

Bexar Grotto Meeting

Date: 8/28/17

Attendees: 40

Greg called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

Visitors

David is visiting for the first time.

Karen Wheeler is a friend of Alan Montemayor. They work together in the Sierra Club. She is a microbiologist. She is interested in what lives in the caves. There was a microbe found in a cave in Lechugilla . This microbe divides once every 10,000 years.

Elena (LeeLee) is visiting and they're signed up for the Robber Baron trip.

Treasury report provided Pam:

\$14, 470.46 in the account

Organization Reports

TSS – The board meeting was Saturday. It turned into a teleconference meeting. It was a productive meeting. They are moving forward on the headquarters/facility purchase. Marvin has publications to sell. If you'd like to browse through them, talk to Marvin.

TSA – A members' meeting will occur at TCR on October 15th. Ellie has agreed to run elections again. If anyone would like to be an officer, email Ellie Thaney. Rob is uncertain when the elections will take place, but they most likely will be online. The elected officials will stay in office until the new year.

TCMA – We have a big awesome fundraiser that the committee is working on. The event will take place at Buffalo Billiards. We are also going to have elections at the end of the year. If you are interested in being on the Board of Directors, let Gregg Williams know. Per Hurricane Harvey, the TCMA is creating a relief fund for any cavers who have found themselves in need at this time. Bennett has put together a donations page for which you can earmark money for that purpose. All of the money will go to cavers. There is still a lot of unknowns in terms of who has been affected in Houston. There are many people in the Greater Houston Grotto who could have been affected. Look on the TCMA website and check your email. The new website is tcmacaves.org.

NSS – The convention in Montana next year will be in Helena. They just received a grant of \$400,000 for a new museum and education program. They just rented out the old Cave Avenue office. There was a bequeath from Roger Spurka. It's a piece of property in Wisconsin that can be sold for revenue.

Old Business

There was a meeting of the Robber Baron property group. There has been someone stopping by the cave every day to check on things. So far there has not been any evidence of anyone on the property and no new trash. There are still a lot of things that need to be dealt with, as well as planning for the open house on November 11th.

New Business

Rob: We bought new helmets and we need to get some headlamps. Rob is making a motion that we buy headlamps for the helmets. Rob also thinks we had some headlamps that were in disrepair, so we possibly need to buy more. Joe Mitchell asked what is the current number of good helmets that we have. Greg M. reported that we have 34 helmets, 24 of which have lights. Kirk asked how many helmets Joe would like ideally. Greg reminded the group that Rob made the motion to buy 11 additional lights. Leia reported that the grotto gets a 10% discount at Good Sports, including Petzl lights. Bennett will look and see what lights the current helmets have. Bennett will make the purchase. Rob wants to know what the reasonable dollar amount would be. Bennett reported that \$300 to \$400 would be enough for headlamps. Joe M. mentioned that we should also buy some helmets. Evelyn also has 10 at the university, and Houston brings helmets to the event as well. Rob reported that the current need is headlamps so at this meeting we could free up the money for headlamps. Rob made the motion to spend \$400 on headlamps. Gregg Williams seconded. All were in favor of the motion.

Announcements:

Leia: She is writing an introduction for the Bexar Facts, so if you have any information, pictures, stories, or opinions please send them to Leia. See her after the meeting for her email. Leia would also like to feature new members in the Bexar Facts. If you are a new member, please see Leia so that you can be highlighted.

Geary: Things are progressing with the Hydrogeo workshop. Professors are going to take a couple days to get a head count from their classes. Attendance may be down this year because schools may not have had as much of an opportunity to advertise. Also, he does not know how many will be coming from Galveston, but he would not be surprised if a number of people from that area do not attend. They've gotten a really good response sponsorship-wise and have gotten all of the funds they have asked for. Jordan and Stephanie are the volunteer coordinators. Registration will kick off at 4pm on Friday. They have a water well drilling rig coming in as well as a Lydar system for the interior of the cave. They have a couple other new modules going on. The weekend will end at noon on Sunday. He and Jill will send the program guide to the printer in the next couple of days. Geary is getting a lot of interest from college professors. They're considering it the premier event of the year. Thomas Adams, the curator of paleontology at Witte will be the keynote speaker in the cave on Saturday night. He is an outstanding speaker. They will also have lightning talks on Friday and Saturday. Those are 10 minute long talks. There will be several vendors with books and T-shirts. They will have BBQ and vegetarian options.

Jordan: She is the volunteer coordinator for Hydrogeo workshop. She will be passing around a list to provide your contact information in case you are interested in helping out this year. Volunteers will be setting up tents, keeping the area clean, keeping people organized, and helping with food.

Jill: Needs high quality and high resolution photos of Deep Cave within the next 48 hours.

Upcoming Trips:

August 30th: Robber Baron at 6:30pm. Please let Geary know if you are a new caver and need equipment.

September 6th and 13th: There will be planning meetings for the Hydrogeo workshop. Contact Geary Schindel.

September 12-14th: Rob will be taking Boy Scouts into Robber Baron in preparation for Deep Cave. Contact Rob if you'd like to assist.

September 15-17th: Hydrogeo Workshop at Cave Without a Name. Attendance is \$50. Harmon's BBQ will do the catering. They will do all the work. Talk to Jordan and Stephanie about volunteer opportunities.

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

September 30th: TCMA Fundraiser "Save the Caves" at Buffalo Billiard's in Austin at 7pm.

October: The first full weekend in October (October 7th and 8th.), the Government Canyon trips will start again. The trips are once a month and the goals are to walk the entire property to identify sinkholes and caves. There was an agreement established before the park opened for cavers to go and walk the entire property, explore caves, document karst features, and collect bugs in the caves. This project is still ongoing. We walk, look for caves and sinkholes, and explore the caves and sinkholes. There are some caves Marvin would not take you to if you're a first timer. We've dug into a number of nice caves. There are thousands of acres that nobody has ever looked at. Your cave is out there waiting for you to find. At this time we have 61 caves as well as a number of good digs and sinkholes. We're actively exploring the deepest cave. He will give a program on Government Canyon. Wear the right clothes, including jeans and hiking boots.

October 12-15th: 39th Annual Texas Caver's Reunion at Paradise Canyon on the Medina River. Parade Theme: Vikings. It is an opportunity to spend time with about 300 Texas Cavers to come together and have fun. There will be speleolympics, costume contest, a parade, vendors, and rope climbing contests.

October 13th, 14th, 15th: Colorado Bend's 30th Anniversary; a number of caves will be open. If you want to participate at Colorado Bend you need to contact one of the trip leaders. Go to the TSA website for more details and contact Chris Pena or Will Quast via the website to make sure nothing has changed. There will also be volunteer opportunities opening up in the fall at the caves and property. It is usually the 2nd weekend of the month.

October 20th-22nd: Rob will take BS Troop 501 to Deep and Punkin.

November 3, 4, 5th: Recreational trip to Deep and Punkin. The trip is currently full but you can get on the waiting list. See Greg Mosier. He will send an email at the beginning of October to the original cavers who responded. He expects that a few slots will come available so keep your ears open.

November 11th: Robber Baron Open House; we will need lots of volunteers. Every 18 months we have a public open house at the cave to allow the public into the cave. It's also a big fundraiser for the TCMA. We usually put 400-500 people through the cave in about 6 hours. We have to station people throughout the cave to monitor the people. We also have tables for BCI and Master Naturalists, etc, at the site. We also print photos of attendees in the cave. Once Hydrogeo is done we will get started on the open house. We will need some help in advance of the event for planning. We will need about 40-50 volunteers.

Trip Reports

Tom Florer found himself on the side of a mountain in Wyoming. They were on a shelf above the canyon floor. The shelf was about 200 yards wide, with streams running along it. Most of the streams drop into sink holes. Once they go into the holes they either come out as springs and make their way out at the bottom or at the bottom of the canyon. Right near their campsite there were a few holes that were big enough to climb into. He shined his light in there and you could hear water running at the bottom of the sinkhole. One hole was easily chimneyable about 18 feet down. It drops another 20 feet down, bolls out a little, and you can see water below. It wasn't a huge quantity of water. He could not tell if this sinkhole emptied out. He thinks there is a waterfall inside of the mountain. This area is not known for limestone. It's either gneiss, basalt, or granite. Geary reported that they have the 4th deepest cave in the U.S. It's on the backside of Fossil Mountain Ice Cave. You can do a through trip with an ice axe to chip your way out of the other entrance. There is a cave called Columbine crawl which is a tiny, wet cave with a series of short drops. Tom made the decision to not go further into the hole.

Program Announcement

Joe and Evelyn Mitchell recently made a trip to the International Conference on Speleology as well as a side trip to New Zealand.

Greg adjourned the meeting at 7:47pm