

Central
New Jersey
Grotto

Manual of
Administration

CENTRAL NEW JERSEY GROTTO

A Chartered chapter of the National
Speleological Society

Chapter No. 252
October 29, 1978

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SECTION ONE

THE CENTRAL NEW JERSEY GROTTO

DESCRIPTION

The CENTRAL NEW JERSEY GROTTO (CNJG), Chapter Number 252 of the National Speleological Society (NSS) is a non-profit organization existing for the purpose of advancing the study, conservation, exploration and knowledge of caves.

The Grotto is administered by four officers elected annually by the regular membership. These officers are subject to the constitution and bylaws and policies of the Grotto and to the rules and regulations as prescribed in the constitution and bylaws and policies of the NSS. The four officers of the Grotto are the chairman, vice-chairman, secretary and treasurer.

The Grotto holds regular monthly meetings and serves as a means of organizing cavers within a geographic area. Members are urged to take part in explorations, publish trip reports, and to enjoy the programs and fellowship of other members. The Grotto members are encouraged to join the NSS and use its resources to further their skills and knowledge of caves and caving techniques.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The CNG is committed to promoting the advancement of knowledge in the field of speleology; to the protection of caves and their natural contents; and to promote fellowship among all those interested therein.

FOUNDING OF THE GROTTO

Once an element within the Trenton State College Outdoor Club, the faculty advisor, himself an NSS member, saw that his student cavers were enrolled as members in the Philadelphia Grotto. Because of the travel distance to attend Grotto meetings, the eminent departure of the faculty advisor, and the desire to keep on caving, application was made to the NSS to establish a second New Jersey chapter to serve the south-central part of the state. The application was approved and a charter dated October 29, 1978 was received. The Central New Jersey was born.

MEMBERSHIP SERVICES

The Central Jersey Caver
Monthly Meeting Notices
Grotto Store
Library
Cave Files
Field Trips
Fellowship
Membership Manual (Coming)
Cave Conversation Activities
Vertical Training
Cave Management

CENTRAL NEW JERSEY GROTTO - MANUAL OF ADMINISTRATION

SECTION TWO

THE NATIONAL SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

The National Speleological Society (NSS) is a non-profit organization affiliated with the American Association for the Advancement of Science. It was founded for the purpose of advancing the study, conservation, exploration, and knowledge of caves. In addition, the Society collects and publishes information relating to speleology in this country and in all parts of the world. Membership in the Society encourages protection and conservation of caves and provides contact with thousands of serious explorers and scientists in the United States and foreign countries.

The NSS is administered by a Board of Governors consisting of twelve directors and four officers who meet three times annually to consider matters of policy. Four directors are elected annually for three year terms. Each year the directors elect the President, Executive Vice-President, Administrative Vice-President, and Secretary-Treasurer. These officers are responsible for the management of the Society under the policies adopted by the Board.

There are more than 150 active local chapters of the NSS throughout the country. These local groups, usually known as "grottos", conduct regular meetings and serve as a means of organizing speleologists within a geographical area. Members are urged, but not required, to join a local grotto in order to take part in joint explorations and publication work and to enjoy the programs and fellowship of other members.

Although some have estimated that 50,000 caves or more exist in the United States, no organizational effort was made to study them until 1941 when the NSS was organized. Its members explore, map, and publish reports about caves. Within the caves are to be found both geological and biological phenomena unlike any above ground. Investigations of these phenomena sometimes require strenuous trips into areas never before seen by man. Special equipment, as well as the skills to use it, are frequently required to extend man's knowledge of caves. Many of our finest caves are open to the public, with guide service and safe, well lighted walkways. A visit to one of these caves will show the scenic beauty of the underground. "Wild" caves provide a unique wilderness experience. Some are among the precious few remaining unexplored areas of the earth. For early man, caves were a refuge and shelter; for modern man they are a challenge to his understanding and talents.

The NSS is a non-profit, tax-exempt organization under the provisions of the Internal Revenue Code. Donations to the Society may be therefore deducted from an individual's Federal Income Tax. The Society's Federal I.D. number is 54-6026867.

The NSS is a corporation pursuant to the provisions of Title 5 of Chapter 5 of the Code of the District of Columbia. The Certificate of Incorporation No. 26672 is dated January 9, 1941.

On May 13, 1964 the National Speleological Foundation, was chartered in the District of Columbia to insure that the Society's trust funds were always used for the purpose for which they were intended.

CENTRAL NEW JERSEY GROTTO - MANUAL OF ADMINISTRATION

SECTION THREE

CONSTITUTION
of the
CENTRAL NEW JERSEY GROTTO
of the
NATIONAL SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

- I. The name of this organization shall be the CENTRAL NEW JERSEY GROTTO.
- II. The purpose of this Grotto shall be to promote interest in and to advance in any and all ways the study and science of speleology, the protection of caves & their natural contents, and to promote fellowship among those interested therein.
- III. The administration of this Grotto shall be by four officers, a chairman, vice-chairman, secretary, and treasurer, which shall have full power to conduct all the business of the Grotto and perform all other functions incident to the proper conduct of the Grotto as permitted within the by-laws of the Central New Jersey Grotto.
- IV. The life of the Grotto shall be perpetual or until the charter is withdrawn by the National Speleological Society according to its rules and regulations, or until terminated by a majority vote of the Grotto members in good standing upon recommendation of the Grotto officers.
- V. Membership in this Grotto shall be open to any person who is interested in speleology and has complied with the conditions of membership as set forth in the by-laws.
- VI. Charter members of this Grotto shall be all members committed to this organization and its proposed and stated precepts as of October 28, 1978 and who desire to be henceforth included in this organization.
- VII. Amendments to this constitution may be proposed by the current officers or by petition of five percent (5%) of the total membership in good standing. Proposed amendments shall be mailed to all members in good standing at least ten (10) days prior to a regularly scheduled meeting. The amendment (s) will be discussed at the meeting immediately following the mailing at which time changes may be incorporated. A second mailing shall be sent no later than ten (10) days before the next regularly scheduled meeting at which time the amendments may be voted for adoption. Amendments may be adopted by a two-thirds (2/3) favorable vote by attending members in good standing.

VIII. The organization of this Grotto shall be as permitted within the rules and regulations of the National Speleological Society, and shall become effective as of October 29, 1978.

NOTE: This constitution as written above was adopted by unanimous vote at the regular meeting, March 20, 1992

BYLAWS
OF THE
CENTRAL NEW JERSEY GROTTO

I. MEMBERSHIP - DUES

A. Membership is open to all applicants eighteen (18) years of age or older who express an interest in caves, cave conservation, or any of the sciences related to speleology or speleological activities.

B. Four classes of membership are available: regular (individual), regular family, associate (individual), and associate family. Regular membership (individual or family) is accorded those who are members in good standing of the National Speleological Society (NSS). Regular members shall be accorded full rights and privileges. Associate membership (individual or family) shall be assigned to all those who are not recognized members of the NSS but have otherwise met all requirements for Grotto membership. Associate members shall not be voting members of the Grotto but shall otherwise be accorded all rights and privileges.

C. Life memberships may be granted for exceptional and outstanding contributions to the Grotto subject to the unanimous approval of the attending regular membership in good standing. Active Life Members shall have full rights and privileges. Life members shall be subject to an annual fee amounting to twelve (12) times the first class postage rate, as established by the U.S. Postal Service, and in effect at January 1 each year. Inactive Life Members, shall have full rights and privileges with the sole exception of Grotto mailings.

Life memberships established prior to August 1, 1991 shall be accorded full rights and privileges and shall not be subject to the annual postage fee.

D. The fiscal year shall begin on January 1, and dues for the ensuing year shall be due at that time. If the dues of any member are not received by March 31, that member shall no longer be considered to be in good standing and all rights and privileges may be suspended.

Changes in the amount of dues must be approved by a majority vote of the attending membership. The new amount must be posted in at least one mailing prior to the effective date.

E. Membership in the NSS shall be encouraged by all Grotto applicants and members. Current membership shall be required of all those who would be a candidate for a Grotto office.

II. OFFICERS

A. The Grotto shall be administered by four (4) officers, elected annually to serve for a period of one year. In the event an election must be postponed for any reason, the term of the incumbent shall be extended until the election takes place. The first term of the succeeding officer shall be shortened accordingly as the next election shall be held at the normally scheduled time.

The four (4) officers shall be a chairman, vice-chairman, secretary, and treasurer. While certain offices may be dual positions, i.e. secretary-treasurer, at no time may the chairman or vice-chairman simultaneously hold the position of treasurer.

While only a single signature shall be required on any Grotto check, a minimum of two officers shall be authorized to sign a check.

B. As required by the NSS, all officers of the Grotto shall be members-in-good-standing of the national organization as well as members-in-good-standing of the Grotto. Each officer shall be required to maintain membership in the NSS for the full term of office. All officers are required to declare the Central New Jersey Grotto to be their primary Grotto for the purposes of NSS proceedings.

Any candidate for Grotto office must have been an active member for a period of at least one year.

C. In the event an office is vacated in mid-term for any reason, nominations of candidates to fill that office and an election may be entertained at the next regular Grotto meeting, or with the exception of the

office of chairman and treasurer, may remain vacant until the next regular election at which time the office must be filled.

D. If the office of chairman or the office of treasurer is vacated for any reason, an election to fill those offices must be held at the next earliest opportunity.

E. Four regular members-in-good-standing from the Central New Jersey Grotto represent the Grotto to the New Jersey Cave Conservancy (NJCC). The Grotto chairman is an automatic representative. Two representatives are elected to staggered terms, with one representative elected each year for a two year term. The fourth representative is elected to serve until replaced by the Grotto.

F. Any officer missing four or more consecutive meetings without a valid reason shall be removed from office and a replacement elected to fill that office.

G. In the event of the absence of the chairman, the vice-chairman, the secretary or the treasurer, in that order, shall be empowered to conduct meetings in the stead of the chairman.

H. The duties of the Grotto officers shall be those commonly associated with the respective offices.

I. The chairman is authorized to call such special meetings as might be necessary to conduct the business of the Grotto. The chairman, vice-chairman, secretary and treasurer shall constitute the executive committee. The chairman is empowered to add past officers or other members-in-good-standing as ad hoc members of the executive committee as necessary.

J. The secretary shall maintain a set of minutes for each meeting of the Grotto, and have shall have them available for correction and/or review at the meeting immediately following.

K. The treasurer shall maintain such financial reports as is consistent with the Grotto's needs. Current status should be available at each monthly meeting. At least one monetary account shall be kept in a checking account

at a local bank under the name of the Grotto. Two (2) officers shall be empowered to sign checks with only one signature being required. The treasurer shall be one of the officers so authorized. All Grotto payments shall be made by check. No Grotto funds shall be held by any person beyond those authorized for an immediate purchase or as normal for petty cash.

III. ELECTIONS

A. The annual election shall be scheduled to be held at the regular meeting during the month of December.

B. Elections shall require a quorum of twenty-five percent (25%) of the total regular membership-in-good-standing. The format of the election: voice, show of hands, secret ballot, etc. shall be subject to the desire of the regular members present at least one month prior to the time of the election. The format selected shall be noted in the minutes of that meeting and shall be official.

C. Elections shall require written notification prior to the election. Notification of the upcoming election printed in a regularly mailed publication, be it a meeting notice or newsletter shall be deemed sufficient.

IV. PUBLICATIONS

A. The Grotto is empowered to issue a newsletter. The newsletter shall be called and be known as *The Central Jersey Caver* and shall be subject to the policies of the NSS and the Grotto. Other special publications may be developed and distributed by the Grotto providing they pertain to or are related to speleology and are not counter-productive to the goals and policies of either the NSS or the Grotto.

B. Newsletters may be exchanged on a no-fee basis with other NSS internal organizations so long as it is practical to do so. Newsletters received from other organizations shall be made available to the general membership.

V. LIBRARY

The Grotto shall maintain a library of speleological subjects and topics for the use of its members. Publications purchased, donated, received in exchange, or acquired in any other manner shall be made available to the general membership. The data shall not be made available to the general public.

VI. PROPERTIES

A. The Grotto may acquire real and personal property, including equipment, literature, and other materials for the use of and on behalf of the membership.

B. The Grotto may not act as an agent on behalf of any member in the transfer of rights, whether in the matter of a sale or gift, as applied to photographs, writings, artistic works, or any other spelean related creation without written permission.

C. Unless specified otherwise in writing, submission of material for inclusion in a Grotto publication shall be regarded as having fulfilled the requirements of permission. Once published, the submission shall be subject to the distribution and rights assignment as is determined for the Grotto publication.

VII. AWARDS - GRANTS

A. The officers or committee to whom the officers have delegated the responsibility may select recipients for awards or grants.

B. An award is defined as a tangible or intangible form of recognition and appreciation for past actions of the recipient. A grant is defined as an

amount of money given to a recipient to assist future actions and may have its use restricted as specified in writing.

VIII. ASSESSMENTS - GIFTS - DONATIONS

A. No special assessment may be made against the members of the Grotto. Voluntary contributions may be solicited by the officers for specific purposes. Fees may be collected for the use of the Grotto's property when approved by the membership.

B. Gifts and bequests may be made to the Grotto in any form or amount and for any use compatible with the purposes of the Grotto. The Grotto may transfer such gifts and bequests or any other of its funds or property to the NSS or any related foundation to be administered for the benefit of the caving community.

C. Donations may be made to the Grotto in any form or amount and are held to be tax-free by virtue of the Federal Identification Number assigned by the U.S. Internal Revenue Service. Donations may be made by the Grotto to such interests as support the purposes and intents of the caving community.

IX. SUSPENSION OF MEMBERSHIP

A. Members may permanently suspended from the Grotto for any of the following reasons:

1. Flagrant and willful misuse of Grotto property.
2. Willful disregard of personal safety, or the safety of others, on NSS or Grotto sponsored trips.

3. Conduct unbecoming to the NSS or Grotto.

B. Petition to permanently suspend any member for cause must be presented in writing to any Grotto officer. The petition shall than be duly considered by the executive committee or specially appointed committee in closed session. The subject shall be notified in writing of the committee's decision.

C. Any member subject to suspension may demand and receive a personal hearing before a representative committee of the Grotto. Decision of this committee shall be final.

X. AMENDMENT OF BYLAWS

A. Any proposal to amend these By-laws may be made at any regular meeting by any regular member-in-good-standing. The proposal may be discussed but may not be voted on until at least the following regular meeting. Notice of the proposed amendment and the upcoming vote must be published in the next meeting notice.

B. These Bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds (2/3) favorable vote by the attending membership-in-good-standing.

NOTE: These Bylaws as written above were adopted by a unanimous vote at the regular meeting, March 20, 1992

Amendments

Proposed change on 12/15/95, voted upon and approved 1/19/96.

III. ELECTIONS

CHANGE FROM:

B. Elections shall require a quorum of forty percent (40%) of the total regular membership-in-good-standings.

CHANGE TO:

B. Elections shall require a quorum of twenty-five percent (25%) of the regular membership-in-good-standing.

Proposed change on 3/19/99, voted upon and approved on 5/21/99.

II. OFFICERS

CHANGE FROM:

E. Four regular members-in-good-standing from the Central New Jersey Grotto represent the Grotto to the New Jersey Cave Management Committee.

CHANGE TO:

E. Four regular members-in-good-standing from the Central New Jersey Grotto represent the Grotto to the New Jersey Cave Conservancy (NJCC).

Proposed change on 9/20/99, voted upon and approved on 11/15/99.

VIII. ASSESSMENTS - GIFTS – DONATIONS

CHANGE FROM:

B. The Grotto may transfer such gifts and bequests or any other of its funds or property to the NSS or any related foundation to be administered for the benefit of the spelunking community.

CHANGE TO:

B. The Grotto may transfer such gifts and bequests or any other of its funds or property to the NSS or any related foundation to be administered for the benefit of the caving community

CHANGE FROM:

C. Donations may be made by the Grotto to such interests as support the purposes and intents of the spelunking community.

CHANGE TO:

C. Donations may be made by the Grotto to such interests as support the purposes and intents of the caving community.

Proposed change on 6/22/01, voted upon and approved on 8/17/01.

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