home. He will try again. Wants to introduce himself and the Grotto, and describe the PA law protecting caves and cave owners, and answer any questions.
- Potential Crystal Cave event for Grotto: Discussion centered on setting up a Grotto member tour of the cave with technical and/or historical trips, picnic, etc. while the Grotto has access to the cave via relationship with owners. To be discussed further to set up a date and specifics.
- There was a rescue at Wind Cave (tectonic cave in Lancaster County in Pequea) last Saturday.

New Business, Continued

- The attendees discussed the identification of the so called Pinnacle Man who was discovered in 1977, frozen in a cave near the peak of Pinnacle Rock on the Appalachian Trail. Took until last week to identify the individual.

Formal meeting was closed by unanimous vote at 7:52 pm.

Program was presented by Dean Snyder, and was the presentation of historical footage of a commercially produced travel-log called “Guided Tour of Roadside America and Crystal Cave”. The content was transferred from 16mm film to video to save the content for future generations.

Program ended at 8:20 pm

Attendees enjoyed freshly baked peach muffins from Jill Kempf, using homemade peaches.
Thank you Jill!

Greater Allentown Grotto
July 21, 2024 Meeting
Wildlands Conservancy Emmaus, PA & Zoom

Meeting called to order at 7:06 pm by Grotto President, Mark Walter

- Attendees were, in person (6), Mark Walter, Dean Snyder, Dwight Kempf, Doug Soroka, Ed Kehs and Simon Varner. Zoom attendee was Vince Kappler.

Minutes read from June 16th Members Meeting (Dwight Kempf)

- No changes to minutes; Motion to Accept by Doug seconded by Ed
- Accepted

Treasurer report (Doug Soroka)

- Motion to accept by Ed, seconded by Dwight
- Accepted

Membership report (Vince Kappler)

- Vince indicated 69 members, with the Ritty brothers added today via dues given to Mark at Convention and turned over to Treasurer Doug at this meeting.
- \$330 collected YTD for dues.
- Motion to accept by Dwight, seconded by Doug
- Accepted

Correspondence report made by Dean Snyder

- Dean checked mailbox last week, with only PCC mail received, nothing for GAG
- Motion to accept by Doug, seconded by Mark
- Accepted

Newsletter (Co-editors Bert Ashbrook and Dean Snyder)

- Dean noted that he wants to publish soon, although he is working on the Journal of Speleo History as well
- Dean received a (very) short article from Emily that he included, as well as one from Steven Sack on rock shelters that also will be included.
- **Dean** will check with his contact at NSS headquarters on whether printed copies need to be sent to HQ, and if not, how HQ is cataloging newsletters for access to members.
- **Mark** will write article on Butler camping/caving trip
- **Jessica** will write article on Lost River formation cleaning trip
- Motion to accept by Doug, seconded by Ed
- Accepted

Website (Rick Kehs)

- No report; Rick was not in attendance

Old Business

- NSS Convention: 2024 convention was in TAG (Sewanee TN) over the July 4th holiday (1st-5th).
 - GAG had a good showing at the convention. Dwight, Doug, Dean and Mark each shared their thoughts on the convention and on caves visited, etc. Bert Ashbrook gave two presentations at convention, and Dean gave one presentation.
- Congress of Grottos: Dwight, as Greater Allentown Grotto representative to the 2024 Convention, summarized the agenda and outcomes at the COG meeting at the Convention.
 - Regarding the two GAG initiated proposals:
 - Proposal for NSS to generate a yearly membership manual failed to be approved.
 - Proposal for NSS to distribute printed copies of the Journal of Cave and Karst Studies to not only subscribers but also at no cost to any Life Member who requests a hard copy was approved.
 - Dwight then summarized the rest of the business conducted at the meeting.
- 2024 Grotto cave trip scheduling:
 - Carpenter Cave: **Ed Kehs** noted that he will contact the cave owner when he is in the area in person
 - Onyx new section: **Ed Kehs** noted that he doesn't know when flooding will subside
 - No Fall Mar has been scheduled
 - Fall NRO September 20 to 22 in Rosendale, NY
 - Fall VAR September 27 to 29 at Hungry Mother State Park in VA, hosted by Out of Bounds Grotto
 - **Mark** to set up Penn Aqua trip in August or September
 - OTR: Labor Day weekend
 - Bridge Day: Oct 19
- 2024 GAG Picnic:
 - The annual end of summer picnic (and replacement for the August GAG meeting) will be held at Ed and Kim Kehs' home in Berks County Sunday Aug 18th. Three onsite caves and lots of great food and friends are usual highlights. Vertical practice in Kim's two story garage will be available, as well as the usual cave investigations and digging. Dwight sent out a flyer to all members and posted date on GAG FB page.
- Annual Camping/Caving Weekend held June 21-23 at Rupert Cave Preserve in McVeytown, PA:
 - Actual attendees were Dwight/Jill/Hamish Kempf, Caitlin and Ellie Clever, George and Karen Bange, Rick Smith, Mark Walter, and Gabby Z.
 - Weather was extremely hot. Trips into Rupert and Kookan were enjoyed by some attendees. Three year old Ellie Clever and 4 month old Hamish Kempf (dog) enjoyed popping their heads into the cave, and spent a lot of time in the cool of the cave house.

- Mark gave trip report on the vertical Kookan Cave; the exit through the metal conduit in the former greenhouse needs work due to periodic dirt collapse blocking exit. **Mark** to forward to **Ed** the name of the York Grotto trip leader.

New Business

- NSS Convention June 21 to 28 2025 in Cobleskill, NY (Schoharie County)

Formal meeting was closed by unanimous vote at 8:29 pm.

Program was unable to be presented due to technical issues with linking CD player to laptop

Attendees enjoyed fancy brownies from Jill Kempf

Greater Allentown Grotto
June 16, 2024 Meeting
Wildlands Conservancy Emmaus, PA & Zoom

Meeting called to order at 7:05 pm by Grotto President, Mark Walter

- Attendees were, in person (4), Mark Walter, Dean Snyder, Jessica Nogradi, and Dwight Kempf. Zoom attendees (3) were Doug Soroka, Vince Kappler, and Michael Dobbins.

Minutes read from May 19th Members Meeting

- No changes to minutes; Motion to Accept by Jessica, seconded by Mark
- Accepted

Treasurer report (Doug Soroka)

- Motion to accept by Mark, seconded by Jessica
- Accepted

Membership report (Vince Kappler)

- Vince indicated 70 members, with 15 not paid yet for CY24. There were 16 members in arrears, emails sent with one check and one promise received. Four (former) members removed from list.
- After a discussion, we will hold the 15 members in arrears as inactive and drop them in 2025.
- There are 48 NSS members in the Greater Allentown Grotto.
- Motion to accept by Mark, seconded by Dean
- Accepted

Correspondence report made by Dean Snyder

- No report; will check mailbox soon

Newsletter (Co-editors Bert Ashbrook and Dean Snyder)

- Dean noted that he wants to publish soon, after the convention in early July
- Dean asked for more quality content so he can publish
- Mark will write article on Butler camping/caving trip
- Jessica will write article on Lost River formation cleaning trip
- Motion to accept by Dwight, seconded by Jessica
- Accepted

Website (Rick Kehs)

- No report; Rick was not in attendance
- Grotto Secretary Dwight periodically sends Rick copies of approved minutes that he posts on the website.

Old Business

- NSS Convention: 2024 convention is in TAG (Sewanee TN, lots of caves) over the July 4th holiday (1st-5th).
- 2024 Grotto cave trip scheduling:
 - Carpenter Cave: need to have **Ed Kehs** coordinate
 - Onyx new section: need to have **Ed Kehs** coordinate; don't know when flooding will subside
 - Dwight set up the weekend of June 21-23 to camp and cave at Rupert Cave Preserve in McVeytown, PA.
 - We agreed to have Mark do a trip in Penn Aqua, George Bange to lead trip into Rupert (New Discovery), and someone (Mark?) lead trip into McClure cave as the three cave trips for the weekend.
 - **Dwight** has secured the Preserve for this weekend and has gotten the required permission from MAKC for the three caves. Cave owners Karen and George Bange are scheduled to attend, and Dwight invited Rick Smith to attend.
 - There also will be a trip into Kookan sponsored by York Grotto, and possibly a trip into Big Ridge by Ed Kehs
 - Both these caves have vertical aspects and people **MUST** have vertical experience.
 - Tentative attendees are Dwight/Jill/Hamish Kempf, Caitlin and Ellie Clever, Ed and Kim Kehs, George and Karen Bange, Rick Smith, Mark Walter, Gabby Z, and new caver Justin Newport.
 - OTR: Labor Day weekend
 - Bridge Day: Oct 19
- The annual end of summer picnic (and replacement for the August GAG meeting) will be held at Ed and Kim Kehs' home in Berks County Sunday Aug 18th. Three onsite caves and lots of great food and friends are usual highlights.

New Business

- Trip reports
- Cave clean up at Lost River Caverns was held June 8th
 - Middle of week, for 6 pm, which is after the Caverns close to public
 - Dean, Doug, Lynn, Mark, Jessica and two Nittany Grotto folks, Paul Winter and Olivia McAllister
 - Two pressure washers, both worked, albeit with an issue with water flow.
 - Pressure washed ceiling, used toothbrushes, scrubbers on formations with river water to wash down the dirt.
 - Doug worked with owners on display cases (siblings Bev and Bob)
 - Worked for 2-2.5 hours and had delicious German style pizza which was wonderful
 - Need to schedule coin recovery trip in late summer. Doug and Dean to coordinate date with owners.

Formal meeting was closed by unanimous vote at 8:13 pm.

Attendees enjoyed fancy brownies from Jill Kempf

Greater Allentown Grotto
May 19, 2024 Meeting
Wildlands Conservancy Emmaus, PA & Zoom

Meeting called to order at 7:02 pm by Grotto Secretary, Dwight Kempf

- Attendees were, in person (7), Dean Snyder, Doug Soroka, Ed Kehs, Dwight Kempf, Simon Varner, new member Austin Newport and a new visitor, Michael Wescott Loder (Wes). Zoom attendees (2) were Vince Kappler, and Bert Ashbrook.

Minutes read from April 21st Members Meeting

- No changes to minutes; Motion to Accept by Doug, seconded by Ed
- Accepted

Treasurer report (Doug Soroka)

- Motion to accept by Ed, seconded by Doug
- Accepted

Membership report (Vince Kappler)

- Vince indicated 70 members, with \$260 collected so far for CY24
- Dillon Gruver (#361) and Austin Newport (joined tonight) are our newest members
- Received inquiries from Austin and Evan
- Motion to accept by Dwight, seconded by Ed
- Accepted

Correspondence report made by Dean Snyder

- Only item noted was a \$10 check from new member, and MAKC Karst Chronicle
- Motion to accept by Dwight, seconded by Ed
- Accepted

Newsletter (Co-editors Bert Ashbrook and Dean Snyder)

- Dean noted that there is nothing new from last meeting
- Dean asked for more quality content so he can publish
- Motion to accept by Dwight, seconded by Ed
- Accepted

Website (Rick Kehs)

- No report; Rick was not in attendance
- Grotto Secretary Dwight periodically sends Rick copies of approved minutes that he posts on the website.

Special Announcement by Dean of the passing of long time Greater Allentown Grotto member Gene Scherle. Dean was unable to find an obituary for Gene. Assigned GAG member number 4, Gene was known as “Suds”, was active in the Grotto, and will be missed.

Old Business

- NSS Convention: 2024 convention is in TAG (Sewanee TN, lots of caves) over the July 4th holiday (1st-5th).
 - Along with the people listed in last month's minutes, it was noted that Gabby Z. and her husband will be attending. No Kehs are planning to attend.
 - Dean noted that there are four history presentations listed for the convention so far, including one by him and one by Bert on Sarah Furnace Cave. Bert also has another presentation he will be giving in the archaeology section on Sarah Furnace Cave.
- Bert gave an update on the Sarah Furnace Cave survey project
 - Cave length at 9.7 miles; improved a notch to 88 on US cave length list
 - Mazy; maybe the maziest in world. 9.7 miles is in area of a six acre footprint
 - Need small people to survey in tight areas on periphery of surveyed cave
 - Others invited to attend the upcoming trip on Saturday and Sunday of Memorial Day weekend
- 2024 Grotto cave trip scheduling:
 - Carpenter Cave: need to have **Ed Kehs** coordinate
 - Onyx new section: need to have **Ed Kehs** coordinate; don't know when flooding will subside
 - Spring MAR: May 17-19 McClure, PA; Dwight/Jill, Simon and Bert attended.
 - Dwight set up the weekend of June 21-23 to camp and cave at Rupert Cave Preserve in McVeytown, PA. We agreed to have Mark do a trip in Penn Aqua, George Bange to lead trip into Rupert (New Discovery), and someone (Mark?) lead trip into McClure cave as the three cave trips for the weekend. **Dwight** has secured the Preserve for this weekend and has gotten the required permission from MAKC for the three caves. Cave owners Karen and George Bange are scheduled to attend, and Dwight invited Rick Smith to attend.
 - There also will be a trip into Kookan and possibly a trip into Big Ridge
 - Both these caves have vertical aspects and people **MUST** have vertical experience.
 - OTR: Labor Day weekend
 - Bridge Day: Oct 19
- Doug stated that he and Dean scheduled a cave clean up at Lost River Caverns
 - June 8th
 - Middle of week, for 6 pm, which is after the Caverns close to public
 - **Dwight** to email Olivia McAllister of NGI who is interested in attending
- Ed Kehs noted that the annual end of summer picnic (and replacement for the August GAG meeting) will be held at his and Kim's home in Berks County. Three onsite caves and lots of great food and friends are usual highlights.

New Business

- Trip reports
 - None presented
- Bert gave a short update as the Greater Allentown Grotto PCC representative:

- At the PCC meeting on the Sunday of the MAR weekend, representatives voted to allow officers of PCC to give up to \$200 grants to cave project groups.
- Bert gave the Saturday night presentation at the MAR on Sarah Furnace Cave
 - Dwight noted that it was an excellent presentation
- Dean noted that Netflix has a documentary available called “The secrets of the Neanderthal” that focuses on information unearthed from a cave in Iraq. Show is one hour and 20 minutes.
- Our visitor, Wes Loder, asked about the status of Merkel Cave in Berks County
 - Wes is a longtime caver living in Kutztown.
 - Grotto members gave Wes the background on the cave and it's status
 - Wes noted that he has quite a few pictures he's taken in his 6 off trail trips into Carlsbad Caverns. He has offered to give a presentation to the Grotto, if he is given enough lead time to transfer his pictures to more modern media.
 - MWL2@psu.edu email address

Formal meeting was closed by unanimous vote at 8:05 pm.

Dean explained the intricacies of Nitrate Films, and how he got several (3) reels of lost films from Russell Neville transferred to modern media. Only two reels were able to be safely transferred.

He presented “Lost Nitrate Films of Collector Russell Neville” to a very interested group. Very historical and very interesting. Thanks to Dean for preserving these valuable (historically) films.

Presentation ended at 8:45 pm, and attendees enjoyed mini muffins from Jill Kempf

Greater Allentown Grotto
April 21, 2024 Meeting
Wildlands Conservancy Emmaus, PA & Zoom

Meeting called to order at 7:01 pm by President Mark Walter

- Attendees were, in person, Dean Snyder, Vince Kappler, Mark Walter, Doug Soroka and a new visitor, Ricardo Babilania. Zoom attendees were Dwight Kempf, Steven Satch, Dillon Gruver, Patrick Peck, and, intermittently, Dave (no last name).

Minutes read from February 18th Members Meeting

- No changes to minutes; Motion to Accept by Doug, seconded by Vince
- Accepted
- Note that there was no official March 17th 2024 meeting due to technical difficulties

Treasurer report (Doug Soroka)

- Motion to accept by Dwight, seconded by Dean
- Accepted

Membership report (Vince Kappler)

- Vince indicated 69 members, with \$240 collected so far for CY24
- Vince noted that there are three members who own caves and are therefore exempt from paying dues, as are 9 students.
- Patrick Peck is our newest member, at member number 360
- Motion to accept by Dwight, seconded by Steven
- Accepted

Correspondence report made by Dean Snyder

- Only item noted was an NSS publication
- Motion to accept by Vince, seconded by Doug
- Accepted

Newsletter (Co-editors Bert Ashbrook and Dean Snyder)

- Bert was not able to attend the meeting, so Dean spoke on the topic
- Dean noted that there is nothing new from last meeting
- Dean asked for more quality content so he can publish
- **Mark** will write up a trip report for the weekend camping in Butler Cave in VA
- Motion to accept by Vince, seconded by Dwight
- Accepted

Website (Rick Kehs)

- No report; Rick was not in attendance

Old Business

- NSS Convention: 2024 convention is in TAG (Sewanee TN, lots of caves) over the July 4th holiday (1st-5th).
 - List of GAG attendees so far: Dean, Mark, Bert, Dwight, Jill
 - Dean noted that there are four history presentations listed for the convention so far, including one by him and one by Bert on Sarah Furnace Cave. Bert also has another presentation he will be giving in the archeology section on Sarah Furnace Cave.
- Sarah Furnace: cave length at 9.63 miles; improved a notch to 89 in US cave length list
- MAR Business Meeting, February 24, 2024.
 - Mark volunteered to work with several MAR folks to engineer and purchase equipment to improve the video and audio components of future meetings for remote attendees.
- 2024 Grotto cave trip scheduling:
 - Carpenter Cave: need to have **Ed Kehs** coordinate
 - Onyx new section: need to have **Ed Kehs** coordinate
 - Spring MAR: May 17-19 McClure, PA
 - Spring VAR: May 3-5, Durbin, WV
 - Discussed that spring caving in the NRO area would be best done by attending the Spring NRO, May 17-19 in East Bern NY. Easier logistics and cave access vs. specific spring Grotto event.
 - Similarly, the Fall NRO, usually in late Sept before caves are closed, would be a better way to get access to more caves, e.g., Merlin (marble cave).
 - SpeleoFest May 24-27 in Bonnieville, Kentucky.
 - Dwight set up the weekend of June 21-23 to camp and cave at Rupert Cave Preserve in McVeytown, PA. We agreed to have Mark do a trip in Penn Aqua, George Bange to lead trip into Rupert (New Discovery), and someone (Mark?) lead trip into McClure cave as the three cave trips for the weekend. **Dwight** will get the required permission from MAKC for the three caves.
 - OTR: Labor Day weekend
 - Bridge Day: Oct 19

New Business

- Trip reports
 - None presented
- Delegate for NSS Convention Congress of Grottos:

- Vince made a motion to have Dwight be a representative of the Greater Allentown Grotto at the NSS Convention on July 1-5 2024 for the Congress of Grottos meeting.
- Mark seconded the motion
- Motion was voted on and approved
 - Dean asked Dwight to bring up the ask to have members manuals be available in a printed format rather than just electronic
 - [Caves.org/org/Congress-of-Grottos/](https://caves.org/org/Congress-of-Grottos/)
- Doug stated that we need to schedule a cave clean up at Lost River Caverns
 - Middle of week, for 6 pm, which is after the Caverns close to public
 - Went through many potential dates; May 29 or June 8th possibilities
 - **Dean** to check with cave owners on date
- Mark noted that the March 2, 2024 Norfolk Southern train derailment along the Lehigh River (one train hit another and hit a train coming the other way) is close to Redington Cave. Mark brought up a Google Map and the members tried to identify how close the derailment was; quarter mile or so is the consensus.
- Logistics for May meeting:
 - Mark will not be able to make the meeting; he has the Zoom license we use
 - Doug volunteered the use of his Zoom license
 - **Doug** to set up the Zoom meeting and issue link
 - **Dwight** to send out link via email to membership
 - **Dean** to give his NSS Convention History Section presentation to Grotto
- Discussed possible future presentations; Dean mentioned he has a film on Crystal Cave and the Roadside miniature village attraction that he could present in the future if he can get the film converted to video. Currently film is spliced with scotch tape and breaks frequently.

Formal meeting was closed by unanimous vote at 8:23 pm.

Mark presented a video on cave diving safety: “Birth of a Cave Diving Legend – A Tribute to Sheck Exley”.

Presentation ended at 9:15 pm.

Greater Allentown Grotto
February 18, 2024 Meeting
Wildlands Conservancy Emmaus, PA & Zoom

Meeting called to order at 7:15 pm by President Mark Walter

- Attendees were, in person, Dean Snyder, Pat Richard, Vince Kappler and our newest member, Bethany Smith. Zoom attendees were Mark Walter, Dwight Kempf, Steven Satch and, intermittently, Chris (last name ?).

Minutes read from December 17, 2023 Members Meeting

- No changes to minutes; Motion to Accept by Pat, seconded by Vince
- Accepted

Minutes read from December 17, 2023 BOD Organization Meeting

- No changes to minutes; Motion to Accept by Vince, seconded by Pat
- Accepted

Treasurer report: in Doug Soroka's absence, Dwight relayed the checking account balance

- Motion to accept by Pat, seconded by Vince
- Accepted

Membership report (Vince Kappler)

- Vince indicated 69 members, with \$200 collected so far for CY24
- As a comparison point, in 2023, the Grotto collected \$430
- Bethany is our newest member, at member number 359
- 2024 dues reminder sent out by email last year, and resent this past week for the 23 folks who haven't yet paid
- In Vince's absence at the Holiday Party in early January, Dean and Doug collected dues for 2024
- Motion to accept by Mark, seconded by Dwight
- Accepted

Correspondence report made by Dean Snyder

- We received a thank you from the Wildlands Conservancy for our donation
- Received a membership application from Bethany
- Received a \$220 donation from Lost River Caverns. They had indicated that the donation was \$200 and the \$20 is for dues, but the Grotto does not charge commercial cave owners dues. Dean stated that **Doug** will send a thank you note for the \$220 as required by the IRS.
- Motion to accept by Dwight, seconded by Mark
- Accepted

Newsletter (Co-editors Bert Ashbrook and Dean Snyder)

- Bert was not able to attend the meeting, so Dean spoke on the topic
- Dean noted that there is nothing new from last meeting
- Dean asked for more quality content so he can publish
- Vince suggested including Grotto member names and emails
 - Group thought that was a good idea, so **Vince** will forward
- **Mark** just got back from a Grotto weekend camping in Butler Cave in VA. He will write up a trip report.
- Motion to accept by Dwight, seconded by Vince
- Accepted

Website (Rick Kehs)

- No report

Old Business

- NSS Convention: 2024 convention is in TAG (Sewanee TN, lots of caves) over the July 4th holiday (1st-5th).
- GAG holiday party was at Dean and Val's on Jan 6, 2024. For a very snowy evening there was a great turnout. Two cases of member and spouse winning gift bags. The Grotto thanks Dean and Val for hosting the party.
- Leithsville Cave: no report. Cave owner seems to have disappeared.
- Sarah Furnace: No Update
- MAR Business Meeting, scheduled for Saturday, February 24, 2024. PCC meeting following MAR Business Meeting. Potluck following business meetings. Location & Time: 1:30 pm. at the Mt. Laurel Church of God located at 1295 Piketown Road, Harrisburg, Dauphin County, Pennsylvania.
 - Because **Dwight** will not be able to attend, he will send the Grotto's proxy assignment to Mark to the MAR secretary, Gretchen ("Red").
- 2024 Grotto cave trip scheduling: **Mark** discussed with **Ed** during Butler Cave trip.
 - Carpenter Cave; still holding off out of respect for illness in owner's family
 - Butler Cave (this weekend; trip discussed in New Business)
 - Onyx new section
 - Spring MAR: May 17-19 McClure, PA
 - Spring VAR: May 3-5, Durbin, WV
 - Discussed that spring caving in the NRO area would be best done by attending the Spring NRO, date TBD. Easier logistics and cave access vs. specific spring Grotto event. **Vince** to find out dates.
 - Dwight to set up weekend in June to camp and cave at Rupert Cave Preserve in McVeytown, PA.
 - Many other options will be explored

New Business

- Trip reports
 - Mark described his two day Shippensburg caving experience with various other (Non GAG) Grotto folks to Carnegie, then Corker Hill (near Frustration Pit) on Saturday, and Peiper and Cleversburg Sink on Sunday.
 - Mark then described the Butler trip this weekend. Attendees: Mark, Ed and Ed Kehs Jr, Zorry Kehs, Dillon Gruver. Everyone got to the cave around 11 pm Friday, took about half hour to lug camping and caving stuff into cave, got to sleep around 1 am. Up at 8 am, trip started 9 am, ended around 4 pm. Ran into Philly Grotto folks, including Amos Mincin. Ate and headed back out at 5 pm to Natural Bridge. Some sketchy areas getting to the bridge. Headed back to campsite at 9 pm and went to bed early. Up at 7 am, back at Ed's house at 5 pm.
 - Take-a-ways:
 - Everything takes longer than Ed says. 10 minutes to camping location took half hour; trip to Natural Bridge took twice as long.
 - Two decade old MRE's are a mixed bag to eat; some stuff is ok, some stuff isn't.
- Rock Shelter exploration
 - Steven Satch has found 450 rock shelters with his daughter in many different states over several years
 - He will send trip reports to Dean for inclusion in Grotto newsletter

Meeting was closed by unanimous vote at 8:15 pm.

Greater Allentown Grotto
December 17, 2023 Meeting
Wildlands Conservancy Emmaus, PA & Zoom

Meeting called to order at 7:05 pm by President Mark Walter

- Attendees were Mark Walter, Dean Snyder, Dwight Kempf, Pat Richard, Simon G. & Jessica Black (Nogradi), with Vince Kappler and Bert Ashbrook by Zoom. Guest Patrick Peck attended in person.

Minutes read from November 19, 2023 Meeting

- No changes to minutes; Motion to Accept by Jessica, seconded by Dean
- Accepted

Treasurer report: in Doug Soroka's absence, Dwight relayed the checking account balance

- Motion to accept by Dean, seconded by Jessica
- Accepted

Membership report (Vince Kappler)

- Vince indicated 70 members, with \$40 collected so far for CY24
- New members Christen and Mathew Vollers
- 2024 dues reminder sent out by email
- Motion to accept by Pat, seconded by Jessica
- Accepted

Correspondence report made by Dean Snyder

- Two Grotto membership applications in PO Box
- Motion to accept by Jessica, seconded by Pat
- Accepted

Newsletter (Co-editors Bert Ashbrook and Dean Snyder)

- Dean noted that he has two articles in hand for next PRS newsletter
- He is working on an article on Veiled Lady Cave in Centre County, Gregg Twp.
 - Near Woodward and Penn's Caves
 - Looking for info from anyone who has been through the cave
 - A couple of attendees have been in it
 - He believes the cave entrance currently may be blocked by mud
- Needs at least two more “quality” articles; please forward to him asap
- Motion to accept by Pat, seconded by Jessica
- Accepted

Website (Rick Kehs)

- No report

Old Business

- NSS Convention: 2024 convention is in TAG (Sewanee TN, lots of caves) over the July 4th holiday (1st-5th).
- GAG holiday party will be at Dean and Val's on Jan 6, 2024 5:17 pm start
 - Dwight sent out an electronic copy just after Thanksgiving and will repeat around New Years to remind folks
- Leithsville Cave: no report. Cave owner seems to have disappeared.
- Sarah Furnace Update
 - Currently at 9.5 miles in length, maziest cave in the world
 - Last trip was November 25th. Cross sections and wet and/or tight passages focus
 - Next trip is Saturday Dec 30th. Much of the survey work is now focused on cross sections and ugly, small and/or wet passages; contact Bert Ashbrook if you are interested in participating.
- MAR Zoom meeting: Dean and Bert attended, representing Greater Allentown Grotto. Intent of meeting was to elect new organization treasurer, due to Bette White's passing. Paul Winter was elected treasurer, and he had to resign the BOD Chair. Chair position will be filled at the regular MAR Business Meeting.
- MAR Business Meeting, scheduled for Saturday, February 24, 2024. PCC meeting following MAR Business Meeting. Potluck following business meetings. Location & Time: 1:30 pm. at the Mt. Laurel Church of God located at 1295 Piketown Road, Harrisburg, Dauphin County, Pennsylvania.
- 2024 Grotto cave trip scheduling: **Mark** to contact **Ed Kehs** to discuss options
 - Carpenter Cave
 - Butler Cave (possible camping in cave)
 - Onyx new section
 - Discussed that spring caving in the NRO area would be best done by attending the Spring NRO, date TBD. Easier logistics and cave access vs. specific spring Grotto event.
 - Many other options will be explored

New Business

- Bert noted that congratulations are in order for longtime Greater Allentown Grotto member Jeanne Wetterling Shipe, who recently married and is living in New Smithville, PA.

Meeting was closed by unanimous vote at 7:45 pm.

Greater Allentown Grotto
2024 Board Of Directors Organization Meeting
December 17, 2023

Wildlands Conservancy Emmaus, PA & Zoom

Meeting called to order at 7:45 pm by current President Mark Walter

Attendees: Mark Walter, Dwight Kempf, Dean Snyder, Vince Kappler (Z), & Bert Ashbrook (Z)

Absent: Ed and Kim Kehs, Doug Soroka

The following BOD members were elected by a quorum of members during the November 19, 2023 Greater Allentown Grotto meeting:

Mark Walter
Dwight Kempf
Vince Kappler
Bert Ashbrook
Dean Snyder
Ed Kehs
Kim Kehs

Based on a motion by Bert Ashbrook, seconded by Mark Walter and unanimously adopted, the 2024 BOD roles will be the same as the current 2023 roles:

President: Mark Walter
Vice President: Ed Kehs
Treasurer: Doug Soroka
Secretary: Dwight Kempf
Membership: Vince Kappler
Newsletter: Dean Snyder and Bert Ashbrook
Member at Large: Kim Kehs
Spiritual Advisor: Dean Snyder

Appointed members:
Webmaster: Rick Kehs

Meeting adjourned at 7:50 pm

Program presented by Dean Snyder:
Dean demonstrated how to make a magnetic bat bumper sticker and handed out a bat template and magnetic sheeting to each member. Our thanks to Dean for providing the program and materials.

A snack was provided by member Jill Kempf: brownie cupcakes with butter cream frosting. Thank you Jill, for the treat!

Greater Allentown Grotto
November 19, 2023 Meeting
Wildlands Conservancy Emmaus, PA & Zoom

Meeting called to order at 7:00 pm by President Mark Walter

- Attendees were Mike and Rick Kehs, Doug Soroka, Mark Walter, Dean Snyder, Eugene Scharle, Dwight Kempf, Bert Ashbrook, Lynn Kleina & Jessica Black, with Vince Kappler by Zoom.

Minutes read from October 15, 2023 Meeting

- One minor change (P.O. Box cost); Motion to Accept by Lynn, seconded by Mark
- Accepted

Treasurer report made by Doug Soroka

- Balances read for accounts
- Doug indicated that he will be making the yearly donation of \$100 to the Wildlands Conservancy this month.
- Motion to accept by Lynn, seconded by Gene
- Accepted

Membership report (Vince Kappler)

- Vince was on Zoom
- Vince indicated no changes from last month; 66 members and \$430 collected so far, some for CY24
- One person inquired about the Grotto; Isabella, a PSU student. **Dwight** will get contact info for the PSU Caving Club and send to Vince to forward to her. She is absolutely welcome to join our Grotto, but if she is in State College, she will have more caving opportunities via the PSU Caving Club.
- Motion to accept by Lynn, seconded by Mike
- Accepted

Correspondence report made by Dean Snyder

- Nothing in PO Box other than the NSS magazine
- Noted that the new rental will be \$70, payable in November. He indicated that the Postmistress offered a smaller box for \$70, and she was willing to keep our current PO Box number and transfer to the smaller box. A win for the Grotto.
- Motion to accept by Lynn, seconded by Mark
- Accepted

Newsletter (Co-editors Bert Ashbrook and Dean Snyder)

- Dean noted that The Journal of Spelean History has gone out (he is editor) and is now ready to focus on the next issue of Pack Rat Scat
- He has one article he wrote and one from Bert along with a picture of George Ackers for the next issue of Pack Rat Scat.
- Needs at least two more “quality” articles; please forward to him asap
- As occurred the prior month, Dean and Bert exchanged some additional comments
- Dean indicated that he was willing to accept 5 or 6 pictures to go with an article
- Motion to accept by Lynn, seconded by Mike
- Accepted

Website (Rick Kehs)

- Up to date on meeting minutes
- Discussed the technical requirements for photos to be posted to website
- Dwight sent him several dozen (about 60) pictures that he will have to cull through and resize. Will start the process when he has time and can wrap up quickly

Old Business

- NSS Convention: 2024 convention is in TAG (Sewanee TN, lots of caves) over the July 4th holiday (1st-5th). Bert indicated that the 2025 Convention will be in Cobleskill New York.
- No one at the meeting attended Bridge Day, Fall VAR or the Cave Rescue class.
- GAG holiday party will be at Dean and Val's on Jan 6, 2024 5:17 pm start
 - Dean passed out more fliers; Dwight will send out an electronic copy just after Thanksgiving and New Years to remind folks
- Leithsville Cave: no report
- Sarah Furnace Update
 - Currently at 9.5 miles in length
 - October 28th and 29th trips were focused on breaking up large slabs in the entrance in preparation for placement of support ties; the entrance is now almost a walk in. Future work will focus on placing the railroad ties to support the entrance.
 - The November 12th trip was well attended by 11 people, including several “thin college kids” that did survey work in the small passages in the east and southeast portions of the cave. They made great progress.
 - Next trip is Saturday Nov 25th. Much of the survey work is now focused on cross sections; contact Bert Ashbrook if you are interested in participating.

- Bette White memorial service was 10/21 in State College area. Bert attended and indicated that there were about 75 folks there, with ~50 cavers, 25 local (State College area) and PSU. Mike Baake from Idaho was the furthestmost attendee, but there were folks from many other states. Will, Bette's husband, is working on a new textbook on geology.
- MAKC BOD meeting: Bert attended. Tom Metzgar is the new president or board chairman. New MAKC BOD members were elected. They indicated that they will re-write the By-Laws, and intend to go after the vandals that were identified recently at Sarah Furnace Cave. MAKC is looking at acquiring (buy/lease) a cave in West Virginia; more to come.

Old Business, Continued

- Mark led discussion on going back to NRO area (e.g., Schoharie County) in the spring. Vince indicated that May and early June trips are likely to have snow, and the water in the wet caves is snow melt and very cold. He noted that the Spring NRO would be a good opportunity to go caving in the region with fewer logistics issues (i.e., reserving cabin, getting permits, etc). Bert indicated that Philly and Bald Eagle Grottos are members of NRO.
 - **Vince** to look into when Spring NRO is scheduled.
 - **Mark** to look into what is required to have the Grotto join the NRO (while still belonging to MAR).
- Future Grotto Trips: **Mark** indicated that he will get together with Ed Kehs to discuss future trips.

New Business

- Nothing brought up for discussion

Elections

- Dean made a motion to keep the existing Board of Directors in place for 2024.
- Bert seconded the motion.
- No discussion, other than Mark's comments that will not be included here.
- Motion passed unanimously.
- **Dwight** will check with Ed (VP) and Kim Kehs (Director At Large) to confirm they will continue in their current positions. Ed and Kim were not able to make tonight's meeting.
- Due to time constraints, the Board of Director reorganization meeting was not held; this is the meeting at which the elected Grotto members are assigned positions within the Board structure. **THIS IS STILL TO BE DONE.**

The formal meeting ended around 7:50 pm

Bert Ashbrook gave a wonderful presentation of the many caves he, his wife, Gordon Smith and Laura Allen visited on a whirlwind visit to France via Spain.

Snacks of pumpkin scones, baked by member Jill Kempf, were distributed by Dwight.

After an interesting presentation, program ended around 8:45 pm.

Greater Allentown Grotto
October 15, 2023 Meeting
Wildlands Conservancy Emmaus, PA & Zoom

Meeting called to order at 7:03 pm by President Mark Walter

- Attendees were Ed Kehs, Doug Soroka, Mark Walter, Dean Snyder, Eugene Scharle, Dwight Kempf, Simon Varner, with Bert Ashbrook, Robert Yochum and Vince Kappler by Zoom

Minutes read from September 17, 2023 Meeting

- No changes; Motion to Accept by Doug, seconded by Gene
- Accepted

Treasurer report made by Doug Soroka

- Balances read for accounts
- Motion to accept by Ed, seconded by Mark
- Accepted

Membership report (Vince Kappler)

- Vince was on and off the Zoom meeting
- Via email, Vince indicated that he received inquiries from Chris Vollers and John Ferretti. Neither one attended tonight, but John Ferretti requested and was accepted to the Grotto FaceBook page.
- Motion to accept by Mark, seconded by Dwight
- Accepted

Correspondence report made by Dean Snyder

- Nothing in PO Box
- New rental will be \$99, payable in November
- PCC shares address but does not share in expense; very low PCC mail volume
- Motion to accept by Ed, seconded by Gene
- Accepted

Newsletter (Co-editors Bert Ashbrook and Dean Snyder)

- Dean noted that he is done with the latest issue of The Journal of Spelean History publication (he is editor) and is now ready to focus on the next issue of Pack Rat Scat
- Need more “quality” content; please forward to him asap
- Bert made some additional comments
- Motion to accept by Doug, seconded by Ed
- Accepted

Website (Rick Kehs)

- No report.

Old Business

- NSS Convention: 2024 convention is in TAG (Sewanee TN, lots of caves) over the July 4th holiday (1st-5th)
- GAG holiday party will be at Dean and Val's on Jan 6, 2024 5:17 pm start
 - Dean passed out flyers; he will send Dwight electronic copy for Dwight to send out just after Thanksgiving and New Years to remind folks
- Leithsville Cave: no report
- Sarah Furnace Update
 - Currently at 9.4 miles in length, 91st in U.S.
 - Next trip is weekend of Oct. 28-29. At least the 28th will be focused on reinforcing the entrance with rr ties; possible that will take both days. If not, experienced cavers who know how to survey, please, given the tight, wet conditions. Contact Bert Ashbrook.
- Bette White memorial service is 10/21 in State College area. Ed and Kim will be going and have address and time information if needed.
- Trip report on Grotto trip to Gage Preserve in Schoharie, NY
 - Mark, Simon, the Ritty brothers, Jamie and Allie attended the weekend
 - Mark showed pictures that several people took while he and Simon narrated.
 - Did Gage (Balls) Cave; everyone enjoyed the rappel into the cave
 - Emily Davis, one of the Preserve Managers and owner of Speleobooks, was there to provide advice; the shop is very close to the cabin and cave
 - New cabin is nice, but only a shell. Preserve wants to keep mice out, so no mattresses; slept on plywood.
 - Next time, bring air mattresses and way to blow them up.
 - No flames allowed in cabin
 - Since there is no electricity and no flames, this should be treated as a 3 season cabin.
 - Due to many factors, everyone left Saturday.
 - Folks indicated an interest in doing a trip in spring of 2024, visiting the many caves in the area. Most are closed now for bat preservation reasons.

New Business

- Upcoming Events
 - October 21: Bette White's memorial service
 - October 21: Bridge Day in New River Gorge in West Virginia
 - October 21-23: Fall Var in RASS Fieldhouse, Millboro VA
 - October 27-29: Orientation To Cave Rescue course, Brookhaven VFD, Morgantown, WV

- October 28-29: Workday and survey at Sarah Furnace Cave in Clarion County, PA
- November 18: MAKC BOD meeting with elections
- Mark noted:
 - As of now, there is no Fall MAR; no Grottos volunteered to sponsor it.
 - Greater Allentown Grotto elections will be in November. Please think about becoming a member of the Grotto BOD
- Potential future trips
 - Ed suggested Quarry Hill Cave along I-81 at Newville as a possible future trip. He knows the brother of the owner and is working to get a trip set up.
 - Alexander Cave in central PA is available for trips.
 - Carpenter Cave is a possibility
 - Ed suggested a camping trip INSIDE Butler Cave in Virginia. Few minutes hike inside cave to sandy area to camp. Dwight and Ed have done this before and had a great time; lots of opportunities to do cave trips when camping inside.
 - If anyone is interested in doing a cave trip into Onyx and/or Fraser Caves, contact Ed Kehs to come up with mutually acceptable date.
 - Ed noted that the area around the new discovery in Onyx is still under water, making the pretty formations hard to see. Plus you are crawling in water. Will watch to see when water drops, then discuss future trip.
 - **Mark** suggested that he and **Ed** get together to discuss timing of future trips.
- Bert offered to do a presentation next meeting (November 19) on caves he explored on a recent trip to France.

The formal meeting ended around 8:07 pm

Mark played a episode of “The Caverns” PBS series filmed in Tennessee in a well known cave.

Snacks of pumpkin muffins (with and without dark chocochips), baked by member Jill Kempf were distributed by Dwight

After a wonderful presentation, program ended around 8:45 pm.

Greater Allentown Grotto
September 17, 2023 Meeting
Wildlands Conservancy Emmaus, PA & Zoom

Meeting called to order at 7:05 pm by President Mark Walter

- Attendees were Ed Kehs, Doug Soroka, Lynn Kleina, Mark Walter, Dean Snyder, Eugene Scharle, Dwight Kempf, Jessica Nogradi, Jon and Michael Ritty, Simon Varner, with Justin Bowen and Vince Kappler by Zoom

Minutes read from June 18, 2023 Meeting

- No changes; Motion to Accept by Lynn, seconded by Doug
- Accepted

Treasurer report made by Doug Soroka

- Balances read for accounts
- Checking moved over to Truist
- Motion to accept by Lynn, seconded by Jessica
- Accepted

Membership report (Vince Kappler)

- Membership at 66 people
- \$430 in dues collected YTD
- Justin inquired about membership, and is at this meeting via Zoom
- Motion to accept by Lynn, seconded by Gene
- Accepted

Correspondence report made by Dean Snyder

- Nothing except junk mail
- Motion to accept by Lynn, seconded by Mark
- Accepted

Newsletter (Co-editors Bert Ashbrook and Dean Snyder)

- Dean noted that he has one article by Bert and one by himself
- Need more “quality” content; please forward to him asap
- Motion to accept by Lynn, seconded by Mark
- Accepted

Website (Rick Kehs)

- No report.

Old Business

- NSS Convention comments by membership
 - Mark stated this was his first convention. On MWF he did sessions, TTH caved.

- Dean stated the facilities were good, food was so-so. Presos went well:
 - History 100+ attendees; Bert gave two great presentations, Dean gave one
 - He stated that Bette White approached him and stated how much she enjoyed the History Session.
- GAG picnic was at Onyx Cave August 20, 2023
 - Good turnout; lots of trips into caves. Food was great, nice to see people we haven't seen in awhile. Steve dug out a lot of buckets on his project during picnic.
 - Unfortunately, Ed noted one attendee went to the very back of Fraser by himself, which is a major safety concern.
- GAG holiday party will be at Dean and Val on Jan 6, 2024
- Rupert Cave Weekend July 14-16
 - Co-weekend with Nittany Grotto
 - Explored New Discovery of Rupert and historical section of Rupert
 - Ed took owners of Big Ridge (Zooks) into Rupert; quite a few folks
 - Ed and his granddaughter explored the historical section and had a great time
- Leithsville Cave search July 22
 - Great turnout, over a dozen folks
 - Jessica noted that the landowner had employee in track hoe digging along quarry face; quite a lot of linear feet dug out with no obvious entrances seen.
 - Mark, Jamie and others worked hard clearing out around a possible sinkhole up the hill; no luck after clearing around it.
 - Dwight noted that landowner is very busy and hasn't had a chance to get back to him after he reached out multiple times.
- Sarah Furnace Update
 - Currently at 9.32 miles in length, 91st in U.S.
 - Next trip is weekend of Sept. 30, Oct. 1st, surveying both days. Experienced cavers who have been in SF only, please, given the tight, wet conditions. Contact Bert Ashbrook.

New Business

- Members were informed of the passing of Bette White, long time Nittany Grotto member, and MAR treasurer. She has been a fixture at regional and national events, and will be missed. Ed noted her memorial service will be in State College on October 21st; he and Kim will be going and others are welcome to join them.
- Gage Preserve in Schoharie, New York trip this coming weekend, 9/22-24.
 - Thus far, Mark, Dwight Jon & Michael Ritty are confirmed, with Simon and Jamie/Allie possible.
 - Site manager needs waivers by Wednesday, Dwight requesting them sent to him by Tuesday. Have from everyone except Jamie/Allie.

- Mark noted:
 - As of now, there is no Fall MAR; no Grottos volunteered to sponsor it.
 - Greater Allentown Grotto elections will be in November.
 - 2024 NSS Convention is planned for the July 4th weekend in TAG
 - Discussion noted that our convention is the least expensive nearly week long convention around; great value.
 - Mark already signed up for 2024 Convention at this year's Convention.
 - For 2024, Mark will be starting the trip planning starting next month in order to have a full year of trips available to all members.
- Cave trips reports
 - Ed took the Zook family (owner of Big Ridge Cave) into Peiper Cave.
 - Ed took several members of the Grant family into Big Ridge. All did very well, including the younger members of the family.
- Potential future trips
 - Ed offered Quarry Hill Cave along I-81 at Newville as a possible future trip. He knows the brother of the owner and is working to get a trip set up.
 - Alexander Cave in central PA is available for trips.
 - Carpenter Cave maybe a possibility this Fall; owner has some issues that have been impacting access.
 - If anyone is interested in doing a cave trip into Onyx and/or Fraser Caves, contact Ed Kehs to come up with mutually acceptable date.

The formal meeting ended.

Presentation by Greater Allentown Grotto Member Doug Soroka: The Aven Armand cave in Southern France, and Padirac Cave, also in Southern France. Two world class caves!

Snacks of Cowboy Cookies, baked by member Jill Kempf were distributed by Dwight.

After a wonderful presentation, program ended at 8:34 pm.

Greater Allentown Grotto
June 18, 2023 Meeting
Wildlands Conservancy Emmaus, PA & Zoom

Note: Dean Snyder took minutes as Dwight Kempf was unable to attend meeting.

Meeting called to order at 7pm by President Mark Walter

- Attendees were Ed Kehs, Lynn Kleina, Mark Walter, Dean Snyder, Eugene Scharle, Rob Yochum, Jamie Lichner, Allie Lichner, others by Zoom

Minutes read from May 21, 2023 Meeting

- No changes
- Accepted

Treasurer report made by Doug Soroka

- Balances read for accounts
- Accepted

Membership report (Vince Kappler)

- Membership at 65 people
- Accepted

Correspondence report made by Dean Snyder

- NSS News and Journal of Cave and Karst Studies
- Accepted

Newsletter (Co-editors Bert Ashbrook and Dean Snyder)

- No report

Website (Rick Kehs)

- No report.

Old Business

- NSS Convention begins next week in West Virginia
- GAG picnic will be at Onyx Cave August 20, 2023
- GAG holiday party will be at Dean and Val on Jan 6, 2024
- Rupert Cave Weekend July 14-16
- No July Meeting for GAG
- September Program will be Doug Soroka
- Leithsville Cave search July 22

New Business

- Change of bank discussed due to \$15 monthly fee, new bank will be Truist

The formal meeting ended.

Grotto Presentation:

- Program by Gabby of Silver Waters Cave in West Virginia

Respectfully submitted

Dean Snyder

Greater Allentown Grotto
May 21, 2023 Meeting
Wildlands Conservancy Emmaus, PA & Zoom

Note: Names/topics in **BOLD** indicate action items

Meeting called to order at 7:05 pm by President Mark Walter

- All were welcomed
- Eight in-person attendees, four Zoom attendee
- Attendees were Doug Soroka, Lynn Kleina, Dwight Kempf, Mark Walter, Dean Snyder, Ed Kehs, Gene Scharle, Jessica Jessica Nogradi; Mike Bobbins, Bert Ashbrook, Steve Satch and Nick Macelko on Zoom
- Mark reviewed the agenda for the meeting

Minutes read from April 16, 2023 Meeting

- There was one change on the topic of Bert's article for the next PRS, per Dean
- Motions to accept/second were made (Lynn, Doug), vote taken, and passed

Treasurer report made by Doug Soroka

- Balances read for accounts
- Motions to accept/second were made (Lynn, Ed), vote taken, and passed

Membership report (Vince Kappler)

- Vince was absent; no report

Correspondence report made by Dean Snyder

- Dean attended Wildlands Conservancy, 50th anniversary reception April 20th as Greater Allentown Grotto representative; about 200 folks attended
- Nothing else to report
- No motion were made to accept since there was no correspondence to report

Newsletter (Co-editors Bert Ashbrook and Dean Snyder)

- Dean reported no change from April
- Trip reports, scholarly reports on cave biology, history, etc. are encouraged
- Motions to accept/second were made (Lynn, Dwight), vote taken, and passed

Website (Rick Kehs)

- Rick was absent; no report.

Old Business

- Upcoming events review, status:
 - Penn Aqua Cave Preserve workday, Saturday April 22nd. Mark attended; a group built a wall around the kiosk; George Bange had to go obtain more rock. After the work was completed, folks were invited to Karen and George's home. George gave everyone a tour of his workshop and gave everyone a turned wooden bowl as a thank you for participating.
 - Spring MAR, May 5-7. Over 200 people attended the event at Shade Gap, PA. Lots of caving, good food. Mark, Ed, Chad, Dwight and Jill all attended. Presentation on Sliding Rock Cave on the southern tier of PA. MAKC had a booth and sold various merchandise; about \$1,500 of Frank Herzog's stuff was sold this weekend, for a total of \$5,000 sold by MAKC (so far). A great time.
 - Spring VAR, May 19-21. Mark and Caleb attended. Mark caved Friday night at small cave across road from camping (McCoy) and Keys Cave Saturday with 15 Philly Grotto folks, followed by Hamilton Saturday night. Mark's comment was that the event wasn't as well organized as MAR, and that the presentation was not well done.
 - SpeleoFest, May 26-29
 - Spring NRO, June 9-10
 - NSS Convention, June 26-30. Dean, Lynn, Doug, Mark and Bert indicated that they will be going.
 - Doug noted that Dean is in charge of the History section at the Convention, and that Bert will be giving two presentations in the History section, and one in Cartography section.
 - A motion was made by Lynn and seconded by Dwight to elect Bert Ashbrook as the Greater Allentown Grotto representative to the Congress of Grottos at the NSS Convention June 26-30. Motion was unanimously passed.
 - Picnic – August. Ed noted that the picnic will be at his and Kim's place on Sunday, August 20th.
 - Holiday Party (January 2024)
 - Sarah Furnace Cave survey trips: Bert indicated that there was a mid month trip to SFC last Thursday May 18th. Cave is now 8.93 miles. There was a “semi rescue” during the trip. The next survey trip is the Saturday/Sunday Memorial Day weekend trip this coming weekend. Let Bert know if you are interested; need people to do cross-section surveys of the cave.
 - Ruppert Caving and Camping weekend: **July 14-16** has been confirmed by the owners of cave; it will be a combined Greater Allentown Grotto/Nittany Grotto weekend.
 - Durhan/Carpenter Caves, Northampton County. The tentative date of June 4th has not been confirmed by landowner due to health issues within their family. Trip was been postponed, probably to Summer/Fall.

- Trip to New York state NSS Gage Cave Preserve: No change to last month's discussion.
- Mark noted Bald Eagle has Alexander Cave trip set up on June 3rd that we are welcome to attend. So far, there has not been any Greater Allentown Grotto members indicating interest.
- Ed Kehs noted that Peiper is available with some notice to him. He also noted that the new discovery in Onyx trip will be in August or September. No change from April; **Date to be set later.**
- Mark noted that Mike Shank of York Grotto can lead a trip into Cleversburg Sink, along I-81, near Carnegie and Peiper caves (Shippensburg). No change from last month; a trip will be set up this summer/fall focusing on Cleversburg with the other two caves as backup if water levels are too high.
- Follow up on last month's discussion with Dominic Abanese regarding potential cave on his property and scheduling a time for Grotto members to visit and evaluate potential locations for cave (Hellertown/Saucon Valley area):
 - **Dwight** had a followup call into Dominic, he is open to many dates, except June 4rd. Dwight sent an email earlier in the week summarizing this conversation. Unfortunately, Dwight and the GAG Board who received the email all forgot this limitation and the Grotto tentatively set up the date as June 4th. **Dwight** to call Dominic and set up date for later in June.

New Business

- Trip Reports (trip reports are also included in Old Business in appropriate cave discussions)
 - Trip report from Dwight on his and Jill's trip to Kentucky to the Great SaltPetre Cave (GSP), an NSS preserve. He described his through trip into Pine Hill cave, which has a vertical entrance and a horizontal exit, and the trip into the formerly commercial GSC, a fascinating cave with lots of history.
- Mark indicated that he spoke with **Gabby** at the VAR and that she will be presenting at the June Grotto meeting.

The formal meeting ended at approximately 7:50.

- Motion to end the meeting/second were made (Lynn, Dwight), vote taken, and passed

Grotto Presentation:

- **Mark** presented a canned NSS presentation from 1987 about a historic and ground breaking project done at Wakulla Springs in the Florida Panhandle. He presented the slides from the original presentation, along with some additional commentary on the participants in that project, what was new at that time and how that has evolved and impacted cave diving today, and how this enabled subsequent further exploration of Wakulla over the past 30 years. A fascinating presentation!

The presentation ended around 8:58 and the meeting ended.

Respectfully submitted

Dwight Kempf

Greater Allentown Grotto
April 16, 2023 Meeting
Wildlands Conservancy Emmaus, PA & Zoom

Note: Names/topics in **BOLD** indicate action items

Meeting called to order at 7:05 pm by President Mark Walter

- All were welcomed
- Thirteen in-person attendees, one Zoom attendee
- Attendees were Doug Soroka, Lynn Kleina, Dwight Kempf, Mark Walter, Dean Snyder, Chad Kardos, Ed Kehs, Gene Scharle, Caleb Bachman, Jamie and Allie Lichner, Logan Lusareta, Jessica Nogradi; Bert Ashbrook on Zoom
- Mark reviewed the agenda for the meeting

Minutes read from March 19, 2023 Meeting

- There were no changes
- Motions to accept/second were made (Lynn, Doug), vote taken, and passed

Treasurer report made by Doug Soroka

- Balances read for accounts
- Issue with access to the state of Pennsylvania charity website through Keystone PA login was updated. Doug has tried multiple times to log in with frustrating results, went to his local PA congressman again. This submission is due in January of each year, and the inability of the state to give Doug access has prevented submission. This time, the State of PA has agreed to allow use of paper submissions, and Doug will download and submit.
- Motions to accept/second were made (Lynn, Mark), vote taken, and passed

Membership report made by Vince Kappler

- Vince was absent; two new members were announced, Logan and Caleb.

Correspondence report made by Dean Snyder

- Letter from Wildlands Conservancy, inviting someone from Grotto to attend 50th anniversary reception April 20th as a long time contributor was received last month. **Dean** will be attending on behalf of the Grotto.
- One magazine came since last month report; NSS News.
- Motions to accept/second were made (Lynn, Jamie), vote taken, and passed

Newsletter (Co-editors Bert Ashbrook and Dean Snyder)

- Dean noted that he has about 15 pages submitted for next newsletter; two topics. Bert's Kentucky caving trip and an article on Crystal Cave (PA).
- Trip reports, scholarly reports on cave biology, history, etc. are encouraged
- Dean asked for submissions of articles in email text or pdf formats as his computer does not have the ability to use Word .doc document format.

- Motions to accept/second were made (Lynn, Doug), vote taken, and passed

Website (Rick Kehs)

- Rick was absent; no report.

Old Business

- Upcoming events review:
 - Penn Aqua Cave Preserve workday, Saturday April 22nd. (See **Mark** for info)
 - Spring MAR, May 5-7
 - Spring VAR, May 19-21
 - SpeleoFest, May 26-29
 - Spring NRO, June 9-10
 - NSS Convention, June 26-30
 - Picnic – August (TBD)
 - Holiday Party (January 2024)
 - Sarah Furnace Cave survey trips: two to three times monthly through the end of December. Usually last Saturday in month (Sat/Sun in late spring through early fall) and one mid month trip each month. Dates available through **Bert or Dwight**.
 - Mark and Dwight noted that attendance at these events will allow folks to camp cheaply (regional field meets), get access to many different caves, and meet many people who may be able to get them into caves in the future.
- Dean updated the Grotto on the sale of Frank Herzog's caving gear at the Mid-Atlantic Karst Conservancy event last Saturday, 4/15. Frank passed away two years ago. Lots of gear sold, approx. \$2,300, benefiting Frank's widow and the MAKC.
- Mark continued the discussion from last month on 2023 Cave Trip Planning. We discussed possibilities:
 - Durhan/Carpenter Caves, Northampton County. The tentative date of Sunday April 2nd 2023 did not happen due to issues with the landowner's family (illness). Trip tentatively set up for June 4th, to be confirmed by **Ed Kehs** with landowner.
 - Gabby Z, a Grotto member, indicated to Mark that she is open to lead trips on Friday or Sunday of the VAR, May 19 or 21. This is down in the Franklin, West Virginia area, near property she owns near the VAR location of Thorn Springs. After a survey of tonight's attendees, it appears that only Mark and Dwight (and spouse Jill) will be attending VAR, so this side trip will probably not happen.
 - Potential new scuba trip to Lost Rivers: **Mark stated that he and Jamie** need to send the best pictures and video from last trip to owners before a new trip is scheduled.

- Ruppert Caving and Camping weekend: This year will be the third time the Grotto has this weekend at Rupert. **July 14-16** has been confirmed by the owners of cave and Rick Smith; Rick has very generously led trips into several central PA caves during the last two years. Dwight and Mark noted that our fellow grotto, Nittany, will again be joining us for the weekend, which will result in more people to meet, and more caves to explore.
Decisions on which caves to visit will be made at future meetings.
- Trip to New York state NSS Gage Cave Preserve: Mark noted on the Bald Eagle Grotto Zoom meeting that he met Peter Lenahan, MET Grotto, who is connected in the NRO/NCC area and may be another contact to cave in New York Schoharie area if Vince is not able to lead trips due to medical issue.
 - We will leave the current approach in place: **Vince** to keep eye on when reservations for cabin use opens. Target is for **Vince to grab a weekend in September** before many of the caves in the area close October 1st to protect the bats.
 - When weekend is confirmed, we will have to decide on which caves to visit.
- Mark noted Bald Eagle has Alexander Cave trip set up on June 3rd that we are welcome to attend. **Contact Mark with interest.**
- Ed Kehs noted that Peiper is available with some notice to him. He also noted that the new discovery in Onyx trip will be in August or September. **Date to be set later.**
- Mark noted that Mike Shank of York Grotto can lead a trip into Cleversburg Sink, along I-81, near Carnegie and Peiper caves (Shippensburg). **Mark:** A trip will be set up this summer focusing on Cleversburg with the other two caves as backup if water levels are too high (Bert mentioned this issue).
- Follow up on last month's discussion with Dominic Abanese regarding potential cave on his property and scheduling a time for Grotto members to visit and evaluate potential locations for cave (Hellertown/Saucon Valley area):
 - Dean talked with Bucks County Grotto folks about where on the property a cave may be located. They indicated that there are three quarries nearby and the cave entrance is likely to be on the face or base of one of these quarries.
 - **Dwight** has a followup call into Dominic, but hasn't heard back yet.
- Discussion of how to grow the Grotto
 - Mark indicated that due to time constraints, we will defer this discussion to the next meeting, but that the attendance tonight is a good sign for the future of the Grotto.
- Grotto May Meeting Presentation: **Mark** will present a canned NSS presentation from 1987 about a historic and ground breaking project done that year at Wakulla Springs in the Florida Panhandle. He will present the slides from the original presentation, along with some additional commentary on the participants in that project, what was new at that time and how that has evolved and impacted cave diving today, and how this enabled subsequent further exploration of Wakulla over the past 30 years.

New Business

- Bert noted that Franklin Grotto member Gordy Ley drowned while on a caving trip yesterday. Members expressed their sadness at losing a well known caver.
- Trip Reports
 - Mark did a scuba trip to Manatee Springs, Florida. Tonight he gave a brief overview of the trip using a map.
 - Lost River Caverns formation cleanup trip 4/14 had 5 participants. Doug, Lynn, Mark, Dwight and Dillon attended. We spent a couple of hours cleaning formations with soft brushes and tooth brushes and used pump sprayers to clean off the loosened dirt. Enjoyed “German” pizza, a Hellertown specialty after.
 - Dwight and Bert did survey trips to Sarah Furnace Cave in Clarion County, PA at the end of March (3-25) and on Good Friday. Cave is now over 8.86 miles, and is number 100 on the U.S. list of longest caves. Bert noted that new surveyors are no longer sought for the project, since the cave survey process is now converging on tight and difficult passages which preclude teaching folks surveying techniques. Bert is project leader for this initiative.
 - Dwight described his trip into Black Coffey Caverns (formally Baker Caverns) in Greencastle, PA.

The formal meeting ended at approximately 8:07.

- Motions to accept/second were made (Lynn, Doug), vote taken, and passed

Members and guests enjoyed the freshly made “cowboy cookies” provided by Jill Kempf.

The presentation was given by Grotto member Doug Soroka on a portion (three days) of his trip to the caves in the French/Spanish border area. Aven d'Orgnac caverns started the talk, which also covered the prehistoric cave paintings and etchings of La Grotte de Lascaux. An entertaining presentation. Our thanks to Doug for this presentation.

The presentation ended around 9:20 and the meeting ended.

Respectfully submitted

Dwight Kempf

Greater Allentown Grotto
March 19, 2023 Meeting
Wildlands Conservancy Emmaus, PA & Zoom

Note: Names/topics in **BOLD** indicate action items

Meeting called to order at 7:01 pm by President Mark Walter

- All were welcomed
- Twelve in-person attendees, one Zoom attendee
- Attendees were Doug Soroka, Lynn Kleina, Vince Kappler, Dwight Kempf, Mark Walter, Dean Snyder, Chad Kardos, Rick Kehs, Mike Kehs, Gene Scharle, Dominic Abanese and friend Ron and Dillon Gruver on Zoom
- Mark reviewed the agenda for the meeting

Minutes read from February 19, 2023 Meeting

- There were no changes
- Motions to accept/second were made (Lynn, Vince), vote taken, and passed

Treasurer report made by Doug Soroka

- Balances read for accounts
- Required 990T submitted to the U.S. Government by deadline
- Issue with access to the state of Pennsylvania charity website through Keystone PA login. Doug has tried multiple times to log in with frustrating results, went to his local PA congressman, who arranged a meeting with PA Dept Rev., but no one showed up from the department. This submission is due in January of each year, and the inability of the state to give Doug access has prevented submission. **Doug** will be going back to his state congressman for help.
- Motions to accept/second were made (Lynn, Vince), vote taken, and passed

Membership report made by Vince Kappler

- Greater Allentown Grotto 2023 roster includes 62 members, down one from February.
- Vince spent time scrubbing the membership list and took several people off the roster who haven't been seen in several years.
- So far this year, Vince has collected \$330 in dues.
- Motions to accept/second were made (Lynn, Doug), vote taken, and passed

Correspondence report made by Dean Snyder

- Letter from Wildlands Conservancy, inviting someone from Grotto to attend 50th anniversary reception April 20th as a long time contributor. **Dean** is looking into attending on behalf of the Grotto (he may be attending for another organization).
- Two magazines came since last month report; Karst Chronicle and NSS News.
- Motions to accept/second were made (Lynn, Doug), vote taken, and passed

Newsletter (Co-editors Bert Ashbrook and Dean Snyder)

- Bert absent; Dean represented the editorship
- Trip reports, scholarly reports on cave biology, history, etc. are encouraged

- Dean noted that the publication of Bert's information/illustrations of Durham Cave that can either go into the next Pack Rat Scat or the Journal of Spelean History has not been resolved.
- Dean asked for submissions of articles in email text or pdf formats as his computer does not have the ability to use Word .doc document format.
- Motions to accept/second were made (Lynn, Vince), vote taken, and passed

Website (Rick Kehs)

- Rick noted that the website was transferred to new NSS platform, which was not smooth. Not all grottos have transferred their websites, according to Rick's research.
- He asked for suggestions for things to add to the website. Lynn suggested that having several months of programming listed for meetings would perhaps draw people into participating.
- Mark facilitated a discussion of the next three months of programming:
 - April: Doug will present more of his France/Spain caving trip
 - May: Mark will present program on his scuba trip to Florida last month to Manatee Springs
 - June: (the Sunday of the week before the NSS convention) TBD; perhaps use one of the many NSS presentations available through the website. **Mark** to look into.
 - Mike Kehs asked if the Grotto would be interested in a program on the woodwork process that will be used to create a 3'x5' wooden caving scene that he will be doing for the NSS headquarters in Alabama. The attendees indicated strong interest is seeing this when it is done. Will be many months off, but **Mark and Mike** will keep in touch regarding the timing of the presentation.
- Rick asked for new pictures to place on the header of the website. The existing pictures are 8-9 years old from when Wouter Sanders built the website.
 - **Dwight** will provide pictures from several events, including picnic and holiday party for Rick to place on website. JPG format is fine.

Old Business

- Upcoming events
 - Spring MAR, May 5-7
 - Spring VAR, May 19-21
 - SpeleoFest, May 26-29
 - Spring NRO, June 9-10
 - NSS Convention, June 26-30
 - NCC appreciation event at Gage Property in NY state, July 15
 - Picnic – August (TBD)
 - Fall MAR (TBD)
 - GAG Election – November
 - Holiday Party (January 2024)
- Sarah Furnace Cave survey trips: two to three times monthly through the end of December. Usually last Saturday in month (Sat/Sun in late spring through early fall) and one mid month trip each month. Dates available through Bert or Dwight.
- Trip Reports
 - Mark did a scuba trip to Manatee Springs, Florida. Will do a presentation in May.

- Dwight and Bert did survey trips to Sarah Furnace Cave in Clarion County, PA at the end of February and this past Monday, March 13th. Cave is now over 8.66 miles, and is number 101 on the U.S. list of longest caves, only 120' from hitting number 100! Bert is project leader for this initiative.
- Dean updated the Grotto on the sale of Frank Herzog's caving gear. Frank passed away two years ago. Lots of gear sold, benefiting Frank's widow. Dean transferred many boxes of caving related gear to the MAKC, which they will sell at a April 15th event at their headquarters in Blairsville, with the rest taken to NSS convention to be sold. He needs help manning the NSS tables where some of the gear will be sold to benefit the organization. See Dean if you can help. Money raised will be split between the selling organization and Frank's widow.
- Dean passed around a copy of the new publication on Alexander Caverns, a well known central PA former commercial cave. He will be donating copies to MAKC, NSS and National Caving Museum in KY. Written by grandson of the man who ran the commercial cave. Published by the Mifflin County Historical Society. Book turned out really nice. Can be purchased via online link.
- Mark continued the discussion from last month on 2023 Cave Trip Planning. We discussed possibilities:
 - Durhan/Carpenter Caves, Northampton County. The tentative date of Sunday April 2nd 2023 probably will not happen due to a change in Ed's schedule. **Mark** to contact Ed on status.
 - Gabby Z, a Grotto member, indicated to Mark that she is open to lead trips on Friday or Sunday of the VAR, May 19 or 21. This is down in the Franklin, West Virginia area, near property she owns near the VAR location of Thorn Springs. **We need to get back to her on interest.** Revisit next month.
 - Lost River Caverns conservation trip: Friday night, April 14th. Contact Dean or Doug. Approx. two hours of cleaning formations and then pizza.
 - Potential new scuba trip to Lost Rivers: **Mark stated that he and Jamie** need to send the best pictures and video from last trip to owners before a new trip is scheduled. Some picture/video quality is poor due to lighting conditions and water/moisture impacting the software processing.
- Ruppert Caving and Camping weekend: This year will be the third time the Grotto has this weekend at Rupert. **July 14-16** has been confirmed by the owners of cave and Rick Smith; Rick has very generously led trips into several central PA caves during the last two years. Sharer Cave was discussed as a cave to visit during the weekend in addition to the historic and New Discovery parts of Ruppert Cave. Decisions on which caves to visit will be made at future meetings.
- Trip to New York state NSS Gage Cave Preserve: New cabin is almost finished. Some windows need installed along with other minor checklist items. April 2nd workday planned. Contact Vince if you can attend. Cabin will be dedicated July 15th, with NSS BOD attending.
 - **Vince** to keep eye on when reservations for cabin use opens. Target is for **Vince to grab a weekend in September** before many of the caves in the area close October 1st to protect the bats.
 - When weekend is confirmed, we will have to decide on which caves to visit.

New Business

- Discussion of how to grow the Grotto

- Mark indicated that due to time constraints, we will defer this discussion to the April meeting.
- Dwight introduced Dominic Abanese and his friend Ron who informed us about hints of a cave on Dominic's property based on decades of club minutes from the organization who previously owned the property in the Lower Saucon area. He described the closure of the cave in 1946 due to an issue with a young child, and the need multiple times over several decades to refill a sinkhole that may be the cave entrance.
- Dominic is looking for some advice/expertise from the Grotto regarding how to search for the cave on the roughly 20 acre land.
- The discussion covered techniques he could use to identify the potential cave opening and how to re-open the entrance.
- Dominic was grateful for the input, and will be arranging for members of the Grotto to check out the property, and also will arrange for a backhoe dig of the sinkhole in the near future. He will contact **Dwight**, who will let Grotto members know about the potential dates, so we can be onsite to observe.
- For confidentiality reasons, the details of the discussion are not included here.

The formal meeting ended at approximately 8:41. Members and guests enjoyed the freshly made saltine toffee candy provided by Jill Kempf.

The presentation was given by Grotto member Dean Snyder, who showed us a 16mm film of the Andy Griffin show 1964 episode when Andy and his girlfriend were trapped in a mine and rescued by the town folk. An entertaining presentation. Our thanks to Dean for providing this seldom seen show.

The presentation ended around 9:25 and the meeting ended.

Respectfully submitted

Dwight Kempf

Greater Allentown Grotto
February 19, 2023 Meeting
Wildlands Conservancy Emmaus, PA & Zoom

Meeting called to order at 7:02 pm by new President Mark Walter

- All were welcomed
- Eighteen in-person attendees, one Zoom attendee
- Attendees were Doug Soroka, Lynn Kleina, Vince Kappler, Dwight Kempf, Mark Walter, Dean Snyder, Chad Kardos, Jamie Lichner, Allie Lichner, (& Jamie's wife?), Michael Ritty, Jonathan Ritty, Ed Kehs, Ed Kehs Jr., Zuri Kehs, Nick Bodle, Dillon Gruver, and Gene Scharle in person, and Bert Ashbrook on Zoom
- Mark reviewed the agenda for the meeting

Minutes read from December 18, 2022 Meeting

- In secretary Paul Barnett's absence, Dwight took minutes
- There were no changes
- Motions to accept/second were made, vote taken, and passed

Treasurer report made by Doug Soroka

- No change in money in mutual funds
- Doug noted the amount in the checking account
- Motions to accept/second were made, vote taken, and passed

Membership report made by Vince Kappler

- Greater Allentown Grotto 2023 roster includes 63 members, unchanged from December.
- Two inquiries, Nick Bodle and Dillon Gruver were forwarded to him; he replied, and both people are present tonight.
- Vince noted that new members joining late in 2022 are covered for 2023.
- Bob Gilman and Bev Rozewicz, owners of Lost River Caverns, paid dues and donated \$200. Doug will issue thank you/IRS acknowledgment note.
- Charlie Clinger paid two years of dues for 2023/24 and made a \$20 donation.
- Motions to accept/second were made, vote taken, and passed

Correspondence report made by Dean Snyder

- Two letters with dues
- P.O. Box is shared with PCC
- Motions to accept/second were made, vote taken, and passed

Newsletter (Co-editors Bert Ashbrook and Dean Snyder)

- Bert asked that all members submit articles to Dean for the next Pack Rat Scat newsletter
- Trip reports, scholarly reports on cave biology, history, etc. are encouraged
- Bert mentioned he has some information/illustrations of Durham Cave that can either go into the next Pack Rat Scat or the Journal of Spelean History. After some spirited back and forth between him and Dean, it was agreed that they would take the discussion and decision off-line.

- Motions to accept/second were made, vote taken, and passed

Old Business

- Trip Reports
 - : Lost River Caverns dive into Queen Room. Jamie and Mark, with help of other GAG members dived sump into Queen Room. Jamie investigated second sump in Queen's Room; it goes, but he did not attempt to dive it. Will be subject of next dive, which will need to include two additional people in the Queen's Room for support to Jamie and Mark to do the second sump. Second sump is apparently not on the cave map.
 - Vertical practice and Onyx/Frasier/Eckert caves at Ed/Kim Kehs' home. Five Grotto member participated, practicing vertical skills in the two story garage. All enjoyed the tour of the caves.
 - Carnegie Cave, Shippensburg. Five Grotto members enjoyed a great experience while doing some photography (Jamie).
 - Sarah Furnace Cave: Bert gave the great news on this Grotto project that he leads. He reviewed the past three trips, end of January, second week of February, and yesterday. Some exciting developments: connections were made in two locations, rediscovery of the Orange Room, and the breaking of the 8.5 mile mark for total passage length. All Grotto members with some cave experience are invited to come to the survey days to learn the survey process. It is the maziest cave in the world, with 8.6 miles under 5.5 acres of surface area.
- Crystal Cave Cleanup Project: Done for the season
- Dean updated the Grotto on the sale of Frank's caving gear. Lots of gear sold, benefiting Frank's widow, and he needs help transporting boxes of caving related gear to the NSS convention, as well as help manning the NSS tables where some of the gear will be sold to benefit the organization. See Dean if you can help.
-

New Business

- Upcoming events
 - MAR Business Meeting Saturday, February 25
 - Spring MAR, May 5-7
 - Spring VAR, May 19-21
 - SpeleoFest, May 26-29
 - Spring NRO, June 9-10
 - NSS Convention, June 26-30
 - NCC appreciation event at Gage Property in NY state, July 15
 - Sarah Furnace Cave survey trips: two to three times monthly through the end of December. Mark reviewed the dates with the meeting attendees.
- Mark started the discussion on 2023 Cave Trip Planning. We discussed possibilities:
 - Durhan/Carpenter Caves, Northampton County. Tentative Sunday April 2nd 2023. Ed will lead trip and will contact cave owner to confirm date and will communicate when he has approval.
 - Gabby Z, a Grotto member, indicated to Mark that she is open to lead trips on Friday or Sunday of the VAR, May 19 or 21. This is down in the Franklin, West

Virginia area, near property she owns near the VAR location of Thorn Springs.
We need to get back to her on interest.

- Vince noted the many classic caves that will be available for tours during the VAR in May.
- Ruppert Caving and Camping weekend: This year will be the third time the Grotto has this weekend at Rupert. Possible dates of July 14-16 and 21-23. Dwight to contact owner of cave and Rick Smith to confirm dates; Rick has very generously led trips into several central PA caves during the last two years.
- Mark indicated that we will continue this discussion at the March meeting.
- Dean noted that a book on the History of Alexander Cave is being published by the Mifflin County Historical Society. Anyone interested in purchasing a book, contact Dean.
- Bert asked the attendees if anyone knows anything about Sweat Bee Cave in Pendleton County, WV. No one was aware of any information on this cave.

The formal meeting ended at approximately 8:15. Members and guests enjoyed the freshly baked King Cake pastries provided by Jill Kempf.

The presentation was given by Grotto member Doug Soroka. He showed pictures of his trip to Grotte de la Verna, a portion of a huge cave system on the France/Spain border that he visited on August 4th, 2022, during the International Congress of Speleology. An amazing cave, and an excellent presentation. The Grotto thanks Doug for the presentation.

The presentation ended around 9:15 and the meeting ended.

Respectfully submitted

Dwight Kempf

Greater Allentown Grotto
December 18, 2022 Meeting
Wildlands Conservancy Emmaus, PA

Meeting called to order at 7:02 pm by President Dwight Kempf

- All were welcomed
- Eleven attendees
- Attendees were Doug Soroka, Vince Kappler, Dwight Kempf, Mark Walter, Dean Snyder, Chad Kardos, Pat Richard, Jamie Lichner, Allie Lichner, and new members (brothers) Michael Ritty and Jonathan Ritty

Minutes read from November 20, 2022 Meeting

- In secretary Paul Barnett's absence, Dwight took minutes
- There were no changes
- Doug made motion to accept minutes, seconded by Pat and passed

Treasurer report made by Doug Soroka

- No change in money in mutual funds
- Doug mentioned the amount in the checking account
- Motion to accept report made by Vince, seconded by Pat, and passed

Membership report made by Vince Kappler

- Greater Allentown Grotto 2022 roster includes 63 members, up two (Jonathan and Michael) from November.
- Our newest members are numbers 353 and 354
- Vince collected dues for 2023 at this meeting (new members joining late in 2022 are covered for 2023)
- Motion to accept report made by Pat, seconded by Doug, and passed

Correspondence report made by Dean Snyder

- Nothing to report
- As mentioned last month, Dean paid the P.O. Box fee, \$90, for the Grotto and was reimbursed
- P.O. Box is shared with PCC
- Motion to accept report made by Mark, seconded by Pat, and passed

Newsletter (Co-editor Bert Ashbrook, not present; info below from Co-editor Dean Snyder)

- Dean asked that all members submit articles for the next Pack Rat Scat newsletter
- Trip reports, scholarly reports on cave biology, history, etc. are encouraged
- Please submit to Dean via email or PDF format, NOT in M.S. Word format, since he doesn't have access to this format.
- Dean has a series of questions that he can use to interview people for an article, e.g., if Ed wants his Onyx New Discovery included in the next addition as an article
- No fixed schedule for next publication; when enough content is available, he will publish.
- Mark and Jamie will consider providing an article on scuba diving in caves

Old Business

- Bally Cave (Dean): On hold until spring. Dean will determine the date of the next trip and report at next meeting. Mailing address of owner of cave was given to Kim Kehs to send PCC Christmas card to.
- Sarah Furnace (Dwight): over 8.2 miles, density of cave still running ~ 1.5 passage miles under each acre. Maziest cave in the world. Cave is now number 104 in U.S. in length, down from 100 last month due to updating of CaverBob's rankings. Dwight was at survey yesterday, last of 2022: three survey teams added around 500' of length to the cave. Usually two to three survey trips per month available. Interested cavers contact Bert Ashbrook.
- NSS Convention at OTR campsite in WV June 26th-30th 2023, with programming at Davis and Elkins College. Great way to meet cavers, get into great caves, enjoy wonderful camping facility, and see great salons to learn from.
- Holiday Party is planned for January 7th, 2023 at Dean Snyder's home. Info sheet was distributed to those at meeting.
- Crystal Cave Cleanup Project: Doug noted that he will be going to the cave many times during the time the cave is closed to visitors to clean up formations, etc., from December 1st through March 1st. Grotto members and guests are invited to help in this important project. See Doug for specific dates and times.
- Greater Allentown Grotto Member Trip Reports (member)
 - Sarah Furnace Cave (Dwight); info above
- Dean updated the Grotto on the sale of Frank's caving gear. Lots of gear sold, benefiting Frank's widow, and tables will be set up in Dean's garage during the Holiday Party on Jan. 7th 2023 for anyone interested in purchasing items.
- Dwight thanked the Wildlands Conservancy for allowing us to meet at their facility.

New Business

- Mark stated that for 2023, he wanted the Grotto to run cave trips into caves that are open during the winter. We discussed possibilities:
 - Onyx (Not the New Discovery, but the traditional cave), Peiper, Carnegie, and Salamander and Sellecks in New York State, controlled by NCC.
 - Tectonic caves include Wind Cave in Pequea, Lancaster County, Spider Hell and Pinnacle on Game Land property near the Appalachian Trail.
 - Doug suggested that Mark take a look at the MAKC site to identify which MAKC controlled caves are open in the winter.
- Mark indicated that the Grotto should investigate putting monthly meetings on web, perhaps by Zoom. Doug checked internet wifi and indicated that he had a signal and it connected him to the internet. Mark to investigate which technology to use to potentially have our more remote members participant in our meetings.

The formal meeting ended at 7:40 pm and the presentation started. Two types of popcorn donated by Jill Kempf were distributed and were well received.

Dean premiered, for the first time anywhere, a video he and a fellow historian developed on the well known cave explorer and photographer Russell T. Neville called: Russell Trall Neville: The Cave Man.

Dean and his co-author put in over 100 hours developing the video. The Grotto members thoroughly enjoyed the presentation. We thank Dean for the presentation!

The outstanding video ended around 8:20 and the meeting ended.

Respectfully submitted

Dwight Kempf

Greater Allentown Grotto
November 20, 2022 Meeting
Wildlands Conservancy Emmaus, PA

Meeting called to order at 7:02 pm by President Dwight Kempf

- All were welcomed
- Twelve attendees
- Attendees were Lynn Kleina, Doug Soroka, Vince Kappler, Dwight Kempf, Mark Walter, Gene Scharle, Chad Kardos, Pat Richard, and one guests with Pat, Bruce

Minutes read from October 16, 2022 Meeting

- In Paul Barnett's absence, Dwight took minutes
- There were no changes
- Doug made motion to accept minutes, seconded by Mark and passed

Treasurer report made by Doug Soroka

- No change in money in mutual funds
- Doug mentioned the amount in the checking account
- Motion to accept report made by Lynn, seconded by Vince, and passed

Membership report made by Vince Kappler

- Greater Allentown Grotto 2022 roster includes 61 members, up one (Chad) from October.
- Our newest member, Chad, is number 352
- \$480 of dues collected this year, some for 2023 (new members late in 2022 covered 2023)
- Motion to accept report made by Lynn, seconded by Kim, and passed

Correspondence report made by Dean Snyder

- A couple of routine mailings, e.g., NSS publications
- Dean paid the P.O. Box fee, \$90, for the Grotto and was reimbursed
- P.O. Box is shared with PCC

Newsletter (Co-editor Bert Ashbrook, not present; info below from Dean)

- Dean asked that all members submit articles for the next Pack Rat Scat newsletter
- Trip reports, scholarly reports on cave biology, history, etc. are encouraged
- Please submit to Dean via email, NOT in M.S. Word format, since he doesn't have access to this format.
- Dean has a series of questions that he can use to interview people for an article, e.g., if Ed wants his Onyx New Discovery included in the next addition as an article
- No fixed schedule for next publication; when enough content is available, he will publish.

Old Business

- Bally Cave: a second cave on the property has been explored by the two owner's kids; too small for adults to go in. Need to explore and map that new cave; plus two

locations in surveyed cave for digs. Dean will determine the date of the next trip and report at next meeting.

- Sarah Furnace: over 8.1 miles, density of cave still running ~ 1.5 passage miles under each acre. Cave is now number 100 in U.S. in length. Next survey day Saturday Nov 26, 2022, and Saturday, Dec 31st. Interested cavers contact Bert Ashbrook.
- NSS Convention at OTR campsite in WV June 26th-30th 2023, with programming at Davis and Elkins College. Great way to meet cavers, get into great caves, enjoy wonderful camping facility, and see, great salons to learn from.
- Holiday Party is planned for January 7th, 2023 at Dean Snyder's home. Info sheet was distributed to those at meeting.
- NSS Gage Preserve cabin project: Vince has been working with a hearty group of cavers to build a cabin at the NSS Gage Preserve in Schoharie County, NY. He has attended 4 weekends, and is amazed at the skills and tools that the folks have brought to the project. Will be dedicated in June, and we talked about staying there for the summer Greater Allentown Grotto NY trip.
- Crystal Cave Cleanup Project: Doug noted that he will be going to the cave 3 times a week to clean up formations, etc., from December 1st through March 1st, when the cave is closed. Grotto members and guests are invited to help in this important project.
- Greater Allentown Grotto Member Trip Reports (member)
 - Sarah Furnace Cave (Dwight); info above
 - Crystal Cave (Doug); Doug took 27 people from the Philly Grotto through Crystal to celebrate a Philly Grotto anniversary. They are planning to have two groups of 10 people volunteer in the winter cleanup of the cave in the near future, with Doug coming up with projects that can be covered with that level of manpower in the time they will be in the cave.
 - Onyx and Frasier Caves (Ed): trip into the two caves by York Grotto cavers; seven people. Too many people for comfortable trip into Frasier, though.
 - Piper Cave (Ed): four trips into Piper by various groups.
 - Big Ridge (Ed): took 6 people into cave and after bouncing the pit, came back up to the ropes section at the second drop and microblasted a passage into a 96' pit that the participants enjoyed dropping.
 - Active month for GAG!
- Onyx New Discovery: Ed noted that he still hasn't completed microblasting the alternate passage into ND. Until then, no one will be allowed in. However, there is lots of other stuff to see in Onyx, and he is willing to lead trips just about any time.
- Dean updated the Grotto on the sale of Frank's caving gear. Lots of gear sold, benefiting Frank's widow, and more will be sold at NSS Convention in conjunction with MAKC.
- Dwight thanked the Wildlands Conservancy for allowing us to meet at their facility.

New Business

- PCC Christmas Card Process: Kim noted that she is the PCC contact that sends out Christmas cards to cave owners in the MAR area. Anyone that wants cave owners added to the list, please contact her. I suggested the owners of Bally Cave; Dean will provide address to Kim.
- Donation of materials to National Cave Museum: Lynn noted that the National Cave Museum is the perfect location for Grottos to donate cave related materials, since the materials are kept in a climate controlled atmosphere in acid free boxes.

- Elections: The protocol is for the election of the board members, and then an executive meeting following the end of the general membership meeting to assign roles.

The members elected to the Board are:

Doug Soroka
Dean Snyder
Mark Walter
Dwight Kempf
Rick Kehs
Vince Kappler
Ed Kehs
Kim Kehs

The presentation ended at 8:04 pm and the presentation started. White Chocolate/Cranberry/Pecan cookies made by Jill Kempf were distributed and disappeared very quickly.

Dean showed a slide to DVD conversion trip presentation on the original discoverers of Fern Cave and Surprise Pit in Fern from the early 1960's. At 440' deep, Surprise Pit was the deepest pit, at the time, in the U.S.

At the close of the presentation, the entertainment portion of the meeting was closed by a motion by Lynn, seconded by Kim, and unanimously approved at 8:34 pm.

The newly elected 2023 Board of Directors convened an executive meeting at 8:35 pm. The primary business addressed was the appointment of the board members to specific roles. The Board unanimously appointed the following members to the following roles:

President/Chairman: Mark Walter
Vice President: Ed Kehs
Treasurer: Doug Soroka
Spiritual Advisor/Correspondence/Programming: Dean Snyder
Secretary: Dwight Kempf
Membership: Vince Kappler
Webmaster: Rick Kehs
Newsletter Co-Editors: Bert Ashbrook/Dean Snyder
At Large Member: Kim Kehs

After appointments were completed, Dean mentioned that there are lots of long term projects that the Greater Allentown Grotto could move forward in 2023, including generating an update of caves in Northampton and Lehigh Counties, either as a MAR book or solely as a GAG project.

Mark indicated that he would like to see family related activities to introduce younger folks to caving and to the Grotto.

The executive meeting ended at 8:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted

Dwight Kempf

October 16th, 2022

Meeting called to order at 7:04 pm by President Dwight Kempf

- All were welcomed
- Seven attendees
- Attendees were Lynn Kleina, Vince Kappler, Dwight Kempf, Mark Walter, Gene Scharle and two guests, Chad Kardos and Joe Ortlip

Minutes read from September 18, 2022 meeting

- In Paul Barnett's absence, Dwight had taken minutes
- There were no changes
- Lynn made motion to accept minutes, seconded by Vince and passed

Treasurer report made by Lynn Kleina in Doug Soroka's absence

- Funds in mutual funds had a decline consistent with the general stock market decline.
- Motion to accept minutes made by Mark, seconded by Vince, and passed

Membership report made by Vince Kappler

- Greater Allentown Grotto 2022 roster includes 60 members, unchanged from September
- \$480 of dues collected this year, some for 2023 (new members late in 2022 covered 2023)
- At the end of this meeting, Chad submitted his application and dues and is now our newest member
- Motion to accept minutes made by Lynn, seconded by Mark, and passed

No Correspondence report (Dean Snyder not present)

Newsletter (Bert Ashbrook and Dean Snyder editors, not present; info below from Dwight)

- Dwight asked that all members submit articles for the next Pack Rat Scat newsletter
- Trip reports, scholarly reports on cave biology, history, etc. are encouraged

Old Business

- Fall MAR was held at Lincoln Caverns in central PA, sponsored by Out Of Bounds Grotto
 - No GAG members present were able to attend, although Dwight received positive report from cavers he talked with at the Sarah Furnace Cave surveys
- Bally Cave: no report
- Sarah Furnace: over 8 miles, density of cave still running ~ 1.5 passage miles under each acre. Cave is number 103 in U.S. in length. Next survey day Sunday Oct 30, 2022, with workday Saturday, Oct 29th. Interested cavers contact Bert Ashbrook.
- NSS Convention at OTR campsite in WV June 26th-30th 2023. Great way to meet cavers, get into great caves, enjoy wonderful camping facility, and see great salons to learn from.
- Holiday Party is planned for early January 2023 at Dean Snyder's home. Info to follow.
- Greater Allentown Grotto elections are planned for November. Please consider running for membership on the Board.

- Website: Our thanks to Rick Kehs for keeping at it and getting the Grotto website back up online. The issue was a security issue, probably associated with the move of all NSS internal organizations to a new server several months ago.
- NSS Gage Preserve cabin project: Vince has been working with a hearty group of cavers to build a cabin at the NSS Gage Preserve in Schoharie County, NY. The prefab nature of the construction allowed large sections to be placed on the existing slab with the use of a neighbor's boom truck. Vince has been helping three days and is planning to help again this coming weekend. Anyone interested in help contact Vince Kappler.
- Greater Allentown Grotto Member Trip Reports (member)
 - Sarah Furnace Cave (Dwight)
 - Lava River Cave in Flagstaff, AZ (Mark); lava tube, walking height, ¾ mile long, neat.
 - Canyoneering at Zion Nation Park (Mark); three roughly 50' rappels on figure 8's with belay on commercially guided trip. Second rappel into waist high water. Fun.
 - Schofer Cave in Berks County (Chad) Chad visited the outside of the cave, which was gated for the PA Game Commission by the Grotto some time ago. Everything on the gate looks ok.
 - Active month for GAG!
- Grotto Picnic: To benefit the new folks at the meeting, we described the annual August Grotto picnic in terms of opportunities to meet Grotto members, do vertical practice and go into three different caves to visit and dig. Another benefit of Grotto membership.
- Dwight thanked the Wildlands Conservancy for allowing us to meet at their facility.

New Business

- Dwight mentioned that Ed Kehs is thinking about a Grotto trip into Onyx (former commercial cave in Berks County) to see the new discovery. A suggestion to perhaps have vertical training in Ed's two story garage the same day was discussed. Details to follow.
- Joe asked about the specific equipment that is recommended to cave in the northeast. He has caved in Indiana. Vince and other members provided generic input about different equipment requirements for different caving situations (vertical, water, time of year, etc.), but that three sources of light and appropriate clothing is essential.
- Vince noted that the RASS field house in Bath County Virginia (a combined MAR/VAR was held there in the past) is available for NSS Grottos to use and perhaps would be a good venue for our Grotto to use to cave in the future.
- Schoharie County Caving/Caving Trip: the group wants to have a Grotto trip to Schoharie County, NY again in 2023, perhaps staying at the Gage Preserve in the new cabin. Vince was fine with the idea, although we would need to visit some different caves from the 2022 trip to keep interest up.

The presentation ended at 8:12 pm and the presentation started.

Dwight gave a presentation of the Greater Allentown Grotto camping weekend and trips in Schoharie, NY in early August. Mark and Vince helped narrate the slides, which included the camping at the NSS preserve and trips to Gage and Schoharie Caverns.

During the presentation, all enjoyed freshly baked apple cake with caramel icing (still warm) provided by Jill Kempf.

September 18th, 2022

Meeting called to order at 7:00 pm by President Dwight Kempf

- All were welcomed
- Six attendees
- Attendees were Doug Soroka and Lynn, Vince Kappler, Dwight Kempf, Mark Walter and Gene Scharle (?)

Doug requested that the entertainment portion of the meeting occur first. He gave a fantastic program on several of his trips to caves in France including Grotte De Clamouse (Clamouse Cave) during his summer visit at the International. The caves he visited were beautiful, and Doug's pictures and descriptions were outstanding. Our thanks to Doug for giving an excellent presentation.

During the presentation, all enjoyed freshly made cranberry and chocolate chip scones (still warm) baked by Jill Kempf.

The presentation ended around 8pm and the business meeting started.

Minutes read from May 15, 2022 meeting

- Although not present, Paul Barnett was thanked for taking minutes
- Lynn made motion to accept minutes, seconded by Mark and passed

Treasurer report made by Doug Soroka

- Funds in mutual funds had a decline consistent with the general stock market decline.
- Motion to accept minutes made by Vince, seconded by Mark, and passed

Membership report made by Vince Kappler

- Greater Allentown Grotto 2022 roster includes 60 members
- Couple of new members since May
- \$470 of dues collected this year
- Motion to accept minutes made by Gene, seconded by Lynn, and passed

No Correspondence report (Dean Snyder not present)

Newsletter (Bert Ashbrook and Dean Snyder editors, not present; info below from Dwight)

- Pack Rat Scat issue 128 issued earlier in the month of September
- Very preliminary discussions of potential articles for the next issue
- PRS sent to NSS (three email addresses) and to the three grottos in the newsletter exchange (Nittany, Central Ohio and Pittsburgh Grottos)

Old Business

- Spring MAR/VAR at Grottos, VA was well attended and went off well. Commercial cave at the camping site was fantastic.

- Bally Cave: no report
- Sarah Furnace: over 7.5 miles, density of cave still running ~ 1.5 passage miles under each acre. Next survey day Oct 10, 2022 and last weekend in October. Interested cavers contact Bert Ashbrook.
- Greater Allentown Grotto Recent Trips (Leader)
 - Alexandra Cavern (Gabby)
 - Crystal Cave x2 (Doug)
 - Camping and caving at Rupert Cave Preserve (Dwight)
 - Camping and caving at Schoharie Preserve (Vince)
 - Very active year for GAG!
- NSS Convention: Doug and Lynn described their activities; a very full week.
- Picnic last month was very well attended, and the Grotto thanks Kim and Ed Kehs for offering use of their home and caves.
- Dwight thanked the Wildlands Conservancy for allowing us to meet at their facility.
- Vince mentioned the work activities planned for the Gage Cave preserve; a new cabin will be placed on existing slab; prefab. Vince will be going up for two of the weekends to help out.

New Business

- Dwight mentioned that Dean is planning a Greater Allentown Grotto holiday party at his home in early January. Details to follow.
- Dwight asked Doug when the GAG elections are typically held. Doug mentioned November.
- Website is still down. Webmaster Rick Kehs is working with NSS folks to get a fix identified. (Post meeting update: Rick was able to get the website back up!)

At the close of discussion, the business portion of the meeting was closed by a motion by Lynn, seconded by Vince and unanimously approved at 8:55 pm.

May 15th, 2022

The meeting was called to order by Doug at 7pm

Minutes were read by Paul and accepted by all. There were 9 in attendance.

Treasurers Report:

- 1.) Doug gave the treasurer's report.

Membership Report:

- 1.) 58 Active members
- 2.) Collected 250 in dues, there are a few members with outstanding dues.
- 3.) 6 New members over the past two years.

Correspondence:

- 1.) Dean was not present to give the report.

Old Business:

- 1.) Vince is putting together caving trips in NY, 1st weekend in August, cabin reserved in Schoharie, no water/plumbing. More information will be coming about forms that need to be signed. Sleeping bags/mats needed. There will be space for tents as well. There are multiple caves of different skill levels available to visit. Please contact Vince if interested.
- 2.) Pack Rat Scat still needs an editor.

New Business:

- 1.) GAG Needs to send a thank you note to Crystal Cave for allowing us to use their property for our recent event.
- 2.) GAG needs to pay for the porta potty for the Rupert Cave trip.
- 3.) VAR/MAR The 21st-22nd
- 4.) GAG should look into getting Wildlands Conservancy WiFi access during regular grotto meetings so that hybrid meetings can be held.
- 5.) Ed and his wife will be hosting the grotto picnic August 21st
- 6.) There will be no meeting in June due to the NSS Convention
- 7.) There will be no meeting in July due to the GAG trip to Rupert Cave.

A motion to close the official portion of the meeting at 739PM.

Trip Reports & Other Information:

1. Sarah Furnace is 6.9mi long and is the longest cave in PA, the Second longest in the northeast behind McFails cave.
2. Alexander Caverns trip was a success. Cavers spent 6-7 hours in the cave and had a good time.

Program:

- 1.) Doug gave a presentation on the LiDAR mapping at Crystal cave. The presentation showed several of the different scans

April 17th, 2022

The meeting was called to order at 7:02PM by President Dwight Kempf who welcomed everyone for attending the meeting. Notices for the meeting were sent out twice and 8 were in attendance.

The minutes were read and Paul was thanked for taking the previous minutes. Previous minutes needed two corrections, one to correct the spelling of Frank Hercegs last name, and one to correct the date on the Lidar trip to March 1st, motion to accept made by Lynn seconded by Paul and accepted by all present.

Treasurers Report:

- 1.) Doug gave the treasurers report

Membership Report:

- 1.) Vince was absent and Dwight gave the membership report.
- 2.) Currently GAG has 58 Active members, Dave Stubbe is the newest member.

- 3.) Vince would prefer cash/check as payment for membership Dues

Correspondence

- 1.) Dean reports that GAG is now a lifetime member of the MAKC

Old Business:

- 1.) No Updates for PRS, in the future there will be a discussion about co-editorship between Bert and Dean
- 2.) The LiDAR mapping at Crystal Cave was a success, Doug reported that 12 people showed up to help. Several types of 3D mapping took place, and in his opinion the infrared one looked like it did the best job. Doug says he will give a presentation on the mapping later.
- 3.) Bally Cave 2 dig still postponed until the weather is better, Dean reports that landowner relations are still strong and positive.
 - 4.) Upcoming Trips: Alexander April 30th, contact Gabby Zawacki for more information. Crystal Cave Trip May 7th, multiple tours will be given, one on history and one on the restoration project.
 - 5.) MAR/VAR in Grottos VA May 20-22nd \$33 per person, includes camping and meal.
 - 6.) NSS convention is June 13th-17th In South Dakota. Contact Dave Hughes about attending.
 - 7.) GAG trip to Rupert July 15th-17th. There will be a lot of trips.
 - 8.) August 5th – 6th in Upper NY-New England. A cabin is reserved for that weekend, no water or electric, there is an outhouse. Plenty of camping and less than 20min drive to a large amount of NCC and NSS caves.
 - 9.) Sarah Furnace trips May 28th/ 29th and June 25th/26th
 - 10.) MAKC will be hosting a number of trips to celebrate their anniversary.

New Business:

- 1.) June Meeting TBD
- 2.) Doug reports that some campgrounds have space available only for 501c's and GAG members are able to take advantage of that because we are a Nonprofit.
- 3.) There will be a closed executive committee meeting after tonights meeting.
- 4.) Dean is still helping to sell caving related items owned by the late Frank Herceg. A large portion of the items are common but some are quite valuable.
- 5.) A memorial to Frank Herceg can be found on youtube.
- 6.) On Thursday Dean presented a check to the Wildlands Conservancy for \$16,000

Trip Reports and Other Info:

- 1.) The Sarah Furnace trip on Good Friday was successful, COVID restrictions have been loosened and now it is easier to do trips.
- 2.) Sarah Furnace has now exceeded 6.8mi of surveyed passage with a lot more left.
- 3.) MAKC has their own requirements for their caves.

A motion to close the official portion of the meeting was made at 8:20PM and was accepted by all present.

Program:

- 1.) Doug gave a presentation called 3 Days in Ohio detailing his trip to Ohio Caverns and he showed slides of the cave and his efforts to teach people in cave restoration. The presentation included many stunning photos of cave formations and the cave restoration process.

February 20th, 2022

The meeting was called to order at 7:05PM by President Dwight Kempf who welcomed everyone attending the meeting. Notices for the meeting were sent out twice and 6 people were in attendance including new member Ian Belman. All wore face masks according to Wildlands Conservancy requirements.

The minutes were read and Paul Barnette was thanked for taking the previous minutes. Previous minutes needed a correction changing Doug to Dean under Correspondence. Doug made a motion to accept the minutes, seconded by pat and passed.

Treasurers report:

- 1.) Doug reports Funds in mutual funds had a great return in 2021, in the mid 20% range.
- 2.) Doug noted that the 990T EZ was sent to IRS for 2021 for the Grotto.
- 3.) Doug also noted that we received a notice requiring a State of Pennsylvania form BOC-2, which he filled out and sent. Apparently, this has been required but not filed for 10 years until this year's notice. CY 2020 and 2021 sent in.
- 4.) Motion to accept minutes made by Dean, seconded by Vince, and passed.

Membership Report:

- 1.) Greater Allentown Grotto 2022 roster includes 58 members, including Ian
- 2.) Historically, we have had a total of 349 members active at different times since founding
- 3.) Motion to accept minutes made by Doug, seconded by Pat, and passed

Correspondence:

- 1.) Received a donation from Lost River Caverns (LRC) for \$100, and a \$10 membership fee from them. Since Lost River Caverns and Crystal Cave owners are members at no cost, we will record the funds of \$110 from LRC as a donation. Dean will write a thank you note from the Grotto.
- 2.) Motion to accept minutes made by Vince, seconded by Doug, and passed.

Old Business:

- 1.) The newest edition of Pack Rat Scat is out now and it is a mega issue with a lot of articles and information. Dwight thanked everyone who submitted trip reports and articles for the PRS.
- 2.) GAG still needs a volunteer for the position of Editor for the Pack Rat Scat. Contact President Dwight if you are interested.

New Business:

- 1.) Greater Allentown Grotto (GAG) January 2022 holiday party was canceled due to health issues on the part of sponsor Dean and spouse.

- 2.) The Mega issue of Pack Rat Scat (PRS), the GAG newsletter, was sent to NSS by Gabby Zawacki.
- 3.) The editor role of PRS is still open. Dean shared a conversation between himself and Bert Ashbrook of a possible agreement to alternate editorship between the two of them. More to come as the two further discuss the possibility.
- 4.) Cave Maintenance Project: Doug indicated that the cave cleanup with power washers, etc. and formation repair activities are coming to a close at Crystal Cave in Kutztown this month, with the cave reopening next week. There have been 20+ trips this year, and the Grotto has been doing this for upward of 15 years. Doug, Dean and Ed Kehs added two formations to Crystal Cave using special techniques to permanently place the speleothems in locations that are noticeable by the tourists, but not within reach, to minimize potential damage.
- 5.) On March 1st 2022, a professor from Harrisburg University will be bringing LDAR mapping equipment to Crystal Cave to map the walking passages (and maybe more) of the cave. All are welcome to provide aid in the form of moving equipment and holding lights. Be at Crystal at 8:00 am.
- 6.) Sarah Furnace Cave survey project: Dwight indicated that the last three trips were snowed out, but the cave is now over 6.4 miles in surveyed length, with the next trip Sunday (not Saturday) February 27th. MAKC, owner of the cave, has put COVID 19 restrictions into effect, including limiting the number of pods entering the cave, and other requirements. Contact Chris Hill (temporarily substituting for Bert Ashbrook) with interest.
- 7.) Bally Cave survey project: Dean Snyder stated that digging project is on hold in the cold weather, but will resume when things warm up. Cave owner requested copies of all documentation regarding the cave, which Dean provided. The documentation is extensive, and includes a history written by Dean, maps, and other information.
- 8.) Dwight thanked the Wildlands Conservancy for allowing us to meeting at their facility.

Trip Reports and Other Cave Information:

- 1.) Doug gave a trip report on his experience at Ohio Caverns where he spent 3 days fixing formations (including drilling into pure crystal) and teaching cave staff how to continue the process of fixing formations. Doug will present his experiences in a program at the April meeting, entitled "Three Days in Ohio".
- 2.) Dean gave a short synopsis of the status of a cave in the Lehigh Valley that was advertising on a Facebook site that it allows digging in the cave for \$20/hr. Apparently, the owner was visited by a PA Bureau of Mines inspector. No additional information is available.
- 3.) Dean shared that Dave Arnold, an early GAG member, has passed away.

At the close of discussion, the business portion of the meeting was closed by a motion by Doug, seconded by Pat and unanimously approved at 8:32 pm.

Program:

- 1.) Dean Snyder showed a wonderful presentation on "Russell Neville's Cellars of the World", a series of three film to video segments on mid-1920's trips by Russell Neville and others to several caves in KY, TN, and other locations. Very interesting presentation. Copies are available from NSS.

December 19th, 2021

The meeting was called to order at 7:09PM by President Dwight who welcomed everyone for attending the meeting. Notices for the meeting were sent out twice and 9 people were in attendance.

Paul read the minutes and changed "Frank Herceg's Relative" to "Karen Herceg" as suggested by Dean. The minutes were accepted by all present. Paul was thanked for taking the minutes.

Treasurer's Report:

- 1.) Doug gave the Treasurer's report, accepted by all present.

Membership Report:

- 1.) Vince reports one new old member which brings membership to 56. Vince has sent out notices for dues that are due. Accepted by all present

Correspondence:

- 1.) Dean gave a report on the correspondence, no new correspondence. Accepted by all present

Old Business:

- 3.) The newest edition of Pack Rat Scat is out now and it is a mega issue with a lot of articles and information. Dwight thanked everyone who submitted trip reports and articles for the PRS.
- 4.) GAG still needs a volunteer for the position of Editor for the Pack Rat Scat. Contact President Dwight if you are interested.

Projects:

Crystal Cave: 7-8 trips so far, Doug will be there Tuesday December 21st. Doug shared some photos of the progress they have made in cleaning the formations.

Sarah Furnace Cave: The Cave is up to 6.4mi in surveyed length. Steady progress is being made. Each team is able to survey a few hundred feet of passage each trip. The next trip is December 26th and will be the last one for the month. Contact Bert Ashbrook if interested. Caving experience is required.

Bally Cave: Dean reports that it may be getting too cold to continue digging. Currently digging is slow because of the size of the cave. In the future trips may be arranged to see the pristine cave.

New Business:

- 1.) No January Grotto meeting, Dean is hosting the Greater Allentown Grotto Holiday Party Saturday, January 8, 2022 from 5:38 pm until ? at his home. Dwight thanked him for having this party this year for the Grotto. Invitations for the party will be sent out.

- 2.) A road trip to the NSS Headquarters in AL was proposed and will be discussed at the holiday party.

Program:

- 1.) Dean shared some 8mm footage of Crystal cave in PA and Mammoth cave in KY. The footage was a mix of 8mm films that were sold in gift shops at a lot of the major caves, and some home footage.
- 2.) All enjoyed cookies made by Jill Kempf

November 21st, 2021

The meeting was called to order at 7:05PM by President Dwight who welcomed everyone for attending the meeting. Notices for the meeting were sent out twice and thirteen members plus two guests were in attendance.

Everyone present wore masks per Wildlands Conservancy requirements.

The minutes were read and accepted by all present. Paul was thanked for taking the previous minutes.

Treasurer's Report:

- 1.) Doug gave the treasurers report, accepted by all present.

Membership Report:

- 1.) Vince gave the membership report, accepted by all present.

Correspondence:

- 1.) Dean gave a report on the current correspondence, accepted by all present.

Old Business:

- 1.) Bridge Day was cancelled, as was OTR, and multiple MAR/VAR/NRO events due to COVID-19. Everyone expressed hope for future events happening.
- 2.) GAG sponsored Penn Aqua trip went well, with 6 participants. Dwight thanked Gabby Zawacki for leading the trip, and everyone agreed that a spring trip will be scheduled.
- 3.) Pack Rat Scat newsletter was discussed by editor Gabby. Since this is the only edition this year there are lots of articles, and the PRS is scheduled to be published in December.
- 4.) WE NEED A VOLUNTEER to take on the editor role of PRS. Please indicate your interest to President Dwight.
- 5.) Cave Maintenance Project: Doug indicated that the cave cleanup with power washers, etc. and formation repair activities will resume at Crystal Cave in Kutztown this month, starting this week. With the cave closed for winter, Doug is able to bring the equipment into the cave and leave it for the next few months while the cleanup continues, 2-3 days each week. Volunteers are welcome to join the effort; contact Doug.
- 6.) Sarah Furnace Cave Survey Project: Bert Ashbrook indicated that the cave is now over 6 miles in surveyed length, and that the winter schedule of surveying (Saturdays and one weekday during the month) is now in effect. "We teach surveying, but not caving." Volunteers are required to have caving experience first. Contact Bert with interest.

- 7.) Bally Cave Survey Project: Dean Snyder stated that there is a lead on the ground level 17' to the left of the main cave opening that he and Vince started to dig out. The digging is difficult due to the small geometry of the passage and the problem of getting spoils out of the end of the passage (uphill) to be dumped outside. Dean will let membership know when digging project is continued.
- 8.) Dwight thanked the Wildlands Conservancy for allowing us to meet at their facility.

New Business

- 3.) Dean Snyder indicated that the Greater Allentown Grotto Holiday Party has been scheduled for Saturday, January 8, 2022 from 5:38 pm until ? at his home. Dwight thanked him for having this party this year for the Grotto.
- 4.) Dean indicated that Karen Hecceg gave three boxes of his caving related stuff to Dean to monetize. In one box, he found GAG pins along with the original invoice indicating that the pins cost Frank around \$1.50. Dean suggested that the Grotto buy the pins at invoice, \$74, to be given to Frank's relative. Pat suggested a higher amount, and Dwight suggested \$100. A motion was made, seconded and approved to buy the pins for \$100. Two people then bought pins from the inventory. The rest of the box's contents will be sold at MAKC and MAR events.
- 5.) Trip Reports and Other Cave Information
 - a.1.) Bert reported on his and Gordon's trip to the only cave in Delaware, which is 30' from the PA border.
 - a.2.) Gabby reported on her York Grotto pumpkin hunt adventure where she got to see many cave entrances, quarries, etc.
 - a.3.) Bert reported on his survey trip to MauMau Cave in Lancaster County.
 - a.4.) Vince reported that the NRO (Northeastern Regional Organization, equivalent to MAR) has acquired the last of several entrances to Clarksville Cave by donation from owner. He also indicated that there are two more cave acquisitions in the works.

At the close of discussion, the business portion of the meeting was closed by a motion, seconded, and approved by the group.

Program:

- 1.) Dean Snyder gave a wonderful presentation on "Pennsylvania Cave Photos - That You've Never Seen Before", a slide show of 40 pictures of caves and people from rarely seen documents, along with a treasure trove of history behind each subject.
- 2.) All enjoyed pumpkin whoopie pies made by Jill Kempf and cookies and pie supplied by Gabby and Matt.

October 17th, 2021

The meeting was called to order at 7:00pm. Notices for the meeting were sent out twice and 6 people were in attendance.

The minutes were read and accepted by those present.

Treasurer's report:

- 1.) Doug gave the treasurer's report, accepted by all present.

Membership report:

- 1.) Membership report was given and accepted by all present.

New Business:

- 1.) There was discussion of spending money for NSS, MAKC, and other cave buys. The grotto will not spend anything until the first of the year. Will most likely go to local projects and not exceed the grotto's annual income.

Elections for the board of directors took place, those nominated were elected by all present.

The meeting was ended at 7:45pm

Program:

- 1.) Gabby gave a presentation on Penn Aqua cave.

At the closed meeting of the directors the following 2022 positions were assigned:

President – Dwight
Membership – Vince
Spiritual Advisor – Dean
Treasurer – Doug
Secretary – Paul
Director at Large – Ed
Director at Large – Gabby
Director at Large – Mark Walter

September 19th, 2021

The meeting was called to order at 7:05pm by Dwight who thanked Doug for allowing us to use his zoom license. Notices for the meeting were sent out twice and 9 were in attendance.

Paul read the minutes and they were accepted by all present.

Treasurer's report:

- 1.) Doug gave the treasurer's report, accepted by all present.

Membership Report:

- 1.) Vince was not in attendance and could not give the membership report.
- 2.) Nicholas a new member was in attendance and introduced himself.

Old Business:

- 1.) Fall MAR/VAR has been rescheduled for next year due to COVID-19
- 2.) OTR Cancelled
- 3.) Penn Aqua Trip Saturday October 2nd Contact Gabby if you are interested.
- 4.) Gabby is continuing work on the next PRS please send articles/submissions.

- 5.) September 28th is the next time Doug will be at Crystal Cave to work on the restoration project.
- 6.) Saturday September 25th and 26th is the next Sarah Furnace survey trip. Total length is up to 5.6mi
- 7.) Dean reports Bally II still needs digging to open up more passage.
- 8.) The wildlife conservancy has asked the Grotto to reapply to use their facility. Dwight made a motion to have Dean submit the forms, accepted by all present.

New Business:

- 1.) Ed Kehs is looking to set up a trip to Butler Cave in VA in October.
- 2.) Donations to the NSS to pay for the NSS 404 program are no longer needed. Suggestions for donations to the NSS were made and the Grotto will revisit the matter in January 2022
- 3.) Bert gave a trip report about a trip to Mummau cave in Lancaster County.

Meeting ended at 7:45

Program

- 1.) Dean gave a presentation on a trip taken by Dean, Doug, Bert, and Lynn, to the National Cave Museum, at Diamond Caverns, Park City, KY which contains some of the rarest Mammoth cave memorabilia. They visited Indian cave and Outlaw Cave former show caves near cave city. Their big cave project was at Diamond Caverns, they observed digging with a well digger to locate new passage. They also visited the location of Oscar Logsdons' house.

July 18th, 2021

The meeting was called to order at 7:09PM by President Dwight who thanked Doug for using his account to host the meeting. Notices for the meeting were sent out twice and 27 were in attendance.

June minutes were not read because Paul Barnette was not in attendance due to a family emergency.

Treasurers Report:

- 1.) Doug was not able to give a treasurer's report because he was not able to make the meeting due to travel.

Membership Report:

- 1.) Two newest members are Eric and Laurel GAG #344 and #345
- 2.) Dues have been collected for the year, those who joined in the second half of the year will have their dues cover this year and next year.
- 3.) 53 active members total

Correspondence:

- 1.) Dean was contacted by some prospective new members.
- 2.) No new correspondence.

Old Business:

- 1.) Sarah Furnace Update: Mid-month Trip to Sarah furnace had 3 members; Dwight, Lilly, and Bert. The team was able to calibrate a Disto (A tool for surveying and mapping caves that measures distance, azimuth, and inclination) in the cave and did some resurvey that was needed due to out of calibration Distos. The team also surveyed some new passage in the cave. The total surveyed passage in the cave is between 5.1 and 5.2 miles right now.
- 2.) Gabby the Pack Rat Scat Newsletter Editor is in Alaska and will be able to work on the next installment of the PRS when she returns. If anyone has articles, please send them to Gabby.
- 3.) Dean is planning a trip to Bally Cave soon to do some digging to open new passage.

New Business:

- 1.) The Wildlife Conservancy in Emmaus, where the grotto traditionally meets for our monthly meetings, are looking for additional insurance information to allow the grotto to continue holding meetings there.
- 2.) Red Church Trip had 10 participants Bert led the trip and he and Dwight had a talk with everyone before the group entered the cave.
- 3.) GAG Camping weekend at Rupert Cave August 20th to August 22nd, will include trips through Mclure, Seawra, and the historical section of Rupert Cave. Invites will be sent out by Paul.
- 4.) GAG Picnic will be August 15th 11am to 8pm at Onyx Cave. Reminders will be sent out by Paul. Email Ed or Kim Kehs to RSVP
- 5.) NSS Convention July 25th to July 30th will be virtual please visit Caves.org for the schedule. The virtual convention will be free.
- 6.) Steve shared some info about some rock shelters and a small cave that he found. One of the rock shelters found had previously been discovered to be the burial site for a Native American woman.
- 7.) NCC held their member appreciation celebration at Clarksville cave, 70+ people were in attendance.
- 8.) OTR has open preregistration.

Meeting was ended at 7:58pm

Program:

- 1.) Dean gave a presentation on Robert L. Ripley and his 1939 visit to Carlsbad Caverns in New Mexico.

June 20th, 2021

The meeting was called to order at 7:03PM by President Dwight who thanked Doug for hosting. Notices for the meeting were sent out twice and 14 people were in attendance.

Paul reviewed the minutes, a correction to the May meeting date from May 19th to May 16th was made and the minutes were approved by all.

Treasurers Report:

- 1.) Doug reviewed the financial status for GAG

Correspondence:

- 1.) No new correspondence.

Membership Report:

- 1.) Vince reports 52 total members.
- 2.) 4 new members since the last meeting.
- 3.) Almost all 2021 dues are collected.
- 4.) Membership report was accepted by all.

Pack Rat Scat:

- 1.) Gabby is requesting submissions to help fill out the next edition of PRS which is currently in progress.

Trip Report:

1. Lily gave a report on her very first cave trip to Red Church Cave on June 6th, she said it was a very good beginner trip.
2. Bert Gave a trip report about a trip with GAG Members to Mammoth Cave to do historical research with special permission to verify the veracity of an old map. Bert also reported visiting a former show cave called American White Onyx Cave.

Old Business:

- 1.) Sarah Furnace: Dwight and Bert briefed those in attendance on the survey progress of Sarah Furnace Cave and the Upcoming MAKC celebration at SFC.
- 2.) Dean is organizing a trip to dig open the entrance to a new cave on the Bally Cave Property, the owner is conserving the name for the new cave and has been advised on proper naming conventions.
- 3.) In Person meetings may resume soon as COVID restrictions loosen. Dean will be contacting the conservancy for permission to resume in person meetings.

New Business:

- 1.) Dwight is scheduling a GAG caving/camping weekend at Rupert Cave property; the trip will include caving trips to Seawray and Mclure caves August 20th- 22nd. Dwight made a motion to set that weekend as an official GAG Weekend, them motion was seconded and passed unanimously.
- 2.) GAG Picnic at Eds house is August 15th a Sunday.
- 3.) The NSS Convention for 2021 will be digital.

Meeting ended at 7:58

Program:

- 1.) Special Guest Matt Pelsor creator of The Caving Podcast gave a presentation about his podcast's history and shared audio clips from interviews with some of his guests. He also took questions from those in attendance.

May 16th, 2021

The meeting was called to order at 7:02PM by President Dwight who thanked Doug for Hosting. Notices for the meeting were sent out twice and 9 people were in attendance.

Paul reviewed the minutes, and they were approved by all present.

Treasurers Report:

- 1.) Doug reviewed the financial status for GAG.
- 2.) The Checks for donations in honor of Frank Herceg were cashed.
- 3.) All present approved the treasurers report.

Correspondence:

- 1.) The Grotto received 2 items, The NSS News and the Journal of Cave and Karst Studies.

Membership Report:

- 1.) Vince reports 48 current members.
- 2.) Charles Clinger is the newest member, but he is also one of the original members with GAG #12.
- 3.) Dues have been submitted.
- 4.) Two people interested in joining GAG were invited to the meeting.

Old Business:

- 1.) Sarah Furnace is up to 4.3mi worth of mapped passage and only needs another 1/2mi to make it the longest surveyed cave in Pennsylvania.
- 2.) Memorial Day Weekend there will be an overnight trip to survey Sarah Furnace cave. Contact Bert for more info.
- 3.) Crystal Cave has changed management and work on restoration has paused for now.
- 4.) Dean has been helping the Bucks County Grotto doing Ground Penetrating Radar work near Lost River Caverns in Springtown.
- 5.) Dean is considering a Trip to Bally Cave May 22nd to locate another cave on the property.

New Business:

- 1.) Bert is putting together a trip to Red Church June 5th, Six other people at the meeting expressed interest in attending the trip.
- 2.) Old Timers Reunion will be Labor Day weekend in West Virginia.
- 3.) In Person meetings may resume soon when the Grotto can get permission to meet.
- 4.) Tom Metzger and Bert went on a trip to Washington County at the end of March and found two historic caves.
- 5.) Lynn made a motion to end the meeting at 7:57PM, approved by all.

Program:

- 1.) Doug gave an educational presentation about his trip to Oman to help their Government with establishing a National Park. He spoke about the caves they visited, the history of the country, and the work that they did on the trip. The program ended at 8:50PM

April 18th, 2021

President Dwight called the meeting to order at 7:03 PM

March 21, 2021 meeting minutes:

- 1.) Dean was substitute secretary for that meeting.

- 2.) Members present approved a \$100 donation to the MAKC Penn Aqua Fundraiser and a \$100 donation to the NSS Buy-A-Brick Fundraiser in memory of Frank Herceg, GAG Member # 53. The grotto also sent a condolence card to Frank's family.
- 3.) Doug moved to approve the minutes; seconded by Lynn. All present approved.

Treasurer Report:

- 1.) Doug reviewed the financials of the grotto.
- 2.) Dwight moved to approve the report; seconded by Lynn. All present approved.

Old Business:

- 1.) Sarah Furnace (SF) is now over four miles long and within striking distance to surpass several caves on the PA long cave list. Bert reported that SF has the potential of being the maze-ist cave in the world. Maze caves are catalogued by dividing the mapped miles of passage divided by the surface area: SF is currently at approximately 1.5 miles of passage per surface acre. Next mapping trip will be April 24.
- 2.) Gabby is collecting articles for the next PRS.

New Business:

- 1.) The 2021 NSS Convention will be virtual and expected to be held the last week in June.
- 2.) International Year of Caves and Karst has been extended into 2022.
- 3.) The 2021 International Union of Speleology Conference has been cancelled.
- 4.) Dean is planning a trip to Balley Cave to check on the rumor of another cave on the property. Mid-May is the anticipated time frame and Dean will advise members when scheduled.

Program: Dean presented a program on the Kentucky Reptile Gardens and Neville Cave. Russell T. Neville was a famous cave photographer especially noted for his work in the Mammoth Cave Region. His daughter (and caving partner) along with her husband established the Reptile Gardens, in park City, KY. While documenting the history of the gardens from the start to the current overgrown site that is barely distinguishable today, Dean learned that R. T. Neville mentioned in one of his letters that there was a cave on the garden's property. A search of KY cave files determined the cave was undocumented. About 12 years ago, Dean received permission to explore the cave and over the years, with the help of other GAG members, has produced a map of Neville Cave which has since been added to the Kentucky Cave Survey.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:08.

February 21st, 2021

The meeting was called to order at 7:03PM by Dwight who thanked Doug for allowing us to use his zoom account. Notices for the meeting were sent out twice and 10 members were in attendance.

Paul reviewed the minutes, and they were approved by all present.

Correspondence:

- 1.) No new correspondence.

Treasurer's report:

- 1.) Doug gave a report on GAG finances.
- 2.) MAKC cashed the check for the Penn Aqua purchase.
- 3.) Tax documents have been sent to the IRS

Membership:

- 1.) Grant and three of his children joined the Grotto.
- 2.) Grotto membership is at 47.

Old business:

- 1.) Sarah Furnace survey up to 3.6 mi, trip on Thursday last trip of Feb is postponed until 1st sat of March. MAR meeting last sat in Feb. If you want to get involved in surveying Sarah Furnace email Bert. Because of Covid groups are separated into survey "pods" folks interested in helping the survey project need to join a pod of surveyors. Each group must have one sketcher.
- 2.) Crystal Cave Project, Doug and group has been usually going 3 days a week, installed or repaired 6 formations. A lot of progress has been made on cleaning several formations. This week is the last week to clean before the cave opens.
- 3.) PRS issue 126 out, Send stories to Gabby.
- 4.) Bert Suggested GAG exchange newsletter publications with other PA Grottos.

New Business:

- 1.) MAR business meeting last Sat of February at 1:30pm meeting will be on Zoom Link for MAR Business meeting Zoom on Feb. 7, 2021 at 1:30p.m.: <https://mar.caves.org/busnmtg.htm>
- 2.) NSS convention in Weed CA is scheduled for Jun28 to Jul 2, NSS looking to move it to July 24th to Jul 31st.
- 3.) International Conference Jul 21st to Aug 1st
- 4.) 2021 is the international year of Caves and Karst, Orgs from around the world are putting together seminars. Info can be found on the GAG FB page.
- 5.) New River Gorge in WV has been designated as a US National park
- 6.) NCRC is running a series of virtual training seminars starting Feb 24th every two weeks through may. 2hrs every other Wednesday, covers a variety of topics throughout the seminars. NCRC cave rescue seminars. Email has been sent out.
- 7.) Some members have not received the most recent NSS newsletter.
- 8.) Bally cave owner looking for people to survey second cave area. 9.) Gag year-end report for NSS sent in Presentation:

- 1.) Bert gave a presentation on Thomas Jefferson and his caving history and answered questions from the Grotto.

January 17, 2021

The meeting began at 7:04PM, The meeting was called to order by Dwight who thanked Doug for hosting. Notices for the meeting were sent out twice and 9 were in attendance.

Paul reviewed the minutes, and they were accepted by all present.

Correspondence:

- 1.) Dean received a \$100 donation from Lost River Canyons for GAG's work in the past, the donation was forwarded to the treasurer.
- 2.) PCC requested a donation to help with the purchase of Penn Aqua.

Treasurers Report:

- 1.) Doug reviewed GAG finances.
- 2.) Check for Penn Aqua purchase was sent out.

Membership:

- 1.) GAG membership is at 40 members.
- 2.) Dues were collected and forwarded to the treasurer.
- 3.) There were two inquiries about membership, Vince invited them to the meeting and Grant logged in and introduced himself and talked about his interest in caving.
- 4.) Dues for 2021 are due, please send dues to Vince.

Old Business:

- 1.) Sarah furnace trip 1/17/2021 contact Bert by email if interested in Sarah furnace project. trip last Saturday of the month.
- 2.) Doug will be at crystal cave for restoration project Mondays Wednesdays and Fridays at 1100 get ahold of Doug if interested. \$700 worth of change taken out of the cave and will be donated to charity.
- 3.) PRS issue 126 will be out soon.
- 4.) Dwight discussed MAKC purchase of Penn Aqua, MAKC is seeking donations for the purchase GAG sent 200 check for MAKC Penn Aqua purchase

New Business:

- 1.) Dean reported January 8th, 2022 Holiday Party is on a Saturday
- 2.) Vince reported the next Board of Governors meeting will be on the 13th of March a Saturday, Contact Vince for info.

Program:

- 1.) The program was a presentation by Dean Snyder of photos from Russel Trall Neville, a lawyer and famous cave photographer who knew Floyd Collins. The photos featured were from Mammoth Cave and its vicinity. Dean followed up his presentation by answering questions about his program.

December 20, 2020

December's meeting was called to order by Dwight who opened by thanking Doug for hosting this month's meeting. Notices for the meeting were sent out twice and ten members logged on.

Vince reviewed the minutes, and they were accepted by all present.

Correspondence: 1.) Dean reported receipt of a certificate for GAG's donation to the SCCI fundraiser for Balcony Sink.

Membership:

- 1.) 40 members for the 2020 year.
- 2.) 25 members current on dues for 2021.
- 3.) \$110 has been collected for 2021 dues.

Treasurer report:

1.) Treasurer gave a report on financial status for the grotto and is preparing formal thank you letters for donations for tax purposes.

Old Business:

- 1.) 3.25 miles in Sarah Furnace. Come out and help contact Bert.
- 2.) Crystal Cave cleanup project has started because the cave is closed for the season.
Lost River is on hold because of Covid (LR is open all year)
- 3.) PRS will likely publish after the holidays. Any trip reports or other stuff should be sent to Gabby.
- 4.) GAG Facebook is popular; Dwight indicated he gets 40-50 views every time something new goes up.

New Business:

- 1.) The annual GAG holiday party is cancelled due to Covid.
- 2.) Discussion on MAKC purchase of Penn Aqua. Mike moved that GAG donate \$200 to the MAKC fundraiser. Bert seconded and All approved the donation.
- 3.) Rosanna Bahr (PA Geologist) is interested in a trip to study Balley Cave and others that have similar geological features. Bert will be leading the effort to organize.

Director Election: Vince reported that all current directors plus Paul have agreed to stand for a director position. There were no other nominations. Doug reviewed the process of electing directors and how directors then assign themselves GAG positions in a private meeting. Mike proposed we reappoint current directors and Paul as 2021 directors. The vote was unanimous.

Program: Gabby's trip to TAG highlighted Cagles Chasm's multi-level drop series (70-35-80) and the 117' open air Jeepside Entrance Pit. Also visited Rumbling Falls.

The meeting ended 8:10pm

At the closed meeting of the Directors the following 2021 positions were assigned:

President – Dwight,
Vice President – Ed,
Secretary – Paul,
Treasurer – Doug,
Correspondence/Programs – Dean,
Editor – Gabby,
Membership – Vince, Webmaster
– Rick, Director at Large
– Frank.

November 15, 2020

The virtual meeting was hosted on Doug's Zoom account and chaired by Dwight. (Many thanks to Doug for pre-arranging this meeting because he was not expected to be available at our usual start time.) Notices were sent to all members twice and nine members logged on.

Vince reviewed the minutes from the October meeting and one minor correction was noted: the GAG trips into Butler were corrected to say Ed lead the trips on Friday and Saturday. (See October notes for corrected details.)

Correspondence: 1) GAG received a check for \$100 from Network for Good. This was a fundraising donation from member Paul Barnette. The grotto formally thanked Paul for his generosity.

Membership: 1) Nathaniel was introduced as the newest member - #333. Welcome Nathaniel! 2) Vince reported that the grotto has collected \$350 in dues this year. 3) A dues reminder will be sent to all members and requesting that because we will conduct virtual meetings for the foreseeable future all 2021 dues must be paid by check and mailed to Vince.

Discussion: 1) Sara Furnace mapping project is about 750 ft. short of three miles. The next mapping trip is scheduled for 11/28 but that may change because of Covid restrictions. Contact Bert if interested. 2) Rick reported problems with posting pictures on the GAG web site since it was moved to the new NSS servers. Rick and Vince have been in touch with NSS IT and they are looking into it. 3) The GAG annual election for Directors will be held at the December meeting. Notice will be sent to all members asking for nominations. All directors must be NSS members and the elected directors assign the various grotto responsibilities. 4) Dean paid the annual post office box rental fee. 5) The annual holiday party is cancelled because of Covid restrictions.

Program: Dwight presented slides of his trip to Whiteside Mountain, NC, where he and several friends rappelled and climbed the 600+ ft. cliff. The program generated good questions about rigging techniques, equipment, and tandem climbing.

The formal meeting ended at about 7:45 but informal conversation about caving equipment, geocaching, Paul's trip to Penns Cave, and sources for good caving reference books and literature lasted until 8:55.

October 18, 2020

The virtual GAG meeting was hosted and chaired by Doug. Dwight was on the road but was able to call in. Notices for the virtual meeting were sent to all members 2x and 11 members either called in or logged on.

Doug provided a treasurer's report and Vince reviewed the minutes from the September meeting.

Dean reported that SCCI had received the GAG donation toward the purchase of Balcony Waterfall Cave and GAG is recognized for same on that preserve's website.

Dwight gave a quick trip report on the GAG trip to Butler the first weekend in October. Ed led the trip for 5 GAG members on trips Friday and Saturday. They were fun "tourist" trips - no digging, no pushing tight leads, no mapping - where they got to see great sections of the cave.

Program: Rose-Anna Behr, geologist with the PA Geologic Survey, presented a special program on the Geology of Berks and Lehigh Counties. The program focused on the forces that created the unique limestone areas in the regions where known caves are located. Rose-Anna also demonstrated use of the numerous mapping processes that help identify potential cave locations. Members asked questions and displayed photos taken of some of the unique limestone formations she discussed in her presentation. The program lasted about 55 minutes.

September 20, 2020

The virtual GAG meeting was again hosted by Doug and chaired by Dwight. Notices for the virtual meeting were sent to all members 2x but only five members logged in and participated this time.

Meeting Minutes: Although the previous meeting minutes had been posted to the website, Vince reviewed them to the online group. The minutes were approved by all members participating.

Membership: Paul and Miranda are new members, GAG # 331 and 332 respectively. Total membership stands at 40 and we had one online inquiry about the grotto since the last meeting.

Treasurer Report: Doug reviewed grotto finances and reported that we have made our annual donation to the NSS Building Fund and that our annual donation to the Wetlands Conservancy will be made before the end of the year.

Old Business: 1) The grotto thanks Ed and Kim for hosting the annual grotto picnic. The food was great and the conversations and activities were well received by the 25-30 members present. 2) Sara Furnace: 165 feet of passage was added to the map on 9/15. The next trip will be 9/26-27 and Bert has scheduled a sketching seminar for the 3rd weekend in Oct. Contact Bert if interested. 3) Ed led a trip to RCC on 9/13. Six members attended and enjoyed the cave. There may be a trip report in a future *PackRatScat*. 4) Balley Cave Survey: after two mapping trips the data has been compiled and a map is being produced. Another cave was located in the immediate area and will likely require additional trips to map and explore the new find.

New Business: 1) The grotto thanked Dean for establishing and maintaining excellent RCC and Balley Cave landowner relations. Although access to both is limited, prearranged trips for responsible cavers are possible and both caves have potential to be continued projects for GAG members. RCC for some cleanup work in the big room and Balley has potential for expansion. 2) MAKC has an agreement to purchase a large wellknown PA cave and a fundraising plan will be announced soon. 3) GAG has agreed to move its website to the new NSS portal. There is no cost to the grotto but we had to formally agree to new terms and conditions. 4) SCCI has purchased another preserve, Balcony Waterfalls Cave. Dean moved; Dwight seconded that GAG donate \$200 toward the purchase. All members participating approved.

Announcements: 1) Ed will lead a GAG trip to Butler Cave the first weekend in October. Contact ED if interested. 2) At the October meeting, Roseann Behr, Senior Geologist, PA Geological Survey, will present a virtual program on the Geology of Onyx and Chrystal Caves. 3) The grotto received a donation from David Hughes in recognition of Dean's

work on caver activities at the recent NSF meeting. 4) GAG director elections will be held in December. Members interested in serving should contact Dwight.

Discussion: "Posting cave info on social media." Dean started the conversation by pointing out that several recent posts that appeared on social media contained info that could possibly identify caves the grotto was working on. Long standing grotto policy has been to not identify caves or locations in any forum that the general public can access.

Ex: While *PRS* may have articles that identify specific caves we only put the cover and index page on our website. You have to be a member to get the complete newsletter.

Members present commented that the non-disclosure policy is a common practice of caver organizations including the NSS. Going forward, members participating in GAG activities should be reminded to use caution that details about a cave, i.e., name, location, owner status, identifying features, etc. should not appear on a public forum.

Doug moved: Paul seconded that the meeting be closed. All approved. 8:11.

Program: 1970 Lehigh Valley Grotto (LVG) trip to Norman Cave, WVA. This program was put together by Dean from vintage slides that were donated to the grotto by Rev. Jim Roth along with other LVG memorabilia. The slides photos were taken by Perter Camana. Dean converted the slides to digital for the program. A copy of the program and the other LVG items will be donated to the MAKC library.

July 19, 2020

The third virtual GAG meeting was again hosted by Doug and chaired by Dwight. Ten members logged in and participated.

Meeting Minutes: Vince reviewed the meeting notes from the June 21st meeting (below). There were no questions or corrections. Doug moved the minutes be accepted as read: all approved by waving their hand.

Membership: No changes since last report

Old Business: 1) Convention will be on-line only and quite a few sessions have been listed on the NSS web site. 2) OTR has been cancelled. 3) Sara Furnace mapping project is now (about 500 ft. short) of two miles. The group also worked on trail maintenance on the last trip there. The next mapping event will be Aug 29-30. Contact Bert if interested.

New Business: 1) Doug circulated information on a Zoom presentation on the geology of Crystal and Onyx Caves being presented by PA State Geology Survey. 2) The annual GAG picnic will be hosted by Ed and Kim at Onyx Cave on August 16 from 11 to 8. The caves will be open and Ed will offer vertical training exercises for those interested. Vince will send an announcement to all members and to Philly and Commander Cody Grottos within a week with a follow up about 10 days before the event. Notice will also be posted on the web site. 3) Doug moved the meeting is closed at 7:32: all approved.

Program: Dwight presented a program on Rustys Cave, a SCCi preserve in Dade Co., GA.

June 21, 2020

The June meeting opened at 7:01 PM by Dwight who thanked Doug for hosting our second Zoom meeting. Sign-on information had been posted on the web site and an email invitation was sent to all members. Eight members logged on and participated.

Meeting Minutes: Vince reviewed the meeting notes from May 17 meeting (below) with one minor correction --- in the May notes it was reported that OTR for 2020 was cancelled which was corrected to read Spring NRO was cancelled. After minor discussion, Doug moved and Bert seconded that the minutes be approved. All in favor.

Membership: We have 39 members after Vince culled the list of individuals who had not paid dues. We collected \$320 in dues for 2020. We had one inquiry from Paul about GAG and caving. He was invited to join the meeting and sent the latest copy of PRS. Paul logged on, introduced himself and explained he was interested in caves having visited several commercial ones. He stayed on for the rest of the meeting.

Treasurer: Doug reported on grotto finances. Vince moved and Dean seconded that the report be accepted. All in favor.

Correspondence: 1) Vince reported that he contacted the NSS Office about publications being mailed to him instead of the official GAG address. Problem should be fixed for July mailings. 2) Dean was contacted by a former Lehigh Valley Grotto member (a student grotto from the 60's) and offered original charter documents, older newsletters and slides (that could be duplicated) taken by a professional photographer of a LVG trip to Bone Cvae. Dean though he could make a program from the old slides. and planned to offer the historical documents to MAKC.

Old Business: 1) Fate of OTR 2020 would likely be announced by July 1. 2) Planning continues to offer on-line programs featuring papers, programs, awards, etc. for the 2020 Convention.

New Business: 1) There is interest in having a grotto RCC trip. 2) Dean had not gotten a response from Wetlands about the use of their education building for meetings. He will continue to reach out to them. We will use Zoom in July if the Wetlands is not available. 3) Dwight will contact Ed about planning for the annual picnic. 4) The web site appears to be up to date and Facebook has been active. 5) Doug moved; Dean seconded that the formal meeting be closed. All approved. Meeting closed at 7:48.

Program: Bert presented an in-depth program on mapping in Sara Furnace.

May 17, 2020

The February and March meetings were cancelled due to the coronavirus restrictions against gatherings. Dwight and Doug had circulated an email suggesting the grotto try to conduct a meeting via Zoom and the directors agreed. Instructions for loading Zoom as well as passwords and meeting info were emailed to all members and posted on the Website. At 7 PM, meeting host Doug welcomed all to the first virtual GAG meeting. There were nine cavers on line and Dwight called the meeting to order.

Meeting Minutes: Vince reviewed the meeting notes from the February meeting (below) and after minor discussion Doug moved; M. Spencer seconded that the minutes are approved. All in favor.

Treasurer Report: Doug had not collected any money or issued any checks since last meeting. No change in our accounts.

Correspondence: Dean - no mail over the last two months. Vince – received grotto copies of the April and May issue of the *NEWS* and the *JOURNAL*. They had been mailed to his home address. Vince will contact the NSS Office and have the address changed to the GAG post office box.

Discussion: 1) Dwight has reactivated the GAG Facebook account and is posting info about the grotto and membership information. Some non-members have been checking in. 2) Sarah Furnace project is on hold because of the virus restrictions but mapping may begin in a few weeks. Bert displayed the current map - 8445 ft. or 1.6 miles. Currently 7th longest in the state. 3) MAR was well attended and there was much discussion about caving this season. MAR Spring event was cancelled as well as Spring NRO. 4) Convention is formally cancelled but there will be program segments (awards, papers, salons, etc.) available on a virtual platform. More info will be posted as it is finalized. 5) The next issue of PRS is almost ready and will be circulated soon. There was some discussion about frequency of publication but no formal decision. 6) Doug moved; S. Spencer seconded that the formal meeting be closed. All in favor.

Program: Rustys Cave was scheduled but postponed until next meeting. Dwight showed a few photos of critters and scenes from recent hikes. That was followed by a roundtable discussion of how each of us has been impacted and coping with the virus closure and its restrictions.

February 16, 2020

Program: National Show Cave Museum: Dean - overview of the new museum showing it in different phases of construction, historical Mammoth Cave photos that are part of the exhibit, and arrival at the museum of the rock that pinned Floyd Collins. Part 2: background story on the Floyd Collins bust that is on display and a step by step review of how a lifelike cast is molded. Doug – showed more details of the exhibits, another view of the infamous Floyd Collins rock, and how GAG members helped arrange displays and hang antique commercial cave signs. Part 2: GAG members (and others) were mapping in Neville Cave.

Correspondence: Dean reported receiving a letter and donation from Lost River Caverns. Ed circulated an announcement from VA DEP explain how (most?) state caves would be open on a permit basis.

Treasurer: Doug reported on the current finances of the grotto.

Membership: Two new members recently joined Steven Satch and daughter Anya, GAG members #329 and 330. Steven was present, introduced himself and spoke of his primary interest- locating and documenting historically significant rock shelters that early peoples may have used. He has focused his work in NY, NJ and eastern PA. Several members

mentioned shelters they had seen or heard of and suggest several sources for additional information. Vince sent a second reminder email to members who had not paid their dues.

Discussion: 1) Ed has been holding weekly vertical training and Gabby and Christian have been attending. 2) Dwight has reactivated the GAG Facebook page. 3) Doug had 6 cavers help on the Crystal Cave restoration project the past weekend. 4) Sara Furnace – over 8K ft. have been surveyed under just one acre of surface area. Anyone interested in helping or want to learn how to map/sketch should contact Bert. Monthly trips are planned well into the future.

Upcoming events: 1) MAR business meeting will be Feb. 29. Several members plan to attend. 2) MAR/VAR May1-3, Grand Caverns, Grottoes, VA. 3) NSS Convention, Elkins, WV, July 27-31. 4) Fall OTR September 3-7.

After the regular meeting, there was a closed meeting of Directors.
The Directors present appointed: Dwight- president, Ed - vice president, Doug - treasurer, Vince - membership, Dean - correspondence, Gabby - editor, Rich - webmaster, Frank - director at large.

December 15, 2019

Director Election for 2020: *Announcement of election was published in PRS #124.*

Candidates interested in running were: Dwight Kempf, Ed Kehs, Sr., Doug Soroka, Dean Snyder, Gabby Zawacki, Vince Kappler, Rick Kehs, and Frank Hecceg.
Jessica Nogradi moved to appoint above list as GAG Directors for 2020.
Second by Gabby Zawacki
Motion approved by all members present.

Program: 1) Caving in South America: Doug and Lynn's trip to Ecuador and the Galapagos Islands. 2) Caving in TAG: Gabby's recent trip to Waterworks, Montague, Signal Light, and Gourdneck Caves in TAG region.

Correspondence: Dean – no recent mail. Vince – circulated the latest IO Newsletter and a copy of the NSS Monthly Membership Report.

Treasurer: GAG made a \$100 donation to Wetlands Conservancy and paid the post office box rental fee.

Membership: 1) Jericho K. had inquired about GAG and caving via email and was invited to and attended the meeting. 2) 2020 dues are now payable; \$70 has been collected to date and we have 44 members on the roster.

Discussion: 1) Fall 2019 Newsletter #124 - Gabby: newsletter was emailed to members on 12/1. All email addresses appeared to be good because none bounced. Dean: printed copies for the NSS Library and distributed a few extra copies at the meeting. Vince: emailed newsletter to 20 former members who have not paid dues for several years. 2) Ed lead a trip in Onyx and is planning a trip to Piper. (He has noticed new sinkholes and a stream is being pirated on the Piper property.) Both trips were specifically set up for new members and Ed plans to continue offering local trips to new members. 3) Funks Cave:

Dean is still working with group to get an acceptable release form. 4) There were 23 mapping trips to Sara Furnace so far this with one more on the 29th. Length has passed 6k feet. 5) Ed inquired about a trip into RCC. Because the owner is an avid hunter, it was decided we would wait until after deer season before we request permission. It was also pointed out that the field road should be snow free and dry or frozen so that we don't cause any field damage.

November 17, 2019

Program: Dwight - Fall MAR photos featuring Milroy and Ruppert Caves.

Correspondence: We occasionally get a paper copy of an exchange newsletter but it seems most grottos are only sending digital newsletters to members. Dean received the bill for our annual post office mail box rental.

Membership: Christian is our newest member (GAG # 328). 2020 dues are now payable and notice will be in PRS and direct email.

Discussion: 1) Gabby (via email) reported that the next issue of PRS is almost complete and after a final proof-reading will be ready to send. Consensus was that the issue should be emailed to current members and that Vince should compile an email list of former members who will be sent a complimentary copy. Dean said we should plan on printing some copies for our library and the NSS achieves. 2) Kim asked about officer elections. Many points were discussed including: there haven't been "announced" elections for directors in several years possibly because of very low meeting attendance and no newsletter; however, meeting dates and time are posted on the web; meeting notes (on the web) have mentioned when elections were held; directors have been re-elected annually by members present; we now have a volunteer editor and another member is willing to stand for election as a director. It was decided we would hold director elections, possibly in February, or sooner if we can get an announcement in the newsletter advising the membership. 3) Bert talked about the Sara Furnace mapping project: 22 trips, 5635 ft. surveyed, and a great opportunity for anyone who wants to learn mapping.

October 20, 2019

Program: Dean (film) - Death Valley Days, episode 156, *Fair Exchange*

Membership: Gabby is our newest member (GAG # 327) which brings are total membership to 42. Vince collected \$390 in dues this year and has begun to accept 2020 dues which remain at \$10.

Discussion: 1) Several members attended Fall MAR. There were over 90 cavers at the event. Ed said that many attendees visited Piper Cave during the event. 2) Doug reported on visiting Lost Pond Cave in the Adirondacks and a nearby graphite mine. The mine had a nice colorful display of calcite formations. 3) Ed visited the new owner of Carpenters. He is receptive to letting Ed offer the occasional grotto trip to the cave and Ed is planning to guide the owner (and interested members) in a trip there in November. 4) Dean reported that the GPR project to local Funks Cave is still active. The owner is considering a proposal to allow digging at the site. 5) Gabby has agreed to edit the newsletter. She had to recreate the format and already has several articles. She expects to have a draft version available for review and comment before it goes out to the membership. 6) Sara Furnace mapping project – almost a mile of passage documented on the new map already. 7)

Dean and Val will host the annual Holiday Party at their home On January 4, 2020.
Details will be posted on the website by early December.

September 15, 2019

Program: Dwight presented a more extensive program on mapping in Sarah Furnace.

Treasurer: Expenses for the grotto picnic were paid.

Correspondence: Dean circulated most recent editions of Karst Chronicle for those who do not receive it.

Membership: We had two inquiries about grotto membership in August. Both were invited to the meeting and one was able to make it.

Discussion: 1) Gabby expressed interest in restarting and editing the newsletter. She had assurance of some articles and that an officer would try to secure a copy of the masthead and formatting templates used in the past. Gabby expected to have a mockup available for the October meeting. 2) Ed offered to schedule and lead new caver trips to Piper and another local cave. 3) Ed has made contact with (a relative of ??) the owner of a long closed central PA cave. There was much discussion about grotto trips to the cave many years ago and it was described as being nicely decorated. If the new owners are agreeable, Ed would try and arrange a trip for those who expressed interest.

July 21, 2019

Program: Dwight – He took many photos of members and activities at the recent convention. Others present provided comments about their experiences in TN also. Dwight also had a shorter second program on the Sara Furnace mapping project in western PA. Bert is the lead on that project and he explained the mapping process and unique cave/mining features shown in Dwight's photos.

Treasurer: Overview of our holdings with the NSF.

Discussion: 1) Dean's work with students from Kutztown using GPR to locate a lost cave entrance on hold until fall. The land is leased to a local farmer and is now cultivated. 2) Ed passed out fliers for the Annual Picnic on 8/18. 3) Bert reported that MAKC has purchased Sara Furnace Cave which is currently a major mapping project lead by Bert. Anyone interested in helping should contact him. 4) Doug reported on a recent clean-up at Lost River Caverns.

There was a closed meeting of the directors immediately following the regular meeting.

May 19, 2019

Program: Dwight – Annual Bridge Day rappelling event.

Treasurer: 990 non-profit registrations paperwork has been submitted.

Discussion: 1) The Bridge Day program generated discussion of the changes and qualification for participation in that event since other members participated years ago. Ed re-confirmed his long-standing offer to hold a vertical practice. Any member may

contact him to schedule training/practice. 2) The grotto received 2019 OTR information and it has been posted on our website.

March 17, 2019

Program: Dwight presented an excellent program about his recent trip to the classic vertical pits near Aquismon, Mexico. Fourteen cavers (eleven from PA, and one each from UT, VA, and IL) made the trip from various starting points to Brownsville, TX, and then an additional nine hour drive south to Aquismon. The vehicle Dwight was traveling in was packed full and had spools of pit rope wrapped in a tarp secured to the roof. As they crossed the border, Mexican authorities directed them toward x-ray inspection where the whole vehicle was x-rayed for contraband. Dwight explained that was a plus because if the authorities had requested a physical search, it would have taken hours to remove all the gear for inspection.

During the nine-day trip, the group visited La Cueva Linda (100' rappel), Sotano De Cepillo (440' free rappel), Nacimiento del Rio Choy (180' rappel into a river), Hoya de las Hauhaus (700'+ free rappel) and Sotano de las Golondrinas (1,100' free rappel).

Dwight took over 1800 photos during the trip. He showed about 75/80 at the meeting – highlighting unique features in each cave as well as the rigging used in the various pits.

New Business: Members present decided to cancel the June 16 meeting because many GAGers would be traveling to Convention which starts on June 17.

Discussion: 1) Bert is helping to map Sarah Furnace Cave which is under contract to be purchased by MAKC. The cave may prove to be the longest in PA. Anyone interested in helping should contact Bert for information on who to contact to help out, project dates and cave location. 2) Dean and Dwight attended the annual MAR/PCC meeting in February. About 50 cavers were in attendance. One item of local interest is a plan to offer to do a cleanup in Cold Air Cave. The cave is heavily vandalized with spray paint. 3) The Kutztown University group that has been using GPR to search for the entrance to Funks Cave will be returning to the site after snow melt. 4) Dean completed the annual NSS IO report for the grotto.

February 17, 2019

Program: Pennsylvania Caves of the 18th Century by Bert Ashbrook. This was a paper presented at the 2013 NSS Convention. The paper documents written references, first hand accounts, and maps showing cave locations before 1800. Many historical figures including George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, and William Penn as well as historically significant publishers and geographers are linked to the authors whose work is the subject of the paper.

Membership: Current membership stands at 39 and \$350. has been collected for 2019 dues. Vince will send a reminder to those who have not paid yet.

Treasurer: Doug reported on the grotto's finances.

Correspondence: PO Box rent was paid. There have not been any exchange publications lately.

New Business: Vince moved and Dean seconded a motion for the grotto to make a donation of \$300. to the NSS building fund. All present agreed; motion passed. Note: A \$300. donation is the equivalent of being a 404Team member which requires a reoccurring minimum monthly donation of \$25. Several years ago, the grotto agreed to support the building fund but we could not sign on to automatic monthly payments. Instead we try to make an annual payment when our finances are sound.

Discussion: 1) Dean asked for newsletter articles so that we might publish an annual issue. 2) The spring MAR-PCC meeting will be on 2/23. Several members expect to attend. There is no spring MAR event planned yet. 3) The spring NSS BOG meeting will be held at State College 3/23. Area caves are welcome to attend. 4) Dwight reported on his trip to Mexico where the group of 14 did some of the very deep, classic pits. Dwight may have a slide program of the trip by the March meeting. 5) Doug reported there was possible record high water in Lost River Caverns. Recent record rainfall, snow and thaws put some walkways were water. 6) Ed and Kim will host the annual picnic in August.

December 16, 2018

Only four members present; no formal meeting.

November 18, 2018

Program: Caverns of Sonora video (2004).

Treasurer: Doug gave overview of our checking and investment accounts

Membership: Members who had not paid dues or responded to multiple emails were removed from the roster. The total is now 38. Vince sent the first email reminding that 2019 dues can be paid now.

Discussion: 1) The November issue of the *NSS NEWS* had an article by the president about the NSS Board planning to develop and adopt an anti-harassment policy. Vince had access to a draft copy of the NSS Board November 10, 2018 meeting minutes and a new NSS Anti-Harassment Policy had been approved by the board. The new NSS policy will impact IOs because while they are independent organizations IOs must adopt their own policy "or agree to implement the NSS policy, or risk loss of association with the NSS." After some discussion, GAG members present voted unanimously to adopt the NSS AntiHarassment Policy. 2) Dean reported that Mike Nagle, a founding member of the grotto (GAG 5) passed away recently. 3) Dwight attended Bridge Day 2018. The weather wasn't good but 25 ropes were used for rappelling and 5 for climbing. Over 300 people used the ropes but rappellers were outnumbered by base jumpers! An estimated 380 people jumped. 3) Ed led 6 cavers on a fun trip through Carpenters. Another trip is scheduled for December. 4) Dean and Doug reported on their recent trip to the NSF meeting in SD. 5) Ed unexpectedly met a relative of a long-closed PA cave and was given contact info for the (new?) owner and encouraged to speak to them about access. 6) Further analysis of the GPR search for Funks Cave hint at a potential dig site. The project will resume when weather permits.

October 21, 2018

Program: Doug's work on a cricket/beetle science project in Mammoth Cave and pre/post-convention activities in and around the Montana Convention this summer.

Treasurer: Doug reviewed the most recent NSF statement.

Membership: \$250. in dues was collected this year. Membership renewal reminders will be emailed by mid-November. Dues will remain at \$10 per year for 2019.

Discussion: 1) Holiday Party will be hosted by Dean and Val on Jan. 5, 2019. There will not be a grotto meeting in January. 2) Analysis of the magnetometer data from the search for Funks Cave did not show anything unusual although ground penetrating radar did indicate some anomalies in the search area. The search area may have to be expanded because period reports (and legend) say the entrance was blocked by old farm machinery (hence the use of a magnetometer) before the entrance was filled with dirt. 3) A Geology Conference was held in Allentown and Ed led participants in a tour of Onyx Cave. 4) Frank led a group of students on a tour of Onyx and other geologic sites in the area. 5) Dean and Vince cut up the tree that had fallen across the entrance to RCC. 6) Dean arranged for a group of cavers from York Grotto to visit RCC. They seemed to enjoy the cave and did not have any trouble with the gate. 7) Ed will lead a grotto trip to Carpenters on the second weekend in December. Contact Ed for additional information.

After the regular meeting there was a closed meeting of the Directors to appoint Officers for 2019.

September 16, 2018

Program: Dean compiled a program of 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 anthropolids 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 anthropolids 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 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.