

Philadelphia Grotto Bylaws

as amended thru June 2, 2022

Article I Membership

Section 1. Any person will be eligible for membership in the Philadelphia Grotto without regard to age, ancestry, color, disability or handicap, national origin, race, religious creed, gender, sexual orientation, or veteran status.

Section 2. All members of the Philadelphia Grotto will be urged to join the National Speleological Society and will be expected to conduct themselves in accordance with its goals.

Section 3. Each applicant for membership (Member Candidate) shall submit a written application in such form as the Board of Directors may specify, signed by the applicant and endorsed by two (2) sponsors.

A. The application shall contain the applicant's name, residence, phone numbers (home and work), date of birth, name and address of next of kin and areas of interest to pursue in caving.

B. Upon collection of the appropriate dues for one (1) year, a temporary membership card will be issued which must then be endorsed by the applicant's sponsors in accordance with the following Section.

Section 4. The candidate must demonstrate, to no fewer than two (2) experienced Grotto members (Sponsors), during a period of not less than two (2) caving trips, an understanding of proper, safe and responsible caving techniques and practices.

A. An experienced Grotto member shall be defined as any full member, in good standing, possessing the equipment and techniques necessary to accomplish the level of caving that the individual has currently achieved or any member deemed, by the Board of Directors, to meet the

prerequisites of an experienced caver. Any full member in good standing, as of the date of the ratification of these amendments to this By-Laws, shall be considered an experienced caver for the purpose of the definition of an experienced caver as it applies above

- B. The candidate shall have a regular Grotto member sign the temporary membership card upon satisfactory completion of each cave trip, verifying that the candidate acted in a responsible manner on the cave trip as witnessed by the regular member

Section 5. A favorable vote of two-thirds of the Board shall be required for election to full membership status in the Grotto, a quorum being present.

- A. If written notification is received of the Board in objection to the conduct of a candidate, the candidate shall be asked by the Board to explain the circumstances causing the objection and given the opportunity to correct any infraction;
- B. If objection, in writing, to the acceptance of a candidate are received by the Board from three (3) member of the Grotto, action on the application shall be deferred for sixty (60) days;
- C. If objections, in writing, to the acceptance of a candidate are received by the Board from five (5) members of the Grotto, the candidate shall not be accepted for membership.

Section 6. Any Member Candidate with known or verifiable caving experience may, at the discretion of the Board, be awarded full membership status after due discussion of the candidate's application without the need of the review process as described in Article 1, Section 4 of these By-Laws.

Section 7. Members with a history of harassment, as defined in [Article VIII Section 4],. May not be granted membership to the Grotto

Section 8. Any member in arrears for Grotto dues shall not be entitled to vote; any member six or more months in arrears may be dropped from the Grotto rolls by vote of a majority of the Board provided that at least two notices of payment due have been sent.

Section 9. Honorary Lifetime Membership may be awarded to individual members who have made significant contributions to the success of the Philadelphia Grotto through years of dedicated, honorable service. A majority vote of the board of directors is required for approval. Board members will not be eligible to receive honorary lifetime membership while currently serving on the board. Honorary Lifetime members will be considered as dues paid members for the rest of their life, with full membership rights.

Section 10. A Lifetime Membership Dues Option shall be available for ordinary full membership status. Eligibility will require having completed a year of full membership in good standing with dues current. The non-refundable, non-transferable fee amount shall be set and approved by a majority vote of the board of directors. If invoked, Article 1, Section 7 shall be applicable.

ARTICLE II OFFICERS

Section 1. The Officers of the Grotto shall include a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer, and such other officers as the Board of Directors may elect.

Section 2. The specific duties of the Officers shall include but shall not be limited to the following:

A. The Chairperson shall be executive head of the Grotto, call and conduct all meetings, and with the advice and consent of the Board, appoint and remove such committees as are deemed necessary by the Board. As Presiding Officer at meetings he/she shall cast the deciding vote in case of a tie vote at any regular Grotto meeting.

B. The Vice-Chairperson shall assume the duties of the Chairperson in the event of his/her absence or disability. He/she shall also coordinate activities of meetings, programs, regional organizations, conventions, publications, reports to the National Speleological Society and such committees as are needed to conduct the affairs of the Grotto. He/she shall also be custodian of such papers and other property of the Grotto as is not otherwise designated.

- C. The Secretary shall keep minutes of all meetings of the Grotto and Board; maintain membership rolls of the Grotto; maintain correspondence except such as is designated by the Board to other Officers; shall hold all application blanks and issue them on request; notify applicants of their election or rejection; and make a complete report on all or any of the above activities at each regular Grotto meeting. He/she shall be the Parliamentarian (using Robert's Rules or such other authority as the Board may direct) and the keeper of the Articles of Incorporation, By-Laws, and other Corporate documents and records of the Philadelphia Grotto. In case or the inability of the Secretary to carry out his/her duties, the Chairperson shall take over all his/her duties until the Board shall appoint a successor.

- D. The Treasurer shall have care of all funds of the Grotto, to disburse and handle them as the Board directs. He/she shall keep accurate account of all his/her transactions, render a yearly report at the annual meeting and report on an interim basis the status of funds at each regular meeting. All funds collected by other members for the Grotto shall be promptly remitted to the Treasurer. In case of the inability of the Treasurer to carry out his/her duties, the Chairperson shall take over all his/her duties until the Board shall appoint a successor.

Section 3. Officers shall hold office until the next Annual meeting of the Grotto and until their successors are duly qualified and have been elected.

Section 4. Any member of the Board may be removed from office for neglect of his/her duties by a majority vote of the members present and voting at a regular membership meeting or at a special meeting called for the purpose, provided such Officer be given two weeks notice in writing of the proposed action.

The Grotto shall be governed by a Board of Directors, which shall consist of the previous Chairperson and six other members. The Board will include the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer, and three other members. Any vacancy on the Board shall be filled by action of the Board.

ARTICLE IV MEETINGS

Section 1. There shall be an annual meeting in December, for the purpose of hearing annual reports and the election of the Board and the Officers.

Section 2. Regular meetings of the Grotto shall be held monthly.

Section 3. An annual meeting of the Board shall be held in conjunction with the annual meeting of the Grotto or at such other time as the Chairperson may specify; other meetings of the Board shall be as called by the Chairperson. Such meetings shall be called promptly by the Chairperson upon oral or written request of any two members of the Board.

Section 4. The Board of Directors of the Grotto or the chairperson may call a meeting of the Grotto at any time, and shall call a meeting promptly upon written request of ten percent of the membership, or ten members, whichever is less.

Section 5. A quorum of the Grotto shall be ten percent (or ten, whichever is less) of the members in good standing at any meeting.

Section 6. A quorum of the Board shall be four members.

Section 7. Any decision of the Board may be reversed by a majority of votes at a membership meeting, provided notice has been given in writing at the previous meeting of such proposed action.

Section 8. The Standing Committees shall include: Safety; Conservation; Library; Equipment; Memberships; and such others as the Board may deem necessary. Each standing committee shall have a minimum of three members. Each Standing Committee Chairperson shall appoint their own committee members with the approval of the Grotto Vice Chairperson. The Standing Committee Chairpersons will be appointed by the Chairperson of the Grotto and approved by a quorum present at any regular Grotto meeting. He/she may be removed from office upon recommendation of any member by the Chairperson of the Grotto with the approval of the Board.

A. The Safety Committee shall have as its goal the promotion of safe caving practices within the Grotto, to include the training of all new members in correct safety practices. Particular emphasis shall be placed on establishing minimum equipment standards for equipment that might be purchased by the individual and/or any caving party in the Grotto. The Safety Committee Chairperson (Safety Officer) will be responsible for reporting all relevant safety information to the National Speleological Society and any outside groups. The Safety Officer will report on all activities of the Safety Committee at each regular Grotto meeting. The Safety Officer may recommend action against any member pursuant to Article I, Section 5 hereof for violation of safe caving practices.

B. The Conservation Committee will be responsible for establishing current conservation standards and attitudes to be followed by the individuals within the Grotto and the Grotto as a whole. Cave cleanup will be a major priority. Coordination of all conservation information including landowner relations will be the responsibility of the Conservation Committee Chairperson (Conservation Officer). The Conservation Officer will report on the status of all conservation activities at each regular Grotto meeting. The Conservation Officer may recommend action against any member pursuant to Article I, Section 5 hereof for flagrant violation of current conservation standards and attitudes.

- C. The Librarian will be responsible for the care and updating of the Grotto Library which encompasses a permanent collection of all former correspondence and exchanges with others that have occurred and any reference materials of other nature. The Librarian, with the assistance of his/her committee, will file on a permanent basis all correspondence received from the Secretary and other members to be held in a permanent collection. Access to the Library must be maintained for the membership in the Grotto. Everything that is borrowed from the Grotto Library must be signed for. Except as otherwise determined by the librarian a borrower must be a full member of the Grotto at the time of borrowing from the Library. The current status of the documents on loan will be reported to the Grotto membership at each monthly meeting of the Grotto and the Library records will be available to the Chairperson or Vice Chairperson at any time for their inspection. Chronic lateness in returning any borrowed items from the Grotto Library may result in a member being suspended from the Grotto membership until the item or items in question are returned in the condition lent or the Grotto is fully compensated for any loss.
- D. The Equipment Committee Chairperson (The Supply Officer) with the assistance of the committee will keep accurate records of all Grotto equipment and will make the equipment available to all full members of the Grotto. Equipment will be issued in an equitable manner at the discretion of the supply officer. The equipment will only be used on designated Grotto trips except as otherwise approved by the Chairperson. Grotto funds may be used for equipment purchase and maintenance as approved by the Chairperson or Treasurer with the consent of the Board. The Supply Officer will report the status of all equipment and usage at each regular Grotto meeting and the equipment records will be available any time for inspection by the Chairperson or Vice Chairperson.
- E. The Membership Committee will be responsible for maintaining an active, up to date list of all members of the Grotto and coordinate same with both the Grotto Secretary and Treasurer and will be highly active in soliciting new members for the Grotto. The committee will develop and maintain a membership card at least embodying the information as delineated in Article I, section 2 of the By-Laws to be filled out by all regular and prospective members of the Grotto. The committee will welcome all prospective members to the Grotto and assign a full Grotto member as a contact person to help that person become a full Grotto member and keep that person in touch with all upcoming activities of the

Grotto. The committee will report on all its activities to the Grotto at each regular grotto meeting. The Membership Committee Chairperson will serve and be known as the Public Relations Officer of the Philadelphia Grotto and will develop close ties to other organizations in the surrounding community that would serve as a wellspring for prospective new members.

Section 9. Special Committees may be appointed at any time by the Chairperson.

ARTICLE V FINANCES

Section 1. Dues payable by the individual members shall be set by the Board with the approval of the grotto membership.

Section 2. All expenditures must be approved by the Chairperson and each voucher must be signed by the Chairperson or the Treasurer.

ARTICLE VI ELECTIONS

Section 1. Elections shall be held in accordance with the following procedures.

Section 2. All candidates for election as Directors shall be members in good standing of the National Speleological Society substantiated with a current membership card.

Section 3. Directors shall be nominated and elected as follows:

- A. Nominations for director shall be made in person or by electronic attendance at the last regular meeting of the Grotto preceding the annual meeting, or in writing or email addressed to the Secretary of the Grotto and received at such address (postal or email) prior to such regular meeting. The retiring chairperson may be nominated for election. A person may nominate themselves.
- B. Nominees for election shall be announced by the Secretary at such regular meeting.
- C. *Electronic ballots listing each nominee shall be prepared by the Secretary, shall be made available via email and shall be emailed to each member in good standing not less than two weeks prior to the annual meeting. Written ballots will be made available on request.*
- D. Each full member in good standing may vote for nominees for election to the board by submitting the electronic ballot or returning the written ballot prepared by the Secretary or a reasonable facsimile thereof to the Secretary prior to or on the day of the annual meeting, prior to the counting of the ballots. To avoid duplicate ballots, all written ballots must be signed and dated to be valid, provided, however, that no record shall be taken of the manner in which any members voted. In the event that more than one ballot is submitted by the same member, the Judge of Election shall count the last-dated ballot and discard the previous ballots of such member. In the event of undated ballots, the Judge of Election shall determine, in their sole discretion, which ballot shall be counted.
- E. Ballots shall be counted at the annual meeting. Each member may vote for six nominees. Multiple votes for one nominee on the same ballot shall be disregarded. In the event a member votes for more than six nominees, the Judge of Election shall disregard the votes for such excess nominees, and shall, in their sole discretion, determine such votes shall be treated as excess for purposes of this paragraph.
- F. Prior to the annual meeting, the Chairperson shall appoint a Judge of Election, who shall not be a nominee for election, and who shall

determine questions of eligibility and validity of ballots as described above, and shall count the ballots under the supervision of the Secretary. The Secretary shall announce the results of the election.

- G. The six nominees receiving the greatest number of votes shall be elected as members of the Board of Directors, provided, however, that in the event the retiring chairperson is elected in such manner, the person receiving the seventh highest number of votes shall also be elected. The nominee receiving the greatest number of votes shall be the chairperson. In the case of a tie vote, the presiding officer shall cast the deciding vote.

- H. The new members of the Board of Directors shall assume their duties upon the adjournment of the annual meeting.

Section 4. Election of Officers. The Vice Chairperson, Secretary, and Treasurer shall be elected by the Board of Directors at the annual meeting of the Board provided in Article IV, Section 3 hereof, in accordance with the following procedure:

- A. Each office shall have nominations and election in the following order:
 - i) Vice-Chairperson
 - ii) Secretary
 - iii) Treasurer

- A. A person other than the chairperson may be elected to more than one office concurrently.

- B. Election shall be by a plurality of the Board of Directors present. Votes shall be counted and recorded by the Secretary.

- C. Officers shall assume their duties immediately upon election.

ARTICLE VII PUBLICATIONS

Section 1. The Philadelphia Grotto recognizes the importance of communications not only to its members but to the outside caving community and public at large. In furtherance thereof, the Grotto will publish a newsletter from time to time, recapping issues discussed at the previous monthly meeting plus notices of upcoming events, and notices to the Grotto membership required by the by-laws. There will be a Philadelphia Grotto Digest published at least twice yearly with the intention of providing a forum for all caving literature of both a fiction and non-fiction nature to the caving community at large.

Section 2. The Philadelphia Grotto shall submit an annual report to the Chairperson of the Internal Organizations Committee of the National Speleological Society, containing all required information.

Section 3. At least two copies and preferably four copies of the annual report and each issue of the Grotto Digest shall be submitted to the National Speleological Society Library. At least one copy and preferably two copies of the Grotto Digest shall be furnished the Society Cave Files Committee, and it is recommended that one copy of the Digest be furnished to the U.S. Geological Survey Library, Washington, DC.

Article VIII Anti-Harassment

Section 1. The Grotto provides a safe environment for members, their guests, or any other individuals. This environment includes, but is not limited to, social media and online spaces. The Grotto will not tolerate harassment in any form.

Section 2. The Anti-Harassment Policy applies to all events sanctioned by the Grotto, as well as all non-sanctioned events that have at least one grotto member present.

Section 3. The Anti-Harassment Policy applies to all members of the grotto, guests of the grotto and guests of grotto members.

Section 4. Harassment includes but is not limited to inappropriate comments, inappropriate sexual behavior that warrants intervention, unwanted advances and touching, invasion of personal space in a sexual manner, deliberate intimidation, and

unwelcomed sexual advances. In addition, harassment includes unwanted verbal, physical, cyber, or aggressive behavior.

Section 5. Grotto trip leaders and Board Members are mandated to report any harassment to the Board to investigate. Failure to do so will result in immediate suspension from the grotto for at least 6 months as well as further disciplinary action at the discretion of the Board, pursuant to the Bylaws.

A. Members and witnesses of an incident of harassment should report it to their Trip Leader or Board Member immediately, so that the trip leader or Board Member may take corrective action against the offender at the time of the incident.

B. Trip leaders and Board Members are mandated to take corrective action if they first hand witness harassment.

a. Corrective action includes but is not limited to:

- i. verbal warnings
- ii. expulsion from the area and/or event

Section 6. Complaints about harassment are to be handled in a manner that reasonably protects the identity and dignity of the complainant.

Section 7. The Grotto and its Board will make every effort to assist and provide protection of our members and guests. If any person finds the Board is not adequately handling an incident or fears that the Board may not adequately handle an incident, they may instead read out to the NSS President and/or Chair of Directorate without any repercussions to the complainant.

Article IX Anti-Harassment

Section 1. Non-Harassment Discipline

A. Any member or guest may be suspended or expelled for conducting themselves so as to endanger human safety or cave conservation or so to bring the grotto into disrepute or threaten the Grotto's relation with the National Speleological Society.

B. If an incident does occur a simple majority vote of the entire Board shall be required for expulsion

a. Such vote may be taken only after at least one week since an email or written notice has been submitted to the Board and at least two weeks' notice in writing has been submitted to the member in question, and after such member shall have the opportunity to address the board.

b. The Board in their discretion may choose to suspend the member with a simple majority vote, until an expulsion vote is taken.

Section 2. Discipline of Members

- A. All members and guests are required to conduct themselves in accordance with Article II Anti-Harassment.
- B. Incidents of Harassments also included public incidents, including but not limited to, criminal investigations.
- C. If an incident of Harassment does occur the Board is required to call an emergency Board meeting within seven days of being notified of an incident. The accused shall be notified through email or written letter that an emergency meeting is being called.
 - a. The emergency meeting shall be used to determine if investigation of the incident is required
 - i. If an investigation is required the board may suspend the accused until investigation and final vote completes. Suspension requires at least two Board members to deem it necessary.
 - b. Investigation of an incident shall not take more than two weeks to complete.
 - i. The investigation shall be conducted in a manner to best protect the identity and dignity of the alleged victim and accused.
 - c. At the end of the investigation the Board shall vote on whether to expel the individual. Expulsion will only require a simple majority vote.
- D. If an individual is expelled the Board shall notify all members that an individual was expelled due to harassment and specify in what nature that harassment was.
 - a. If the harassment was sexual the Board shall also notify other Grotto Boards which the individual may have been apart of as well as the NSS of the expulsion to protect the general NSS members.
 - i. The Board may provide investigatory information to the Grottos and NSS

Article X Amendments

Section 1. Amendments to the By-Laws must be presented at a regular meeting or one called specifically for the purpose, and be passed by a majority vote of members of the Grotto present at the meeting after being presented to

the membership at the previous meeting, or through email at least two weeks before the vote is taken.