

Bexar Grotto Meeting

Date: 10/9/17

Attendees: 38

Arron called the meeting to order at 7pm.

Visitors

Marie is from New Jersey and saw us on Meetup. She has done some rock climbing.

Marilyn met Greg Mosier through work.

Brad Smith is coming back after being away for some time.

Jacob found out about us from Sidney. He's a tour guide at Natural Bridge Caverns.

Sidney is Jacob's girlfriend. She gives the adventure tours at Natural Bridge Caverns.

Treasury report not provided

We don't have the Hydrogeo information yet, but there is \$13,668.66 in the Bexar Grotto accounts.

Organization Reports

TSS – No updates, no books. There will be a table and books at TCR.

TSA – Rob: TSA is helping with registration. Rob might go around and ask for individual's help with things going on this weekend. The TSA meeting is on Sunday at 9am. If you are a member of TSA you should have gotten an email with the ballot. There is also an opportunity to write in Rick Corbell for chairman. If you have ideas for the TSA, we'd like to hear them. If you go caving we would like a brief trip report. This is for our magazine. You don't have to write long dissertations. If he could just get half or a quarter page and one photo he can fill up a magazine with many trip reports.

TCMA – Gregg: Texas Caver Reunion is coming up this weekend. We will have a member's meeting Saturday morning at 9am. We'll go over general business then. We may also try to introduce the people who have been nominated. We will also have a fundraising breakfast early Sunday morning at 8:30am. Come by and get some breakfast. If you would like to help cook, see Pam. We had a very successful fundraiser at Buffalo Billiards. Over 100 people attended. The Gary Franklin band was there and they will perform at TCR as well. They're an all caver band. We still have nominations open. Look at our website.

NSS – The NSS will have a table at TCR. You don't have to be an NSS member to help out. You'll be basically passing out brochures, publications, and answering questions.

Bracken: Fran was not in attendance.

Old Business

No old business.

New Business

Don: Texas Cavers' Reunion starts Thursday around noon and goes through Sunday around 3pm. There is a wine tasting Friday night, a parade Saturday, music Saturday, dinner Saturday, and mud wrestling. Don needs help monitoring the front gate. We've had people coming in who don't sign their liability

release. He needs volunteers. There are rope climbing contests, speleolympics, and lots of fun. Please bring cash, as there is no way to take credit cards. Registration is \$30 per person. The river is gorgeous. If you have a working carbide light, bring it because Don is going to give away some carbide. The nude Texas Cavers' calendar will be at TCR. They're planning on doing an old-timers' calendar next.

Linda: NCRC is having a training at Colorado Bend SP this year. They will have level 1, 2, and SPR (small party self-rescue). It would be awesome if we could have some people go to it. It's January 20-27th. SPR is only 3 days. SPR is separate and anyone can attend. \$175 for SPR and level 1 and 2 are \$450. The instructors are paying to go there. Rob wonders if we should make a motion to sponsor people for SPR. We have five people here who can take a week. Linda would be willing to make an application sheet. Arron doesn't know if we have any training money budgeted. Linda said that it's next year. So next time around we'll revisit it and come up with a list of names. Arron would like an application with minimum requirements as well as a commitment. Linda will head up the application. Ken Demarest told Linda to check with him about scholarships.

MJ: The vehicle gates at Robber Baron have been installed. A fence company donated all the additional materials we needed.

Announcements:

Rob: Rob is getting a lot of requests for Eagle Scout projects. If you are a preserve manager or manage another place within our community that we can take to the scouts, let him know. There needs to be a point person who is the beneficiary who comes up with the scope of work and meets with the scouts. They sign a few documents and sign off on their projects. Every week he gets a request to help scouts come up with good Eagle Scout projects. Linda reported that the fence around the cave and the walkway were both scout projects. At Bracken there have been several projects. Email Rob Bissett if you have any ideas. All he needs are ideas. Preserve managers need a list of things that could be helpful. It doesn't have to be 100% caving related. Linda reported that they need a fence at Rolling Oaks. Rob also needs to know where the helmets and lights are because he has a big group in about 12 days. Tom Florer has the brand new helmets. Bennett has some helmets. Mike has the old helmets and a bag of dirt that goes with them. Mike has about 10 to 15. Mike has to clean them up because they had a dirty trip.

Arron: The officers have decided on the nominee for the Chuck Stuehm award. We also have the Carl Ponebshek award.

Tom: Carl Ponebshek was a caver who passed away. It's a reward for new cavers. Requirements must be that you must have started caving in the past two years. The prize is a one year membership to the NSS. It honors his memory and helps to beef up membership in the NSS. The criteria is that they must have been caving twice in the past two years. Carl was a 1st army guy. He was at the Battle of the Bulge and D-Day. He was behind enemy lines. If you have anybody in mind, let any of the officers know in person or by phone.

Mike Harris: Robber Baron Open House. We need lots of volunteers. It's a community event and we need lots of people to be in the cave. Contact Evelyn Mitchell and let her know what time you can spend over there. We're going to be funneling close to 500 people through the cave. Linda reported that we only open up part of the cave. Mike said we will also have a group for people to go to other places in the

cave for a guided trip. We need to make sure no minors get in on their own. There was a minor last year who forged his parents' signature to get into the cave. Arron explained Robber Baron cave to the visitors. It's a great opportunity for new members. Mike reported that we'll also send out a request for help. We got rid of the pile of brush, but there is a lot we need to do before the open house. Mike reported that we now have three homeless people. Everyone has been doing a great job running people off. Greg is wondering if we have enough equipment. The CO2 level is occasionally not great so we won't have more people in the cave than we have equipment for.

Long sleeve grey shirts: \$20, short sleeve: \$15, Hydrogeo workshop are \$5 but if you join tonight you get a free T-shirt.

Leia is writing Bexar Facts and would like caving stories and member highlights.

Upcoming Trips:

October 12-15th: 39th Annual Texas Cavers' 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, mud wrestling, a parade, vendors, and rope climbing contests. It's a great environment and a beautiful place to go swimming. Bring a tent or just come out for the day.

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.

October 28th: There is a joint NASA and WEKS foundation sponsoring LCATS. They're doing an event at Robber Baron. They get high school students who are interested in science to build an instrument that will be used in space. They're going to do experiments in the cave. Joe Mitchell doesn't have a time yet, but speak to him if you're interested. Mike reported that Joe could use some help that day.

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 lot of slots will be opening up for the Deep and Punkin trip.

November 4th and 5th: There will be karst walking at Government Canyon. The Aggies will be there camping out.

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. We will need some help in advance of the event for planning. We will need about 40-50 volunteers. Joe Mitchell will send around a sign-up list in the future. In the immediate future Joe needs some help with the advanced planning and advertising. If

someone lives close to the cave who could handle a handout for material around the cave entrance, we could provide this to neighbors who live around the cave. He'd like to do it in early October. Jacob said he could help. Joe also likes to have tables from various organizations there. We've had Master Naturalists there in the past. If the Master Naturalists would be interested in having a booth, please let Joe Mitchell know. In the past we've had an after-party for volunteers. Rob is offering his house for an after-party.

Thanksgiving: Ron Rutherford is running a Musquiz trip over Thanksgiving. There will be Quintana Roo trips over Thanksgiving and Christmas. If you need more information, contact Linda. You must be vertically competent to do Musquiz.

December 2nd and 3rd: Government Canyon

December 31: NSS is holding a New Year's Eve ball in Huntsville, AL.

****There will be upcoming trips to Hill Country State Natural Area, keep your ears out****

****Bennett is curious about the December Christmas party.****

Trip Reports

Marvin: This was our first Government Canyon weekend. We had three teams. Marvin had the kids' team. Earlier in the year Ted Lee contacted Marvin about a scout doing his exploration merit badge and was wondering if anything out there would work. Marvin knew of some small caves that needed a survey. Marvin had planned to do this Saturday. His daughter Leia was there and Victoria's daughter was there. They hiked to the Canyon Ranch area. Ted went with them for about an hour and then turned back. You have to go quite a distance to get there. They surveyed the Foot Tall Mud Crawl. It's about six meters long. The two scouts had no problem squeezing in. Sunday Jerry Gillespie and Kelsey Woodward went to the Gallagher Ranch tract and visited the two caves they know about there, including Shadow Pit. They went and took pictures as well as a fauna collection. They saw a Gulf Coast Toad that was sitting in a pocket on the wall about three to four feet off the floor. The toad looked healthy and fat. They also went to Loca Guera Pit. They took a few pictures of old graffiti and found some pits. Shadow Pit is around 9 meters and the other is 7-8 meters deep.

Steve: Greg Mosier and Gary Gilletzie went to check 5-33. It doesn't have a name yet. It's a crack in the rock in the side of the hill. They had borrowed the park services' GPS. They started to look at anything close by as a backup plan. They found a few things within a thousand feet or so. They went to check it and it turns out it was one Marvin had checked once before. That's typical of Government Canyon. The third place they stopped at was a 2-3-inch-wide crack. There were Harvestmen there which is a good sign. They each put their hands in the crack and felt airflow. That closed the deal and so they started working. They started blasting and set off about 8 charges and managed to get one opened up to squeeze in.

Greg M.: He squeezed in and there was just enough room to lay inside and look over a ledge. He tossed a rock over the ledge and there was a dead airspace fall. The crack is about a foot wide and goes down about 8 feet. It opens up at the bottom. You could look down about 8 to 10 feet and there is some open space beyond that. There is probably a 20-foot pit there.

Arron: They did some ridgewalking to look for features. They were doing well until they realized somebody was lost. They spent an hour and a half looking for him but it turns out he went back to the truck. They re-discovered some other features, but somebody had already been there before.

Alan: He went to Madagascar in July and August and saw what's called tsingy. Deep inside the pinnacles there is a cool cave. It was vertical passageways that went for long distances. There were cool little frogs inside and giant black rats.

Leia: She took a group of people to Robber Baron last Wednesday. It rained and rained. Everybody was getting soaked and poured on. Twenty minutes later she came back up and reported that she could not open the gate. Mike Harris had trouble opening it. They went in and had a great trip. Also, she ran into a lady passing out fliers to Robber Baron. There is a portion of the cave that extends under Hill View. She will be coming to the open house and would like to talk to everyone. She had a hose under her house and she put a hose down there. It never flooded and there was a hollow sound. They believe that the cave extends farther.

Geary: He did a little touring in Croatia, Montenegro, and Bosnia. Ridgewalking there is not easy for fear of getting your legs blown off by landmines. There are incredibly impressive karst features there. They were blown away. They did some interesting driving including a road that meets the top 10 most dangerous roads. It was scary. There were no guardrails for 1500 feet. Caves there are big sinkholes that seem to be plugged at the bottom, but they find smaller entrances. They spent a lot of time at fairly cheap hotels with wonderful people and good food. He stayed in a chalet and had an owner who brought over a large bottle of Gruppo. They saw some of the largest springs in the world. They saw some of the areas where they filmed Game of Thrones.

Ken: He went to Mexico with Peter Sprouse to Sotana de Mesqua, near Del Rio. They dropped a 65 meter, double barreled pit that has been explored once before. The water level was so high that they couldn't head downstream. They went upstream and spotted one blind white cave catfish. They took water samples. They sighted three snakes and two frogs, and a mouse. On the 2nd and 3rd days they went with Terry Saver to some pictograms that were some of the best preserved and most extensive of their kind that he's ever seen.

Bennett: Pam and he went caving in the basement of their hotel in Ouray. It was a vapor cave fed by hot springs.

Program Announcement

Ken will do a program on cave safety.

Arron adjourned the meeting at 8:02pm.