TCMA PASSAGES

FALL 2019 - VOL. 19, NO. 2

Important members' meetings: Be there!

The **Texas Cave Management Association (TCMA) member's meeting** at **Texas Cavers' Reunion** is **noon Saturday, October 12**. Updates will include several recent developments: our Honey Creek Cave access agreement, new preserve managers and candidates for the board—plus **breaking news** that you'll really want to hear about!

If you're not a member, please join us at the TCMA table during TCR or online at tcmacaves.org. You won't want to miss this meeting!

Also, learn the latest about the **Texas Speleological Survey**, including plans for moving to the new Texas Speleology Center. A brief meeting at **11:30 a.m. Saturday** near the TSS sales tent will precede the TCMA meeting.

Additionally, a **TCMA breakfast** will be served at **8:30 a.m. Sunday**. Please bring cash for the suggested $5 donation. Coffee and tacos (egg, potato and sausage) are on the menu along with fruit and yogurt. Come support us!

Nine run in board elections

Voting is currently underway by Texas Cave Management Association members to fill three open Board of Directors positions. Electronic ballots were distributed on October 1. Balloting closes on Sunday, October 20.

If you would like to vote but are not a member, please join — or renew your membership if needed — at the TCMA table or on our website at https://www.tcmacaves.org/ …

Nine candidates are running for the three positions.

The Elections Committee thanks every candidate for taking time to run and support TCMA. The following are campaign

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Inside *Passages:*

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- **Officers and preserve managers** Page 2

Caving council members: TCMA hosted the San Antonio City Council at Robber Baron Cave Preserve as part of Councilman Clayton Perry's District 10 tour on August 16. — *Mike Harris photo*

Honey Creek pact signed

The owners of Honey Creek Springs Ranch have negotiated a formal access and monitoring agreement with TCMA for Honey Creek Cave, Texas' longest, which is located on the private ranch.

Honey Creek is a water cave with 21+ miles of surveyed passage, often described as an underground river. The resurgence serves as the headwaters for the flowing section of Honey Creek. This surface stream is known for its superior water quality and

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TCMA, Honey Creek ranch reach agreement

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unique ecosystem. Honey Creek (surface stream) is surrounded almost in its entirety by Honey Creek State Natural Area, a unit of TPWD.

TCMA and our members will have four trips a year for scientific study, exploration (survey), and limited recreational access. In return, we will formalize our monitoring efforts on water quality, cave biota and the overall impacts the cave is experiencing. The surrounding area is experiencing an explosion of property development and faces significant risks from water pumping, waste water discharge, aggregate mining, and general impacts from increased human activity.

Kurt Menking will serve as our inaugural project manager. Bill Steele will lead the renewed survey efforts. They have a combined experience of nearly 80 years with the cave. Many thanks to the Honey Creek owners along with Menking, Steele, Andy Gluesenkamp, Greg Mosier, Ellie Thoene, Linda Palit and many others for their hard work maintaining landowner relationships over many years. We are currently working with key stakeholders to establish our trip schedule, access guidelines, monitoring protocols, etc.

Stay tuned for more information on how you can help TCMA fulfill our mission and visit Honey Creek Cave. For membership information, please visit our website at tcmacaves.org. Please contact info@tcmacaves.org with your questions.

Rave reviews for Robber Baron Cave Preserve open house

by Mike Harris

A spectacular success! Almost 750 people visited Robber Baron Cave Preserve for our open house where $7,000+ was raised for TCMA. For six hours on September 28, we shared this precious underground treasure with the community. More than 100 visitors lined up by the 9 a.m. opening, and throughout the day we exceeded our previous attendance, sales and donations milestones.

Cavers from as far away as Houston and Waco volunteered for the signature event, coordinated by Lindsey Adamoski. Mimi Jasek donated her unique TCMA/Robber Baron quilt/blanket created with 100+ hours of loving care. It was raffled off, raising almost $200. Joe Mitchell launched another creation: the Robber Baron board game! Giving Monopoly a run for its money, these games are now available in limited supply. A big thanks also to Elaine and Rob Bissett for hosting the after-party for hard-working volunteers!

Linda Palit awaiting crowds — *Mike Harris photos*

***Contribute** to Passages!*
Send text and photos to:
Jay Jorden – jjorden@gmail.com
Visit us online! http://www.tcmacaves.org/

TCMA membership info

Membership Fees:
Regular - $15.00
Institutional/nonprofit - $50.00
Corporate - $100.00
Life (Regular Rate) - $500.00
Donate! We're a 501(c)3 nonprofit.

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
John Brooks
Christi Burrell
Ken Demarest
Andy Edwards
Trevor McClymont
Amy Morton
Greg Mosier
Linda Palit
Denise Prendergast
Joe Ranzau
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, Rob Bissett
Ezells Cave – Gregg Williams, Dave Adamoski
Godwin Ranch – Andrea Croskrey
Lost Oasis – Drew Thompson
Robber Baron – Joe Mitchell, Mike Harris
Rolling Oaks – Evelynn Mitchell
UT (Amazing Maze, O-9 Well) – Ben Hutchins
Avery Ranch – Lindsey Luetge
Whirlpool – Liz Herren
Wilcox – Ken Demarest
Webmaster – Andy Edwards
Passages editor – Jay Jorden
Volunteer: email info@tcmacaves.org.

Hopefuls for TCMA board submit statements

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statements from each (in a few cases, edited for length considerations):

Christi Burrell started caving in 1987. Her first cave was Robber Baron, followed by Logan's and then Benders Water Cave (now Twinkie's Cave). She visited all three of these caves in two weeks. She was hooked. Since then, she has explored caves all over Texas, New Mexico, and other states. Mrs. Burrell has held office in the TSA in the past. She truly appreciates all of the conservation work that has been done by the TCMA.

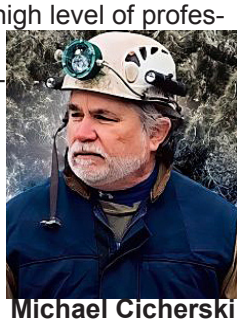
Christi Burrell

In addition to caving, she also enjoys hiking, camping, backpacking, rock hounding, and canoeing. She is married to Mike Burrell, who is also a caver. They live on the property of Cave Without a Name in Boerne, Texas where her husband has been working for several years. Mrs. Burrell works at First Presbyterian Church San Antonio, located 2 blocks from the Alamo in downtown San Antonio. Her work for the church is in the finance department, and she has been working in nonprofit finance for almost 20 years.

Michael Cicherski has been caving regularly since the late 80s. He is a Fellow of the National Speleological Society and a recipient of the NSS Certificate of Merit.

Michael has participated in projects at Honey Creek Cave, Powell's Cave, and elsewhere in Texas, as well as projects in Montana, Kentucky and Mexico. Michael continues to be an active caver, and is the co-project director in two on-going efforts in the Texas Hill Country.

Michael has previously held positions of leadership in the TSA, TCMA and in The 15th International Congress of Speleology. As treasurer, he brought a high level of professional bookkeeping standards to each of the organizations and was instrumental in helping the Congress turn a profit in 2009.



Michael Cicherski

In addition to the treasurer's role, Michael has served on various TCMA Committees, assisted on various projects in each of the organizations, and briefly served as a preserve manager for Ezells Cave.

As a member of the Board, Michael will help the TCMA focus on its mission statement of acquisition, management, protection and accessibility of caves in Texas.

Ben Dau has been an avid outdoors enthusiast since his parents put him on cross country skis before he was two. Ever since then, he's been hooked and spends most of his free time enjoying the outdoors. He is an avid rock climber, canyoneer, and mountaineer. Ben eventually got his caving toes wet ridgewalking while living in New Mexico's Gila Wilderness. Since moving to the Houston area three years ago, Ben has been active in the Texas caving community. He has volunteered at the Deep and Punkin and Robber Baron Cave Preserves, and participated in various tank haul projects. Ben has also been active in the national and international caving communities by participating in exploration projects in Montana and Mexico. Ben is a strong advocate for managing both cave recreation and nature conservation. While not traveling for caving, Ben volunteers with the Houston-Galveston Area Council, cleaning trash from beaches and bayous.

Ben Dau

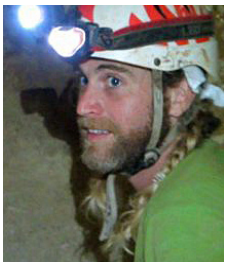
Mandy Novak — I have been an active member of the UT Grotto for two years after joining a trip to Deep and Punkin. In those two short years, I have been involved with multiple TCMA cave projects and I plan on continuing those efforts. As a member, I have worked on digs & cleanup at Whirlpool, construction of a new gate for O9 Well, various projects at D&P, along with other non-TCMA cave projects. My background is in native horticulture so I understand the significance of preserving the special nature of Texas and keeping it that way.

Mandy Novak

In addition to helping preserve the TCMA caves, I believe it is essential to recruit and introduce caving to those who are interested. After helping with the UT Grotto table at Barton Springs, I learned that there are so many people that are unaware of what we do and they want to get involved. I hope to garner more interest by organizing efforts to do so. Whether it involves people respecting the underground from afar, or actually getting physically involved, education on how caves impact our daily lives is an enormous facet in preserving them.

When I'm not stuck in Austin traffic or working, I am usually filling my free time with gardening, bouldering, eating Tex-Mex food, or caving of course.

Kevin Pride — Growing up in Georgia, I had no idea what was beneath my feet (other than red dirt). As a kid, I hiked and canoed throughout the Smoky Mountains and occasionally would stumble across a hole in the ground. Being a natural spelunker, I would take an old flashlight and explore until I thought it was too risky. Fast forward about 20 years, and I now know that any amount of solo exploring is too risky.



Kevin Pride

I formally began caving about four years ago with the Greater Houston Grotto. Roger Moore was a friend of my girlfriend and commented on Facebook pictures that she posted of us in Bee Cave in Kickapoo Caverns State Park. Once again, I stumbled across Bee Cave while doing a little off-trail exploring. Roger suggested that I join GHG. I'm glad I took his advice. At my first meeting, I signed up for a

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Candidates share visions for TCMA election

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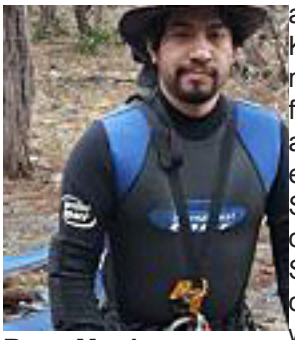
trip to Logan's cave in Helotes. Little did I know, I was about to find more than an exciting caving experience – I was about to find a community that continues to be a second family to me and my daughter. The trip was lead by an all-star cast of amazing people who I now consider family (for better or worse) – Ellie Watson, Aaron and Victoria, Peter D, Trevor, Courtney from GHG, Amy Morton, and Tom Rogers (my cave parents), Fernando, and Galen. I'm sure I'm forgetting a few other folks. After that cave trip I was hooked. I joined all the caver clubs – TSA, NSS, UT Grotto. I became most active in Bexar Grotto and quickly became a regular at Government Canyon Karst Survey Project. I am eager to run for the TCMA board. I intend on focusing on family-friendly activities and events with a focus on science education. Three years ago, Peter Sprouse gave my daughter an honorary Junior Cave Scientist badge. She cherishes the badge to this day. I would like to facilitate a club within TCMA that would encourage families in taking a scientific approach to cave trips. Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to caving with you all soon!



Ryan Monjaras

Ryan Monjaras — Hello, I'm running for TCMA Board. I've been caving since 2008, I've been a member of numerous grottos current and defunct, and I've held an officer position in most of them. In short, I know Texas caves and I know Texas cavers from all over. I've been to at least one cleanup for every preserve we host cleanups for and have managed Lost Oasis Cave Preserve in the past. I've not been very active since moving to Houston, but my passion for caves is still there. Thank you for your consideration.

Ron Ralph — I am running for the position of Director of the Texas Cave Management Association. I am a past Director during which I attended almost every board meeting. I live in Austin and have attended various cave functions such as TCR, NSS conventions, Bustamante clean-up and cave surveys in state parks.

I have been on the TCMA Budget committee for several years now and have served on the Database and the Elections committees. I have also been manager for Lost Oasis and Ezells Cave Preserves. I have also presented programs to the public and to the State Legislature concerning TCMA and the benefit of cave protection and preservation. If elected, I would like to continue a project to work with ranch owners with caves on their property to allow TCMA, assisted by TSA, to remove old trash and rehabilitate formations.

Ron Ralph

Carol Schumacher has been part of the caving community since 1999 when she brought her son 16, into the community to became the youngest president of the UT grotto at 17. She held the title of vice chair the proceeding year. Her contributions to community are endless but her most memorable was being able to hand her son and daughter their high school diplomas as a BISD school board trustee. Carol's respect of cave structures we live above and importance in gaurdianship started with her son's, but has only strengthened since being involved in this conservation community.

Carol Schumacher

"I would like to make an even wider contribution to the family I love."

Cruz St. Peter has been an active caver and diligent member of the caving community for nearly a decade. Cruz first began caving in 2010 as a member of the Aggie Speleological Society at Texas A&M University. He quickly fell in love with the underground world and the wonderful people he befriended in the caving community. Cruz joined the Greater Houston Grotto in 2015, where he currently serves as Vice-Chair. He is an active caver who has participated in several expedition projects, including Sistema Chevé in Oaxaca, Proyecto Espeleológico Purificación in Nuevo León, and the Silvertip System in Montana. Additionally, he has volunteered a significant amount of his free time toward cave wildlife conservation; assisting with several White-nose syndrome research projects in Texas and Northern Mexico. His most recent conservation effort involved building a cave gate in Tennessee, to protect a maternal colony of endangered bats. Cruz's track record of leadership and commitment to cave conservation make him a qualified candidate to join the TCMA board. Mr. St. Peter currently serves on the Board of Directors for a bio-pharmaceutical company, Blood and Plasma Research, Inc. His background in environmental science and his professional life in industry research have honed his skills in networking, technical writing, and navigating funding opportunities.

Cruz St. Peter

TCMA has a large presence in San Antonio and Austin, but not much in East Texas. As a member of the TCMA board, Cruz would work hard to educate the Houston community on cave conservation and safe caving practices, expanding TCMA's visibility beyond the Texas Hill Country.

TCMA at TCR!

DON'T MISS our:

- **TCMA members' meeting** at noon on Saturday, location TBD. Come learn about us—and hear an important announcement!
- **Breakfast,** 8:30 a.m. Sunday. Eggs, tacos, fruit, yogurt, OJ, coffee. $5 donation, please!

Please join TCMA if you're not a member! The