

Bexar Grotto

Meeting Minutes

February 26, 2018

Opening

The regular meeting of the Bexar Grotto was called to order at 7:00 p.m., at Chester's Hamburgers.

Present

30 + people

New Members/Visitors

3 new members/visitors

Cody from Japan (Air Force) other person's name not understood from Japan; Chris Lafferty is a returning visitor/member of the Bexar Grotto, back to work and stay.

Treasury Report

Final number: \$16,135.60 ; 2017 taxes have been submitted

Bexar Grotto Caving Membership: \$5.00/year per person; Family--\$7.00/year

Organization Reports

TSS: [No new info.//--Just](#) From last meeting notes: Texas Speleology Center (property in South West Austin we recently purchased for the headquarters), they had a meeting a couple of weekends ago, but moving forward there are repairs needed to be made on the house, moving things from the TSS office over to the new Texas Speleology Center, just in time because of a recent burst of a pipe for flood; nothing was ruined; glad they moved; looking for people to help repair the place; looking for people in general to lead and help; N/A

TSA: TSA Spring Convention coming up March 23, 24, at Hill Country State Natural Area outside Bandera, TX.; be looking at grotto emails/Texas Cavers email lists for more info on TSA Spring convention, the online registration should be opening up in the next two weeks or so, so be looking for that. nice, fairly-large camping area; earlier this year so it's not so hot! (nice place to go hiking, hang out, camp, go caving possibly?)

TCMA: members meeting coming up on March 24, at TSA Spring Convention, at Hill Country State Natural Area, at lunch time from Noon to 1 p.m., Rob brought a donation for the auction we are having to help support the funding and conservation of Texas Cave Management Association (TCMA). WE need anything valuable that you may want to donate, for the live and silent auction! Please donate! Email Lindsay Admoski on the TCMA website or find her on FB. No recent or near future cave purchases yet due to getting the organization stuff to run more smoothly, but hopefully in the near future; we need money and support, too! [Lindsay said: We have a really exciting auction item \(Ben Hutchins\) is giving us the naming rights to a new species they found in the Edwards Aquifer, a type of Ostracod * ?, if you bid on this auction item and win, you get to name the new species. \(this is at the live auction at the convention on Saturday, only!!\)](#)

NSS: Encouraging people to join! The parent organization of the Bexar Grotto. You can join on caves.org; you can get an NSS Magazine; Check out the NSS newsletter; if you're serious about caving; NSS Convention in Montana in July 2018! Date: TBD

Bracken: Rob Bissett spoke for BCI's Fran Hutchins, "White Nose Syndrome Research continues in the Texas Panhandle caves; the research has expanded to do more than just the times of the year when the Bats are hibernating so we can get a better understanding of the fungus and what it's doing to the bats and in general throughout the year and what kind of conservation it has". Continue down with trip reports with BCI and Fran Hutchins.

MJ had question on NCRC Scholarship: [He \(MJ\) and Garry Donnom didn't get to participate in the NCRC this past year with the scholarship, and wondered if that rolled over to the next year? Mike Harris said that from what he understood, that it did roll over, and that the grotto paid for it. MJ said he thought he heard something like that, but wasn't for sure if it was in stone or not. Mike asked Lindsay about when she was secretary about if they discussed anything on this, and she said, "I don't think we discussed on if it would roll over or not." Everyone said they assumed it should roll over, Tom F., made a motion or so to roll it over, \(MJ said that the problem was that by the time the scholarships were granted it was too late to sign up,\) no one believed there needed to be a motion, because they voted to send him, they haven't sent him yet, he is still here, \(Garry Donnom\). MJ?](#)

Open Issues: *Leia will be recording (AUDIO) for meeting minutes! This recording is for notes use only! When talking about meeting or anything, please speak loud and clearly so I can hear what is being said and so I can type the*

meeting min up afterwards! I have talked to several people about recording and they are ok, if you are not ok with it, please talk to Leia Hill! Be kind and polite because the thoughts are being recorded!

Old Business

No. Bennett said he doesn't know if the grotto needs it anymore but here is the old laptop he had for the grotto presentations. As a back up. He said it needs a charger, a Dell Charger, it has Microsoft Office 2010, which would work with office 2016. Steve said he will keep the laptop with the projector, and he will look for a charger, since he has several laptops/chargers. Needs to be a DELL charger, or compatible with DELL. (FYI: If anyone uses PowerPoint, u can automatically save it to .pps which will play it on almost any device, media projector.

Mike Harris on behalf of the Bexar Grotto asks the Treasurer, Emily, regarding to the motion made last time to the NSS, did we send a check to the NSS? She said no one spoke to her about it, or followed up with her on it. (Mike Harris says that there were some letters from Dave Hahn, in regards to some of the communication that's happened, (some of the stuff discussed: "Has the NSS received the \$1,000? The office said no. Is the NSS going to accept the loan offer? Answer was NSS and I are very grateful for the Bexar Grotto stepping up to help out. At this time it appears we do not expect to need the loan, but would like to keep this option open for the next 30 days, if that's ok with the grotto?" "IF the NSS is going to accept the loan offer, the Bexar Grotto would like something in writing from the NSS to formalize the loan agreement," and they said yes they would put something in writing if needed. And the other question was, "what was the current status of the fundraising for the completion of the construction?" Answer was, "We appear to have cash flow to complete the project; legal has went after the contractor and I have talked with a couple of contractors to finish up the project." Que. "What was the total cost of the remodel and the fix?" Answer: "The total contract cost was \$29,150.00, how much was paid to contractor? Total was: \$23,700, and how much did the contractor do? "He claims 21,000, but no materials were ordered and all ground and underground completed medal studs installed, and part of ceiling drilled or brew in." "How much money is needed to complete the work?" "They said less than \$26,000," And last statement was: "If two through four did not add up, could you explain the discrepancy?" He said, "I would assume three things: first, he underbid the job; second, work completed was more than expected, cost wise; third, he's a poor manager." Issues on the toilet up there. So based on his [Dave's] communication, they're grateful for the \$1000.00, and as far as the loan, that's currently on hold; and Mike Harris says we can discuss that later if need be, but the NSS will get back with

us within 30 days if they do want to accept the loan we voted on.” 30 days, dated the 25th, (Feb. 25)? So we can go ahead and send the check for a \$1000.00, and loan we can discuss if and when that pops up.”

New Business

Catherine Berkley-Jones: I would like to, on behalf of, 2018 [Proyecto Espeleológico Sistema Huautla](#) (PESH) project, I would like to request a donation from the Bexar Grotto the project. The expedition this year will be leaving April 1 and will be a month long, expecting over 40 people for the course of the expedition, including Bexar Grotto member, Amy Morton. (Biologists will be attending, archeologist, cavers from Austin will be attending, Fernando will be attending again.) The expedition expenses are extensive, all cavers who are coming pay their own way, including transportation, they are charged a fee of \$15 a day, but that pays for all of their meals, gear, rental fees, transportation there at system. Frugal project! It is a very worthy cause and last year the grotto donated \$1,200 to the expedition. “I would like to ask for a donation of a \$1,000. Catherine made a request, not a motion, yet. Was discussed. Questions asked. Motion was then made after some questions for \$1,000 unrestricted funds, for the PESH trip. Discussion: Some people in grotto felt a 1,000 was too much to ask for, they asked about 500 instead. There was a vote on the amendment. It was voted on, and was amended for \$1000 for the PESH trip). For more information, see or contact Catherine Berkley-Jones of the Bexar Grotto. Also check out: <http://www.peshcaving.org> (the PESH website is great info, too)!

Garry White: Made a proposal to the grotto regarding programs, “What I would like to do is when I send out letters to speakers, I conclude that they bring their own computer, (compatibility and familiarity) (familiarity—they know everything about their computer and how everything works and where everything is, but) Compatibility –the issue is if we (Bexar Grotto) have our own computer, and someone brings their computer, there is the risk that there will be compatibility issues with their software. BTW: Office 2019 is coming out soon, and PowerPoint Viewer is discontinued in April 2018, which is the reason why we stay safe, the presenter bringing his or her own computer) but send their food bill over to the treasure, plus if they have traveled OUTSIDE of Bexar County areas, then we give them \$20 for gas. I would like this as a standard rule for programs. Mike motioned for the ability to pay for the guest speaker’s meal and their gas; Discussion: if they travel from outside Bexar County; flat simple rule; and it was amended. (Garry White says that he will not accept nor request \$20 for gas for driving from San Marcos to make a presentation or for the grotto to pay my meal for the simple

reason of conflict of interest. However, the policy is before the presentation is made, I (Garry) will email the presenter and remind him or her that they need to bring their computer, the Grotto will pay for their meal, and if they're driving in from out of Bexar County, they get \$20 for gas, and their meal will be paid for). Are these words worth it?! **Gratuity, Appreciation, Courtesy, Public Relations, and Good Will.** (This grotto could very well use some Good Will right now)!

Joe Mitchell announced very last meeting on Jan. 22: "Texas Speleology Center (located in South West Austin) now has a government board that is composed of two (2) TSS Directors, one (1) TCMA director, and two (2)-at-large-cavers, one from San Antonio, and one from Austin, and we will start to figure how to manage the facility, looking for someone to serve as Property Manager, helping make a move in the next few weeks out here, and then we can start looking at what repairs need to be done." \$1,000 donation and 4,000 loan??

Geary Schindel on the topic of Bathrooms for NSS:

He was at the NSS office in Huntsville, Alabama two weeks or so ago, for a committee meeting; there seems to be a problem; regarding a set of restrooms in the foyer that are important in the ball room rented, some of the contract work disappeared, which has shut down any work on the thing. **Issue:** *NSS vs. Contracting company case (may have to file a lawsuit); need to raise about \$15,000 within the next 30 days, looking to see about getting some seed money. -----* **Question:** *Can Bexar Grotto help supply money to get the funding for the bathrooms? What money can we donate? The completion for construction of bathrooms is totaling: 15 K.* **Motion** was made by Jill to give a donation to the NSS for the completion of restroom project, totaling 5 k. It was **seconded**, and then there was discussion. **Discussion:** *Lively discussion was going on, Look into a loan for the completion of the project; some money is included but not enough to complete the construction project; all for helping NSS most grotto members said and agree. Some disagreed that funds were not needed to donate for the project, was voted on, and majority said yes.* **Amended:** *by Jill Orr, proposed the [Bexar] Grotto give \$1,000 + \$4,000 Loan {donation} that was made to motion to be paid back by December 31. 2018.*

Announcements: The UT Grotto in Austin is having a Film Festival, submissions may be turned into Bryce Williams, Film Festival is March 7, 2018 at 7:45 p.m. on the UT campus! They are looking for short films, maybe 5, 10, max 15 min films on caves and

cave-related topics; Cave calendar for sale: \$20.00, benefit TCMA, and they are made by Bennett Lee.

New Bexar Grotto Officers: Mike Harris, President/Chair; Garry White, Program Chair; Leia Hill, Secretary, and T-Shirts; Trip Chair, Jill Orr, Bexar Facts: Richard Silver; Treasure, Emily Thompson, website/master, Randy Baker,

Geary Schindel on Vertical Training!: Vertical Training class—a lot of people are interested and have contacted Geary about it; so if you're interested in getting some good vertical training, please see Geary Schindel after the meeting or email him at: gschindel@edwardsaquifer.org to confirm your interest or talk with him more about the training; see the Handout Geary printed about the Vertical training class, and requirements, dates, etc., get vertically trained and “certified” so you can go on cave trips that require vertical competence and knowledge; it doesn't hurt to even get a refresher if you have some experience; really for new folks, and people who haven't had any or much vertical training!

Mike Gibbons: a family who is part of the Bexar Grotto recently added a new member to the family—a new baby! Mike brought cards, so please kindly sign them and sincerely congratulate the family on the newest addition to the family and grotto! Let the big brother know he is welcomed and loved, too! Thank you Mike! The woman (wife) is from South America and apparently has land where caves are and has invited a few people to go next year hopefully to check them out; hopefully more will and can be invited; see Mike Gibbons for more info,

T-Shirts are on Sale! Short Sleeves: Sale \$10, Reg. \$15 ; Long Sleeves: Sale \$15, Reg. \$20 ; Hydro Geo Shirts: \$5 ; Patches: \$5 ; (This deal is going to be until the end of February 2018, and or when agreement with Grotto members is official?.) Please buy t-shirts! See Leia Hill at grotto meetings for shirts; or email her; PLEASE BUY! They are perfect gifts for friends, yourself, family, etc.

Books are for sale (TSS) from Marvin Miller at meeting, see him after meeting;

Upcoming Trips:

Jill Orr:

March 4—TRIP IS CURRENTLY FULL! Wait list. Rehmer's Cave at 9 a.m.; ; New Braunfels, TX, for those who are going and confirmed, please check email from Jill Orr: jorr333@gmail.com. (need to carpool). Talk to Evelyn Mitchell as well!

*Jill contacted Doris and Joe Ezeinhauer to work on a CM Shovel Cave day where it could be open to the whole Bexar Grotto, working on an overnight stay. There are several caves on property we may be able to go into, but CM Shovel cave specifically is vertical and you MUST BE vertically trained and proficient to go in that specific cave, along with a wet suit. Jill doesn't have a date yet, she is working with Doris on that. She also told Joe that we would do a couple of hours of service work there, cleaning and clearing cedar trees. We would need to bring our own equipment and gear. She's asking for mid-April or early May and Jill will let us know when she hears something back. Dates TBD!!!

Jill: Also started another project where hopefully (NO promises not for sure yet) she talked to Joe Mitchell about getting into Natural Bridge Caverns, Joe has his lidar and we could maybe possibly do a trip with me and him, using the lidar, donating that to NBC and maybe opening some off-trail trips to the grotto?? No Promises! She is going to ask and find out. She proposed the idea to NBC? And they are supposed to get back to Jill. She will let us know. No dates yet. (Also depends on Joe with Lidar, but wants to try and ask for May if we do the trip with Joe Ezeinhauer in April).

Bennett: A couple years ago we explored some caves on Fraizer's Ranch, a couple miles north of CWAN), Fraizer has now found some more caves on his property and wants us to come take a look at them. None of the caves are huge, but there are a lot of them, including one which is really long in length and needs to be surveyed or is a good survey cave. WEEKEND OF APRIL 7, 8, 2018. Not sure if its just one day or both days or if its just Saturday or just Sunday? Bennett will send out more details by email or so when the time gets closer and he finds out more info. Stay tuned!

Lindsay: March 31, Robber Baron Cave Big Brothers and Big Sisters Trip (she is still talking to them and getting the details for that) but she does need a few volunteers to help with the kids, but she will send out more info later.

Zach S. --**March 6, 7, 8, Robber Baron Cave with Lee High School Science class**, he has enough volunteers for leaders, but check email from Zach. Those who are signed up to help, please check email from him, you should plan to be there at 10 a.m. each day you are signed up for. Kids do service/slave work, then go on a tour afterwards. Must be on bus at 2:15 p.m. So Times are: 10 a.m.-2 p.m.;

March 10 and 11th (On the 2nd weekend of the month this time, March.

{Normally 1st weekend of every month}). [Meet at 9 a.m. at the volunteer](#)

[headquarters station. @ Gov. Canyon state natural area project.](#) See Marvin

Miller for more info on where to go and park. His email is: [*mlmiller@gvtc.com*](mailto:mlmiller@gvtc.com) .

This is a great place to go caving, ridge walking, karst searching, digging, surveying, hiking, and camping.

March 23, 24, 25: [TSA Spring Convention at Hill Country State Natural Area](#) near Bandera TX; one day of scientific presentations and workshops, maybe a workshop on Sunday. (Anything from Photography, surveying, to sketching, to rigging, field excursions (presentations). This is a catered event. Camping is included in the registration! \$20 if you pre-registrar /per person; \$25 at gate/ per person. Bandera, TX. To find out more see Robb Bissett, or go onto the TSA Facebook Page, TSA Website, or check your emails for the Texas Cavers list. There is pre-registration through online service (ask the treasure). Important: The Convention is at the ***Chapas Group Area***, if you see a lot of people there, you're probably there! There is a map too somewhere to find the area. Go to the Chapas Group area, there will be a big building there, that's where the registration will be, the presentations will be there, you can sign up for the workshops there, either Friday night or Saturday Morning! When you get into the park, just keep hanging a left, don't go in the main part of the park on the right, keep going to the far-left road of park!

**Lindsey Admoski mentioned that she is willing to host a trip on a week night to beginner Robber Baron Cave located down the street in Alamo Heights. Leia Hill is also willing to help host a trip to Robber Baron Cave. See Leia Hill and Lindsey Admoski for more details! Usually we go about 6:30 p.m. one week night till about 9 or 9:30 p.m. This is a cave you should explore and work your way up in; only hazard is high CO2 sometimes, especially in the Summer.

Trip Reports:

Robber Baron Cave has had a couple of trips and service projects there. More to come!

Noble: He ended up getting to go to Whirlpool Cave in Austin, he said it was a great trip and a fantastic cave! There were a few fire ants down in the cave at the bottom. Whirlpool is a straight, long cave and its not a maze cave Robber Baron Cave is, but it was rough and jagged. No blood shed or broken bones! He and the crew made it all the way back to the

Surprise Room (past the Birth Canal) and all the way back. (Weekend of Feb. 18)? He was so glad he got to go! Great job, Noble.

Roy: I went on a trip this weekend thanks to Geary Schindel and Leia Hill, who told me about the trip to Annadale Ranch out near Uvalde, TX. We got to go inside this new cave that had been visited a few times by a few people, but not really well-known, and it was a big surprise! The entrance had a little slot to get into, and then at the bottom of the entrance slot it immediately opened up into this really large room that slanted to the bottom. There was a 25-30 foot breakdown slope drop that ended at the bottom of the cave floor (which was accessible), and the ceiling for that part was fairly high, tilted. Lots of loose rocks and boulders, dangerous and steep and interesting. To the bottom right of the passage, there was a route to a little chamber/room that was HIGHLY decorated, with stalactites and stalagmites, totem poles, soda straws, and cave ribbon. Everyone was in awe of the beauty and delicacy of the cave and particularly this main room. When Roy was climbing back up the 25 foot slippery, breakdown hill, he accidentally knocked down some loose rocks, big and small ones, and people cleared to the very side of the breakdown pile to avoid being hit. Frio Bat Cave was visited afterwards with a pleasant shock and awe for all. The land owner of Annadale Ranch was very kind and interested in the cave (new cave) and welcomed us to exploring it.

Alan M.—in addition to Roy's trip report, I want to talk about Frio Bat Cave. Huge Bat cave with 3 big chambers, guano on the floor, and extensive guano mining. Took camera and video in there. Beautiful cave, had never been to. This cave actually has a commercial bat (there is a charge, of course) bat flight on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights in the summer. Really nice cave, cool air, stinky, but breathable. Heard about it for years and years, and finally got to go to it.

Rob Bissett: This past week I was up in North Texas and along the border of Oklahoma, along the Peace River and number of Red Rivers, with Bat Conservation International (BCI). Fran, Rick, and myself (Rob), were up there and BCI joined us, some biologists from Pennsylvania and Indiana joined us as well. We were continuing our research into the rapid spread of White Nose Syndrome, in Texas. This past December I was up there and we did a treatment, test treatment, using Chitosan on the bats, and we went back this time (last week) to test the same areas and the same bats, hopefully, to see if the treatment was effective. I don't know, we just do swabs and then we send the swabs off to see if the Chitosan, which is the [biopolymer] chemical we spray on the bats and walls, will slow down the growth and spread of white nose. We are also taking surveys of numbers over the last seven years, if bats are decreasing as white nose takes firm hold in North Texas. At our next meeting, which is Monday, March 12, I'm going to give a presentation on our number of years of work up there! (PS, not to give away the whole spoiler on next week, but Fran was in one particular cave, that's a long crawl at the end of the cave, and he had to go to the bathroom. It just so happened there was a skylight and instead of just going to the bathroom in the cave, he decides to go out and the rest of us, the three of us, don't want to wait for him, (sorry Fran), we left the cave and we marched across land and went back to the truck,

and TWO hours later, we are resting and eating and we realize that Fran isn't there, where is he?! So we mounted a small rescue, if you want to call it that, and as we get near the cave, he is trudging through the underbrush and makes it to the road. He then realizes that as he left the skylight which is about a 3' by 3' hole vertical as he's crawling up through it he comes across a bunch of rattle snakes. But instead of backing up and down into the cave he kind of does his "Fran" thing—he just grabs the rattlesnakes and throws them to the side, crawls out, and is out on the grass then decides to go back into the cave, where he left his pack. But there's more rattlesnakes, and they wouldn't let Fran in. It was easier for him to grab the rattlesnakes by hand climbing up than it is coming back down, so he just stood there for about an hour and a half wondering what to do and finally gave up and decided to cross land and no foul no harm to him or snakes. He came back with a machete—he wasn't going to hurt the snakes—scooted them out of the way and came back out through the skylight again. (This implies he came back to get his bag and he got it). Fran needs to get a go pro and film his adventures! Please! It was a productive, fun trip.

Mike Cunningham: Me, Steve, and Joe, Tom, and Gregg Mosier went out to Seco Mayfield property, and we started ridge walking, Louis and Clark territory, which is a 2 mile by 10 mile discretion of area that hasn't been ranched much. So in the process we found a couple of features, a little 4 foot pit entrance that you had to stand on your head to dig out? Joe and Tom worked on a little feature for a while, and then we found a sinkhole, about the size of a large room, with a couple of trees in it, and a lot of digging involved if we did anything with that. We maybe touched 5 acres of the property so we have a lot of ridge walking to do out there still. Friday night after I got there and everyone got there, Tom went over to see the neighbors first, finally made it onto the ranch, went to Writing on the Rocks Cave? , rigged it up, (this is a Mexican Freetail Bat colony cave, with a few thousand bats in there right now. I presented Seco with a 3-D model that Joe had made and (Seco) was pretty excited about that. In the afternoon, we went over to Chris's (Blowing) Crack, we were going to do some work in there and all go and dig there was a porcupine in there and then Steve decided it was a raccoon [instead] in there and decided to get it worked up, which was kind of fun. Tom: we went over to Trash Pit Cave, it's a pit they've been dumping trash in for years and we went and looked in it (saw that there was a passage that appeared to go off this way and one that went off another way so we went back to the Ranch house and got a ladder and climbed down a big pile of tetanus and went down into the cave) really didn't have any formations, but it did have a decent amount of passage that you can work your way around the rusty wire and chunks of metal. We found a couple of old branding irons, we showed these to the land owner and he couldn't quite figure out why someone would have thrown out a perfectly decent brand iron in the pit. Joe: Mike took me and Gregg while someone took a nap. Went to another cave that had lots of car parts in it. And then that evening we were treated to a wonderful dinner by Mike, by pork loin. 5 star meal! Tom: Did a lot of wondering around on the ranch. Never been there before and they have this huge swimming pool type thing out there that had a bloated raccoon floating around it in, Great trip.

Leia Hill finally went to Whirlpool Cave In Austin, and she loved it! Was a challenge but amazing cave! She asked UT Grotto if it was ok if she joined the beginner trip to Whirlpool Cave, and they said yes. Kris Pena lead the group and it was a great time. Leia had never been to the cave before and had heard about it, and thought it was a lot like Lilyhammer Cave at Government Canyon, very jagged, narrow, crawling, few formations, and animals. Take a look at Whirlpool cave map, went back to the Birth Canal, side passages in and next to birth canal, are there new, unexplored passages? Someone please ask and find out!

Notes written and recorded by: Leia Hill, Secretary of the Bexar Grotto, 2018,

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Meeting Adjournment 8:00 p.m

**Presentation for tonight: Kurt Menking talks about Honey Creek Water Cave!
WWOOOHOOO!!!!!!!**