

Bexar Grotto Meeting

Date: 11/13/17

Attendees: 63

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

Visitors

Eeyori moved here over a year ago. She did a little caving in NY state. Brendan did a lot of caving in NY as well.

Rye went to Robber Baron this past weekend.

Luke is a big fan of rock climbing and is interested in caving.

Jeb likes rock climbing as well. He caved in Mexico and just went to Robber Baron Saturday.

Jennifer has been interested in this for a long time but didn't know we exist.

Billy and Elizabeth hike everything taller than five feet. He is part of the rescue program at Garner. He went to Robber Baron and loved it.

Jesse went to Robber Baron and loved it. She is interested in the geology of the caves.

Megan and Alan went to Robber Baron Open House and Megan liked the tight squeezes.

Terry and his family have been doing caves all over the country, but never any tight squeezes.

Treasury report

We picked \$8,422.29 at Hydrogeo, so our total is now \$21,312.80

Organization Reports

TSS – Joe Mitchell explained the TSS and their role in keeping records for the 6,000 caves around the state. Talk to Marvin if you're interested in a publication on Texas caves.

TSA – Rob Bisset reported that we had officer elections. He was elected again as chairman. Rob explained the TSA to the new visitors. Rachel Reddig (Ginger) is now the treasurer. That was the only change.

TCMA – Gregg explained TCMA to the new visitors. All paid members should have a ballot in their email for the upcoming elections for the 2018 Board of Directors. We have a good slate of candidates. Gregg will not be on the board this coming year as he has reached his term limit. There is a write-in option for the TCMA ballot. Joe Mitchell reported that we've been doing the Robber Baron open house for 7 years. This was the biggest and most successful one ever. 569 people went through the cave. We earned \$5,339. We sold about 80 T-shirts and 20 bags of guano. Joe thanked Rob and Missy for having us at their house for a party afterwards. The 67 volunteers deserve recognition. There were many volunteers that came from different cities. We logged 592 volunteer hours just on Saturday. This is the last Open House Joe Mitchell is going to coordinate. If somebody does step up he will assist them in passing on the knowledge. Joe is also going to pass on scheduling duties to Mike Harris.

NSS – Geary Schindel reported that the July Montana convention is coming together. It will be in Helena. It should be outstanding. There will be many trips to interesting caves. If you're going to be in the Huntsville, AL area over New Year's you may attend the Bat Ball at the new headquarters. Three

important documents have been passed: the ad hoc committee report is now posted on the website, the convention ad hoc committee, and the ad hoc committee on education and museums. We got a \$400k gift from a member who wanted the organization to use the money to create an education program. The membership committee has an issue with declining membership. They're trying to figure out how to address the change. The membership covers the fixed overhead membership costs. If you're an NSS member whose membership has lapsed, you should consider joining again.

Bracken – No news

Old Business

Carl Penobshek Award: Tom Florer explained the Carl Penobshek award to recognize outstanding new cavers. The award is a one year membership to the NSS. We selected a candidate who has been enthusiastic about caving. We selected Noble Fisk.

We approved a purchase of some cave phones. They have arrived. Arron explained what a cave phone is.

The NCRC scholarships: A basic application was proposed for the scholarship. Linda has drafted an application.

New Business

Geary thinks we should pay the entire cost of the NCRC for the scholarship. Mike Harris made a motion that we pay the full amount for two NCRC scholarships and that the officers review the applications and pick a candidate randomly from the qualified applicants. Gregg Williams seconded the motion. Geary reported that we have \$22,000 in the budget and last year we didn't have any members to go. He thinks we should pay for everyone that wants to go. Linda thinks two is a reasonable number. Gregg suggested amending the motion if we have more than two people interested. Mike is willing to amend the motion to 4 people. Prerequisites were discussed. Mike amended the motion to up to four qualified people. Gregg Williams seconded it. Pam passed out silent ballots. Linda reported that this isn't a one shot chance and that we do this regularly and discussed the other options for NCRC. The vote was 37 for and 0 against.

Arron presented the Excel spreadsheet for the grotto. We bought cave phones, lights, helmets, and some other extra expenses. We also donate to a variety of entities. Last year we sent five firefighters to the NCRC. Arron talked about the things we get requests for and sometimes approve. We donated money to the NSS headquarters. We rented a Porta Potty for Robber Baron. We also donated to the 4th annual Hydrogeo workshop. Arron discussed the grotto income. Our total income was \$20,234. Total expenses were \$16,500. Projections for 2017: \$23,000, Expenses: \$20,000. We came out where we were supposed to be. When the budget committee discussed these, they reported that the grotto needs to have money to bankroll events. Then the committee said we have other unknown expenses, so we should probably have 5-10k in emergency. They also wanted money to donate towards other valued items. We want \$20,000 in the bank and to get there we will save .40 on the dollar and make available for donation .60 on the dollar. Our total in the bank is \$21,312.80. We have about \$200 available for donations. After we hit \$20,000 in savings we don't save anymore and everything else is donated. The grotto is in a great position for 2018. The committee was formed to create a document detailing the mission of the giving committee and reviewed the document. Geary said we should have a two week period to review the information because they haven't had time to review it. Geary made a motion to postpone it for two weeks. Marvin seconds Geary's motion to postpone any further action on this.

30 agreed to postpone the giving policy and 7 wanted to move forward for it.

Joe Mitchell made a motion to be reimbursed for \$129.50 for kneepads and gloves for the open house. Gregg seconded. The grotto did a hand vote and Joe's reimbursement was approved.

Geary presented a slideshow on the Hydrogeo workshop. Geary explained the workshop. He found that many people coming out of school don't have field experiences, so this is an opportunity to teach them field techniques. The slides demonstrated the growth in profit since 2014. This year there was an \$8,422.29 profit. He presented the sponsors to the workshop. The total profits were \$27,536.06. One of the concerns is that the sponsors are donating that money for the event and that it should be used for the event. Bennett interjected and said that the money was raised for the event and the money from the event came from the students. Geary said that the money is fungible. Arron reported that the Bexar Grotto bankrolled the event. Rob wanted to know the point of this presentation. The steering committee recommended that the Hydrogeo be separate from the grotto. In the future the HG will be its own 501c3. The Association of American Geologists have said that they'll take over the event. Geary reported that this funding source for the grotto is going to disappear. Arron said that the steering committee still has to vote on this. Greg made a motion to wait to vote. Then he decided to revoke the motion. Nobody seconded. It's a dead motion. Mike Harris made a motion to allow the Hydrogeo to form its own 501c3. Geary clarified that the steering committee recommend that there'd be some seed money for the event. Numbers discussed were \$5000, and then people also discussed \$1000. Pam suggested we don't vote on seed money until they are their own organization. Bennett said we need to decide as a grotto if we need to let them spin off to their own entity. Bennett says there is really nothing to vote on, we're just not going to do it. Gregg said that if the people in New Mexico want to take over then they can. Geary thinks that Hydrogeo is free to move into their own entity and it doesn't require a vote. Everyone agreed that we don't need a vote.

Announcements:

Joe has 34 helmets gathered up. They're drying in Joe's garage. He doesn't know who wants to have them. There are not enough bags to store all the gear.

Next meeting we're doing the photo selection for the Christmas cards. If you have a contender, bring a photo.

Grotto T-Shirts are for sale.

Upcoming Trips:

November 18th: Rob is starting the Hill Country State Natural Area project. No camping is available this weekend. On this day the plan is to verify cave locations via GPS coordinates. We're still working out the process for the camping situation. We haven't established what we're going to do. Please notify Rob in advance if you are coming. Do not just show up to the trip. Email Rob Bissett. People will be expected around 9am. He is looking for two teams of three people. He isn't sure how many teams he wants yet.

November 23rd-26th: Ron Rutherford is leading a trip to Musquiz. Contact him if you are interested. Musquiz is south of Del Rio by 150 miles approximately. It is a lot of rough road. This is a "pit-bopping" trip. You must be vertically competent and be able to set re-belays. You should be able to survey and rig vertical caves. Rob is unsure as to whether he is still open to more people.

November 23rd through 26th: Peter Sprouse is going to Quintana Roo in southern Mexico, which are all horizontal.

Thanksgiving Day: State of Zacatecas, you must have passports. Piece of property where for 100 years the local community has dug geodes out of the ground. They dig the geodes out, crack open with hammer, and one out of ten are keepers. There are 300 acres of quartz geodes all over the ground. If you want to go talk to Kirk. They are going to caravan down there. They will spend half a day at the geode mine and half a day at a nearby shelter cave with pictographs. The following day they go to a silver mine in the town of Zacatecas.

December 2nd and 3rd: Government Canyon SNA trip. Contact Marvin Miller or show up at the volunteers' center at 9am.

December 16th: Hill Country SNA

January 6th: Government Canyon SNA; TSA Winter Business Meeting at Government Canyon

January 20th: Hill Country SNA

January 20th through 27th: NCRC Cave Rescue Training at Colorado Bend State Park

February 17th: Hill Country SNA

April 21st: Hill Country SNA

Trip Reports

Trip reports were skipped.

Program Announcement

There was no program announcement.

Gregg made a motion to adjourn at 8:28 and it was seconded. Everyone agreed.