



2012 Congress of Grottos Agenda

Lewisburg, West Virginia

June 27, 2012

1. Call to Order
2. Welcome
3. Sign-in / Placards
4. COG Chair Report
5. Old Business
 - a. NSS President Report
6. New Business:

Motion: The Southeastern Regional Association (SERA) of the NSS moves:

All NSS publications that are scanned and made available online shall only be for NSS members and made available for printing.

Motion: The Baltimore Grotto moves:

Newsletters shall be stored on an archival storage system.

Background:

Old newsletters are mimeographed and are becoming unreadable. Others may be deteriorating. If those are preserved, they could be put on the NSS website in the future for research and reader enjoyment. Cave locations would need to be redacted before posting.

Motion: The Battlefield Area Troglodyte Society (BATS) Grotto moves:

The NSS shall institute a grotto development program as described below.

Goal: To strengthen individual grottos, the NSS grotto system, and the positive effect that grottos have on the world of caves and caving.

Purpose: To provide a structure that encourages grottos to strive to improve their effectiveness and value to cavers, caves, the caving community, and the public, and for the NSS and its members to be able to recognize outstanding grottos.

Background: Chief complaints from new visitors to grottos, whether existing or potential NSS members, concern the poor reception they received upon visiting a grotto, the lack of training and programs offered, the difficulty in being invited on caving trips, and encountering a cliquish culture within a grotto, thus indicating a lack of openness to newcomers. Additionally, regions have had a difficult time persuading grottos to host regional meetings and participate in projects and in finding individuals to volunteer for various jobs.

This proposed Grotto Development Program is an effort to provide grottos with guidance in ways they might change their culture and practices to help the grotto grow and thrive, contribute to the overall caving community, and promote the future of caving and the NSS.

Section 1: How the program will function

Organizational targets will be provided for grottos and will be available on the Internal Organizations (IO) Web pages.

Each year, when completing their grotto IO report, grottos may complete a checklist to report on the organizational targets met during the previous year.

A valuation system will be established to rate the checklist responses, perhaps with a point value given to each checklist item and consideration given to various checklist/target categories.

Each participating grotto will receive an automated ranking based on the values associated with their responses. The ranking will be represented in the form of a caving-related rating icon (such as bats, stalactites, watts, a light beam, etc.) awarded for each level the grotto achieves based on the checklist (similar to the commonly recognized star ratings used to honor high-performing restaurants and hotels).

Data entered by grottos and the automatic ranking given to the grotto will be dynamically linked to the grotto listing on the NSS Web page http://www.nssio.org/Find_Grotto.cfm.^{*} The ranking icons awarded to the grotto will automatically appear next to the grotto name.

Visitors to the NSS Web site will be able to click on the icons next to the grotto listing to view the grotto's completed checklist and thus learn about a grotto's activities and services.

Grotto members and visitors will be able to provide feedback to the grotto and the IO committee through a link on each grotto's data page. ("How are we doing?")

The NSS will recognize high-ranking grottos and grottos that achieved significant improvement annually at the NSS Convention, in the NSS News, in the Members Manual, and through various modes of electronic media (including the NSS Web site, NSS user forums, and the NSS Facebook page).

The IO Committee will be responsible for establishing, managing, and promoting the program.

*Confirm URL when setting up the program. The NSS Web site will be changing.

Section 2: Grotto Organizational Targets

To promote engagement with and among grotto members and to serve the greater goal of strengthening individual grottos, the NSS grotto system, and the positive effect that grottos have on the world of caves and caving, grottos will strive to meet the organizational targets listed in the categories below.

Provide a Welcoming Atmosphere:

A member or committee of the grotto is responsible for welcoming visitors to grotto meetings and ensuring that they meet grotto members, are invited on caving trips, are invited to attend training sessions, and are invited to join the grotto

Grotto provides visitors, prospective members, and new members with a welcome package containing information on caves, caving, the NSS, and the grotto.

Every e-mail, letter, and phone inquiry made to the grotto or to an officer of the grotto receives a response within one week.

Grotto organizes regular caving trips designed specifically for new cavers who attend meetings. New cavers have an opportunity to attend a grotto caving trip within their first two grotto meetings and are then invited on all trips considered appropriate for new cavers until they are no longer considered a "newbie."

Promote Safety and Training:

Grotto conducts regular training and safety sessions for both new and existing grotto members.

At least one grotto member attends National Cave Rescue Commission (NCRC) training annually.

Grotto conducts a formal new-member orientation program to discuss caving safety, clothing and equipment, landowner relations, cave conservation, and other elements of responsible caving.

Strengthen Ties with the NSS and the Greater Caver Community:

Grotto increases its membership each year.

Grotto increases its percentage of NSS members each year.

Grotto achieves 100 percent NSS membership each year.

Grotto participates each year in region meetings and events.

Grotto submits its annual IO report before the deadline each year.

Grotto is represented at the annual Congress of Grottos meeting.

At least one grotto member holds an official position in the NSS, is a member of an NSS committee, or was a candidate for an officer or director seat on the most recent NSS Board of Governors elections.

At least one grotto member holds an official position in the region or is a member of a region committee.

At least one grotto member attends the annual NSS Convention each year.

At least one grotto member submits an entry to an NSS Salon each year.

Grotto files reports to American Caving Accidents for any cave-related incidents or accidents occurring during the calendar year.

Grotto conducts joint projects or programs with grottos outside of NSS region activities.

Grotto Services:

Grotto holds general meetings for members on a regular schedule.

Grotto offers a formal program (such as a speaker, slide show, video, demonstration, etc.) at every regular meeting of the general membership.

Grotto offers regular grotto caving trips as permitted by weather and proximity to caves.

Grotto issues a newsletter on a regular schedule. Copies are submitted to the NSS Library.

Grotto uses a listserv or other electronic forum to communicate with members.

Grotto maintains a Web site that includes current contact, trip, and event information as well as a link to the NSS Web site. Web site is kept up to date.

Grotto provides an area on the grotto Web site or a grotto Flickr, Picasa, or other photo sharing site for members to share photos and videos of caving trips and events.

Grotto maintains a grotto library for use by members.

Grotto maintains an inventory of basic caving equipment for use by members, new members, and potential new members.

Through ownership, partnership, or other arrangement, grotto provides members access to caver field houses or field stations.

Grotto Activities:

Grotto participates in at least one cave conservation project or trip each year.

Grotto offers social events for grotto members outside of its regular meetings and caving trips.

Grotto conducts or participates in a long-term survey, science, restoration, or ridge-walking project.

Grotto conducts or participates in a long term conservation program

Grotto conducts or participates in a program to enhance landowner relations.

Grotto hosts an NSS Board of Governors meeting and/or assists in hosting an NSS Convention at least once out of every five years.

Grotto members assist with organizing or managing NSS Convention activities at least once out of every five years. This may include grotto responsibility for a key event or

publication or grotto support and assistance with a specific element of the event, such as registration, security, events, field trips, sessions, etc.

Grotto hosts or co-hosts a region meeting at least once out of every five years.

Grotto participates in NSS region projects.

Outreach:

Grotto conducts activities to reach out to nonaffiliated cavers. This may include placing information at a kiosk at a cave entrance or greeting visitors to a popular "spelunker" cave and distributing information.

Grotto participates in a community, school, or other project or public event to educate others about caves and their environments.

Grotto works with youth groups that cave, or intend to cave, to teach responsible caving.

Grotto contacts or actively maintains relationships with local cave-for-pay operations to encourage responsible caving, NSS membership, NCRC training, and grotto membership.

Grotto initiates or submits articles that appear in print or online media on a cave or caving topic, or initiates or participates in a cave-related program for broadcast media.

Grotto or one of its members has a contribution published in the NSS News.

Grotto creates, or assists in creating, instructional, cave conservation, or other cave-related media (including videos, slide shows, or papers) for the grotto Web site, the NSS Web site, or the NSS AV Library, and/or for use in public outreach.

Grotto establishes and enhances relationships with state or federal agencies whose responsibilities include or have an effect on caves.

Grotto establishes and enhances relationships with private landowners.

Grotto reaches out to local college students to teach responsible caving and encourage grotto membership or to involve college outing or caving club in grotto and/or region activities.

Section 3: Checklist of Grotto Organizational Targets

To promote engagement with and among grotto members and to serve the greater goal of strengthening individual grottos, the NSS grotto system, and the positive effect that grottos have on the world of caves and caving, <insert grotto name here> has met the following organizational targets within the <yyyy> calendar year.

Provide a Welcoming Atmosphere:

- ☐ A member or committee of the grotto was responsible for welcoming visitors to grotto meetings and ensuring that they visitors are introduced to grotto members, are invited on caving trips, are invited to join the grotto, and are invited to attend training sessions.

- ☐ Grotto provided visitors, prospective members, and new members with a welcome package containing information on caves, caving, the NSS, and the grotto.
- ☐ Every e-mail, letter, and phone inquiry made to the grotto or to an officer of grotto officer received a response within one week.
- ☐ Grotto organized regular caving trips designed specifically for new cavers. Grotto provided opportunity for every new caver to attend a grotto caving trip within their first two grotto meetings. New cavers were invited on all trips considered appropriate for their abilities and experience.

Promote Safety and Training:

- ☐ Grotto conducted regular training and safety sessions for both new and existing grotto members.

Type of training: _____

Frequency (weekly, monthly, quarterly, annually, as needed): _____

Number of sessions held in calendar year <yyyy>: _____

- ☐ At least one grotto member attended National Cave Rescue Commission (NCRC) training.

Course/s attended: _____

Number of NCRC-trained grotto members: _____

- ☐ Grotto conducted a formal new-member orientation program to discuss caving safety, clothing and equipment, landowner relations, cave conservation, and other elements of responsible caving.

Frequency (weekly, monthly, quarterly, annually): _____

Number of sessions held in calendar year <yyyy>: _____

Average number of attendees: _____

Strengthen Ties with the NSS and Greater Caver Community:

- ☐ The number of grotto members increased during calendar year <yyyy>.

Membership total last year: _____ Membership total this year: _____

- ☐ The percentage of NSS members in the grotto increased last year

% NSS members last year: _____ % NSS members this year: _____ OR

- ☐ Grotto achieved 100% NSS membership. Yay!
- ☐ Grotto participated in region meetings and events.
- ☐ Grotto submitted its annual IO report by the deadline. Yay!
- ☐ Grotto was represented at the most recent Congress of Grottos meeting.

- ☐ At least one grotto member holds an official position in the NSS, is a member of an NSS committee, or was a candidate for an officer or director seat on the most recent NSS Board of Governors elections.

Positions or committees: _____

- ☐ At least one grotto member holds an official position in the region or is a member of a region committee.

Positions or committees: _____

- ☐ At least one grotto member attended the most recent NSS Convention
☐ At least one grotto member submitted an entry to an NSS Salon last year

Salons: _____

- ☐ If there was an accident while a grotto member was caving, a report was submitted to the editor of *American Caving Accidents*
☐ Grotto conducted joint projects or programs with other grottos outside of NSS region activities.

Briefly describe: _____

Grotto Services:

- ☐ Grotto held general membership meetings on a regular schedule.

Frequency: _____

Number of meetings held in calendar year <yyyy>: _____

- ☐ Grotto offered a formal program (such as a speaker, slide show, video, demonstration, etc.) at every regular meeting of the general membership.
☐ Grotto offered a formal program (such as a speaker, slide show, video, demonstration, etc.) at 50 percent or more of the regular meetings of the general membership.
☐ Grotto offered regular grotto caving trips as permitted by weather and proximity to caves.

Frequency: _____

Number of grotto cave trips offered in calendar year <yyyy>: _____

- ☐ Grotto issued a newsletter on a regular schedule.

Newsletter name: _____

Frequency: _____

Number of issues published in calendar Year <yyyy>: _____

- ☐ Copies of the grotto newsletter were submitted to the NSS library.
☐ Grotto used a listserv or other electronic forum to communicate with members.

- ☐ Grotto maintained a Web site that includes current contact, trip, and event information
- ☐ Grotto provided an area on the grotto Web site or a grotto Flickr, Picasa, or other photo sharing site for members to share photos and videos of caving trips and events.
- ☐ Grotto maintained a grotto library for use by members.
- ☐ Grotto maintained an inventory of basic caving equipment for use by members, new members, and potential members.
- ☐ Through ownership, partnership, or other arrangement, grotto provided members access to a caver field house or field station.

Grotto Activities:

- ☐ Grotto participated in at least one cave conservation project/trip.

Location: _____

Purpose of project/trip (cave cleanup, restoration, bat count, etc.): _____

- ☐ Grotto offered social events for grotto members outside of its regular meetings and caving trips.
- ☐ Grotto conducted or participated in a long-term survey, science, restoration, or ridgewalking project.

Name of project: _____

Frequency of grotto participation: _____

- ☐ Grotto conducts or participates in a long-term conservation program.

Name of program: _____

Briefly describe: _____

- ☐ Grotto conducted or participated in a program to enhance landowner relations.

Briefly describe: _____

- ☐ In the past five years, grotto hosted an NSS Board of Governors meeting and/or assisted in hosting an NSS Convention.

Event: _____

- ☐ In the past five years, grotto members assisted with organizing or managing NSS Convention activities. This may have included grotto responsibility for a key event or publication or grotto support and assistance with a specific element of the event, such as registration, security, events, field trips, sessions, etc.

Convention year: _____

Briefly describe Convention involvement: _____

- ☐ In the past five years, grotto hosted or co-hosted a region meeting.

Event year: _____

Meeting: _____

- ☐ Grotto participated in an NSS region project.

Name of project: _____

Outreach:

- ☐ Grotto conducted an activity to reach out to nonaffiliated cavers. This may have included placing information at a kiosk at a cave entrance or greeting visitors to a popular "spelunker" cave and distributing information.

Briefly describe: _____

- ☐ Grotto participated in a community, school, or other project or public event to educate others about caves and their environments.

Name of event: _____

Location: _____

Briefly describe participation: _____

- ☐ Grotto worked with a youth group that caves or intends to cave to teach responsible caving.

Name of group: _____

Briefly describe activity: _____

Number of caving trips with youth groups last year: _____

- ☐ Grotto contacted or actively maintained relationships with local cave-for-pay operations to encourage responsible caving, NSS membership, NCRC training, and grotto membership.

Name of organization: _____

- ☐ Grotto initiated or submitted articles that appeared in print or online media on a cave or caving topic, or initiated or participated in a cave-related program for broadcast media.

Title of story: _____

Author: _____

Publication date: _____

Media outlet: _____

Link to story: _____

- ☐ Article by grotto or one of its members was published in the *NSS News*.

Title of story: _____

Issue: _____

- ☐ Grotto created, or assisted in creating, instructional, cave conservation, or other cave-related media (including videos, slide shows, or documents) for the grotto Web site, the NSS Web site, or the NSS AV Library, and/or for use in public outreach.

Title/topic: _____

Type of media or publication: _____

Link: _____

- ☐ Grotto established or enhanced relationships with state or federal agencies whose responsibilities include or have an effect on caves.

Name of agency: _____

Briefly describe activities: _____

- ☐ Grotto established or enhanced relationships with private landowners and public land managers.

Briefly describe activities: _____

Significant accomplishments: _____

- ☐ Grotto reached out to local college students to teach responsible caving and encourage grotto membership, or to involve the college outing or caving club in grotto and/or region activities.

College/University Name: _____

Briefly describe activities: _____

7. Presentation/Discussion:
Dean Wiseman, NSS PR Chair has requested time to talk with the Congress.
8. Discussions from the floor
9. Elections:
10. Other Business:
11. Adjournment:

Minutes of the Congress of Grottos of the National Speleological Society 2011 Convention

Call to Order: by Carol S. Jackson, Chair 2011 Congress of Grottos

Report from the Past Chair, NSS Board of Governors: Gordon Berkhimer (See Attached)

Issues:

Mermec Valley Grotto moves: (Second by Glazier Grotto)

Whereas, the Congress of Grottos has little participation at its meetings in the last decade or more and that lack of participation is by choice;

Whereas, the Congress of Grottos seldom has business placed before it in the form of a motion, especially ones that have been circulated among the grottos before the Congress meets;

Whereas, when such motions are passed by the Congress of Grottos they are generally not given due consideration by the Board of Governors¹;

Whereas, the Congress of Grottos is merely an advisory body;

Whereas, the Cave Diving Section decides the outcome of almost all votes; in 2010 it had 93 votes.

Whereas, convention organizers must provide sufficient space to accommodate significant participation despite the lack of such for many years;

Whereas the NSS membership is much more mobile than when the Congress was established and has many more ways to communicate among themselves and with the BOG not least of which is the Internet;

Whereas, the members of the NSS now have the power to modify both the Bylaws² of the NSS and to change the Acts³ of the NSS through binding referenda;

Whereas, the Congress of Grottos has fulfilled its purpose and is no longer serving a useful function;

It is resolved that the Congress of Grottos is dissolved.

Notes:

1. Only 40 internal organizations participated and there were no motions made prior to the meeting (per Alicia Lewis, 2010 Chair, Congress of Grottos). There were over 250 eligible internal organizations (<http://www.caves.org/committees/1-a/All-101.shtml>) and they don't have to present to bring business before the Congress or to vote (<http://caves.org/nss-business/bog/Append-Q.pdf>, VIII A, IV D)
2. <http://www.caves.org/nss-business/congress.shtml> Item 2 and 3, followed by <http://www.caves.org/nss-business/minutes/Nov01Shog.html> Item 18 a through c. Steve Omeroid (AVP at the time) thought that no motion actually had to appear on the BOG agenda as a result of the Congress of Grottos resolution. He argued that he and a couple of other officers had discussed it, rejected it and that met the consideration criteria. Ted Kayes (Secretary-Treasurer at the time and current Director) told Philip Moss (Director at the time) that it was unfortunate that Philip had improved the motion enough that it might pass. For more information on the resistance from the BOG to this resolution from the COG, contact Ray Keeler with Central Arizona Grotto.
3. <http://caves.org/nss-business/bog/Append-Q.pdf> VIII A - The BOG does not submit resolutions to the Congress for consideration.
4. <http://www.caves.org/nss-business/bog/Bylaws.pdf> Bylaw XII A. (3)
5. <http://www.caves.org/nss-business/bog/Bylaws.pdf> Bylaw IV. M.

Motion Failed by show of placards

- **The Permian Basin moves:** (Second by Dogwood City Grotto)
that the National Speleological Society convert to an electronic archiving system and allow any grotto that publishes electronically to submit these publications to the NSS in their electronic form.
Discussion: Regarding copies of newsletters to the NSS:
Would the NSS reconsider electronic archiving of newsletters as an alternative to sending hard copies?
Although this is a redundant proposal, electronic archiving is so much more sophisticated and safe than it had been previously, so below the topic should be revisited. Many grotto newsletters are electronic publications only. Unless archived materials have been printed with high quality ink on high quality rag content paper, "archived" publications are not long-lived. Electronic archive services are becoming more economical and are redundant.

All Permian Basin Speleological Society publications-"Sprunk" then "Hole News"-are available on line as Adobe Portable Document Files (.pdfs). If preferred, we would be happy to provide the NSS library with a compact disc of our newsletters.

(**Motion Passed** by show of placards, none opposed, no abstentions)

- **South Carolina Grotto moves:** (Second by Nittany Grotto)

The NSS should provide the option of paper or electronic copies of the NSS News to its members.

Passage of this motion will reduce the printing and postage costs associated with the publication, and prevent a storage issue for the members who tend to collect issues.

Motion Passed by show of placards, none opposed, no abstentions.

Discussions from the Floor:

- **San Francisco Bay Chapter moves:** (Second by VAR)

The NSS will raise significant donations and pledges before incurring major debt for a new headquarters.

Motion Failed by obvious show of placards; 12 for, some abstentions.

General Discussion from the Floor initiated by Alicea of Meramec valley Grotto re encouraging attendance at COG

Points raised include:

How to encourage representative attendance at COG.

Reason for attending personal contact.

Hear other people's points of view. Issue disenfranchisement some groups feel.

Posting of motions at least one month ahead of time for discussion at grotto meetings.

Encourage grotto members to join NSS to increase vote count.

Authorization to represent organization; should there be a limit.

IRS deduction for attendance as delegate. NOTE: individual should be on record as having been appointed as delegate in case of IRS audit.

Encourage young people participation.

Open forum encourage younger participants to attend.

Article in NSS news promoting reasons for attending.

Delegates should be authorized by home organization.

Conflict with other sessions.

VAR moves: (Second by RASS)

That the Congress give vote of appreciation to Gordon Berkhimer for activity regarding cave access relating to WNS and CBD in general and during convention.

Motion Passed by show of placards without discussion; none opposed, DCG abstains.

- **Stonewall Grotto moves:** (Second by Greater Allentown Grotto)
That the Congress give vote of appreciation to Bert Ashbrook for representation in CED WNS law suit.

Motion Passed by show of placards, none opposed, no abstentions.

Election of 2012 Officers

Chairperson: Bill Stringfellow, Dogwood City Grotto; motion to accept by acclamation SFB, Second Meramec,
Motion Passed

Vice Chair: Blake Jordan volunteered. Sandia Grotto; Motion to accept by acclamation Permian Basin, Second Meramec.
Motion Passed

Meeting Adjourned until next regular meeting by Chairperson, Carol S. Jackson.

Future COG issues to be directed to:

Bill Stringfellow, 204 Lake Court, Woodstock, GA 30188-3212, 678-576-0509, COG@ropeguv.us

Blake N. Jordan, 6109 Concordia Rd NE, Albuquerque, NM 87111, 505-362-0101, blandavoid@comcast.net

Report to Board of Governors 2011

COG 2011 meeting, convened on Tuesday, 19 July at 0905 by Carol Jackson, Chairperson, presiding.
Vice-Chair Clifton Colwell, absent.
Recording Secretary William N. Jackson, appointed.

Report from President of the NSS, Gordon Birkheimer; attached.

Motion by Meramec Valley grotto re dissolution of COG.
Second by Glacier Grotto.
Discussion by Alicia from Meramec Grotto.
Failed by show of placards.

Permian Basin Speleological Society motion for electronic archiving.
Second by Dogwood City Grotto.
Discussion by PB rep.
Passed by show of placards, none opposed, no abstentions.

South Carolina Interstate Grotto (SCIG) moves: The NSS should provide the option of paper or electronic copies of the NSS News to its members.
Second by Nittany Grotto.
Discussion by Bill Jackson, SCIG
Passed by show of placards, none opposed, no abstentions.

San Francisco Bay Chapter moves: The NSS will raise significant donations and pledges before incurring major debt for a new headquarters.
Second by VAR
Failed by obvious show of placards; 12 for, some abstentions.

GENERAL DISCUSSION FROM THE FLOOR initiated by Alicea of Meramec re encouraging attendance at COG
How to encourage representative attendance at COG.
Reason for attending personal contact.
Hear other people's points of view. Issue disenfranchisement some groups feel.
Posting of motions at least one month ahead of time for discussion at grotto meetings.
Encourage grotto members to join NSS to increase vote count.
Authorization to represent organization; should there be a limit.
IRS deduction for attendance as delegate. NOTE; individual should be on record as having been appointed as delegate in case of IRS audit.
Encourage young people participation.
Open forum encourage younger participants to attend.
Article in NSS news promoting reasons for attending.
Delegates should be authorized by home organization.
Conflict with other sessions.

VAR moves vote of appreciation to Gordon Birkheimer for activity regarding cave access relating to WNS and CBD in general and during convention.
Second by RASS.
Passed by show of placards without discussion; none opposed, DCG abstains.

Stonewall Grotto moves appreciation to Bert Ashbrook for representation in CBD WNS law suit.
Second Greater Allentown Grotto.
Passed by show of placards, none opposed, no abstentions.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Chairperson: Bill Stringfellow, Dogwood City Grotto; motion to accept by acclimation SFB, Second Meramec, PASSED.

Vice Chair; Blake Jordan volunteered, Sandia Grotto; Motion to accept by acclimation Permian Basin, Second Meramec. PASSED.

Adjourned until next regular meeting by Chairperson, Carol S. Jackson.

Future COG issues to be directed to:

Bill Stringfellow, 204 Lake Court, Woodstock, GA 30188-3212, 678-576-0509,

Blake N. Jordan, 6109 Concordia Rd NE, Albuquerque, NM 87111, 505-362-0101,

APPENDIX Q RULES OF PROCEDURE FOR THE CONGRESS OF GROTTOS

(Refer to Section 48)

I. The name of this organization shall be the Congress of Grottos of the National Speleological Society.

II. The Congress shall meet each year during the annual convention of the NSS.

III. Representation at the Congress of Grottos (hereafter referred to as COG) shall be determined in the following manner:

- A. Each Grotto (Chapter), Section, Regional Association, and Survey shall be entitled to representation according to the following schedule: two votes for 5-15 NSS members, three votes for 16-25 NSS members, four votes for 26-35 NSS members, and so on.
- B. In determining the number of votes to which an Internal Organization (IO) is entitled, no NSS member may be counted as a member of more than one IO.
- C. The NSS membership database shall be used to determine representation.

D. Each IO is entitled to a minimum of two votes.

E. Any collection of eight or more NSS members who are not members of a Grotto may receive representation according to the same schedule as for Grottos with the provision that the NSS member has designated no Primary Affiliation in the NSS database.

IV. A. The COG shall be composed of delegates who are members in good standing of the NSS.
B. Each IO and grouping of NSS members may appoint any number of delegates up to a maximum of the number of votes to which it is entitled.

C. IO's may, in order to ensure their representation at COG, appoint as delegates proxies who are not members of the IO, provided written authorization is presented.

D. In the event that delegate and proxy methods are not possible, votes may be submitted in writing to the Chairman of the COG. If, during the course of discussion on the floor, a resolution is amended so as to change its original intent, the written vote will not be cast.

E. Delegations need not cast their votes as a unit but may split the vote so as to indicate the desires of the membership. Grottos may instruct their delegates how to vote or may allow them discretionary voting power.

F. Distinctive placards will be provided, bearing the name of the IO and the number of votes to which it is entitled.

G. Voting shall be done initially by the show of placards. The Chairman may, at his discretion or upon the request of any delegate, call for a roll call vote.

V. Any NSS member may attend the COG to express his views and shall be entitled to speak if recognized by the Chairman.

VI. The Board of Governors of the NSS are requested to attend COG, as observers, to be advised of the views of the membership. Delegates may address questions to the Officers regarding their department if it is germane to the discussion.

VII. The COG shall elect a Chairman of the COG to preside at meetings of the COG during his term of office, and also a Vice-Chairman.

A. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman shall be nominated and elected by the assembled Congress at its meeting during the annual convention.

B. These officers shall serve from the close of one annual convention to the close of the succeeding annual convention.

C. A Chairman may not serve more than four terms in succession.

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D. No one may be elected Chairman who has not attended at least one COG prior to his election.
E. A Chairman or Vice-Chairman who becomes an Officer or Director of the Society during his term shall complete his term with the COG but may not be re-elected.

F. If the Chairman of the COG vacates his office during the term, the office shall be assumed by the Vice-Chairman.

VIII. The agenda of the Congress shall consist of resolutions submitted for its consideration.

A. Resolutions may be submitted by any IO or grouping of eight or more NSS members. The COG encourages the BOG and the Executive Committee to refer significant issues to the COG for consideration.

B. An Issues Committee shall be appointed by the Chairman of the COG and by the Chairman of the IO Committee of the Society to determine the issues confronting the Society and to propose resolutions intended to reveal the views of the membership. The Issues Committee shall provide the IO's, in good time, with information and discussions concerning these issues.

C. The Issues Committee shall, in correspondence with the proposer of a resolution, establish clarity of the wording of a resolution, consistency of a resolution with the Constitution, Bylaws, and Acts of the BOG of the Society, and shall resolve conflicts or overlaps between resolutions submitted.

D. The agenda shall be submitted to all IO's in sufficient time to allow the resolutions to be discussed before the annual convention.

E. If time permits, resolutions will be allowed from the floor of the Congress after all other business has been taken care of.

F. The purpose of the COG being advisory and not legislative, resolutions need not be stated in advisory form but may be phrased in a multiple answer format to better express the views of the membership.

IX. No Officer, Director, or Chairman of a permanent committee of the NSS may serve as a delegate unless no other individual is available.

X. These rules may be amended by a majority vote of the Congress provided that such motions to amend appear on the agenda.

XI. *Robert's Rules of Order, Revised* shall govern all procedures not covered by the above rules.

(Adopted by the Congress of Grottos in 1969 with amendments in 1972, 1973, 1976, 1980, 1993, 2002, and 2003.)

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