



The Southport Digs

The Official Newsletter of Tennessees'
Southport Chronic Cavers Grotto
of the National Speleological Society



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SCCG URL: <http://www.angelfire.com/tn/southportcavers/>

2003 SCCG Officers (the "Bobs") :

Buddy-Bob Baldwin (Chairman)

Brian-Bob Roebuck (Vice Chairman - Newsletter Ed)

Bob-Robert Sewell (Secretary)

Lynn-Bob Roebuck (Treasurer)

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The Year 2002 in review

The year 2002 was a year of many changes for the Southport Grotto. This year started off quite well with regular meetings held at a small church in Chapel Hill, TN as well as Grotto Trip meetings held at various cave locations every other month. The grotto held several cave trips throughout the year, hosted canoe trips to find caves along the Duck and Buffalo Rivers, had members active in cave exploration, survey, and mapping, had members heavily involved in conservation activities, and generally helped advance the science of speleology in many small but important ways. Most of the regular grotto meetings had presentations highlighted by information on protecting the Snail Shell Cave System in Rutherford County. Several new members joined the grotto during the year and participated in some of the grotto trips. Most grotto members attended local caving events and a few attended the NSS Convention in Maine as well. For a small size grotto with many new officers the future appeared bright and the year productive.

Grotto Officers Revolt!

Even with all the positive things happening some differences of opinion occurred and personalities occasionally clashed. It appears that some members of the grotto were unhappy with how things were going. The officers for 2002 were elected in March and served in official capacity through the last official grotto meeting held in August 2002 at the church in Chapel Hill, Tennessee. Officers for 2002 were: Karen Marsh (Chairman), Jeremy Hill (Vice Chairman), Renee Leonard (Treasurer), and Nancy Clift (Secretary). One other official grotto function was held at Tumbling Rock Cave in September where grotto funds were used to pay for the cost of the entrance fees for members (and apparently several guests) that attended. After that time however no attempt was made by grotto officers to hold regular meetings of the grotto despite many grotto members' attempts to contact them. The situation was quite confusing and there was no information available from the officers. Thus a gathering of interested grotto members was held at Southport Cave on a cold December night to talk about the future of the grotto and to socialize around a camp fire. No grotto officers attended this meeting despite invitations extended to all grotto members and friends. At that time it appeared the officers would never be heard from again.

Suddenly on January 3, 2003 three grotto members received an email from Jeremy Hill (SCCG Vice Chairman). It stated that the grotto officers and several other members were not rejoining the grotto next year and that no further grotto meetings would be held. It stated further that if no grotto members stepped up to run the grotto that a letter of dissolution would be sent to the NSS with all grotto assets turned over to the NSS. In response a list of members quitting the grotto was requested along with a request that each officer contact the members to assure the grotto of their intentions. Remaining grotto members proceeded to

contact the NSS office in Huntsville for assistance and guidance and in the interim members were selected to continue grotto affairs and collect any grotto resources and information still held by the former officers.

Not much was collected from the officers with the exception of the treasury, the small amount of grotto property, and a brief listing of financial records. Although he promised to turn over what Southport items he had Jeremy Hill later reported via email that some grotto paperwork was accidentally thrown away by his room mate. Most communications were done through email and a few phone calls. Some further attempts to gather grotto records etc were made but were unsuccessful. In actuality only Jeremy Hill offered any information about the intentions of the other officers to complete their obligations at running the business of the grotto for the remainder of the year. The rest of the grotto could only assume that what he reported was accurate. He did state via e-mail that the officers were going to complete their terms and then quit along with some of the other members. The fact that holding regular meetings is one of the official functions of the grotto officers apparently went unnoticed by them. In fairness it appears the treasury was kept up as well as perhaps the records of the limited official meetings of the grotto. The officers did seem to do an I/O report and did not act to dissolve the grotto as previously indicated. The fiscal year of SCCG ended in February 2002 and new officers were elected at the March meeting. It is worthy of note that none of the former officers attended the meeting to pass on official documents etc and aid in the transition for the new officers.

Survey and Exploration

Several members actively participated in exploration, mapping, and survey during the year. Ron Johnston and Nancy Clift participated in several survey trips to middle Tennessee caves with Ken, Annette, and Alexandra Oeser as well as with HR3 members Keith Filson and John Ferree. Many caves were surveyed and maps produced for the TCS. Way to go guys! Jeremy Hill, Troy Fox, Karen Marsh, and Paul Snook also hand their hands in some survey and exploration activities. Some new caves were found and some surveyed through their efforts. Brian and Lynn Roebuck also did a bit of survey and exploration mostly in Hubbards Cave and some smaller caves including a nice virgin cave in Bedford county with rarely seen HR3 members Don Lance and Ron Zawislak. In all it was a good year for cave exploration and survey for SCCG!

Canoe Caving

Just when you thought it was safe to stay out of the water SCCG members took to the "whitewater" of both the Duck River and the Buffalo River in Tennessee to paddle, look for caves, paddle, splash water, paddle, well – you get the picture. Several new caves were found using this method and many known but obscure caves were visited on these trips. The Roebucks, Rob Robbins, Buddy Baldwin, Steve Tyndall, Bill and Chris Walter, and a host of others usually attended these speleo-aquatic outings. A good time was had by all.

Conservation

The year 2002 was a landmark year for conservation efforts. Members of SCCG worked on many fronts to further the cause of cave conservation. Rob, the Roebucks, Paul Snook, and others worked on several projects together with Nashville Grotto cavers and other individuals. The issues with Dry Fork Creek, Snail Shell Cave Area Development, bat protection, Tennessee Cave Salamander status, biological inventory of caves along the Cumberland Plateau, bio inventory of caves along highway 41A highway expansion, and a few other projects were worked on to varying degrees by these and other grotto members during the year. Some of the people and organizations the grotto members worked with include Dr. Thomas C. Barr, Dr Jerry Lewis, Dr Mick Harvey, TNC, TWRA, USFWS, and others. Also many SCCG members participated in area cave clean-ups including Lost Creek Cave, Soard Cave, Stephens Gap, and a few others.

Grotto Cave Trips

Many grotto cave trips were held during the year. The usual participants were Karen Marsh, Jeremy Hill, Bart and Renee Leonard, Nancy Clift, and Ron Johnston. Some of the new members also went along on these trips as well as the Roebucks, Rob Robbins, and Eric Johnson. Depriest Branch, Tumbling Rock, and several other nice caves were visited and explored by the grotto members on these outings. Before the demise of regular grotto meetings many of the meetings were centered around cave trips. Short meetings were held prior to the trips and everyone seemed to have fun – well at least for awhile that is...

A New Year!

In March 2003 officer elections were held and the grotto was back in business as usual. While many former members made good on their promise to refrain from joining some new members showed up and are welcome additions to the grotto. Already plans were made for cave trips and future revisions to the grotto constitution and bylaws (no surprise here eh?) with other cave related and fun related issues discussed as well. Southport appears to be healthy and happy yet again. Next issue will include upcoming events, new cave trips reports, etc etc. Stay tuned...

Upcoming Events

May 9th – 11th - *Spring VAR Meeting:

To be held in Daily WV, hosted by the Potomac Speleological Club & the DC Grotto. Contact Bob Hoke at (301) 725-5877 or bobhoke@erols.com

May 16th – 18th - *SERA Cave Carnival:

To be held in Rock Island, TN and hosted by the Tennessee Central Basin Grotto. For more info see <http://www.caves.org/grotto/tcbg/sera2003/sera.htm>

May 23rd – 26th - *Speleofest:

To be held in Fort Knox, KY and hosted by the Louisville Grotto. See their web site at <http://www.caves.org/grotto/louisvillegrotto/> or contact Jon Mitchell at (812) 591-2830 / cavekraz@earthlink.net .

July 18th – 20th - *Karst-O-Rama:

This event is to be held at the Great Saltpetre Preserve in Mount Vernon, KY. Contact Wayne Barton at barton@fuse.net or call (513) 961-5183.

August 4th – 8th - *NSS Convention:

This killer event happens way out in Porterville California this year! For more info visit the NSS website or contact Perry Frantz at (408) 356-8506 / apfrantz@pwconsult.com .

October 13th – 17th - *2003 National Cave and Karst Symposium (NCKMS):

Hosted by the NSS cave Diving Section in Gainesville FL this year. For information see <http://www.cavediver.org/necks/nckms.htm>

WANTED!

Cave related stories, artwork, cavemaps, trip reports, etc for the next issue(s)! If you got it get it to me! Send your stuff to Brian Roebuck, editor SouthPort Digs, at solow@charter.net or give me stuff at grotto meetings or send it through the US Mail. Snail mail to 94 Magnolia Lane, Normandy, TN 37360. Thanks!!

Grotto Business:

This was our first meeting of the new officers. It looks like they are off to fix a few things and take care of grotto business (hey that's what they are supposed to do!!). Minutes of the meeting were recorded by (Bob) Robert Sewell – our talented new grotto secretary. Here they are:

Southport Chronic Cavers
General Meeting
Friday, April 4, 2003
806A South Garden, Columbia, TN

----- Attendance -----

Buddy-Bob Baldwin, Chairman
Brian-Bob Roebuck, Vice-Chairman
Lynn-Bob Roebuck, Treasurer
Bob-Robert Sewell, Secretary
Rob-Bob Robbins
Bull-Bob Snook
Ray-Bob Heery

----- Call to Order -----

Buddy Baldwin called the meeting to order at 7:15 PM.

----- Agenda -----

A letter in support of the Friends of the NSS Library was signed by all present. Lynn Roebuck explained it: "Friends of the NSS Library petitions the NSS Board of Governors and Officers to ensure that the NSS continues to take full and complete financial responsibility for the NSS Library and that the care and control of the NSS Library remain directly in the hands of the NSS."

Lynn Roebuck gave an accounting of the grotto treasury. The choice of a bank was discussed, and settled upon.

Robert Sewell read the minutes for the March meeting.

Discussion: a proposal to change the grotto's fiscal year from its current cycle of March 1 to the end of February, to a new cycle from January 1 to December 31. Benefits would be more timely and accurate I/O reports. Most other grottos use this date range for their fiscal year. It was pointed out that a consequence of this action is that the current year will be short, and dues will be collected again next January.

A motion was made and seconded to change the grotto's fiscal year from its current cycle of March 1 to the end of February, to a new cycle from January 1 to December 31.

The motion carried.

Discussion: A proposal to change the grotto constitution and bylaws in the following manner:

Constitution

Section III. B. The following sentence shall be added at the end: Reporting to Grotto membership actions of the Executive Committee at the next scheduled Grotto meeting.

Section VII. The very last word in this section shall be changed to ballot.

By Laws

Section I of the By Laws; under Applications - that sub section shall be re-lettered to A.

And I.A.1) shall read Regular membership dues - \$10.00 and I.A.2) shall read Family membership dues - \$15.00 and I.A.3) shall be deleted in its entirety.

Section I.C.(2).(c) the following words shall be added after Executive Committee: or two-thirds vote of the Grotto membership>

Section I.C.(3). The words: or two-thirds vote of the Grotto membership shall be added after each instance of the words: Executive Committee. There are three such instances in the section.

The Section labeled "Titles and Duties of the Executive Committee" under A.(2). Vice Chairman - the duties shall be changed in its entirety to read: Acts as Chairman in the absence of the chairman and coordinates meeting programs.

The discussion pointed out the need for corrections to spelling, section labeling, adding safeguards for the potential of a malfunctioning executive committee, keeping the general membership informed as to executive actions, deleting redundant sections, and redefining the duties of the vice-chairman.

A motion was made and seconded to amend the grotto constitution and bylaws as related above.

The motion carried.

Discussion: A proposal to change the date of the monthly grotto meeting.

Due to conflicts with other commitments for some general members and Executive Committee members, alternate dates were discussed. The consensus was that the most agreeable night for the most members would be the first Monday of each calendar month, at the same time of 7:00 PM.

A motion was made and seconded to change the date of the monthly grotto meeting to the first Monday of each calendar month, at 7:00 PM, effective beginning the month of May 2003.

The motion carried.

Discussion: Problems in Harrison Saltpeter Cave (Ross Cave).

An empty CO2 cartridge was found in this cave, and possible reasons for this to have been found in the cave were discussed. Shooting cave bats was the strongest possibility. This and the continued vandalism and spray painting in the cave brought on another discussion of gating techniques, gate weaknesses, donors to a gating project, and the potential attitude of the land owner. The existence of the NSS's yearly \$1,000 grant for such activities was mentioned.

----- Grotto Cave Trip -----

A caving trip was planned for Cedar Ridge Cave, April 20, 2003. It was agreed to meet at the Monteagle Hardee's off I-24 at 10:00 AM. Contact Lynn or Brian Roebuck for information and/or directions.

----- Adjourned -----

The meeting adjourned at about 9:15 PM.

----- Next Meeting -----

The next general meeting will be at 7:00 PM, Monday, May 5, 2003, at 806A South Garden, Columbia, TN.

Minutes recorded by Robert Sewell, Grotto Secretary.

2002 SCCG Members Listing (from YahooGroups site)

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NOTE: For additions, corrections, and general rants contact the editor Brian Roebuck at (931) 455-8658 or e-mail solow@charter.net.