

CONSTITUTION  
and  
BY LAWS  
of the  
YORK GROTTA  
of the  
NATIONAL SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Revised: 29 October 2013

# CONSTITUTION OF THE YORK GROTTO

an Internal Organization of the

## NATIONAL SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

- I. The name of this organization shall be the York Grotto of the National Speleological Society.
- II. The purpose of this grotto shall be the same as those of the National Speleological Society, with the additional purpose of organizing NSS members in the York, Pennsylvania area to better promote the objectives of the National Speleological Society.
- III.
  - (1) Regular membership is limited to members of the National Speleological Society.
  - (2) Any member of the NSS shall be eligible for regular membership in this grotto. (Revised 10/28/80)
  - (3) Non-NSS members in York and the surrounding areas may be granted an associate membership. (Revised 10/28/80)
- IV.
  - (1) The Grotto shall be governed by a seven member executive committee composed of the following: (revised and amended 10/12/82)
    - A. Chairman
    - B. Vice-Chairman
    - C. Recording Secretary
    - D. Secretary/Treasurer
    - E. Editor
    - F. Two additional Members-at-Large

(See Bylaws III for duties and election procedure.) (Revised 10/28/80)
  - (2) The Executive Committee shall have complete power to manage the business of the Grotto, to formulate Bylaws, to raise funds in any manner not inconsistent with the policies of the National Speleological Society, and to perform all other necessary functions.
  - (3) Decisions or actions of the Executive Committee may be over-ruled by a two-thirds majority vote of all Grotto members.

- V. (1) Executive Committee and General Meetings shall be held at such time and place as are designated by the committee.  
  
(2) A petition signed by two-thirds of the Grotto membership shall be mandatory upon the Executive Committee to call a special meeting for the purpose stated in the petition.
- VI. The Constitution and Bylaws of the National Speleological Society shall be binding on this Grotto, and any action inconsistent therewith shall be null and void.
- VII. Amendments to this Constitution shall be made by two-thirds favorable vote of those present at any meeting of the Grotto called by the Executive Committee especially for that purpose, or by written consent of one-half of the total Grotto membership.
- VIII. The York Grotto is a non profit organization. No part of the net earnings of the organization shall inure to the benefit of or be distributable to its members, trustees, officers, or other private persons, except that the organization shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distribution in furtherance of the purposes set forth in the article giving definition of purpose herein. No substantial part of the activities of the organization shall be the carrying on of propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, and the organization shall not participate in, intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements) any political campaign on behalf of any candidate or public office. Notwithstanding any other provision of these articles, the organization shall not carry on any other activities not permitted to be carried on by (a) a corporation exempt from federal income tax under 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 (or the corresponding provision of any future U.S. Internal Revenue law) or (b) a corporation, contributions to which are deductible under section 170(c)(2) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1951 & C. (passed 10/28/80)
- IX. In the event of dissolution, the assets of the organization shall be turned over to the National Speleological Society. However, if the named recipient is not then in existence or no longer a qualified distributee, or unwilling or unable to accept the distribution, the assets of this organization shall be distributed to a fund, foundation, or corporation organized and operated exclusively for the purposes specified in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 (or the corresponding provision of any future U.S. Internal Revenue Code). (Passed 10/28/80)
- X. Any property shall revert back to the NSS in the event of dissolution. (Passed 10/28/80)

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Except where noted, this Constitution of the York Grotto of the National Speleological Society was adopted by the membership on August 30, 1960.

January 13, 1981

# **BY-LAWS OF THE YORK GROTTO** **of the** **NATIONAL SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY**

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## I. MEMBERSHIP

A. All applications for membership shall be in writing, and be accompanied by pro-rated dues for the remainder of the calendar year. (revised 1/16/79)

B. Members are classified as follows:

Regular	Institutional
Honorary	Dependent
Associate	Associate Dependand
Life	

Regular members are individual NSS members who have all privileges of the Grotto, including the right to vote, hold office, serve as committee chairmen, receive copies of the currently issued regular publications, and have access to all Grotto records and data.

Honorary members are regular Grotto members to whom Honorary Membership is awarded by the Executive Committee for outstanding contributions to the York Grotto or to the field of Speleology. Honorary members shall be exempt from dues thereafter, and will retain all privileges of regular membership. (Revised 1/16/79)

Associate members are individuals who have all the privileges of the Grotto except the right to hold office or serve as committee chairmen. Such members may receive copies of the currently issued regular publications and have the right to vote, subject to approval of the Executive Committee.

Institutional members are incorporated organizations and unincorporated entities, other than individuals, whose activities or interests are related to Speleology.

Dependent members are individuals in the immediate family of members in good standing. No Dependent member is entitled to receive copies of currently issued regular publications pursuant to membership privileges. However, a Dependent may vote, and have access to all Grotto records and data. (Revised 1/13/81)

Dependent memberships are divided into two classes:

- a) Regular Dependents have privileges as specified under 0 above.
- b) Associate Dependents are those Dependent members under the age of 14. They may not vote or hold office and are responsible to

their parent or guardian who is a member. Associate Dependent members automatically become Regular Dependent members upon reaching the age of 14. (Passed 6/29/71)

Life memberships shall be available at a rate 20 times the annual dues, to be paid in one lump sum. (Passed 9/19/80)

C. A serial number shall be assigned to each member at the time of admission to the Grotto. A reinstated former member will have the original number reissued upon payment of pro-rated dues for the current year. (Passed 1/16/79)

D. Organizations having similar interests, purposes, or objectives may become affiliated with the Grotto on conditions approved by the Executive Committee.

## II. DUES - ASSESSMENTS - GIFTS

A. The membership dues of the Grotto shall be as follows:

Annual dues shall be set by the Executive Committee.

No change in dues may be made by the Executive Committee at the same meeting that such a change is proposed. The meeting that passes or approves such a change must be held at least thirty days after the meeting at which such change was proposed.

B. No special assessments may be made against members of the Grotto. Voluntary contributions may be solicited by the Executive Committee for specific purposes. A charge may be made for the Grotto's special publications. Fees may be collected for the use of the Grotto's property when approved by the Executive Committee.

C. Gifts and bequests may be made to the Grotto in any amount and for any purpose compatible with the purposes of the Grotto.

D. A charge may be made to non-members for:

Attendance at Grotto sponsored activities and meetings,

Use of Grotto equipment and Library,

Copies of publications, maps, and other data,

Inclusion of non-members on the Grotto mailing list.

## III. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

A. The Executive Committee shall be composed of the following:

Chairman

Vice-Chairman

Newsletter Editor

Secretary-Treasurer  
Recording Secretary

2 Members-at-Large

The Executive Committee shall be composed of NSS members elected by the Grotto membership at the annual election meeting except for the Editor who shall be appointed by this committee. Only the Editor may serve in more than one position simultaneously, and if this occurs, the Executive Committee shall appoint a third Member-at Large. Any other vacancies shall be filled in this manner until the next regular election is held. (revised 9/19/80)

B. The duties of the officers shall be as follows:

**CHAIRMAN:** Preside at Grotto meetings and Executive Committee meetings. Oversee and supervise all operations of the Grotto, and delegate responsibility. Welcome new members and visitors.

**VICE-CHAIRMAN:** Assist the Chairman and assume responsibilities during the Chairman's absence. Arrange for programs at Grotto meetings.

**SECRETARY-TREASURER:** Maintain membership files and send renewals and other mailings, except for the York Grotto Newsletter and PoopSheet. Maintain financial records and file the annual Internal Organization report to the NSS each January. (revised 3/27/2012)

**RECORDING SECRETARY:** Record minutes of all meetings.

**NEWSLETTER EDITOR:** Compile, prepare and publish quarterly (or as often as material dictates) newsletters for distribution to Grotto members.

**MEMBER-AT-LARGE:** Each member-at-large will ensure that at least three grotto trips are organized per year. Greet guests who attend Grotto meetings and activities.

(Revised 1/16/79)

C. The officers of the Grotto (Executive Committee) shall be elected by the popular vote of the Grotto by the following procedure:

At the September meeting of each year a nominating committee shall be appointed by the current chairman, who shall be obligated to appoint any member who wishes to serve. The nominating committee shall, through careful research and contact with potential nominees, produce a proposed slate of officers to the general membership at the November meeting. Generally, the nominating committee will propose only one person for each office, unless a real conflict exists, in which case more than one name will be placed on the ballot. Any member, who desires to be considered for office, or anyone wishing to make a nomination, shall contact the committee well in advance of the November meeting. At this

meeting, the general membership in attendance shall vote orally according to the proposed slate to fill each office. If more than one person has been proposed for any office, written ballots shall be used. No ballots will be mailed unless the election meeting is not held. If a proposed candidate is not approved by the membership, the nominating committee shall be responsible for finding a replacement candidate acceptable to the membership.

Generally, the position of Vice-Chairman shall be considered to be a steppingstone, or test for the position of Chairman. (Revised 7/31/79)

D. The term of the officers of the York Grotto shall commence January 1 and terminate December 31 of that year. (Revised 4/15/65)

The Vice-Chairman from the previous year is responsible for providing the programming at the January meeting. (revised 3/27/2012)

E. An officer does not have the right to appoint a substitute for his/her office.

F. A quorum for Executive Committee meetings shall be considered a simple majority of voting members or their personally appointed proxies. A proxy cannot be given to another voting member. (Passed 9/19/80)

G. The Executive Committee shall appoint three positions, which may be held simultaneously with an elected office:

LIBRARIAN: manages and finds appropriate housing for all grotto printed materials and collections including books, slides, videos, DVDs, publications, newsletters, minutes, business records, caving gear and supplies.

POOPSHEET EDITOR: produces a monthly update of all grotto activities, including, but not limited to, caving trips, surveys, the summer picnic, the annual holiday party, MARs, NSS conventions and other news, which will be distributed electronically to the membership, mailed when appropriate, and in print at meetings.

WEBMASTER: manages the grotto's internet presence and makes regular reports to the Executive Committee as requested.

It is the responsibility of the persons appointed to the above three positions to give a sixty day notice upon relinquishing them, and when possible, to aid the grotto in finding a successor, and where necessary, to train the next appointee.

(revised 3/27/2012)

#### IV. MEETINGS

A. Regular meetings of the grotto shall be held monthly except during the months when the following two grotto activities occur: the annual picnic usually held in August; and the annual holiday party normally scheduled for December.

(revised 3/27/2012)

B. Special meetings of the Grotto may be called at such times and places as approved by the Executive Committee. The entire membership shall be sent notices as to the date, place, and purpose of any such meeting at least two weeks in advance.

#### V. 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.

#### VI. PUBLICATIONS

A. The Grotto will issue and distribute regular publications and is empowered to issue and distribute special publications subject to regulations governing the subject matter, publication dates, sales, and distribution, as prescribed by the Executive Committee.

#### VII. EXPULSION OF MEMBERS

(1) Non-Payment of Dues: Membership shall be automatically terminated for non-payment of Grotto dues. A member dropped solely for non-payment of dues will be reinstated automatically upon payment of current Grotto dues.

(2) Infractions: Members may be admonished, suspended from certain privileges, or expelled from Grotto membership by a two thirds majority of the Executive Committee for any of the following reasons:

- a) willful misuse of Grotto property.
- b) disregard of accepted safety or conservation practice or the rights of a cave owner
- c) serious concerns regarding cave conservation, damage to cave formations or cave vandalism
- d) unsafe caving practices
- e) conduct detrimental to the York Grotto and/or the National Speleological Society



f) for other cause, inconsistent with the purpose of the York Grotto and/or the National Speleological Society

Disciplinary action under this provision shall be taken only upon a two-thirds vote of the Executive Committee by a secret ballot. Disciplinary action shall be initiated only upon presentation to the Executive Committee of a written petition for disciplinary action, submitted by at least two members of the Grotto not in the same household.

Upon receiving such a petition, the Executive Committee shall take such actions that are deemed necessary to notify the accused member or members, in writing, of the petition, and of the place, date, and time at which the petition will be considered by the Executive Committee. The accused member or members shall have the right to speak on their own behalf. Such considerations shall take place no sooner than twenty-one days and no later than seventy days after the petition is received by the Executive Committee. (Revised 10/29/13)

#### VIII. AMENDMENTS AND REVISIONS TO THE BY-LAWS

A. These By-Laws may be amended only by:

Unanimous approval of those present at an Executive Committee Meeting at which all of the officers or their personally appointed proxies are present; or:

Presenting the proposed amendments in writing to the Executive Committee at least one meeting prior to their consideration, or by mail to each member of the Executive Committee at least one month prior to their consideration and approval by all of the Executive Committee or their personally appointed proxies present at the next meeting. Under the above procedure, only minor changes of language may be allowed at the time of adoption; or:

By two-thirds vote of all Grotto members at a meeting called for the purpose of amending the By-Laws.

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Unless otherwise noted, the By-Laws of the York Grotto of the National Speleological Society were adopted by the membership on August 30, 1960.

All previous amendments have been incorporated into this revised version of the By-Laws.

10/29/13