

**National Speleological Society
Department of the Operations Vice President
Autumn 2026, Facilities Division
Board of Governors Meeting
October 17, 2026**

Table of Contents and Committee Chairs:

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Facilities Division Report:

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The Facilities Division oversees the Pulaski Pike and Cave Avenue properties in Huntsville. This division is responsible for the Archives, which includes the Library, the Museum, the Photo Archives, the Cave Files, the Audio-Visual Library and all other Archival Material. The Facilities Division oversees the NSS Bookstore. Please read the individual reports that follow to gain more insight and details of the particular areas. The following is a synopsis of the Facilities Division for this report.

The old headquarters at Cave Avenue has been demolished. Some of the building's bricks have been salvaged and are stored at the new headquarters. The Cave Ave property has now been added to the Shelta Cave Preserve.

Russell Quinn has been hired to work with the bookstore and Membership. Many members met him at Convention. The bookstore has new swag including water bottles, bandanas and shirts.

Lots of work has been going on in the archives. Ed Strausser and Dave Hughes are regularly in the library cataloguing donations, scanning and archiving items and putting

our collections in order. The back 5 room renovation has been completed and is now a function archive work and storage area. Bob Roth has been on site one weekend a month storing through boxes of items donated from caver's libraries.

The preliminary architectural concept for the training center has been sent to Huntsville Planning Office. We are waiting for their response before we can move forward with full design drawings.

Work weekends have been ongoing for the 3rd weekend of each month. There has been significant grotto interest in helping. The auditorium doors have been painted, the exterior back 5 doors have been painted, gutters have been cleaned, the ceiling outside the library doors has been finished and the new library sign has been hung. An archive work and storage room is finished in the back 5.

Respectfully submitted,
Maureen Handler, Facilities Division Chair

Reports of the OVP Department:

Archives Division

Ed Strausser (AL), NSS 14719RL
archives@caves.org

Cave Files

Dave Huges
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Document Archives

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Photo Archives

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Corresponding Archivist

Bill Torode, NSS 5013L (OS-LB-CO-FE)
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Museum

Ed Strausser (AL), NSS 30571R
museumcommittee@caves.org

Library

Librarian

Bob Roth, NSS 66216 Librarian@caves.org

Assistant Librarian

Bill Torode, asstarchivist@caves.org

Archive Report

Progress

The Library and Museum continue to receive donations to the collection, and we have made great progress adding items to the Library catalog and Museum database. We received 30 boxes of material from NCKRI during convention this year and we anticipate receiving about 60 more boxes from them this week. The NCKRI material is mostly books and newsletters along with some archive items and artifacts. We have also received many donations from different individuals this year. This year we have had 7 audio tapes from the 1950s digitized. These include several tapes from the C-3 Expedition, convention programs and a radio show about caving. Three additional audio tapes are currently out to be digitized.

We have had around 20 requests for articles and information from the Library.

We have created web pages for the Library, Museum and Archives and these are available on the NSS website at caves.org/library, caves.org/museum and caves.org/archives.

One of the "back five" rooms has been remodeled and designated as a Museum workroom. The

room has been fully furnished with archival storage shelves, filing cabinets, photo station and workstation with new computer and printers. We now have room to work on documenting, photographing and storing the artifacts in our collection.

We prepared a small display of artifacts from our collection that was shown at the NSS Convention this year.

Philip Rykwaldner has helped us scan a number of Marion Smith's journals for preservation and digital access.

Bob Roth and Dave Hughes have made great progress sorting material in the Clown Room. Many publications that are not cave related have been identified for disposal, providing much more space in the room.

The new Gurnee Library sign has been hung outside the library. The money for the wood was donated by Birmingham Grotto. Michael Kehs donated his time to carve the sign.

Plans

We will continue to work on getting items entered into the Museum and Library databases. We will work on adding lighting to display cases and preparing some nice displays. We will continue to work on getting a Museum page for the website.

The lighting for the sign will be installed in October.

Problems

An extremely rare and heavy rain event occurred in June. This caused some water to enter the back door near the library. The carpet in the museum hallway got wet. A number of the display cabinets were moved to the auditorium. Fans and a dehumidifier were placed in the hallway. The carpets are now dry and the display cabinets can now be reinstalled.

We are still monitoring the humidity in the library and museum.

Building & Grounds Division

Vacant (TN), buildings@caves.org

Progress

Additional painting has been ongoing including painting the auditorium doors, the back 5 exterior doors, the back 5 outside tin siding and the ceiling outside the library double doors. The gutters have been cleaned, the vegetation on the south side slope has been cut and some electrical upgrades have been worked on. All of the work has been done by volunteers.

There have been monthly work weekends at the headquarters monthly since the convention. Regular attendance has been averaging 5-6 volunteers most weekends, with 16 volunteers showing up in August including folks from Montgomery Grotto, Birmingham Grotto and Clock Tower Grotto.

Plans

- Get the digital sign operable – quote for just the “needed fixes” to make sign operable has been submitted (google drive)
- Need new NSS banners for facility – old ones are faded. Have the name of a company that the preserves use for theirs – to get an estimate
- Currently using the auditorium for staging bookstore for upcoming events
- Need to finalize documents for “outreach” rentals on the facility ie: rental agreement, etc.
- Create calendar for HQ routine maintenance/ upcoming work to be done
- Work on finalizing quotes for renovation of the remaining back 5 room with the possibility of turning this into additional museum display space.

Problems

Funding for the planned work

NSS Bookstore

Michele Kesler and Russell Quinn - Bookstore Manager bookstore@caves.org

Michelle Kesler - Facility Manager facilities@caves.org

Progress:

Office:

Volume of Calls/Emails Daily: 10-20 calls (sometimes more) Call volume is high. Email volume has been higher.

Tasks: Phone calls and emails are top priority. New memberships and filing orders are next. Updating inventory, failed memberships (call and leave voice mail to let them know as well as send email), open contact forms, updating renewed memberships, processing membership renewals, deposits and processing donations daily. Create new member packets weekly.

Plans:

- Continue working efforts for our rentals to emphasize educational and conservation rentals
- Training Center
- Showers in the campground pavilion

Problems

- None

Bookstore:

Progress

- New items have been added to the bookstore including bandanas, water bottles and shirts. Sales of these items were brisk at Convention with all of the new shirts selling out.
- Reduce the inventory of books that we are "storing" and move some inventory through online "sales" and at events. (books that sold 0 qty in the last 2 years were removed from inventory and used for giveaways at events/given to grottos for donations, etc)
- Come up with new merchandise for Holiday season/bundles for bookstore sales. (ordered holiday ornaments for sales/Nature Preserves fundraiser for the holidays)
- Increase sales through bookstore with new merchandise that appeals to a wide audience. (rolled out 2 new shirt designs, water bottles, and bandanas at convention – completely sold out of first order of shirts, placed 2nd order for remaining events – already sold half of those. New merchandise to be rolled out at convention each year)
- Consistency/organization with Bookstore events. (with events increasing in future years, we need to have 2 complete bookstore travel sets/list of items to bring, so all events are consistent/professional) (organization of bookstore travel boxes – 1st set complete – will 2nd set during fall/winter season)
- Organization of front facing bookstore/storeroom (organized front facing BS to be more appealing with membership – includes some museum items on display. Organized stock room

so we know what inventory we have on hand/what needs ordered, make books/symbolics easier to find)

Plans:

New bookstore items are being explored including Christmas ornaments.
Outlining 2027 events for the bookstore to attend

Problems:

None

End of the Facilities Division Report