

**National Speleological Society
Department of the Executive Vice President
Board of Governors Meeting
Montana NSS Convention
July 2018**

The Department of the Executive Vice President is composed of the eleven committees listed below. The contact information for each committee can be found below or on the Internet at www.caves.org.

Department of the Executive Vice President

- 1) **AAAS Representative Biology**
- 2) **AAAS Representative Geology**
- 3) **AGI (American Geological Institute) Delegate**
- 4) **American Cave Accident Committee**
- 5) **Exploration Committee International**
- 6) **Exploration Committee U.S.**
- 7) **Journal of Cave and Karst Studies Committee**
- 8) **Members Manual Committee**
- 9) **NSS News Committee**
- 10) **Research Advisory Committee**
- 11) **Special Publications Committee**

This report contains the Executive Vice President's actions and activities followed by the reports from each committee listed in the order they appear from one to eleven. All of the reports from the committees are entered as received unless otherwise noted.

Report from the Executive Vice President
Curt Harler, NSS 22735 RCL

This is a bittersweet report. This will be my final update to the BOG as EVP. After serving several years as EVP, I believe it is time for NSS, and the EVP's position, to have an infusion of new ideas and a fresh look at what happens in the Department. A huge THANK YOU to all of the Committee members present and past who have helped make my job as EVP easier and rewarding. Thanks, too, to the members who offered ideas, criticism and critique of our processes. All were valuable and helped form the Society the way it is today.

The EVP's Department is healthy and is being turned over to the incoming EVP in great shape. They'll have an amazing team to support the mission. I'll really miss working with Geary, Dave, Kat and Gaylene on the Executive Committee...as well as all of the members of the BOG. As the membership continues to migrate Society leadership away from simply electing the most badass cavers to office, replacing them

with officers who bring expertise and informed opinion to their positions, the NSS is in great shape moving ahead.

A final few (500) words from the EVP to the membership are in the current issue of the *NSS NEWS*. I am not going away ... just underground!

In another change, after more than 20 years of service, Joel Despain has stepped down from the International Grant Committee. He has done a great job for NSS and deserves much more than the simple "Thanks for a job well done!" that we can offer in return. Cyndie Walck has agreed to step up and chair the committee going forward with help from Pat Kambesis. See Cyndie's report, below.

All Grottoes, Sections and other I\Os are invited to place a low-cost ad in the 2019 *Members Manual*. The ads will be placed in appropriate locations in *the Members Manual* (for instance, Cleveland Grotto would be in the Ohio section, Nittany Grotto in Pennsylvania; however, a grotto might choose to advertise in more than one region by including a nearby state's pages...say Philly Grotto promoting itself in the New Jersey and Delaware sections). This is a great way to promote your Grotto, an annual Regional gathering, or to cross-reference your Grotto in another creative way. Details will be available at the *Members Manual* link on caves.org.

NSS received several requests for approval of use of our materials. All were granted. One is a bit unusual and deserves to be noted. Hollywood is making a movie of the award-winning book *MOTHERLESS BROOKLYN*. For some reason, they want to use old copies of *NSS NEWS* covers in the movie as period-setting background. I've read the book and caving has nothing to do with the story of Brooklyn, NY-based orphans who get sucked into a mafia-style career and, when their boss is killed, need to find out who and why. Perhaps someone on the movie crew is a caver?

Again, my most sincere "Thank You!" to all of those who made my term as EVP a wonderful experience. It is a great time to be part of our organization. Even better times are just ahead.

Respectfully submitted,
Curt Harler
Executive Vice President

1) AAAS Representative Biology

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PROGRESS: No action

PLANS: I want to get out a survey to Biology Section members about their understanding of the link between NSS and AAAS, and the benefits to them.

PROBLEMS: Need to make this work a higher priority.

PROBLEMS: None

2) AAAS Representative - Geology

Arthur Palmer

NSS 4059

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For the first time, I won't be able to contribute the AAAS report in time. We're on the road until and don't have access to all the necessary material. I'll just add it onto the next report.

3) American Geological Institute (AGI) Delegate

Dave Decker

Dave Decker

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Progress

The Geoscience Annual Policy Review remains available at

<https://www.americangeosciences.org/policy/annual-review>

AGI's Earth Magazine (available at <https://www.earthmagazine.org/>) May issue has an article on the caves of the Causses du Quercy region of France in their monthly column entitled "Travels in Geology."

Earth Science Week will be held the second week in October. More information is available here: <http://www.earthsciweek.org/>

The most recent AGI meeting was held in Salt Lake City, UT on May 20. I did not attend due to work. The minutes for this meeting have not been posted yet.

The next AGI meeting will be during the annual GSA meeting in Indianapolis, IN from 4 to 7 November, 2018. I will most likely attend the member society council meeting at GSA.

Problems: None.

4) American Caving Accidents COMMITTEE

Bonny Armstrong – Editor

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Progress & Plans – The 2017-2018 issue is in progress. Expected publication date should be June or July 2019. An extra-thick issue of the *NSS News* should be budgeted for or a stand-alone issue the size of a regular *NSS News*.

5) International Exploration Grants Committee

Cyndie Walck, chair
karstgirl@yahoo.com

Committee members:
Cyndie Walck Chair
Pat Kambesis Co-char
Carol Veseley
John Pollack
Kevin Downey

Activities: The International Exploration Committee is sad to say goodbye to long time chairperson Joel Despain! Thank you to Joel for herding cats for many years, we will miss you. Cyndie Walck and Pat Kambesis will co-chair the committee.

Progress: We awarded the following grants in February:

2018 International Sistema Cheve Expedition: \$1500, which includes the Ron Simmons Award for 2018. US Deep Cave Team-Bill Stone

Continued Survey and Reconnaissance of the Sierra de las Minas, Guatemala: \$500.
Ben Hutchins

Montenegro 2018 Kucka Korita Expedition: \$500. Mike Ficco

Return to the Pena Colorado-Deep dive lead: \$1000. Zeb Lilly

Plans: We will be reviewing grant applications for the first half of 2018 in July

Problems: I need clarification on the endowment, total budget and accounting.

6) Exploration Committee U.S.

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Progress: For 2018, Sara Corrie Grants have been awarded to four participants (one yet to send in the mail): Nikki Fox for Maxwelton Cave, WV; Sean Lewis for Fisher Ridge, KY; Elizabeth Winkler for Isla de Mona, Puerto Rico; and Bev Shade for Main Drain Cave, Utah. All are being awarded \$1,000.

I do send emails to those that have not published in the *News* or given a presentation at the Convention. Also, in my letters I now note in the letter the obligation to either publish or present, in addition to sending me on a bi-annual basis progress on their projects, and to let me know when they will publish or present. I decided to do that because I'm so busy these days it falls off my radar.

Plans – We need see where the others are with their projects and if any of them are ready to publish or present, as is required by the grant funding. There are a few grant recipients, going back to 2015 and earlier, that need to be encouraged to publish or present.

(7) JOURNAL OF CAVE AND KARST STUDIES COMMITTEE

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Progress: Progress producing the *Journal* is moving along and the reasonably well. Our only “problem” right now is that our new Copyeditor, Linda Starr, is exceptionally busy with other competing work, such as her paying job, which is slowing down the copyediting of accepted manuscripts.

We are continuing to receive high-quality manuscripts for consideration for publication in the *Journal* at a lower frequency than in the past, mostly from foreign authors. Foreign authors appear to still respect the reputation of the *Journal* while many American authors are looking elsewhere to publish their research because of the continuing inadequate funding of the *Journal* — timeliness of publications is vitally important to authors, but we lack the funding to publish articles as rapidly as necessary. To be able to publish more manuscripts per year, we are moving to publishing four issues per year, primarily in electronic form.

We still have several manuscripts working their way through the system. Our backlog appears never ending. We continue to reject approximately half or more submissions that we receive and some manuscripts that are eventually accepted have to be revised two and even three times before they are accepted if we are to maintain our high standards (note each review and revision often result in several months of time).

I routinely receive praise for the quality of the *Journal*, especially from foreign authors. This is a testament to the hard work our staff of AEs, our copyeditor, and our production editor put into each manuscript we receive.

Frustrations: Funding needs primarily, as always.

Lack of more manuscripts from U.S. authors and articles focused on research in the U.S. I believe this to be related to the fact that we are financially unable to publish manuscripts in a timely manner (and the fact that we only publish three issues a year); most authors need to get their manuscripts published as quickly as possible to be given credit by their institutions.

Problems: Adequate funding is an ongoing problem. To be able to maintain publishing the *Journal* three times a year, the *Journal* must be funded at an absolute minimum of no less than \$42,000. This figure is really much too low, but we are able to keep the *Journal* afloat for that amount of money.

Finding a replacement for Allen Press who will meet our needs at a price we can afford.

Permissions: Permission was granted to:

J. Gavin Bradley to reprint a draft of his 2018 JCKS article as part of his Ph.D.,

Benjamin Schwartz to reproduce three figures from a 2009 JCKS article of which he was the senior author, and

Laura Gerlitz to archive a copy of a 2008 JCKS article on the University of Alberta digital repository on behalf of Dr. B. Jones.

News: Recently, I was introduced to the new Chinese journal *Research* (<https://spj.sciencemag.org/research/about/>), which is the first journal published under the newly developed AAAS / SPJ (Science Partner Journals). SPJ, announced in November 2017, is still getting going but has advertised for more “open access” journals for consideration for partnership with AAAS

(<http://www.sciencepartnerjournals.org/become-a-partner/>).

I have undertaken to contact a representative of SPJ, Chu Xiaoying, and, after some clarification, was informed that SPJ is discussing the possibility of JCKS becoming a partner journal with AAAS. Should become a partner journal, we will retain full control over all aspects of the journal but will, hopefully, obtain additional funding. I am very hopeful that this opportunity may be beneficial to the NSS.

8) Members Manual

Cady A. Soukup, Editor

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Progress: The NSS Members Manual came out on time, within budget, courtesy of Bob Hoke.

Plans: Already investigating cover photos for 2019. May have found one ...

PROBLEMS: None

9) NSS News Committee

Dave Bunnell, Editor

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Progress: Still getting a reasonable amount of submissions though generally have only a month or two ahead worth of material.
We've gotten some nice ad revenue recently with two, possibly 3 full page ads.

Plans: Hoping to do a special issue on Big Rooms based on the laser surveys being done in the UK. If it comes off I hope to have 10 double page spreads featuring the world's largest cave rooms.

Problems:

Still haven't gotten any more columns from my Spotlight columnist.
I've had a few people tell me of problems using nssnews@caves.org so will continue to favor using my personal e-mail address.

10) RESEARCH ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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National Speleological Society Research Advisory Committee:
<http://www.caves.org/committee/rac/>

Committee Members: Joyce Lundberg, (Assoc. Prof, Carleton University), John Myroie (Mississippi State Univ; emeritus), Keith Christenson

Progress:

The Committee reviewed the small research grant proposals submitted for the January deadline, and made awards to Yusnaviel Garcia for his proposal "Reproductive Ecology of the Cuban Giant Frog (*Eleutherodactylus zeus*) in Western Cuba", and to Rachel Kaiser for her proposal "Developing a Threat Assessment and Monitoring Framework for Urban Karst Groundwater Management".

The committee also made two Ralph Stone Graduate Fellowship awards, to Fernando Hernandez, Western Kentucky University, for his project "Using groundwater hydrogeochemical evolution and tracing to understand speleogenesis in Sistema Huautla in Oaxaca, Mexico", and to Robert Ditter, Florida International University, for his proposal "Exploring the population dynamics of critically endangered anchialine cave shrimp across the tropical western Atlantic using a novel genomic approach".

There has been no other business.

Plans: No new applications for NSS Project status have been received.

11) SPECIAL PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE

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Progress:

The Virtual Cave Book and The Natural Bridges Book are both done printing and will be shipped together to save money and customs fees.

Almost all of the materials for Dave Jagnow's new book on the exploration of Coldwater Cave, Iowa has been received, so work could start on that soon.

Elizabeth has done OCR and edited the text from the old Jewel Cave Adventure by the Conns, and sent it to Matthew White. He is supposed to send us some revisions and corrections to that from Jan Conn, along with whatever scans of images they have. We may need to scan and fix a bunch from the older book, not optimal but we will do what we can. Cannot project a finish date until we get this stuff.

No word on the book on Racks in months.

Plans: Finish the second two books mentioned above this summer. JCA will be printed in the USA at an undetermined printer. Steven Frye, who is our publications consultant, will help with selection of a printer. I have no idea when the Rack book will be ready.

The Coldwater book will be printed this fall. So we should have two new books for rollout before or during the Convention and a new one or two for the Christmas sale period.

Ads are being prepared for the July NSS News for the two finished books.

Problems: I would like to see a system established for getting more of our books marketed at show caves and national park caves. I don't think the office takes any proactive steps in that direction themselves.

Printing costs in China are rising a bit due to paper cost increases and somewhat higher valuation of their currency. And who knows if our books might be subject to Trump's tariffs?

Have also been surprised to hear our new, capacious office is already running out of space to store books. Why? I recommend more room be devoted to storage for NSS publications.

--- End of EVP Report ---