



THE SPELEOGRAPH

Lake Ozarks Grotto

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Azure Pool Carroll Cave

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THE SECRETS OF ROCK HOUSE CAVE, MILLER COUNTY, MISSOURI

by Dwight Weaver

Some people call it Jim Henry Cave, others call it Rock House Cave. It is both for it was once the home of Jim Henry, an Indian who lived in Miller County until the mid-1830s.

Ironically, while this cave is so well known in Miller County that a township, a church, a creek, a school and more recently, a county road, have been named for Jim Henry, the cave escaped the attention of organized cavers until recently and is only now being recorded. As far as the author knows, it has not previously been described in Missouri caving literature.

On Sunday afternoon, September 24, 2000, Buzz Caldwell and I, with permission of the land owner, paid a visit to the site. I visited the site again on Oct.10, 2000, with Bill Pfantz. What we found was an amazing geologic anomaly that should have been in the cave files years ago. And it should have been included in the *Geologic Wonders and Curiosities of Missouri*, first published in 1978 by Tom Beveridge and the revised printing by Jerry Vineyard in 1990.

Gerard Fowke, who carried out archaeological excavations in caves in central Missouri (including caves in Miller County) in 1918 and 1919, missed Rock House Cave. He would, no doubt, have dismissed it as a feature of Native American cultural interest and of little use to his work. J Harlen Bretz, the author of *Caves of Missouri*, missed Rock House Cave. He would have found it interesting but probably not very helpful in explaining his theory on the origin of Missouri caves. But the late geologist, Tom Beveridge, would have been delighted to have seen it. He appreciated unusual geology. And I have a hunch that the geologist in Jerry Vineyard would have him doing a tap and dance at the base of this fascinating piece of geologic history.

Even though I have lived less than 20 miles from the site for more than 30 years, and known about its existence most of that time, I had not previously visited it. I should be embarrassed. All of which suggests that there are still interesting geologic wonders to be recorded in Missouri, just as there must be many great caves yet to be discovered throughout the Missouri Ozarks.

Rock House Cave Miller County



Rock House Cave History

The late Clyde Lee Jenkins of Miller County, better known as “Judge Jenkins,” provides a glimpse of the history of the Jim Henry site in his *History of Miller County* (1971). He writes the following:

“The Osage Indians continued hunting in Miller County for many years, even coming to this area in considerable numbers by automobile after World War I. A group of Indians visited the late C.P. Tellman and informed him they would appreciate looking his farm over for a spring of clear water running from the bottom of a perfectly shaped bowl of rock. Before the white man’s arrival on the scene, religious ceremonies had been performed by their people at this site. Receiving Tellman’s permission to search the farm, the spring and rock bowl eventually were found by them...”

“The best known Indian was Jim Henry, probably the last of the Osage tribe to have lived in Miller County. He was so well liked that a township, a church, a creek and a school were named for him. He lived with his wife and children in a large rock house built by mother nature...”

“The rock house they lived in was, and still is, a natural oddity. It is a large, freak rock formation located on a wooden hilltop with no other formations around it. It is about 60 feet in length, circular in shape, and twenty or more feet in height. On the south side of the rock there is a large opening, with an opening somewhat smaller on the east side. Inside there is a spacious cavern. Through the rock is a natural built-in chimney. A fire inside the cavern would have smoke drawn through the cavern ceiling to the top of the rock. Cooking over an inside fire, with heat for warmth, in a smoke free room, left little to be desired in the means of a comfortable dwelling. With skins stretched over poles placed in the openings of the cavern, Jim Henry and his family enjoyed living in a primitive, but comfortable, Indian home.

“In the Spring of 1834, Jim Henry, his squaw and two children were visited by Mr. William Miller and his young son, Pinkney S. It was noted by them that the Indian had chiseled the print of his hand on a large projecting rock as a mark of his prosperity. The hand print may still be visible.”

“What became of Jim Henry and his family is unknown. Some say he went to his people in the southwest. Others say he made a farewell speech at Tuscumbia where he thanked the people for the kindnesses (sic) always extended to him and his family, then departed for a destination unknown to anyone. There are Indian graves close by the old rock home located in the township of Jim Henry, but nothing is known about them. Today, the rock house sits quietly upon the secrets of an Indian family which once lived in its cavern.”

A Closer Look At Rock House Cave Rock

The Rock House Cave “rock” is “60 feet in length, circular in shape, and 20 or more feet in height,” said Jenkins. He wasn’t far off. We measured it at 25 feet high on the down-hill side, and then added an additional five feet (making it 30 feet high) because of large boulders that crown the mass. It was probably much higher at some point in geologic antiquity.

Although our mapping was very preliminary, it is 70 to 80 feet in length along its east-west axis, and perhaps 50 to 60 feet in length along its north-south axis. It has a circumference of nearly 200 feet depending upon how you measure the baseline.

Rock House Cave “rock” sits at 680 feet in elevation with no other large rock outcrops within sight and is within a wooded area. The surrounding timber, however, is fairly young and clear cut farm acreage lies only 20 yards east of it. The rock mass is not very far from the high point of the hill.

Jenkins call it a “*freak rock formation.*” The rock formation is uncommon but not entirely unique for there are at least six other isolated rock formations similar to it in Missouri, most of them in the south central Missouri area. Some people refer to these formations as “blossom rocks,” because they are large masses of sandstone that jut above the surface of the surrounding terrain and appear to have just “grown” or “blossomed” from the bedrock.

These isolated sandstone masses have not been extensively studied but there are existing theories that suggest how they may have been formed. Lee Wallace, a geologist who authored “*The Geology of the Rolla Quadrangle*” in 1913, considered the sandstone masses to have been deposited in caves and the dolomite walls (generally the Gasconade Dolomite) to have been dissolved away over time, leaving the resistant filling material as a conspicuous “blossom.” “Whether the environment was that of a cave or a sinkhole can be debated but the exposure, which are roughly circular in plain view, suggest sinkhole fillings,” said Beveridge in *The Geologic Wonders and Curiosities of Missouri*.

It is easy to view the Rock House Cave “rock” from a distance and visualize it being the former contents of an old filled sink in a long-vanished dolomite plateau. It is definitely a geologic relic of some kind sculpted by millions of years of surface erosion; however, I am not yet comfortable with the theories that have been offered the geologic origin of these kinds of rock formations in Missouri.

The nearest facsimile to Rock House Cave “rock” is probably Blossom Rock near Lane Spring in Phelps County. They are similar in dimensions, both are Roubidoux Sandstone, both are elliptical in shape, and both are riddled with fractures that have been filled with secondary deposits of silica to produce a rock highly resistant to erosion. The filled fractures give the Rock House Cave “rock” a ridged texture that almost presents a fabric, honeycomb or boxy appearance. In places, the silica veins form blades that recent erosion have left jutting out at angles from the surface of the rock. These can look like the cutting edge of a jagged razor blade.

Several vertical fractures along the north and northwest sides have been eroded into V-shaped crevasses that a person can use to climb to the top. Getting back down without “falling” down and being roughly “chuted” to the base, however, is the trick. If these “blossom rocks” are cave-related, then Rock House Cave “rock” is probably the best example to study because it does contain cavernous voids. But while it can be argued that what exists here is not a true cave, it is a combination of cave-like features. Rock House Cave “rock” has an impressive shelter overhang along its west side, and a combination triple-arch and natural bridge tunnel along its south side. The shelter overhang rises at least 12 feet with an undercut just as great and a length of at least 50 feet. Most of the west end of the rock is a shelter with a nearly level floor.

At the south end of the shelter is the west end opening to the tunnel, which has a length of 35 feet. It is 5 to 15 feet high and 6 to 12 feet wide and highest at its west end. Near the east opening the bedrock floor shelves upward in shallow curved terraces.

The portion of the tunnel that forms the projecting south side of the rock mass contains a triple-window-arch-wall structure that can be crawled through, having a maximum height of about 3 feet. The arched windows or openings are 4 to 8 feet across. One opens to the south, one at the southeast corner, and one into the tunnel. The geometrical shapes of the partitions and openings in the triple-window-arch-wall are quite attractive and would give an artist reason to sit a spell and sketch or paint.

Indeed, along this south side there is so much natural sculpting that it gives the south side a character all its own.

What is suggested here in terms of genesis is that during the late stages of the rock's shaping, a stream must have flowed east to west to carve out the tunnel and arches, and then taken a turn to the northwest to undercut the rock and create the shelter. The ancient, no longer existent stream that formed its cave-like features, is probably not related to modern drainage patterns.

It is on the crown of the rock formation that erosional common sense seems to go haywire for the most intriguing anomaly of all exists on top of the rock mass – an isolated, one-room grotto that defines my ability to even speculate as to its geologic origin. The Grotto is part of what appear to be boulder ruins that may instead be “faux” boulders.

Because the silica seams that hold the sandstone together in the boxwork structure are sharply angled throughout the rock mass. This has separated chunks of it into a crown that looks like a mass of jumbled boulders. One of these “boulders” plays host to The Grotto.



Looking in
the entrance
of Rock House
Cave

The chamber is 10 feet in diameter and almost perfectly round. It is domed and about 4.5 feet high at the center. It's floor is almost perfectly flat and has a “smoothed” appearance. It has probably been a convenient den for some wildlife over the years but only a solitary Pipistrellus bat was hanging in The Grotto on the day of our visit. There was no den litter on the floor. The Grotto is large enough to make a good place for two people to sleep. The domed room may be weather tight but it would take a visit during rain to determine this. Although two of the crevasses that crease the north and west sides of the rock formation almost junction in front of The Grotto, there is no solutional evidence to connect The Grotto with the crevasses. The entrance of The Grotto has an interesting triangular shape.

Walking (more like climbing) around on the top of the rock formation is hazardous because of the angular rock surfaces and the rock-hugging vines that grip much of it. The Grotto area, however, is strangely free of these vines.

“Through the rock is a natural built-in chimney,” said Jenkins. Well, not quite unless the feature he refers to has become plugged. But near the west opening of the tunnel there is a slit in the rock overhead – and opening perhaps 3 feet long by 5 inches wide—that could be used as a chimney with a fire built on the floor 15 feet below. The slit penetrates a projection of overhead rock about 3 feet thick. This gap is part of a joint that runs down the center of the tunnel. There are several separate ceiling cavities in this “seam” and one we’ll call the “bat hole.” It appears to penetrate several feet upward and being used by a small colony of bats. The day we visited the site, there may have been 30 or 40 individual bats wedged tightly into the deepest recess of the “bat hole” and they appeared to be big brown bats. Further investigation might reveal if this cavity goes all the way to the top of the rock and has just become plugged, however, determining this is not as important as simply leaving it alone for the benefit of the bats. They should not be molested.

The north wall of the tunnel has a prominent bedding plane seam its full length. The seam is about 4 to 8 feet from the floor and is angled. A short remnant of the bedding plane can also be seen in the south wall and is lower to the floor.

Many of the rock surfaces of the tunnel and its openings are smooth-worn rock. The same cannot be said along the west walls of the shelter undercut and at the northwest corner of the shelter where a projection of rock is exposed to weather. Here the case-hardened exterior of the sandstone has broken away to expose fresh sandstone. Its beige-orange tint is deeply pitted by recent weathering. It is almost an anomaly by itself.

Other Observations at Rock House Cave

Cattle have and still use the shelter and cave tunnel. The cattle dung is old and may be fairly deep on the floor of the shelter, and all around the base of the massive rock outcrop. The tunnel floor is also dung covered but the dung may not be more than a few inches deep uphill in the tunnel from the shelter.

Other than bats and a few insects, no other life was seen in the tunnel the day of our visit, although it undoubtedly serves as a refuge for wildlife from time to time. The meager amount of bat guano on the floor suggests that the bats are only occasional residents.

Mud daubers use the cave extensively. Their abandoned tubes are everywhere on the tunnel walls.

Chiseled graffiti in the form of names and dates are prevalent in the tunnel and along the shelter wall. Only in one place has someone spray painted graffiti – a heart with initials in it. This is located at the north end of the shelter wall and should be removed. Some of the chiseled graffiti looks old and may be of historic value because this rock with its unusual sheltering capabilities has probably been used by man for a long time. There may be petroglyphs here but I could not distinguish any amid the vast amount of carving in the rock surfaces. Bill Pfantz found what he believes are Ogam inscriptions of Celtic or Babylonian origin. It would take a great deal of study to decipher all of the information, ancient and not-so-ancient, chiseled into the walls of Rock House Cave. It is quite likely that Native Americans made use of the site for thousands of years.

Unfortunately, bedrock is close to the surface and there are few if any deposits of sediments other than cattle dung on the floor that might contain artifacts. A historian is left with only the carved and scratched evidence of man having been here to further interpret its history.

Ah, but there is still intrigue here. Jenkins said that Jim Henry, the Osage Indian who lived in the cave in the 1820s and up until about 1835, chiseled a handprint on the wall. Jenkins says it may still be visible.

When Buzz Caldwell, Bill Pfantz and I visited the site, we talked with the owners who recently sold the farm to their children. According to them, a man from Gravois Mill, Missouri, brought several van loads of Osage Indians to the site about 15 years ago on a pilgrimage. They found the handprint. We tried but aren't certain about what we found. There is a lot to examine on those walls of sandstone incised with the souvenirs of human visits through time. Who knows what deciphering it will tell us?

Jenkins mentions a spring in the area that flows from a rock basin on land once owned by a man named Tellman. The owners of the property told us that Tellman's son was an early owner of the Rock House Cave property.

As the late Judge Jenkins said, Rock House Cave sits quietly on the secrets of an Indian family. Even the rock itself is keeping secrets.

LOG Picnic & Work Day – 2025

It was a hot day on September 14th but that was the day that we had scheduled the grotto picnic and a work day at Stark Caverns. Gary & I arrived at the pavilion, unloaded the gas grill and some other stuff, and moved the picnic tables around. It wasn't long before everyone else arrived: Buzz Caldwell, Ken & Monica Long, Christen Easter, Travis, Kathy & Brandon Zumwalt. The picnic tables got moved around, again. Where was that sun going to be when it was time to eat???



Gary, Buzz, Ken and Dillon



Travis, Brandon and Monica staining the bench

We walked the trail to the Memorial Bench & arch. The guys got busy brushing a bucket of red stuff (supposed to be redwood stain) on the arch. It was determined that the little name plates on the bench would have to be removed.

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Monica, Christen & Kathy said they would supervise but it wasn't long before Monica had a brush in her hand for a short time. And what was I doing, you ask? Well, I was working hard at taking pictures! Dillon Bond came and relieved Gary & Buzz of their job. Rosie & Karen Weaver arrived for support. Since there were plenty of brush holders, Gary walked back to the pavilion to start grilling the hamburgers & hot dogs, Kathy went to help, and I followed since the work was almost done.



Gary cooking hot dogs and hamburgers for lunch



Christen, Karen, Rosie and Kathy

We had plenty of food and the conversation was lively. One cave guide came to chat with us for a few minutes. Then, Cave Manager, Matt Naughton and his wife stopped by to check on us but didn't stay to eat. A little later, two more guides came to talk. They said they were interested in doing some caving, other than just being guides – Ken has their names and phone numbers. Sometime, while we were talking at the pavilion, Travis & Brandon disappeared and were gone for a while. They had gone to finish the work on the bench & arch, reattaching the name plates. So, it was back to the work site to check out the finished results of the Memorial bench and arch. They looked amazing, thanks to everyone's hard work.



The Speleograph

I had quarters and encouraged everyone to feed the fish. Several people did feed them and actually saw some of the fish.

Back at the pavilion, some left but a few of us sat and talked for a while. It was a good group and turned out to be a good day, despite the heat. And with the prospects of some new people interested in the grotto, there is still hope that our grotto will survive for a while longer..... --Alberta Zumwalt



Working on the Memorial Bench



Feeding the fish



Sitting in the shade



Getting things done

The North Central Missouri Regional Water Commission and the Missouri Conservation Heritage Foundation Finalize Historic Agreement to Protect Bat Habitat

Thursday, Oct. 23, 2025, at Sullivan County Title, Harve Rhodes, Chairman of the North Central Missouri Regional Water Commission (NCRMWC), and Tricia Burkhardt, Executive Director of the Missouri Conservation Heritage Foundation (MCHF) finalized agreements to establish a perpetual conservation easement around the Roy Blunt Reservoir (RBR). The conservation easement is established to mitigate for the 1,236 acres of Indiana Bat and Northern Long-eared bat habitat impacted by the construction of the RBR.



Under the Endangered Species Act, adverse impacts to the habitat of endangered species warrants compensation. Because of this, the NCRMWC established a 1,644-acre conservation easement. The goals and restrictions within the easement align with the NCRMWC's plan to preserve clean water.

MCHF will monitor the easement for compliance. It will also enforce any violations of the uses of the easement. The NCRMWC is responsible for management and maintenance of the property in the easement for the preservation of bat habitat. Monitoring and management endowments have been established that will provide funding to the NCRMWC for habitat enhancement activities. These endowments will be managed by the MCHF.



The United States Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the federal sponsor for the RBR, approved the easement and funded both endowments in this historic agreement. Rhodes stated, "It took a number of years to forge this historic agreement. We are thrilled to partner with MCHF, who will not only help us facilitate and monitor the easement, but also opens the door for other conservation and recreation opportunities

Burkhardt added, "This project aligns with our mission to preserve, conserve and enhance our natural resources, while promoting opportunities to use, appreciate and enjoy them. We are excited to partner with the NCRMWC to advance initiatives that benefit citizens and conservation."

Miller County had interesting moonshine history

In the United States, members of the Progressive movement called for several societal changes prior to the turn of the 20th century, one of which pertained to the prevalence of alcohol.

Nearly three decades later, their wishes came to fruition through a constitutional amendment that impacted many rural Missouri communities and involved the work of politicians, law enforcement and physicians.

“Many churches and organizations of the time, noting evil consequences of the widespread sale of liquor and its relationship to crime, insanity and other social problems, advocated prohibition as a technique for improving society,” noted Duane Meyer in “The Heritage of Missouri: A History.”

This Prohibition movement blossomed with the ratification of the 18th Amendment to the Constitution in 1919, making it illegal to produce and distribute alcoholic beverages. Implemented through the Volstead Act, Miller County history reveals many in small communities still chose to distill alcohol but attempting to conceal their illegal activities.

“Officers capture two moonshiners” was the headline appearing in the Miller County Autogram-Sentinel on June 16, 1921.

The newspaper explained, “Sheriff John Kinder, aided by deputy L.J. Mayfield and Tom Willis, made a raid on a moonshine outfit ... Saturday morning. The still was located in the smokehouse at the home of Sam L. Robinett west of Brumley.”



Moonshine Still

The temperance movement had failed in previous decades and “Prohibition” (the federal ban on alcohol) became effective Jan. 17, 1920. As with the raid that occurred in Brumley, moonshiners found that selling alcohol could be a lucrative business with a strong customer base.

However, stories soon began to circulate about the poor quality of ingredients and a lack of knowledge in proper distilling practices. This could result in a highly questionable and potentially dangerous product.

“The teachers of Miller County had an opportunity to see a real moonshine still Friday night at the courthouse,” reported The Miller County Autogram-Sentinel on Dec. 1, 1921. “Prosecuting Attorney Donnelly took advantage of the meeting to show the teachers the dangers lurking within the moonshine still.”

The newspaper added that teachers witnessed some of their students coming to school under the influence of alcohol. During the meeting, members of law enforcement (often referred to by the nickname of “revenuers”) were experiencing difficulties gaining the cooperation of the community and compromising their ability to locate illegal moonshine operations.

Violation of the Prohibition laws were of a federal nature, but the individual states were given latitude in the application of punishment. In Missouri, manufacture of alcohol was a “felony punishable by confinement in penitentiary for two years” noted the “Hearing before the committee on the Judiciary House of Representatives” on March 11, 1924.

Concealment of moonshine operations was a grave problem for local law enforcement agencies. A popular site in Miller County for many of these moonshiners were the bountiful number of caves in the area.

In late October 1921, a moonshiner was arrested by the Miller County sheriff for operating a still in a cave along the Big Tavern Creek near Iberia. Another Miller County cave, which later became a popular tourist destination, was also used for the manufacture of moonshine.

“Moonshiners Dam” was constructed inside Stark Caverns near Eldon during Prohibition. The dam held mineral-rich spring waters flowing through the caverns that were reputed to be an ideal ingredient for great moonshine. The dam is also in an area where those making the illegal hooch could see from a good distance those who were approaching.



Moonshiners Dam inside Stark Caverns near Eldon is one of the places where moonshine was illegally distilled during the years of Prohibition. The pure spring water was said to produce excellent moonshine, and the dam was situated where people could be seen from a good distance, whether they were customers or law enforcement. —Courtesy/Jeremy P. Amick

If it was a customer approaching, all was well. But if it happened to be a “revenuer,” the moonshiners could jump into the spring, swim under several feet of rock and pop up on the other side in a much deeper area of the caverns. They could evade the revenuers and avoid any legal entanglements.

Moonshiners Dam remains a popular spot during tours at Stark Caverns.

“The citizenship of Eldon in large numbers still shows an interest in prohibition and law enforcement (and this) was manifested Friday evening by the crowd that attended the law enforcement meeting at the high school auditorium,” explained the Eldon Advertiser on April 6, 1922.

The meeting featured local pastors who maintained moonshine was addictive and essentially made from poison. Dr. William Logan Allee, a native of Olean who completed his medical studies at the University of Missouri, also opined on the toxic characteristics of local moonshine.

“The unfortunate thing about the present day moonshine that is called liquor is that it does not kill quick, but does its work gradually and sure,” he remarked.

With the nation experiencing the Great Depression, political support grew for the end of Prohibition. Many believed legalized liquor could lead to needed jobs and revenue and Prohibition was repealed by the 21st Amendment in 1933. ---- Submitted by Alberta Zumwalt

Minutes from the Meetings

July 8th, 2025

The July meeting of Lake Ozarks Grotto was called to order by Ken Long, Chairman, in the meeting room at Stark Caverns, Eldon, MO.

Roll Call: Eight members present – Dillon Bond, Buzz Caldwell, Christen Easter, Ken Long, Karen Weaver, Rosie Weaver, Gary & Alberta Zumwalt.

The minutes of the June meeting were read and approved.

Grotto picnic. Sept. 14th, to start at noon with work on the Memorial bench and archway. Everyone to bring a dish. Hamburgers & hot dogs furnished by the Grotto. Gary will bring his grill.

Website: Dillon said there is a free version and paid version of Word Press. The free version would handle the web page. We would need to buy the domain name. Total costs would be around \$33 and \$50 instead of using Go Daddy. Chairman Long's priority would be to get everything off our web page, with the help of Dillon.

Kiesewetter. Chairman Long said he would do a Boy Scout trip, probably in October, but needed help. Dillon volunteered. Dillon is also interested in going to Rattlesnake Cave.

Goodwin – Chairman Long said he met Klaus Leidenfrost at the sinkhole on June 17th, mowing/weedeating for 3 ½ - 4 hours. He said the sinkhole is draining faster than it used to.

Karen passed around a few pictures to see if anyone could identify the people. She volunteered to do the August program with a "Name that Picture" program.

The program for this meeting was some very old slides shown on a very old Montgomery Ward slide projector by Gary.

Meeting adjourned. – respectfully submitted by Alberta Zumwalt

August 12th, 2025

The August meeting of Lake Ozarks Grotto was called to order by Ken Long, Chairman, in the meeting room at Stark Caverns, Eldon, MO.

Roll Call: Six members present – Christen Easter, Ken Long, Karen Weaver, Rosie Weaver, Gary & Alberta Zumwalt.

The minutes of the July meeting were read and approved.

Grotto picnic. Sept. 14th, to start at noon with work on the Memorial bench and archway. Everyone to bring a dish. Hamburgers & hot dogs furnished by the Grotto. Gary will bring his grill. G & A – potato salad & condiments; Christen – slaw; Ken – beans & cookies; Rosie & Karen – chips & brownies. Chairman Long said that he thought the Memorial bench & archway only needed to be re-stained. He would take care of getting the stain, Gary said he'd bring brushes & rags.

Website: Dillon Bond sent papers to Chairman Long as examples of a new website – one seemed to be a favorite among members. The cost would be \$12 - \$20 per year and the cost of the domain name which would be a lot less than the \$300 we are paying now.

Kiesewetter. Chairman Long said the trip with the Boy Scouts has been cancelled since he is having surgery on his hand. The lady will get with Jim Cooley for a trip into a cave.

Goodwin – Nothing to report at this time.

The program was by Karen, who passed around old pictures to see if anyone could identify the people and the cave. Thanks for a great program!

Meeting adjourned. – respectfully submitted by Alberta Zumwalt

October 14th, 2025

The October meeting of Lake Ozarks Grotto was called to order by Ken Long, Chairman, in the meeting room at Stark Caverns, Eldon, MO.

Roll Call: Seven members were present – Dillon Wood, Christen Easter, Ken Long, Karen Weaver, Rosie Weaver, Gary & Alberta Zumwalt and 2 guests, Richard Marg & John Gregory.

The minutes of the August meeting were read and approved.

Website – Dillon Bond showed a preliminary design. Some discussion and he will be working on it while Chairman Long will be working with him.

Xmas Party. Christen volunteered to have the party at her house on December 7th.

Chairman Long reminded everyone that election of officers is next month.

Goodwin. Pres. Long reported that Klaus, Jean, he & Monica with 2 others had gone to check out the sinkhole. Klaus is thinking of closing down the project. Some discussion.

The Secretary reported that the \$100 check for Frank Hurley's memorial has still not been cashed.

There was some discussion on the Swap at Jacob's Cave and how it has changed.

MSS Meeting – Gary reported on the meeting which was held at Cooper's Landing in Boone Co. on October 12th.

Kiesewetter Cave. The Boy Scout group that had originally contacted Ken for a trip into the cave, then got a permit for Roubidoux Cave which didn't work out. So, they will be going into Kiesewetter – 4 adults, only 12 on trip – Oct. 18th.

Program – Gary showed some old slides.

Meeting adjourned.—respectfully submitted, Alberta Zumwalt

November 11th, 2025

The November meeting of Lake Ozarks Grotto was called to order by Ken Long, Chairman, in the meeting room at Stark Caverns, Eldon, MO.

Roll Call: Six members were present – Dillon Wood, Ken Long, Karen Weaver, Rosie Weaver, Gary & Alberta Zumwalt and 1 guest, Sarah Mallmann.

The minutes of the October meeting were read and approved.

Xmas party: Christen will have the party at her house – Dec. 7th – starts at 1; eat at 2. A food sheet was passed around.

Website – Dillon is still working on it.

Goodwin – Chairman Long reported that Klaus Leidenfrost and Jean Knoll had done some burning at the location. Discussion on Goodwin. Dillon suggested using Facebook to get new members who would continue on grotto projects.

Kiesewetter Cave – Chairman Long will be doing a trip after recovery from hand surgery.

Election of officers – Karen made a motion the current officers be retained. Seconded by Gary and passed.

Program – Dillon showed an excellent presentation on cave trips into Toby Cave and Fiery Forks with KCAG.

Meeting adjourned. – respectfully submitted, Alberta Zumwalt, Secretary

Grotto Christmas Party 12/07/2025

The grotto Christmas party was scheduled for Sunday, December 7th, at the home of Burke & Christen Easter at Camdenton. We picked up Travis & Brandon, stopped for a bag of ice, and arrived at the party house just before 1 pm. Some people had already arrived. We were welcomed by Christen and beautiful baby, Sydney Wren Easter. We were supposed to have 16 people in attendance and they all came: Ken & Monica Long with their beautiful Granddaughter, Rian; Rosie & Karen Weaver, Buzz Caldwell; Dillon Bond; Sarah Mallmann; Travis, Kathy, Derek & Brandon Zumwalt; Gary & Alberta Zumwalt; with Burke & Christen making up the group.



Burke and Sydney Wren

Of course, Ken had brought his jelly, cream cheese & cracker specialty for everyone to nibble on, something that tends to be habit-forming. When it was time, Burke carved the turkey and a food line formed. There was plenty of food and it was all delicious!



Rian bending in a weird position

Ken thanked everyone for coming and thanked Burke and Christen for hosting the party at their house for many years (sixteen years, to be exact, since 2009). Now, that's a record! I presented Ken with a 6-pack (of hot sauces), which he just can't seem to get enough of..... Buzz had a show & tell for the party but I found out that he had already told it to several people. It was a story of a walking stick, Buzz, and a fall that left the top of his nose bleeding profusely. And a story of people stopping to give him a ride home and he finally accepted a ride from the third one.....

The first game was the left-right game. Brandon passed out a small gift to everyone. After explaining that each person had to begin by figuring out which was their right and which was their left. There was some confusion with Ken, Gary & Buzz..... I read the story and everyone was passing gifts to their right and to their left. At the end of the story, everyone got to open the gift they ended up with.



Buzz, Monica and Sarah enjoying some snacks



Dillon, Monica, Ken and Karen



Christen, Burke, Brandon and Travis watching TV

It was time for Cave-O. Brandon passed out the cards and the little cardboard squares for covering words. I don't know if it was my pronunciation of the words or certain people's hearing ability – you know who you are! Prizes for the regular games were won by: Burke, Gary, Sarah, Rosie, Kathy (2), Rian (2), and Buzz. Coverall was won by: Gary, Buzz, Karen, Travis & Sarah.

Everyone gathered up their food and prizes, leaving some leftovers for Burke & Christen, doing some last-minute visiting and heading out the door to go home. It was a great party with plenty of food and lively conversation. Thanks to Burke & Christen for hosting and sharing their new little miracle baby. – Alberta Zumwalt

