

Draft Minutes of the Second Session of the 2004 Annual Business Meeting

held October 2nd and 3rd at the Mother Lode Fairgrounds, Sonora, California

Newly elected chair Matt Bowers called the meeting to order on Saturday, Oct. 2, 2004 at 7:10 p.m., following adjournment of the first session.

Roll Call

Note: The Western Region constitution entitles each member grotto to the number of votes it had in the last meeting of the Congress of Grottos, subject to a cap of 3. The COG allocates votes based on the number of NSS members claiming primary affiliation with a grotto.

Present: Columbia Grotto (3), Desert Dog Troglodytes (2), Diablo Grotto (3), Mother Lode Grotto (3), San Francisco Bay Chapter (3), San Joaquin Valley Grotto (2), Shasta Area Grotto (3), Southern California Grotto (3), Stanislaus Speleological Assn (3); Matt Bowers, Chair (1); Mark Scott, Vice Chair (1); Dan Snyder, Sec'y-Treasurer (1).

Absent: San Diego Grotto (3), Willamette Valley Grotto (3).

Quorum met: 28 of 34 votes present.

Introductory Comments and Thanks to Outgoing Officers

By way of introduction, Matt explained that this would be an informational meeting only, at which the new officers would introduce certain measures, some of which should be taken back to the grottos for discussion.

Matt thanked Lynn Fielding, Larry O'Brien, Scott Schmitz and Peri Frantz for their service to the Region.

New California Caver Editors

Matt introduced the new editor of the California Caver: Merrilee Proffitt, assisted by Keith Johnson. The Executive Committee appoints the editor.

Proposal to Move and Consolidate Bank Accounts

Dan stated his intention to transfer the region's funds into inexpensive or free accounts. Presently, we pay \$10 per month in service charges for our checking account. Barbara Maeso-Ruble noted that she was able to obtain free business checking for SFBC at Washington Mutual.

Creation of Grotto Liaisons to the Executive Committee

Mark requested that each grotto appoint an official liaison to the executive committee and distributed forms for this purpose. He asked also that each grotto list its current officers. These grotto liaisons are not intended to be the voting representatives in Regional Council (although they could be, if the grotto wishes), but only points of contact to facilitate efficient communication between the executive committee and grottos.

New Online Discussion Group

Matt proposed that the existing Altadena email discussion lists be phased out and replaced with a new Yahoo group offering extra features such as downloadable files and real-time chat. This plan was adopted by acclamation.

"First Thursdays" Online Chat Series

Matt announced one of the first features of the new Yahoo group to be rolled out: the "First Thursdays" online chat series, covering a different theme on the first Thursday of each month in which a discussion is held. In November, Jerry Johnson, professor emeritus of archaeology at CSU Sacramento, will host a discussion on cave archaeology. Matt distributed flyers.

Dinner Announcement

Ray Beach announced that dinner was ready, and requested that everyone exit and re-enter the room to enable the orderly collection of dinner tickets.

Continuation of Informational Meeting in Morning

Matt announced that the meeting would continue the following morning at 9 a.m., at a location outside to be announced, the hall not being available to us then.

Revision of Constitution and Bylaws Proposed

Matt introduced a proposal to rewrite the constitution and bylaws, according to the procedural outline distributed to grotto representatives. Matt has been writing a draft and hopes to complete it by the end of November. The executive committee's proposed draft will then be sent

to the grottos for review and amendments. The committee will incorporate these amendments into a final draft, to be resubmitted to the grottos by the end of March for final review. In accordance with the region's present constitution, the new constitution and bylaws will then be discussed and voted on at a spring meeting of the Regional Council held at the proposed Speleo-Ed Seminar.

Recess

On motion from Ray Beach of the San Francisco Bay Chapter, the meeting was adjourned for dinner.

Call to Order

Newly elected chair Matt Bowers called the meeting to order on Sunday, Oct. 3, 2004 at 9:40 a.m.

Roll Call

Present: Columbia Grotto (3), Desert Dog Troglodytes (2), Diablo Grotto (3), Mother Lode Grotto (3), San Francisco Bay Chapter (3), San Joaquin Valley Grotto (2), Shasta Area Grotto (3), Southern California Grotto (3), Stanislaus Speleological Assn (3); Matt Bowers, Chair (1); Mark Scott, Vice Chair (1); Dan Snyder, Sec'y-Treasurer (1).

Absent: San Diego Grotto (3), Willamette Valley Grotto (3).

Quorum met: 28 of 34 votes present.

2005 Dues are Due!

Dan announced that he is now accepting Western Region dues for 2005.

Matt requested that all membership dues and grotto membership lists (if applicable) be sent directly to the Secretary. Dan will provide updated membership lists to Jim Lakner for use in mailing the California Caver.

Recruitment

Mark stated that the executive committee would shortly provide membership forms to the new grotto liaisons in order to encourage grotto members to join the region.

Dan noted that he would be supplying each grotto with a list of its Western Region members for comparison with their grotto lists. The numbers are dismal...some grottos having no members at all in the Western Region.

Proposed California Caver Name Change

Matt floated the idea of changing the name of the regional publication to more accurately reflect the geographic range of the Western Region; that is, not only California but also Oregon and Nevada (although the single Nevada grotto is not currently a member).

None of the grotto representatives expressed strong opposition, although some were mildly opposed on the grounds of tradition and the sentiment, "If it ain't broke, why fix it?" Others expressed support and the SAG representative, who resides in Oregon, strongly favors a name change.

The Western Caver, *Far West Caver*, and retaining *The California Caver* were put forward as viable alternatives. Council representatives rejected *The Western Region Rag* and *Pacific Coast Caver*, the latter for omitting Nevada and for suggesting that caving in the region is limited to sea caves.

Matt asked that the representatives take the name change proposal to their grottos.

[Changing the name of the region's publication requires an amendment to the bylaws. Section eight establishes the *California Caver* as the official publication of the region. Sections nine and ten also refer to the publication by name.]

Western Region Library

Merrilee Proffitt floated the idea of transferring irreplaceable items in the region's library, now stored at the librarian's home, to a facility such as the Bancroft Library, which can protect the materials from fire and other adverse conditions.

[This action would require a change to the bylaws. Sections four and five currently provide that the Southern California Grotto maintain the library, and that the librarian be selected from the membership of that grotto.]

Merrilee noted that the *California Caver* would probably not have a new look and feel until December at the earliest.

Closing Comments?

Matt thanked the Diablo Grotto and convention chair Merrilee Proffitt for hosting the regional, and Cindy Heazlit of the Cave Conservancy of Hawai'i and Eileen Belan of the Western Cave Conservancy for organizing breakfasts and dinner. Breakfast is currently available at the CCH booth outside the meeting hall.

Bill Frantz asked the council whether grottos should consider the Mother Lode Fairgrounds site for future regional conventions. All agreed that it was a suitable site.

Matt reiterated the intent of the new executive committee to revitalize the region, and asked that the representatives help by bringing the new officers' energy back to their grottos to kick things into gear.

But wait, there's more...

Joel Despain, Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Park Cave Specialist, arrived in time to tell everyone about the Speleo-Ed Seminar to be held in the spring. He and his assistant Shane Fryer have contemplated such a weekend for a year.

Speleo-Ed Seminar in Spring

Possible seminar topics include: cave inventory protocols, biological monitoring, basic dye tracing, a survey class, and sediment monitoring in Lilburn. This will not be a caving weekend, but a hands-on educational seminar designed to help cavers contribute to ongoing cave projects in SeKi.

The council discussed possible dates from January through May. The consensus was to avoid three-day weekends. March was preferred by most.

Joel noted that the Lions Club Roping Arena in Three Rivers, at the site of an old airstrip, might be available for the seminar at low or no cost. The site has ample campsites, nearby motels and restaurants, and some buildings for indoor presentations. It may be possible to serve a WCC fundraising dinner on site.

It was suggested that, since the Lions Club requires its members to bring guest speakers, we might be able to exchange presentations on caves for the use of their facility.

More on Yahoo Discussion Group

Ernie Coffman expressed concern that Yahoo might send subscribers spam. Although the service is ad-supported, Yahoo does not send unsolicited emails.

Matt asked whether he should automatically migrate the current Altadena list subscribers to the Yahoo group.

Marianne Russo suggested that the new membership form should ask for email addresses, since most people now have email.

The Last Word

Peri Frantz, stating, "I want the last word," declared that this election was the first in recent memory where candidates for regional office did not have to be cajoled into running. [Be careful what you wish for, Peri. Today the Western Region, tomorrow the World...bwahaha!]

On motion of Bart Rowlett, the meeting was adjourned at 10:29 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by Dan Snyder, Secretary-Treasurer