



I am running for the BOG for the second time this year because I find serving on boards to be a fantastic way to meet interesting people and learn more about my biggest passion right now, which is caving.

I started caving just eight short years ago and was lucky enough to fall into a great crowd of very competent cavers. It was the best thing to happen to me in a long time. I had just retired after 30 years in the military and was looking for something new and interesting to gobble up my time in retirement, and boy did I find it.

Caving also helped me get over my fear of heights and claustrophobia, so it was not just a physical thing, it was mentally challenging as well. And with three caves on my property, I can always get underground without going too far.

Along with caving (I do mostly project caving/digging), I have joined a number of caving organizations; I am an officer in the Butler Cave Conservation Society (BCCS), Vice Chair of the Virginia Region, a member of the Virginia Cave Board, and a proud member of the West Virginia Association for Cave Studies, the Potomac Speleological Club, and The Robertson Association. I am also a member of the NSS, which was the very first caving organization I joined once I learned of it, back in 2012.

One of my favorite caving activities is building teams to go to digging projects that require large groups to work (not just three or four people, but up to 10-12). I find this to be a pleasant challenge, what with organizing travel, lodging, etc. Part of this process is building the infrastructure to allow hauling out spoils, and every now and then we get a big reward with a breakthrough to virgin cave.

I spend a lot of time leading groups on sport trips in various caves as well. As a member of the BCCS, I have access to all their caves and it is a joy to show them off to visiting groups as often as possible.

Over the past couple of years I have also been training with NCRC and have made it through Level 3 by now. I figure if you're going to go to vertical caves you ought to have some formal training. I think that some people get in trouble in caves because of a lack of training, so educating new cavers is always going to be a priority for me.

What would I bring to the BOG? Well, for one thing you can't live 56 years and not pick up some knowledge along the way. I served 30 years in the military, with the last eight years being in the top enlisted grade (E-9) on various staffs. I was a Russian/German interpreter for many years and spent the last 20 of my service time travelling 200 days a year, so I have seen a lot of places and diverse cultures and people. But mostly I am enthusiastic and looking forward to serving the greater caving community.

Thank you for your consideration.