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My introduction to caving began as many others - via a tourist trip. I visited Belize in April 2019 for my 35th birthday and was eager for adventure. I found it in the Actun Tunichil Muknal Cave. We arrived late in the day and had the whole cave to ourselves to explore (with our guide). We swam into the cave and were greeted by sacrificial remains and Mayan artifacts. I was entranced. Fast forward to fall of the same year, and I again had the opportunity to experience “real” caving in Carlsbad Caverns on a wild tourist trip to Hall of the White Giant. This is the trip that hooked me. I began probing the rangers, “How can I do more of this?” They told me about

grottos and asked where I lived. When I told them, “Georgia,” they told me I was lucky enough to live in the heart of cave country—TAG! By December, I joined Dogwood City Grotto and quickly knew the caving community would become an integral part of my life.

In January of 2021, I was elected to the board of the Dogwood City Grotto as Corresponding Secretary, where I am currently serving my second term. It has been an honor and a pleasure. Accepting this leadership role has given me a wealth of unexpected benefits. I took on the challenge because I wanted to give back to a community I already loved so much, but in return, I gained organizational experience, learned how to make decisions as part of a team, while accepting feedback and representing our membership. Along the way I met a slew of passionate conservationists whom I now call family.

Additionally, I served as the Auction Coordinator for Dogwood City Grotto and raised over \$2,000 by procuring donations, generating excitement, and promoting the event. This money is now being used to fulfill grant requests in the caving community and assists cavers with research, exploration, and rescue.

I am also the present editor of the award winning quarterly publication The Georgia Underground. More of my proudest moments include: Shadowing the Chair of the 2021 TAG Fall Cave-In, Lisa Andrews, and learning how to run the second largest cave event in the country; organizing a parade for the Cave-In to promote fellowship among cavers in the post-pandemic world; and working with Julie Schenck-Brown and Andy Zellner as part of the Landowner Relations team for Dogwood City Grotto and the NSS. In this latter role, we recognize and support landowners who encourage cave conservation, access, exploration, and education.

I want to combine my natural talents of organizational leadership and team building to serve the NSS and our membership with a particular focus on fundraising and event organizing. My goal is to help secure the future of the NSS financially so that we may continue to protect karst and encourage sustainable caving and research. Specifically, I want to promote education and research initiatives at our NSS Preserves, the NSS Convention, and the HQ as part of the proposed re-organization of the NSS. I also want to ensure cavers of TAG have a strong voice within the NSS, while representing all members and ensuring transparency. Listening to our membership and celebrating their accomplishments helps us ensure our mission stays central to planning and the future of the NSS, while recognizing the contributions of all. Through our collective actions, we will ensure the NSS continues to be the premier caving organization.

I encourage you to reach out to me via phone call, text message or email.

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