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It has been many years since I have been an active caver. I did most of my caving during college (UVA, class of '64, BA math, UVA Grotto) and for a number of years thereafter. Most was in Virginia and West Virginia, some in Alabama and Tennessee. I learned vertical in School House and other West Virginia and Virginia caves.

In more “recent” years (only 20-30 years ago) I was involved in the restoration of a commercial cave in north Alabama – Cathedral Caverns. A friend and I created and installed automated light and sound experiences for various parts of the tourist trail. Protecting the components from the environment and automating were interesting exercises. I’ve been a SCUBA diver since 2002. Ok, come to think of it, I was in an underwater cavern on a recent scuba trip, so I have been in a cave recently.

Professionally I was a DP (data processing) person, now an IT (information technology) person. While in the Army and afterward for the Defense Department, I did really fun stuff, language and operating system development and some very classified applications, at the NSA. Then I returned to Birmingham and since have mostly been involved with developing, installing and supporting business computer systems – accounting, sales, inventory, purchasing, all of the “bread and butter” business apps, and of course some web and internet work as well.

In my spare time, I have been Financial Secretary and International Treasurer of the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism (USCJ). I have also been treasurer of the Birmingham Historical Radio Society, the Birmingham Jewish Community Center (JCC), the Birmingham Jewish Day School, and Birmingham Post 608 of the Jewish War Veterans. I also served as President of Temple Beth-El and the Temple Beth-El Foundation, the Birmingham JCC, the Southeast Region of USCJ, Camp Ramah Darom – founding board member, and the Birmingham Chapter of the Association for Computing Machinery. I’m currently on the board of ICCP (the Institute for Certification of Computing Professionals) where I was recently elected treasurer. I currently serve on the boards of JCRS (Jewish Children’s Regional Services), MercazUSA – delegate to the last 3 World Zionist Congresses, ICCP Education Foundation, and the Birmingham Jewish Foundation where I chair the Development committee. I have served on the boards of these organizations and a number of others.

Very briefly, high on the list of important things we need to do is to engage as much of our membership as possible. Our current membership is listed as around 8,500, down from about 12,000 in 2004 and the trend is down. New members are also trending down. On the positive side, we have phone and email information for 91% of our members. On the negative side only about 20% vote. If we are to survive long-range, we need to engage our membership in as many ways as we can think of in the activities of the Society. Technology today provides us with a host of ways to connect with our members. In fact, that in itself is a way. Might we interest some members who are so inclined to get involved with our communications and technology? We need not all be actively crawling in tubes to make important contributions to the important work of the NSS. There are many ways we can be involved. NSS does a lot of

great and important things. Much of it fun, and also worthwhile, interesting, scientifically valuable, and beneficial to the caving community and the broader community of which we are all a part. It takes person-power and involvement to do the many things we do (and we do well). Building relationships is what it is about. If we can do that, everything else is easy.