Texas Cave Management Association

TCMA PASSAGES

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2014 TCMA director elections: results in early December

by Linda Palit, TCMA Nominations Committee chair

Plans are in place for the 2014 TCMA director elections. Directors make key decisions that determine the course our organization takes, and they serve on the committees that do the work the cave conservancy requires.

TCMA members elect the directors, and the directors in turn elect the officers. We currently have 13 director positions, and five of these need to be filled during this election.

Due to unforeseen problems with the online e-voting system we have used before, this election will use paper ballots that will be distributed in early October with a deadline for returns to be announced soon. All current members will receive ballots via the mail address they supplied TCMA on their membership application or renewal. The TCMA Secretary will announce the election results in early December 2014.

Candidates, who have all submitted statements, are: **Pam Campbell, Michael Cicherski, Galen Falgout, Jim "Crash" Kennedy** and **Gregg Williams.**

Please carefully consider these candidates, and vote for up to five candidates on your ballot! Make sure your membership is current, and remember to vote. Candidates will speak to the membership at the TCMA Members' Meeting at the Texas Cavers' Reunion (TCR) on the weekend of October 11.

[See candidates' statements, page 3]

TCMA preserve reports: Robber Baron open house Nov. 1

by Evelynn Roth Mitchell

The next Open House event for Robber Baron Cave is coming up on Saturday, Nov. 1, 2014! This is a great event for the public to visit and learn about a wild cave and also a great fundraising opportunity for TCMA. Many volunteers are needed to make this happen and we would love to have your help either in the cave or on the surface.

I'll be helping to organize the volunteers this time. We will need help for taking and selling souvenir photographs, running the registration process, selling T-shirts, selling concessions, distributing and collecting gear – and, of course, a crew of volunteers to camp out in the cave and make sure our visitors don't wander off on their own. The in-cave volunteers must have their own gear. Again, there is a need for many volunteers, and if there is a particular job you would like to do please e-mail me at *evelynn@satx.rr.com*. If you are just interested in helping and don't care what you do, let me know that, too. Thanks, everyone!

[See more preserve reports in our next issue!]

Inside Passages

President's perspective	Page 2
Shop online ... and help TCMA!	Page 2
TCMA candidate bios/platforms	Page 3
Officers, directors, committee chairs	Page 4

Watch for our year-end Passages issue!

President's perspective

by John Brooks

Cavers and non-cavers frequently ask me about the Texas Cave Management Association. They see the stickers on my truck or visit a preserve and wonder what it is all about. The simple answer can be found in the TCMA's ***mission statement:***

"TCMA exists to acquire, conserve, and manage caves, and to promote research and education regarding caves and karst while providing responsible access to our preserves."

The organization is many things to many people. A more simple explanation is that the organization creates an opportunity for Texas cavers to acquire, own and manage our own caves. As some cavers explain it, our unofficial motto seems to be "Texas Caves for Texas Cavers."

The TCMA is defined by an amazing commitment and dedication to our organization by volunteers: members, preserve managers, committee chairs and directors are all volunteers. The "work" of our organization is done because of a shared passion for cave conservation.

That means there are a lot of people to thank for our successes. Contributions of each of these cavers are why the TCMA is such a great organization.

Sure, the TCMA has a few challenges to overcome, that is to be expected of an all-volunteer organization. But our ability to manage cave preserves and our ability to raise funds to acquire new preserves would not be possible without the dedication of volunteers who do the work required to keep this organization on track.

Accomplishments this year include:

•We raised over $6,000 during our TSA Spring Convention auction.

•We put a new roof on the field house at the Deep & Punkin Cave Preserve.

•Our acquisition committee has looked at several properties with caves. Although none met our criteria for acquisition, we continue to seek out new potential new preserves.

•We have active exploration and mapping projects in several of our caves, and new passage is being found on a regular basis.

•Our board has grown to represent the entire state with directors coming from across the length and breadth of Texas.

•The TCMA was awarded a LIP Grant to install a new bat-friendly gate on Ezell's Cave. The grant will cover 50 percent of the cost, and the remainder will be funded by donations and a TCMA fund raising effort.

So what's next?

•The board of directors, our committee chairs and preserve managers are working to streamline the workings and governance of our organization.

•We are working through the process of becoming an accredited land trust by adopting the Land Trust Alliances policies and procedures.

•The board, committee chairs and preserve managers are meeting in early September to revisit our strategic plan that was created several years ago. We will evaluate our progress in meeting the goals we set for this organization several years ago.

•Our acquisition committee is active and is continually looking for our next preserve.

The efforts of our many members and volunteers have allowed us to accomplish great things this year ... and will ensure that we fulfill on our mission of protecting and preserving "Texas Caves for Texas Cavers."

If you would like to be involved, the TCMA would welcome your efforts ... just ask and we will find a way for you to contribute to the best cave conservancy in Texas.

Shop online ... and help preserve caves!

By Bennett Lee

We recently started two different Amazon programs that allow you to donate to the TCMA when you purchase from Amazon. Best of all, these financial contributions cost you nothing—Amazon will give part of its own profits to the TCMA! These contributions help the TCMA pay for the ongoing costs of maintaining our preserves and caves, like the recent fence repair at Ezell's or the new roof on the Deep and Punkin cabin.

Amazon Affiliate

http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/redirect-home/tcma-20

With the Amazon Affiliate program, Amazon pays the TCMA about 5 percent of your order just for clicking our link to Amazon and then purchasing. It doesn't cost you anything to contribute—Amazon pays the TCMA out of Amazon's own profits. Here's all you have to do: *[See Online, page 4]*

TCMA candidate bios and platform statements

Pam Campbell - I am a third-year caver and member of the Bexar Grotto, where I currently serve as the treasurer. In my three years of caving experience, I have been very active in the caving community. I thoroughly enjoy exploring caves and getting that rush from climbing and squeezing through passages. I actively participate in survey trips and tank hauls – plus, I also lend my time to Robber Baron Cave Preserve projects. I am the Chuck Stuehm Award recipient for 2013 and still enjoy guiding and encouraging new members.

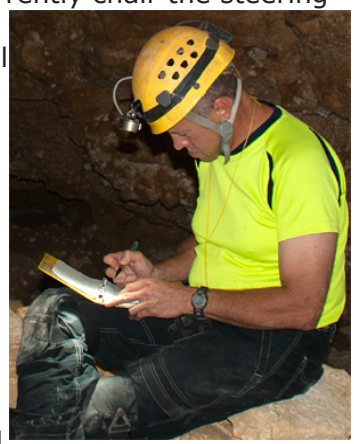
Michael Cicherski - I have been caving since the mid-1980s. Most of my caving has been in Texas, but I have spent time in New Mexico, Montana, and Kentucky as well as being a part of the 1997 Sistema Huautla project. Currently, I am serving as project manager on two projects in the Texas Hill Country. I was Treasurer for the 15th International Convention of Speleology in partnership with my wife Melissa. I have served as the treasurer for the TSA and as 2015 treasurer for The Texas Chapter of the Explorers Club. Finally, I am an NSS Fellow.

If elected to a director position, I will continue to push for an adoption of Accounting Operating Practices and Procedures for the TCMA.

Galen Falgout - I was born and raised in southern Louisiana. I have lived in Austin, Texas since 2003. I started caving in 2009. I'm a mechanic by trade and an explorer by hobby.

In running for the TCMA board, I'd like to see some more young blood with fresh ideas brought into this organization. I would like to see our membership numbers increase and create more benefits of being a TCMA member.

Jim "Crash" Kennedy - I am hoping to be re-elected to the TCMA board this election. I am a cave biologist, having spent 18 years working for Bat Conservation International. Last year I started my own company, Kennedy Above/Under Ground LLC, where I continue to work on karst (and bat) management. I am a past president of the Texas Speleological Association and still sit on the board of the Texas Speleological Survey. I am deeply interested in cave conservation and management on a global scale, and currently chair the steering committee (representing the National Speleological Society) for the biennial National Cave and Karst Management Symposium. I am a very active caver, coordinating and participating in digging, survey, and exploration projects all across Texas and Mexico. I am a Fellow and Life Member of the NSS, and spent four years on the instructional staff of the National Cave Rescue Commission. I have served two previous non-consecutive terms as TCMA director. I am the TCMA Preserve Committee chair, with my emphasis on assisting the many preserve managers, improving our standards, and developing management plans for our properties. Oh, and at the TSA Spring Convention you might also see me helping raise money for the TCMA at our annual auction!



Gregg Williams - I am a lifetime Texas resident and member of the Bexar Grotto. I have been an active caver for the last five years and have been an avid outdoorsman with an eye for conservation for many years. My dedication to the caving community and the region, coupled with my drive to further the caving community and its relations with landowners and the general public, means I will do the best job possible representing the TCMA in all aspects.

I feel grateful to be part of such a diverse and talented caving community and am looking forward to becoming involved in the workings of the TCMA. Upon my election to the Board of Directors, I would like to work toward seeing new caves purchased, promoting good landowner relations, and developing new and future projects to their fullest potential.

Online shopping can help save caves!

[continued from page 2]

1. On the TCMA website *(www.tcmacaves.org),* click the Amazon link in the header.
2. Buy whatever you were planning to buy from Amazon. Be sure you pay for the items during that session (do not close your browser and continue the purchase later).
3. Voilà! Amazon automatically contributes about 5% of your order to the TCMA at no cost to you.

That's all you have to do: click the link and buy. Couldn't be easier!

Amazon Smile - *http://smile.amazon.com*

I want to be very clear that Amazon Smile is different than Amazon Affiliate. It contributes only 0.5% of your purchase to the TCMA and unfortunately cannot be used with Amazon Affiliate. Clicking the Amazon link on the TCMA website contributes 10x more than Amazon Smile, so we would really appreciate you using the link on our website instead.

However, if you want to contribute via Amazon Smile, we appreciate your generosity there, too! Visit http://smile.amazon.com, sign in, and Amazon will ask which charity you wish to contribute to. Select Texas Cave Management Association Inc and Amazon will donate 0.5 percent of your purchases to support the TCMA.

The advantage of Amazon Smile is that once you have signed up for Amazon Smile, Amazon will remind you to use Amazon Smile when you first visit the site. In contrast, with the Amazon Affiliate program you must remember to click Amazon link on the TCMA website each time you purchase from Amazon, but it does contribute 10x more.

So there you have it! Two easy ways to contribute to the TCMA at no cost to you. Setup Amazon Smile to contribute to Texas Cave Management Association Inc, or even better contribute 10x more by clicking the Amazon link at *www.tcmacaves.org.*

Thanks for your continued support!

TCMA Board of Directors meeting at J.J. Pickle Campus, UT Austin, 2013

Texas Cave Management Association - a 501(c)3 nonprofit since 1986

Visit us on the web! http://www.tcmacaves.org/

Daniel Ramirez at D&P Preserve

Board of Directors
John Brooks, president
Bennett Lee, vice president
Saj Zappitello, secretary
Michael Cicherski, treasurer
Bill Bentley
Jay Jorden
Jim "Crash" Kennedy
R.D. Milhollin
Linda Palit
Denise Prendergast
Ron Ralph
Ann Scott
Matt Turner

Committee Chairs
Acquisitions – Travis Scott
Archives - Ann Scott
Budget - Ron Ralph
Communications – Jay Jorden
Database - Ron Ralph
Finance - Michael Cicherski
Fundraising – Linda Palit (interim)
Insurance - Michael Cicherski
Membership – Bennett Lee
Nominations – Linda Palit
Organization/Procedures – R.D. Milhollin
Preserves Management - Jim Kennedy

Preserve Managers
Deep and Punkin - Don Arburn
Ezell's Cave – Ron Ralph
Godwin Ranch – Andrea Croskey
Lost Oasis – Chris Vreeland
Robber Baron - Joe Mitchell
Rolling Oaks - Ellie Watson
UT Lands (Amazing Maze, O-9 Well) - David Ochel
Whirlpool - Matt Turner

TCMA: http://www.tcmacaves.org/
Butch Fralia, webmaster
Passages editor - Jay Jorden
Associate editor - R.D. Milhollin