TCMA PASSAGES

FALL 2018 - VOL. 18, NO. 1

TCMA, TSS partner in Texas cave HQ

From staff reports

The Texas Speleology Center continues to take shape through a partnership between the Texas Cave Management Association (TCMA) and the Texas Speleological Survey (TSS).

Texas Speleology Center southwest of Austin

When remodeling and other work is complete, the center will serve as the repository of extensive cave files and maps curated by TSS. The facility, located on five wooded acres southwest of Austin near Driftwood, is also the joint headquarters for both TSS and TCMA.

The TSS library is currently located at the University of Texas' Pickle Research campus, which for many years has been a focal point for cavers and others wishing to research the cave survey's comprehensive collection.

The cave survey partnered with TCMA in arranging financing to purchase the center, which

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TCMA at TCR!

DON'T MISS our:

- **TCMA members' meeting** on Saturday, October 20, at high noon, near the office. Come meet candidates for our board election.
- **Ropes challenge,** 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday
- **Breakfast,** 8-10 a.m. Sunday. Eggs, tacos, fruit, yogurt, OJ, coffee. $5 donation, please!

TCMA rocks Austin's 6th Street for second straight year

When we thought it couldn't get any better, the Gary Franklin Band proved us wrong. At the Texas Cave Management Association's 2nd annual Save the Caves FUNdraiser this summer, this versatile caver/drummer brought brass and funk together, rockin' the second floor of Buffalo Billiards in downtown Austin.

The band's extremely danceable tunes brought many of the 100+ partiers to their feet. Along with live music, participants joined in on a raffle and made other donations that raised $3,000 or more for TCMA's mission to protect Texas caves.

For the June 16 event, the band started with a New Wave set featuring artists like Prince and Blondie, followed by a funkalicious 70s soul funk set before ending the night with some great classic rock! A band original, *"Don't Rock My Pack,"* was a crowd favorite.

Two awesome raffle prizes – a guided tour of Amazing Maze Cave and a TCMA life member package – were presented in addition to many great door prizes donated by businesses. Two board members were key to the fundraiser: Lindsey Adamoski organized the event, with Drew Thompson again serving as emcee.

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Texas Speleology Center taking shape

TCMA directors gather this summer at TSC

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is the former residence and property of Bill Mixon. The TSS has since held board meetings at the center, and TCMA's first board meeting there was on June 30.

The TCMA and TSS wish to thank Bill for his generosity in the deal, which will benefit the entire Texas caving community. The property includes a main building with a library, meeting room, office space, and a cooking area. It also has a full-size basement with its own lower entrance, and the main level has a spacious deck. A large metal barn on the property is suitable for storing trailers and equipment or holding talks and events. The Center currently holds the Association for Mexican Cave Studies' library, which we anticipate will continue.

Many thanks to the Bexar Grotto for its generous donation of $5,000 toward the purchase.

President's corner: How your help can advance our mission

By Joe Ranzau

Volunteer | vol·un·teer: a person who voluntarily undertakes or expresses a willingness to undertake a service.

Without you, and many cavers like you, the Texas Cave Management Association we have today would not exist. Our organization is the product of our collective vision, blood, sweat and tears. The simple act of reading *Passages* to find the latest news about TCMA is a first step in engaging with a broader community, dedicated to caves and caving. TCMA is a completely volunteer organization, meaning that everything we accomplish is due to the commitment and dedication of each and every one of us.

Joe Ranzau

As we slide suddenly into the fall season, it is always gratifying to look back at what we have accomplished together this past year. Texas Cave Management Association has continued to partner with the Texas Speleological Survey to establish the Texas Speleology Center, a permanent home for Texas caving. The TSC team is currently planning improvements and renovations to prepare the facility for the TSS archives. We are excited for the future of this facility that will benefit all of Texas caving!

For me personally, it is important that TCMA continues to focus on our true mission, conserving caves and providing compatible recreational opportunities for cavers. We hosted groups throughout the year at each of our preserves, educating children and adults about cave conservation. We also helped facilitate rescue personnel training and worked with our partners supporting and enhancing TCMA's mission. TCMA has worked hard to continue investing in improving and maintaining our cave preserves, collaborated with other non-profit partners to identify opportunities to preserve Texas caves, toured multiple properties with caves for sale and supported training programs for cavers.

Behind the scenes, our volunteers handled many things you would not necessarily associate with caving. We have tackled facilities improvements, finance and insurance negotiations, clean-up projects, worked with taxing authorities, conducted extensive neighboring landowner relations, collaborated with law enforcement, code compliance, and search and rescue personnel to resolve challenges at multiple preserves, and even provided disaster relief to some of our affected members.

This is something we share, not to pat ourselves on the back, but rather to educate and hopefully inspire you to find where you might contribute to move TCMA forward. Whether you are able to give 30 minutes, 30 hours or 30 days of your time, TCMA is here, eagerly awaiting your support.

Meet candidates for TCMA Board of Directors

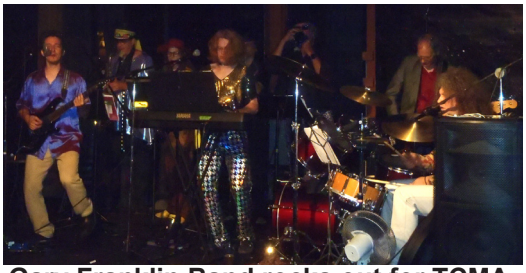
Editor's note: Electronic voting for the TCMA Board of Directors will go live immediately after Texas Cavers Reunion. Watch for your e-ballot and notices on CaveTex and the TCMA Facebook page. Make sure your membership is active. Our election clerks, Matt Zappitello and Ann Scott, will tally the votes within seven days after balloting closes on November 12. Here are statements from eight candidates running for five board vacancies:

John P. Brooks – I am seeking election to the TCMA BOD. In the past, I served two terms on the board, and I feel that I made meaningful contributions. During those terms, I served for four years as president and worked on numerous committees. I have held leadership positions in the Texas caving community many times, including three years as TSA president.

John Brooks

I started caving as a student at Texas A&M in 1976 and was active in the student grotto until I graduated in 1981. I relocated to Dallas and became an active member of the DFW Grotto. Over the past few years, I have been an active member of the Arbuckle Mountains Grotto.

In my "real" life, I am an architect and specialize in the design of complex institutional facilities through an integrated process. That means I lead my clients through an engaged, collaborative design process to create their vision for their project. I feel that my problem-solving and collaborative leadership skills provide benefit to the organizations that I work with on both a volunteer and professional basis.



Gary Franklin Band rocks out for TCMA

I believe the TCMA has an important role in the Texas caving community. The organization has several missions, ranging from preservation and stewardship of cave and karst resources to education and research about caves and the importance of conserving caves, aquifers and karst. I think the board should reflect the geographic diversity of Texas cavers, and the organization should look to create or acquire preserves within each of the unique karst regions of Texas.

In the future, I would like to see the TCMA grow its fiscal assets, acquire additional preserves and secure management agreements

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

Visit us online! http://www.tcmacaves.org/

***Contribute** to Passages!*
Please send your text and photos to:
Jay Jorden – jjorden@gmail.com

TCMA membership info

Membership Fees:
Regular - $15.00
Institutional (Non-profit) - $50.00
Corporate - $100.00
Life (Regular Rate) - $500.00

Joining is easy! Go online at www.tcmacaves.org – or send a check to:
Texas Cave Management Association Inc.
PO Box 7427
Austin, TX 78713

Officers
Joe Ranzau, **president**
Linda Palit, **vice president**
Lindsey Adamoski, **secretary**
Christi Burrell, **treasurer**

Directors
Lindsey Adamoski
Christi Burrell
Ken Demarest
Andy Edwards
Lee Jay Graves
Jay Jorden
Amy Morton
Greg Mosier
Linda Palit
Denise Prendergast
Joe Ranzau
Juliana Rincón
Drew Thompson

Committee Chairs
Acquisitions – Greg Mosier
Archives – Amy Morton
Budget – Ron Ralph
Communications – Jay Jorden
Database – Rachel Davison
Finance – Joe Ranzau
Fundraising – TBD
Insurance – Joe Ranzau
Membership – Denise Prendergast
Nominations – Linda Palit
Preserves Management – Linda Palit

Preserve Managers
Deep and Punkin – Tom Rogers
Ezells Cave – Gregg Williams, Dave Adamoski
Godwin Ranch – Andrea Croskrey
Lost Oasis – Drew Thompson
Robber Baron – Mike Harris
Rolling Oaks – Evelynn Mitchell
UT (Amazing Maze, O-9 Well) – Ben Hutchins
Avery Ranch – Galen Falgout
Whirlpool – Liz Herren
Wilcox – Ken Demarest
Webmaster – Andy Edwards
Passages editor – Jay Jorden

Meet our new TCMA board candidates

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of resources owned by others. I believe that the TCMA should look to acquiring preserves in the five surrounding states. I believe the TCMA should consider becoming a regional or international entity and acquire a preserve in Mexico.

I believe the TCMA needs to avoid the fiscal trap of buying and owning buildings—as an architect, I see too many organizations spend too much money maintaining facilities.

The TCMA should remain true and faithful to its mission, vision and values. The organization's focus should remain on the long-term mission of the protection and preservation of caves, karst, aquifers, research and education.

I respectfully request your support.

Lee Jay Graves – I have enjoyed serving the Association for the last three years. I think we have seen significant progress toward our goals. We still face challenges dealing with certain properties, but by working together, I expect we can arrive at a concensus. I commit to work with every board member to achieve this concensus. We won't agree on every detail, but we must commit ourselves to general agreement on the big issues. We all agree to serve the Association, not ourselves, and we are responsible for growing the organization for the next generation of cavers. If selected to serve another term, I promise to serve the Association to the best of my ability, in the spirit of fellowship and compromise.

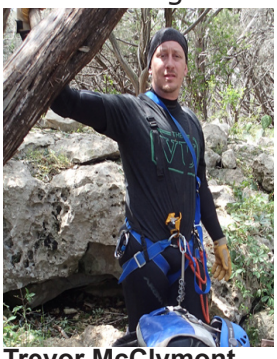
Lee Jay Graves

Lizette Rincon Harbour – I have been a caver since March 2011, when I joined an Introduction to Speleology course from the local grotto in Costa Rica (Anthros). It was the second time in my life I had been in a cave, but I knew I would enjoy it as much as the first time, back in middle school. Crawling, mud baths, wading through underground rivers and squeezing through birth holes? Sign me up!

I was the grotto secretary and communications manager until I moved to Texas in May 2012. I coordinated caving trips, explored a whole lot, and led training sessions on equipment for the Introduction course. I was part of the organizing committee for the First National Speleolympics held at the National Stadium in San Jose, Costa Rica and also completed the Level 1 Cave and Wilderness Rescue Course led by the Belize School of Outdoor Leadership Training ... after a grueling but fun, six-day experience in the Costa Rican rainforest, including but not limited to building a stretcher out of one length of webbing and a machete, 24-hour waterfall rescue and cave overnighting with no equipment! Yup, still loving this caving/rigging/rescue thing!

Liz Harbour

Once I moved to Texas, I knew I wanted to continue caving and began attending the Dallas-Fort Worth Grotto meetings. I became a DFW Grotto member in 2014 and have been active since then, now in my second year as grotto secretary. I have been to national conventions and have attended and volunteered at TSA Spring Convention and the Texas Caver Reunion. And I absolutely still love caving. Although I don't get to go on caving trips as much as I would like for the constraints of family and work, I do try to at least go out caving once every one or two months. I want to continue to help the DFW Grotto grow, help host more caving events for the group and continue to explore underground. I would be honored to serve in TCMA and contribute to cave management from our cave-dry land of DFW!



Trevor McClymont

Trevor McClymont – I was first introduced into caving by my parents at the young age of 8 with an adventure through the Lewis and Clark Caverns in Montana. Throughout my childhood and adolescence, family vacations often had caving on the agenda; commercial caves, but nonetheless caves. Shortly after meeting my wife Courtney in 2004, I was fortunate to introduce her to caving at Carlsbad Caverns. After a couple of adventure tours at the park,

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New candidates for TCMA Board of Directors

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she was hooked to caving like a bat to mosquitos. Our combined appetite for caves resulted in spending our first anniversary at Carlsbad Caverns, where we completed every adventure tour offered at the park. Over the next decade, many vacations we took revolved around caving – caving in multiple states around the U.S., Puerto Rico, Belize, and Western Australia.

We joined the Greater Houston Grotto in 2014, where we were introduced to Texas caves and the larger Texas caving community. I have been very active in the GHG since joining, doing what I can to create a welcoming environment for new cavers and building a positive representation of GHG at caver gatherings; in Texas, other states, and foreign countries.

My caving experiences have given me a tremendous appreciation for caves, their ruggedness and their incredible fragility. My passion for caving has never ceased, and I hope to instill that same passion in my children as they begin their caving lives. I have been interested in expanding my involvement with the caving community, and an appointment to the TCMA would be a great avenue. If elected, I will do my part to make a positive impact on caving through reinforcing cave conservation, caving education, and introducing the non-caving public to the amazement and wonderment of the world below, all while generating a positive light on caving and cavers in general.

Kara A. Posso

Kara A. Posso – A strong affection for the caving community, Texas cave projects, and conservation of our natural resources are my main driving factors in wanting to be involved with the TCMA Board. I place a high value on each of these items and have a deep appreciation for their role in my own life.

I prioritize the idea of service and feel that participation with TCMA would provide a meaningful way to contribute to the community and conservation of resources that I love and respect.

Denise Prendergast – Denise has been a caver for nearly 20 years. With a bachelor's degree in geology, she has a keen interest in resource conservation and the outdoors.

Denise Prendergast

Ms. Prendergast is currently on the TCMA Board of Directors and serves on numerous TCMA committees, focusing on membership and fundraising. She is excited to be part of the TCMA Board and enjoys assisting the organization in acquiring and protecting caves and karst. She is seeking a second term on the Board of Directors.

Ms. Prendergast is currently an officer of the UT Grotto and a past secretary of the TSA.

Joe Ranzau – I am asking for your vote to allow me to serve a term on the TCMA Board of Directors. My goal for this term on the Board is to run and continue serving as President of the organization. TCMA has worked hard to invest internally this past year, and much work remains to be done. We're an all-volunteer board, and each of us has limited time to give. The organization is working to make sure we're well-positioned to carry on our efforts long into the future.

Joe Ranzau

As a former treasurer and current president of TCMA, I am well-versed in the skills and commitment needed to shepard the organization forward. This past term, we've partnered with the TSS to create a permanent home for Texas caving. We're also actively engaged in the broader conservation community and always watching for the next acquisition. In addition to serving previous terms as a director and officer of TCMA, I have also been an officer of the TSA and the Bexar Grotto.

My caving life started 22 years ago as a tour guide at Cave Without a Name. Some strange people from the Bexar Grotto would come out to go play in the stream passage. It looked like fun and they did not appear too crazy. I wanted to know what was around the corner, so I joined in! From there, I quickly joined in the fun around Texas at various projects like

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Our board candidates

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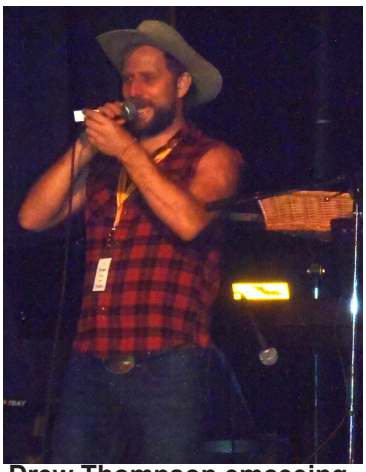
Kickapoo Caverns and at Colorado Bend. Pat Copeland and other cavers lit a passion in me for cave conservation and restoration. This passion has taken me caving in many special places around the U.S., Mexico, and Belize.



Drew Thompson emceeing TCMA summer FUNdraiser

The TCMA stewards places like Ezells Cave, a portal into the Edwards Aquifer, or Deep and Punkin Nature Preserve, a place that not only provides great recreational caving opportunities but also allows us to protect an important bat colony. Giving back to something that gives us so much joy is important. Vote for Joe!

Drew Thompson

Drew Thompson – Drew has been an active member in the TCMA since 2005 and a board member since 2015. He currently is employed by the City of Austin's Wildlands Conservation Division as a biologist specializing in cave sciences. Through this work he monitors and manages Balcones Canyonland Preserve caves and other City of Austin properties.

Drew has been a part of numerous caving projects in the U.S. and Mexico, was president of the UT Grotto of Austin in 2016-2017, holds level one certification from NCRC, and is property manager for the Lost Oasis Cave Preserve.

R.D. Milhollin at Punkin Pit

Aggie cavers visit Whirlpool Cave and improvements

Cave preserve news

Godwin Ranch Cave Preserve – I want to give a big shout-out and thank-you to Kara Dittmer Savvas, Kevin Walsh, Kate Seale, Cougar Seale, Justin Leavitt, and Miguel Francisco Gonzales for their help with the 2018 Summer Solstice cricket count at the Cave Preserve. Approximately 400 crickets were observed emerging from Temple of Thor Cave, one cricket was actually seen at Lakeline Cave, and ~15 crickets were seen exiting Red Crevice during the late June count. Thank you for supporting the TCMA and one of the longest cave biology records in Texas!

On the morning of April 8, the Godwin Ranch Preserve roadside trash pickup got underway. So many thanks to Cait McCann and David Ochel for helping with the pickup! Cleaning up the roadside helps us be good neighbors. Additionally, this ditch drains onto the property. Picking up trash helps to improve the water quality on the preserve, too! ***– Andrea Croskrey***

Whirlpool Cave Preserve – Aggie Speleological Society (ASS) cavers came out several times to our urban South Austin preserve, beginning in early February. This was a great crop of excited cavers. These fine folks continue to provide invaluable help cleaning up 30 years of rubble and digs on the property.

The preserve is now benefiting from a nearby parking lot paved by the city to support the new Violet Crown Trail crossing at the creek. For the lot's construction, TCMA and City of Austin cave specialists were included in discussions because of our routine use of the area and cave impact issues.

Liz Herren will be the new preserve manager going forward. ***– Rich Zarria***