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I am a long time member of the NSS and strongly support the NSS' mission of promoting responsible caving, speleology, and cave conservation. Since moving to Alabama in 1972 I have been a member of the Birmingham Grotto and continue to participate and support the Grotto's activities. However, my participation is less arduous now than in the past. Although primarily a sport caver, through the years I have participated in a number of cave mapping, exploration and cleanup efforts, both in the US and abroad.

For the past three years I have served as NSS Secretary-Treasurer and during this tenure have developed the utmost respect for our officers and directors and their commitment to the Society. They are volunteers and contribute considerable time and money carrying out their responsibilities as travel to the Board of Governors meetings and conventions is not reimbursed.

My efforts as S-T have been to address NSS' financial issues and financial reporting. Although further work needs to be done, we are in a better financial position now than we were three years ago. The improvement is due to bequeaths of members who passed, Team 404 donations, and other large anonymous donations. The remaining principal on the HQ's mortgage has been recently reduced, is now less than \$340,000 and should be paid off in the next few years. However, there are still cash flow concerns, as it is easy for expenditures to exceed income, and we cannot depend on bequeaths of members who pass to pull our irons out of the fire. Additionally, what has not been accomplished in my tenure is timely audits. The NSS is fortunate to have a young and highly competent incoming Secretary-Treasurer, Gaylene Speaect, and, if elected, I plan on supporting her in making further improvements in the NSS' financial operations and timely audits.

I believe that being a member of the NSS is a "value buy" and we need to "toot our horn". NSS membership has been static and is less than it was 10 years ago. Efforts are being made to do a better job of defining member benefits, recruiting members and retaining members. I wholeheartedly support these efforts. The *NSS News* and access to the *Journal of Karst and Cave Studies* (*NSS Bulletin* prior to 1996) and other NSS publications are a member benefit, and I do not support giving away this access for free to non-members. However, we do need to make non-members aware of these publications and membership benefits. That is, the covers and table of contents of the *News* and *Journal* need to be available to the public on our web site. The *Journal* is a scientific publication and abstracts of its articles also need to be available to non-members and a mechanism needs to be developed, as is the case with most scientific journals, that articles can be downloaded by non-members for a modest fee.

Thank you for your consideration.