

# BYLAWS OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA GROTTO OF THE N.S.S.

*Approved July 1979, amended January 1983, December 1985, December 1998.*

## **I. MEMBERSHIP - DUES**

- A. Applications for membership shall be in writing and shall be accompanied by dues as specified in paragraph I.B. A statement that the applicant supports the goals of the Grotto and its conservation policies must be signed by the applicant.
- B. (1) The amount of the annual member-dues, their due dates, and the collection procedures shall be determined by the Executive Committee.  
(2) Membership shall be suspended for non-payment of Grotto dues.  
(3) Reinstatement of membership after suspension for non-payment of Grotto dues shall be automatic upon payment of current dues.
- C. Members may be admonished, suspended from certain privileges, or expelled from Grotto membership for any of the following reasons:  
(i) Willful misuse of Grotto property or facilities;  
(ii) Willful disregard of the safety of themselves and/or of others while participating in a Grotto activity;  
(iii) Conduct detrimental to the Grotto.
- (1) Disciplinary action under this provision shall be taken only upon a two-thirds vote of the Executive Committee by a secret ballot.  
(2) 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.  
(3) Upon receiving such a petition, the Executive Committee shall take such actions as 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. The accused member or members shall have the right to speak on their own behalf.  
(4) Such consideration shall take place no sooner than twenty-one days and no later than seventy days after the petition is received by the Executive Committee.

## **II. ASSESSMENTS - GIFTS**

- A. 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 and extra copies of regular publications, and fees may be collected for use of the Grotto's property when approved by the Executive Committee.
- B. Gifts and bequests may be made to the Grotto in any form or amount and for any use compatible with the purpose of the Grotto.
- C. A charge may be made to non-members for:  
(1) attendance at Grotto-sponsored activities and meetings,  
(2) use of the Grotto's equipment and library,  
(3) copies of publications, maps, and other data, and  
(4) inclusion of non-members on the Grotto's mailing list.

## **III. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE - OFFICERS - DIRECTORS**

- A. The Executive Committee shall consist of eight Directors.

- (1)(a) The Directors shall serve for two years, four being elected each year to take office at the start of the first Executive Committee meeting of the fiscal year. A tie for fourth place shall be broken at the next Executive Committee meeting after the election by a ballot of current members of the Executive Committee and those elected candidates not tied in the election.
  - (b) The Executive Committee shall have the power to remove any Executive Committee member who, without just cause, fails to attend two regular Executive Committee meetings in one fiscal year without sending a proxy or who, without cause, attends no Executive Committee meetings in person for three consecutive months.
  - (c) Vacancies for Director that occur shall be filled for the balance of the fiscal year by Chairman appointment, subject to majority approval of the Directors. If at the end of that year another year remains of the original two-year term, the post for the remaining year shall be filled in regular election of Directors by the candidate receiving the highest number of votes after four candidates for elected to fill two-year terms. A tie for such position shall be broken at the next Executive Committee meeting by a ballot of current members of the Executive Committee and those successful candidates not tied in the election.
- (2)(a) Candidates for Director shall be selected from among Grotto members by an Elections Committee of at least three members, a majority of whom are not Officers or Directors. This Committee shall be appointed annually by the Chairman and approved by the Executive Committee. The chairman of this Committee shall not be a candidate for Director in the election for which the Committee is formed. Additional nominations of members may be made from the floor at a regular general meeting, provided that such nominations are seconded, and subject to acceptance by the member so nominated. The ballot shall have provisions for write-in votes.
  - (b) The deadline for receiving ballots shall be the day of the last regular General Meeting for the last month of the fiscal year. If no General Meeting is held in the last month of the fiscal year, the deadline shall be seven days before the end of the fiscal year. Ballots shall be mailed to the members at least thirty days before the deadline for receiving ballots.
  - (c) The Elections Committee shall submit to the Executive Committee a written report on the results of their selection process and the results of any nominations from the floor.
  - (d) The Elections Committee shall prepare, distribute, and receive the ballots, and shall act as tellers for the election, and shall submit a written report of the results of the election to the Executive Committee.
  - (e) The Elections Committee shall notify each nominee of his or her position in the order of finish in the election, and of the place, date, and time of the organizing meeting of the new Executive Committee.
- (3) Officers of the Grotto shall be Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary, and Treasurer.
    - (a) At the first meeting of the Executive Committee following the election of the Directors, the Directors shall elect a Chairman, a Vice Chairman, a Secretary, and a Treasurer. The terms of office shall be from the time of election until the next such election. Outgoing officers shall continue to serve into the new fiscal year until replaced in such election.
  - (4) All Directors and Officers of the Grotto must be current members of the National Speleological Society.
- B. Officers are not members of the Executive Committee and have no voting privileges. A Director may also serve as an Officer.
  - C. The Directors shall have the power to remove Officers by direction of two-thirds of the Directors, establish additional offices as needed, and fill vacancies in office which may occur.
  - D. Any member of the Executive Committee may appoint a member of the Grotto as a proxy to act for him at a meeting of the Executive Committee. Proxy may act at one meeting for only one Executive Committee member. The presiding officer must be notified of such proxy appointment directly or in writing by the absent Executive Committee member before the proxy may be allowed to serve. Authorization should state whether or not discretionary voting powers have been given to the proxy.

- E. Committee Chairmen may attend meetings of the Executive Committee and have the privilege of speaking on matters relevant to the committee's function but shall have no power to vote by virtue of their chairmanship.
- F. Any other member of the Grotto may attend Executive Committee meetings and may be granted the privilege of the floor at the discretion of the presiding officer but shall have no power to vote.
- G. There shall be at least one Executive Committee meeting in each of at least any six months of the fiscal year. The date, time, and place of these meetings shall be provided to the membership before the date of such meeting. The Executive Committee shall determine the date, time, and place for such meeting and for any special meetings.
- H. A quorum at an Executive Committee meeting will be a majority of the members of the Executive Committee.
- I. Robert's Rules of Order, as revised, shall govern all procedural questions arising at meetings of the Executive Committee, when they are applicable and when they are not inconsistent with the Constitution or Bylaws of the District of Columbia Grotto of the National Speleological Society.
- J. Each action approved by the Executive Committee which serves to establish new policies or administrative procedures will be designated as a "Directive." The Secretary of the Grotto will number each "Directive" and be responsible for notifying the membership in writing.

#### **IV. GENERAL MEETINGS - REFERENDUM**

- A. There shall be at least one General Meeting of the membership in each of at least any six months of the fiscal year. The date, time, and place of these meetings shall be provided to the membership before the date of such meeting. The Executive Committee shall determine the date, time, and place for such meeting and for any special meetings.
  - (1) A quorum at a General Meeting shall be twenty members or ten percent of the total membership, whichever is the greater number.
- B. The members shall have the rights of initiative, referendum, and recall, on all actions of the Executive Committee, or on members of the Executive Committee, by a Petition signed by ten members of the Grotto, or ten percent of the Grotto membership, whichever is larger, presented to the Executive Committee.
  - (1) Upon receiving a valid Petition, the Executive Committee shall immediately take such action as is necessary to notify the entire membership of the Petition, and of the place, date, and time of the General Meeting at which the Petition will be considered for adoption, and making provisions for absentee voting. Such notice shall be given by way of the next regular mailing to the membership, provided that this mailing shall satisfy the time schedule established below.
  - (2) The only grounds on which the Executive Committee can decline to receive an otherwise valid Petition shall be conflict with the Constitution and/or Bylaws of the National Speleological Society.
  - (3) Action pursuant to such Petition must be taken at a regular or special General Meeting within seventy days after receipt of the Petition by the Executive Committee and the notice required above must be given not less than twenty days before the date of the meeting.
  - (4) Adoption of such a Petition shall require a two-thirds vote of the members voting, either in person or by absentee ballot, and the total votes cast must constitute at least twenty percent of the membership.

#### **V. COMMITTEES**

- A. Committees shall be established by the Executive Committee to execute the work of the Grotto. Chairmen of the committees shall be appointed by the Chairman of the Grotto with the approval of the Executive Committee. Each committee chairman shall select the personnel and promote the activities of his committee.
- B. All committees will operate under the direction and approval of the Executive Committee.

## **VI. PROPERTIES - FINANCES**

- A. The Grotto may acquire real and personal property, including equipment, literature, and other materials for use by and on behalf of the membership.
- B. The fiscal year is the calendar year.

## **VII. PUBLICATIONS - GROTTO STORE**

- A. The Grotto will issue and distribute to the members in good standing, other than Family Members, regular issues of the *D.C. Speleograph* 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.
- B. The Grotto may maintain a Grotto Store for the convenience of members, friends, and associates, which will be limited to speleologically related goods appropriate to the policies of the Grotto.

## **VIII. AMENDMENT OF THE BYLAWS**

All proposed amendments to these bylaws must be presented to the entire membership and notice given to the members of the place, date, and time of the General Meeting at which the amendment(s) will be considered for adoption, and provisions shall be made for absentee voting. This notice shall be given not less than twenty days prior to the designated meeting. Adoption of the amendment(s) shall require a two-thirds vote of the members voting, either in person or by absentee ballot, and the total votes cast must constitute at least twenty percent of the membership.

## **IX. NATIONAL SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY**

Unless otherwise provided herein, the Constitution and Bylaws of the National Speleological Society shall be binding on the District of Columbia Grotto of the National Speleological Society, where applicable. Any action inconsistent therewith shall be null and void.

--- end of Bylaws ---

### **Revision history:**

January 1983 amendment ?

December 1985 amendment ?

December 1998 amendment eliminated requirement for Grotto members to be NSS members and added requirement for Grotto Officers and Directors to be current NSS members.