

Bexar Grotto Meeting

Date: 4/10/17

Attendees: 39

Arron Wertheim called the meeting to order at 7:02pm.

Visitors

Ariceli and Andrew; they met Geary at Robber Baron on Sunday.

Treasury report provided by Pam Campbell:

\$14,056.22 and no more gift cards.

Organization Reports

TSS - Board meeting May 6th.

TSA - Spring Convention registration is open. If you register now you can sign up for workshops. If you are not registered it is first come, first served. The workshops include mapping, rigging, sketching, use of walls, etc. You must register for the convention before you can sign up for workshops. Convention is Saturday the 28th of April.

TCMA - We'll have a members meeting at spring convention and a breakfast. We are looking for auction item donations. Spring convention will be toga themed. There was some work done at Ezell's. We have two new preserves: Avery Ranch and Wilcox.

NSS - Board meeting in May. The convention will be in June in Rio Rancho, New Mexico. You cannot bring any Texas gear to New Mexico. This may change. Check the website. They're working on having loaner equipment.

Bracken - Meeting will be at Bracken on June 12th. We're thinking of having a vertical workshop at Bracken now that the debris has been cleared out.

Old Business

The homeless man at Robber Baron has received his belongings. He continues to hang around the area. We are trying to make an effort to convince him to go elsewhere. Alan would like to encourage members to call SAPD using a case number and to not confront the man. He has a long black beard and is tall and skinny.

New Business

We have a date for the Robber Baron open house. It will be November 11, 2017.

We also had a break-in at Robber Baron. The culprits sawed through a gate bar. They left a water bottle and an empty pack of cigarettes. The bar has been re-welded.

Bob Liebman discussion:

Arron read the by-laws regarding the prohibition of distribution of money to private persons. Arron reported that the motion violates the by-laws and that we have to back it out. Geary asked if we could change the by-laws. Joe Ranzau read the new by-laws reporting that amendments to the by-laws may be made by a 2/3 vote in a meeting without advance notice to members. Bennett reported that you cannot change the rules set forth in the by-laws, but they're referencing the constitution. Joe Ranzau noted that we are putting effort and energy into something that should be very simple. He has heard from many people with hard feelings. There are legal and creative ways to satisfy the intent of the membership and people have been working that direction, but we need to figure out a way to make this easy. Another member asked Joe if he had a proposal. Linda asked to hear the proposals. Joe R. reported that Bennett said you can temporarily suspend the constitution and amend the by-laws.

Arron said article 7 states that amendments to constitution can be proposed and then voted upon at the meeting following the proposal, but Joe said that that was out of the constitution. Joe reported that there is nothing prohibiting us from making a purchase that may benefit the individual. It goes against the intent of the by-laws, but nothing prohibits that. Arron reported that we cannot violate rules for 5013c. Other members argued that it would be legal to donate to an individual.

Linda made the motion to spend \$500 with on-rope one to purchase some consignment gear from Bob Liebman. Gregg previously spoke to Bill and he was willing to sell us survey tape and a rescue pulley for \$500. Gregg assumes he still has it. It's not in the PO Box but could have already been sent. Joe R. asked if folks are comfortable with that. Linda amended her motion that we should buy gear for \$500 and Dave seconded it. Katy said we should make an amendment to the by-laws. Pam reported that we found our new by-laws that they are a little different. Pam said we need a committee to amend the by-laws. We voted to buy gear for \$500 and nobody opposed.

HydroGeo Workshop discussion:

Geary would like to make a motion to determine whether or not the Bexar Grotto would like to host the Hydrogeo Workshop this year. Katy asked to hear more about it. Geary reported that it's a service project that the grotto does. Professionals and students are invited. They usually have 250-350 attendees. There are twenty five to thirty five modules for geology and environmental science students. It costs \$50 and has been a big fund raiser for the grotto. If you attend and work then it is free. Geary's understanding is that the money made from the event has caused some contention. Geary said one option is to create another 5013c solely for the workshop.

Gregg said that it's an incredible event and has gotten the name of the Bexar Grotto out there in a good light. He said that the money has brought strife and tension into the grotto. It doesn't seem like we spend enough time talking about caving and having fun at the meetings. Sean asked if we can donate the money we get from it. Joe R. reported that the donations cause the consternation.

Geary said that the funding can be used for a lot of good, such as the three firefighters who used their vacation to take a cave rescue class, toilets, and supporting cave exploration in Mexico. The workshop fills a big niche. There are people who travel from other states and it has become a national model for other regions. Geary also does not want it to be a contentious issue. Geary continued and said that one option is to say that we're not doing it this year. Michelle reported that she doesn't think we can make a decision on that right now and that we need more time. Geary said he needs to send out the notice and it needs to get on the calendar. Michelle asked if it's gotten so big that it needs its own organization. Geary said there are many options and he doesn't have an opinion he'd like to express.

Alan reported that we have had an issue with having a lack of funds to do things in the past. He considers this as part of the growing pains of an organization growing and having to do good. Yes, it's contentious and we will work through it and do good with the money. Steve said that he thinks everyone enjoys the HG workshop and that it's not a burden. Linda said that she thinks it's a huge burden, but we're going through officers quickly due to the burdens. She also asked what the major purpose of the organization is. She believes it has been an incredibly strong and productive workshop with major karst scientists. However, the grotto has to decide if they're willing to take that on and if we have the depth of leadership to do that. Bennett said it's like a part-time job for the organizers. Linda asks if that is the purpose of the grotto. Joe R. said he's not involved in HydroGeo, but to Steve's point, the core people who volunteer are desperately hoping to back away from the workshop. Greg Mosier said that dealing with this is a burden for board members from a standpoint of planning and the responsibility, as well as the strife developing. Recruitment for new board members will be a challenge.

Greg M. thinks there is so much opportunity to do good for the grotto, but he doesn't think we can make that decision tonight. He proposes that we host it this year and that this is a discussion we continue and discuss for next year. Gary W. said that he went. He asked how many people need to be part of the organizing group who are willing to take on the job. Geary says he already has people who have committed to doing the workshop. Gregg said that the money is the core issue and that we need to nimbly and quickly disperse the funds to worthwhile causes. He said we have no reason to save it. But Bennett said we have to keep it in case the next year is not profitable. Pam said what if we don't get the sponsors to do it, we do need some money. Joe R. said we could also have a separate account for the seed money. Joe R. proposes that if we want to walk away we should set up the event knowing that we're going to do it. He asked if people come to these meetings for volunteer opportunities or caving? Joe said we've always had a strong service component but a lot of people are exhausted after the volunteer events.

Greg M. said those are fine points and he wants to make a motion that the Bexar Grotto host it this year, Alan seconds it. Geary had already made the motion, but he takes it as a favorable amendment. Bennett recommended that the HG committee meet separately to talk about it. Joe R. and Rob discussed that a few years ago there was a motion to not hold the HydroGeo workshop and it was stopped, but then it was brought back on again. Nobody remembers this. Gregg says he is okay with the motion as it stands and the HydroGeo committee can talk separately about it.

Arron asked what the motion means. Greg M. said his intent with the motion is that yes means that yes we'd host it, and no is that we would not host it. Jill said that if the core people don't want to do it, then it's a committee decision. Gregg said we should meet soon, figure it out, and then report back to the grotto. Gregg and Geary are co-chairs. Arron asked if they would please report back to the grotto.

Joe R. has new business. He and Kristy are retiring from being head cooks of Bamberger after this year. If anyone is interested in being in charge next year, then talk to him before the event so they can guide you through the process. Joe R. said that this will need to be a decision the grotto needs to make if nobody steps up.

Announcements:

Aspen is hosting a fund raiser for her school for Parkinson's a week from today at Beto's on Broadway on the 17th from 5pm to 9pm. All sales excluding alcohol will go to the Parkinson's disease foundation. If you still want to donate you can talk to Aspen.

Alan is passing around something found at Robber Baron and wants members to guess what it is.

Sue has T-Shirts and patches for sale.

Upcoming Trips:

April 12: Play night at Robber Baron

Saturday the 15th Lamar University has a trip. Michael Cunningham is coordinating so if you'd like to volunteer, talk to him.

April 22nd and 23rd: San Antonio and Austin will have a March for Science weekend. It's at 10am. Aspen reported that there is a Facebook page if you'd like to march. It's also Earth Day.

April 28, 29, 30th : TSA Spring Convention at Hill Country State Natural Area; there will be \$20 pre-registration email blast sent out. There will be in-cave workshops. There will be workshops on coordinating GPS to cell phones. There will be an in-cave rope and rigging workshop (8 people). There will also be a number of other presentations. Registration is open now on the TSA website.

May 6th: TSS board meeting

May 6th -7th: Bamberger Ranch Cookout will be held on Sunday, but volunteers are needed for both days to prepare lunch for 350+ people. See Fran and Rob for more details. Annual fund raiser. Prep and setup Saturday, meeting 7am Sunday to start cooking and feed from 11-1pm. They make a sizable donation to grotto (\$1000). Be on lookout for email. They invite us back for recreation trip. They have a 15 acre spring fed lake and we have a potluck dinner on July 4th. They also have a silent auction and native plants on sale from ranch.

May 13th: Deep and Punkin Work Day (last big work weekend) and Don's birthday bash. There will also be a Government Canyon weekend.

May 20th: Last Government Canyon trip for the summer. Talk to Marvin.

June 12th: Grotto meeting at Bracken. There will be a potluck and bat flight viewing. Make sure to bring a lid for your food and an ice chest for perishable items. There is no electricity and no running water.

Things to look out for: Bexar Grotto has been invited back to Cave Without a Name and the trip should be scheduled soon.

June 19th: NSS Convention in Rio Rancho, New Mexico. Consider getting a hotel because camping in New Mexico in June in a parking lot is not comfortable. Go to the website.

September 15-17th: Hydrogeo Workshop

September 23-30th: International Association of Hydrogeologists in Croatia

October 12-15th: Texas Caver's Reunion. We need people to help cook. Stefan has given up. If we don't get volunteers then we might have to do catering or fend for ourselves. Theme: Vikings.

Trip Reports

Joe Mitchell: We had a Deep survey trip. We had more people come to that than any previous trip. We had some super teams. We had 6 teams total in the cave. Arron said that he was on Marvin's team and he lost his pants and shirt. Bennett said that they found a place that some team had stopped at. It had some pretty areas. It was near the new Crystal waterfall. Dave said he'd never hammered on a cave before, and he and Ellie worked on busting it open. He saw that it opened up to a beautiful room with tight formations. Gregg said they did negative meters. They had to go clean up some areas. He and Matt Z. did some hammering. He nearly ripped off his nipple rings. His hamstring cramped up and he wailed like a stuck pig. While they were hammering into the next lead, Matt smashed his finger with an 80lb rock like a grape. The food was great. The new length of the cave is 6290 meters.

Jill: A few weeks ago she was approached by Wally Henderson of Satler's ranch. He needed someone to give a presentation on caving to Girl Scouts. She said that she could arrange a trip. Jill had 20-30 slides out of it. The girl scouts were asking good questions about the formations. She took two groups into a cave. One of the girls said that when she grows up she wants to be a caver. They're from Austin and we may hear from them again.

Leia: They went to Government Canyon last week. They surveyed the sinkhole that went nowhere. She had dug it out last year and it went nowhere. It took them four hours to get back because the GPS didn't work. Mike wouldn't listen to Leia. Marvin called them in the distance and then Lisa Miller came upon a cave. They found pure calcite. The pit went down 20 feet. They thought that it went down further. It was beautiful. Turns out the cave had already been surveyed. Then they slept under a thunderstorm.

Geary: Went to KY and TN and went into Obbee River Gorge. They went to a 12 mile and 7 mile long cave. It rained and rained.

Program Announcement

Meeting Adjourned at 8:21pm.