



I am running for the 2021 NSS Board of Governors, and I ask for your vote. As a board member, I want to get our IOs more involved with increasing our membership. Our grottos are the first contact with new and younger members. They are the ones that schedule beginner/kid-friendly trips, vertical workshops, surveying workshops, and trips to map caves. It should be every grotto's goal to be more active and visible in local community events such as outdoor expos and introducing caving to potential members. They are the ones to teach these folks about the NSS and its goals. We have a wealth of knowledge from our older cavers, who are quite willing to share that knowledge with younger cavers. As a board member, I will be easily accessible to our IOs and all members.

My first visit to a cave came when I was four years old. My parents knew the owner of a cave in south Mississippi, one of three caves south of Jackson. The owner invited us to see and hear the bats inside the cave. That experience was my first with a maternity bat cave and one that I won't forget. It taught me to respect bat habitats and to champion for bats. Years later, after moving to Tennessee, I was introduced to TAG and TAG's wild caves. I became a member of the Nashville Grotto and helped survey a few caves leading to membership in the Tennessee Cave Survey. I helped to organize the Nashville Grotto's 65th "Birthday Bash" in the Fall of 2018. In the Spring of 2020, I was approached to help coordinate a conservation clean-up effort in Savage Cove. With the help of the NSS Conservation Expo, the SERA Task Force, the Nashville Grotto, and many members of other TAG grottoes, a mountain of trash was cleaned from one of the area's resurgence streams. During the 2019 NSS Convention in Cookeville, TN, I co-chaired the Transportation Committee and volunteered at the Cave Trip Information Booth and the Registration Table.

I served the Nashville Grotto as Cave Trip Coordinator in 2019-2020. We found that many of our members wanted to pass their love of caving on to their children. However, at the time, our grotto did not schedule easier trips. So, once we began organizing beginner and kid-friendly trips, word got out that we were caving and offered easier trips. Within a short time, our grotto membership doubled with younger cavers. As these newer members became more experienced, it led to more surveying and vertical workshops and more experienced cave trips. Several of these members have become members of the NSS and are now leading cave trips of their own and hosting vertical training, learning how to approach the landowner community and recruiting new, younger cavers.

From 2016 to the present, I have made trips to Hawaii and fell in love with the islands' lava caves. I became active in the Hawaii Grotto as well as the Cave Conservancy of Hawaii. I was elected to the Hawaii Grotto Board in 2018 and was elected Secretary of the Hawaii Grotto in 2020. I was asked to serve the NSS as interim Membership Chair, and then the Board elected me as Membership Chair. Since becoming Membership Chair, I have helped write some "how-to's" for the NSS members website. This is an ongoing process, and other people have stepped up to support and improve this process. I am working on a project to reach out to former NSS members to invite those members back, and I have begun to work on outreach to youth groups. I will be excited to serve the NSS membership as a member of the Board of Governors.