



Rich Geisler (33708RL/FE), Virginia

I started caving as a kid (6yo) with my best friend, his brother, and his dad, and have continued for 42 years. Most of my caving has been in the Virginia Region – however, I have caved in TAG and Mexico on several occasions as well as the remainder of the U.S. at NSS conventions.

28 years VPI cave club member (#323) and 23 years as a member of RASS. (15 years as a director and RASS Chairman).

I have attended 20 NSS Conventions and 26 Old Timer Reunions. I have volunteered extensively at both the OTRs and at the NSS Conventions and three times I have served on the Convention Staff. I am a Life Member and a Fellow of the NSS and an OTR Fellow.

What is important to me....

A greater focus on increasing membership: At one time, when the NSS had about 12,000 members, it was roughly estimated that the NSS included about 25% of the active cavers in this country. Since then it is likely that the number of active cavers has increased, but the membership of the NSS has declined to about 9,000 members. Certainly the membership committee should be active in recruiting more members and retaining current members.

Leadership transparency & approachability: At one time it was expected that you see an officer and/or directors at more events than just the NSS Convention. Regional events should be places where you can expect to see and talk with NSS officers and directors about your concerns and areas of interest. With five officers and 12 directors, there should be greater representation at regional events. If elected, I plan to attend every meeting of the Directorate, having read all of the officer reports that have been posted on the NSS web site. I also plan to have a high visibility presence at NSS conventions, OTR's and other regional caver events.

Fund raising & financial management: It is unreasonable that such a large, national organization has a piecemeal bookkeeping system and as a result does not have a current audit. Any organization that is completely financially dependent on dues and donations must be able to provide prospective donors with a current audit and the NSS cannot do so at this time.

Is the NSS seeking funds from other charitable organizations? I have seen no effort in that direction. The old NSS office on Cave Avenue was vacated several years ago, yet it was not cleared out and cleaned up until recently and is finally on the market to be rented. This is not right! If it could have been rented for \$1,000 per month then that is more than \$20,000 that was permitted to slip away.

Cave ownership & protection: It is great that there are a variety of regional conservancies that have undertaken the ownership, preservation, and management of caves. But the NSS is a national organization of cavers with a strong conservation drive, with experience owning and managing caves, and it should be more interested in acquiring, managing, and protecting more caves.

It all comes down to our collective passion for the underground realm, its exploration and mapping, its scientific study, its cultural heritage and historic significance and all the rest of the otherworldly characteristics that make these places we visit special and unique... We all want to preserve them for the future.