

Meeting was hosted by the East Tennessee Grotto via Zoom on February 20, 2021

Note: All Times are Eastern Standard Time

The meeting was called to order by the SERA Chair **Jon Zetterberg** at 10:00 a.m.

The Chair also introduced **Zeke McKee** as the SERA Vice Chair and **Alan Hatcher** as the Secretary/Treasurer.

**Mendy Swain** of the East Tennessee Grotto (ETG) made Opening Announcements and Welcome Message.

- In lieu of the typical cost of acquiring a venue, the ETG will be donating ~\$500 to the NSS directly.

**Brent Aulenbach** introduced the Map Salon. A link to a dropbox was provided that held the maps. (Was since deleted.)

- 13 map entries from 8 cartographers covering 5 different states
- Two Categories: 6 maps in Large Cave; 7 maps in Small Cave
- 6 Total Judges. Results given at the end of the meeting today.

**Don Hunter** introduced this year's issue of **The Southeastern Caver**. Vol 26, February 2021.

- Pointed out **Chris Higgins** photo from Heart of Gould Cave used on the cover.
- Very good response for content this year. Topped out at 50 pages!
- Don briefly reviewed the contents of the newsletter and thanked each contributor.
- Newsletter included a gallery of photos in lieu of Photo Salon being hosted this year.

## Executive Reports

### Chair

- Noted the difficulty surrounding Covid but noted that most grottos are continuing to function during these difficult times.

### Vice Chair

- No report

## Secretary / Treasurer

- Successfully took possession of all SERA materials from **John Hoffelt**
- Took over Admin of SERA Facebook group. Added several hundred more members. Currently 853 members.
- Restarted TAG-NET as SERA-NET
  - Established using Google Groups
  - Currently 145 Members
  - No SPAM has occurred since the group was founded.
- Made contact with most existing SERA I/Os
  - Removed 5 grottos from Existing List
    - Central Florida Grotto, Middle Georgia Grotto, Clayton County Cavers, Central Basin Grotto, RAT Grotto
    - Still working on making contact with other possible defunct grottos
  - Established Google Spreadsheets for Tracking Refusal Lists
    - Trimmed SERA Cave Carnival List of Organizations That Are Never Likely to Host
    - Added possible projection years
- Presented Treasurer Report (See full report at bottom)
  - Projected Possible Low Future Balance
- Suggested using SKTF Design from **Jerry Wallace** as a possible fundraiser.



## SKTF

- The SKTF currently has no leadership role assigned. SERA Chair asked for volunteers to take over the organization going forward.
- **Maureen Handler** has all of the materials and can help anyone get started as SKTF Chair.
- SKTF participated in a Savage Cove cleanup back in March
  - **Julianne Ramsey** gave a report on the cleanup.
  - Grundy County Mayor's office provided dumpsters.
  - Indoor camping provided at the Grundy County Community Center.
  - **Alan Hatcher** added as Chair of the Nashville Grotto that Conservation Chair **Caralynn Strand** was organizing another date to do more cleanup at the site.

## SERA Activities Report

- Secretary read the minutes from the 2020 Winter Business Meeting
- 2022 WBM is scheduled to be hosted by the GSS
  - **Brent Aulenbach** and **Nancy Aulenbach** provided an update.
  - GSS Chair **Brent Garner** is looking for an interesting location for the meeting.
  - May fall back to Bank of Lafayette.
- 2023 WBM invitation was issued to Green River Grotto. Huntsville Grotto would be next.
- 2020 Summer Cave Carnival was hosted by the Upper Cumberland Grotto
  - **Megan Atkinson** gave the report.
  - Held over Halloween. ~55 attendees. 20+ Volunteers. Co-Chaired by Megan and **Rose Morgan**.
  - Raised approximately \$1300, much of it from the secondary publication of the guide produced by **Chuck Sutherland**.
  - **Jay Manneschmidt** requested a copy of the guidebook for the SERA website.
  - The Chair thanked the Upper Cumberland Grotto for hosting under difficult circumstances.
- 2021 Summer Cave Carnival
  - Central Alabama Grotto has declined to host due to Covid based attendance concerns.
  - The Chair stated that if a group of individuals wanted to put on a smaller Carnival that would be fine, but under the circumstances it is also fine if it doesn't happen.
  - **Alan Hatcher** stated they may host a "Simple SERA" at Caver's Paradise.
- 2022 Summer Cave Carnival
  - **Rebecca McNabb** from the Chattanooga Grotto indicated they were moving forward with plans to host the Carnival in 2022 unless CAG would like to.
  - **Alan Hatcher** mentioned that **Michael Gilbert** and CAG might be willing to take over the 2023 Cave Carnival.
  - Michael spoke about the difficulties even trying to find a location due to Covid.
  - Rebecca said they would be flexible.
  - Alan stated that Clock Tower Grotto might consider doing it in 2023.
  - **Greg Whittaker** stated that CTG didn't feel comfortable doing it by themselves but they might want to co-host it with another smaller grotto.

- Michael made more comments about the current state of things regarding hosting carnivals and events.

### **Web Site Report**

- **Jay Manneschmidt** stated that he was leaving for a bit but would like to make sure he gets all of the award winners so he can print up the certificates and send them to the Secretary or Chair for distribution.
- Jay reiterated that he needs all of the information in a timely manner in order to get everything updated.
- Cleanup on the website has been ongoing. Some work to do still, but feels that it has been pretty successful.
- Alan noted that he has been sending corrections to Jay and that Jay has been handling them in a very timely fashion.

Chair called for a 12 minute break and to reconvene at 11 a.m.

### **Old Business**

- No old business was brought up.

### **New Business**

- Blue Grass Grotto joining SERA
- Placing SERA Archives in filing cabinet at NSS Headquarters

### **SERA Awards Discussion**

- Chair explained the process for this year.
- All awards were decided before the meeting.
- All five awards will be given.
- Francis McKenny Award Committee
  - **Chuck Sutherland**
  - **Kyle Lassiter**
  - **Rebecca McNabb**
- Richard Schreiber Award Committee
  - **Gerald Moni**
  - **Bill DeVan**
  - **Jeff Patton**
- Larry S. Adams Landowner Award Committee
  - **Hali Steinmann**
  - **Michael Gilbert**
  - **Warren Wyatt**
- Alexis Harris Conservation Award Committee
  - **Greg Whittaker**
  - **Kelly McNamara**
  - **Megan Atkinson**

- Avis Moni Hospitality Award Committee
  - **Jay Manneschmidt**
  - **Annabelle Dempsey**
  - **Natalie Pheasant**

## Organization Roll Call and Reports

- Alabama Cave Survey - Not Present
  - Jon reported they did not meet this year.
- Athens Speleological Survey - Not Present
  - Jon reported as Defunct
- Augusta Cave Masters - Not Present
  - Jon reported as Defunct
- Birmingham Grotto - **Shay Howell**
  - Working on gating caves near Huntsville
  - Working on protecting caves near a quarry project
- Central Alabama Grotto - **Jason Stacy**
  - Week long trip out West last year with 8 people
  - Especially enjoyed Monument Valley
- Charlotte Cave Club - Not Present
- Chattanooga Grotto - **Rebecca McNabb**
  - Have not met in the last year. May start meeting again soon.
- Clayton County Cavers - Not Present
- Clocktower Grotto - **Greg Whittaker**
  - Maintained monthly Zoom meetings
  - Most members individually active
- Crescent City Cavers - Joseph
  - Grotto restarted two years ago
  - Covid has hurt activities
  - Have done a few trips to TAG
  - Currently 8 to 10 members
- Cullman Grotto - Not Present
  - Secretary reported he has had contact with them this year
  - Cullman Grotto and Montgomery Grotto are “Sister Grottos” and do a lot of activities together.
- Dogwood City Grotto - **Bill Stringfellow**
  - Have not been able to meet at REI but have been using Zoom
  - Having grotto campouts every other month
  - TAG Fall Cave-In Canceled
  - Still sold a T-shirt to fund grant program
- East Tennessee Grotto - **Mendy Swain**
  - Using Zoom for Meetings which has opened up a wider variety of presenters
  - Individual members are still actively caving
  - Extended all 2020 memberships into 2021

- Flint River Grotto - **Ryan Hoffman**
  - Held their annual Cave Crawl just before Covid hit. ~150 people attended.
  - No Cave Crawl this year.
  - Some trips being led.
  - Project in Florida Caverns State Park
  - Discovered third longest dry cave in Florida.
- Flittermouse Grotto - Not Present
  - Secretary reported them as active
- Florida Speleological Society - Not Present
  - Probably defunct.
  - Ryan gave a brief report about a new Florida Survey Organization
- Gadsden Grotto - Not Present
  - Secretary reported some contact made.
- Georgia Speleological Society - **Brent Aulenbach** and **Jon Zetterberg**
  - Chose not to meet this year
  - Received almost double digit in cave submissions
  - Some ridgewalking and exploration
  - No publication in 2020. Will be held for next bulletin.
  - Anyone who paid for 2020 will be credited for 2021.
- Green River Grotto - **Barry Adams**
  - Not as active due to Covid
  - Doing some cartography projects
  - Online presentations
- Huntsville Grotto - Not Present
  - Secretary reported as Active
  - Having meetings including Super Meeting with DCG
- Jackson County Grotto - Not Present
  - Secretary reported as Active
- Montgomery County Grotto - Not Present
- Nashville Grotto - **Jim Minie** and **Alan Hatcher**
  - Online Meetings consistently every month
  - All new officers this year
  - About 95 members
  - Some personal cave trips with social distancing as much as possible
  - Created Vertical and Cartography Sections within the Grotto
  - Sections created to support small group activities
  - Conservation Chair is **Caralynn Strand**
  - Have created badges that can be earned for activities like vertical and conservation
  - Introduced the Nashville Domain, which is a 50 mile radius around the REI
  - Redone our website and automated trips and membership management
  - [www.nashvillegrotto.org](http://www.nashvillegrotto.org)
- Pigeon Mountain Grotto - Not Present
  - Possibly Defunct

- River City Grotto - Not Present
  - Possibly Defunct
- Sewanee Mountain Grotto - **Hali Steinmann**
  - Hosting meetings in homes of members
  - Super Meeting in March with the DCG
  - Decided in June to meet outside as much as possible
    - June - Wonder Cave
    - July - Nickajack Cave Bat Float
  - CaveFest canceled this year due to Covid
  - May try a more casual CaveFest in 2022
  - November Did a Workday at NSS HQ
  - December Christmas Party at The Caverns
  - **Kyle Lassiter** continued to publish newsletter and map of Gourdneck Cave
  - Donations made to NSS, SCCi, CaveSim, and the rescue squads
- Six Ridges Grotto - Not Present
  - Possibly Defunct
- Smoky Mountain Grotto - **Jay Manneschmidt**
  - Have not been meeting
  - Hope to start meeting again in 2021
  - Want to continue surveying Zarathustra Cave
- South Carolina Interstate Grotto - Not Present
  - Jon reported they are still around but not very active
- Spencer Mountain Grotto - **Julianne Ramsey**
  - Small grotto with older members like **Marion Smith** and **Bill Walter**
  - Suspended in person meetings
  - Met outside starting in July but stopped later in the year
  - Tried one Zoom meeting but will likely not continue
  - September - Grotto picnic at Cumberland Caverns
  - Some work going on in and around Nunley Mountain Cave
- Tampa Bay Area Grotto - Not Present
  - Secretary reported no recent contact
- Team Posiedon - Not Present
  - Possibly Defunct
- Tennessee Cave Survey - **Gerald Moni**
  - 596 new caves reported in 2020, mostly by **Justin Hoffman**
  - 61 new caves reported so far this year
  - 11, 352 caves now in Tennessee - 247 over a mile long
  - Using Lidar to find new caves
  - Have not decided about resuming in person meetings
- Triangle Troglodytes - Not Present
  - Possibly Defunct
- Upper Cumberland Grotto - **Rose Morgan**
  - Have not been as active
  - Usually meet at TN Tech but only met twice there this year

- Zoom didn't work out well
- Moved meetings to outside venues
- Roughly 4 or 5 cave trips, some campouts, kayaking
- Waived membership fees this year
- **SCCI - Bill Stringfellow**
  - Closed on Cyclops Cave in Virginia. 7 mile cave.
  - Purchased Balcony Sink Cave in TAG
  - Working on two more acquisitions
  - Please become a Sustaining Member
  - Mayapple Cave and Mulepen Cave donated by **John Attaway**
  - **Alan Hatcher** announced a \$5000 donation last year to SCCi from the Nashville Grotto

Chair called for Lunch Break until 12:45 pm



## New Business

Blue Grass Grotto has requested to join SERA

- **Kevin Zachary, Bob Roth, and Steve Vaughn** on call to represent
  - Based out of Lexington, KY
  - Chartered in 1962
  - Approximately 50 members with about a dozen coming to meetings
  - Tend to concentrate on Biology efforts and short cave trips
  - Bob is Librarian for the NSS along with **Bill Torode**
  - Bob co-manages the Wells Preserve for the NSS
  - **Catherine Bishop** just produced a large book about James Cave that is available at the NSS HQ
- No discussion offered on Application
- No Objections from Member Organizations
- Blue Grass Grotto is now part of SERA

SERA Secretary would like to store the SERA Archives within the NSS Headquarters

- Alan offered to purchase a small filing cabinet to place within HQ
- Might be put in same closet with ACS files
- Alan would also like to put award plaques somewhere at NSS HQ
- Alan made a motion to allow the Secretary to place the SERA Records at the NSS HQ
- **Mendy Swain** Seconded
- Mendy asked about what age of records would be placed
- Current ledger would not be put there.
- Many of the current records like Minutes are electronic these days
- Jon showed the Chair packet that gets passed to new Chair and would not be archived
- No Objections from Member Organizations
- Motion Passed

## Meritorious Service Award

- **Alan Hatcher** nominated **Don Hunter** for his work on the excellent newsletter this year and in the past. **Mendy Swain** seconded.
- No objections and award was given to Don.

## Elections

Vice-Chair **Zeke McKee** moves up to Chair for 2022

**Alan Hatcher** agreed to run again as Secretary / Treasurer. **Gerald Moni** nominated. No other nominations and Alan was elected to a second term.

**Alan Hatcher** nominated **Hali Steinmann** to serve as Vice Chair, who declined.

**Alan Hatcher** nominated **Annabelle Dempsey** to serve as Vice Chair. **Gerald Moni** seconded.

**Annabelle Dempsey** was selected as SERA Vice Chair for 2022.

## Map Salon Awards - Brent Aulenbach

27th Annual SERA Map Salon

Judges for Short Maps

- **Jay Manneschmidt**
- **Jon Zetterberg**
- **Natalie Pheasant**

Judges for Long Maps

- **Kelly Smallwood**
- **Chuck Sutherland**
- **Brent Aulenbach**

First year with a Kentucky map in the Salon.

### Short Caves Awards

Merit - "Rewarded Well" - **Dane Garreau**

Merit - "Guzzle Cave" - **Kyle Lassiter**

Third Place - "Crow Flight Cave" - **Ryan Hoffman**

Second Place - "Field Island Cave" - **Ryan Hoffman**

First Place - "Chad Cave" - **Ryan Hoffman**

### Long Caves Awards

Merit - "Kelly Creek Cave" - **Justin Huffman**

Merit - "Austin Point Cave" - **Jon Zetterberg**

Third Place - "Gypsy Cave" - **Ed Klausner**

First Place - Tie - "Cindy Cave" - **Josh Brewer**

First Place - Tie - "Gourdneck Cave" - **Kyle Lassiter**

## SERA Awards

Francis McKinney Award - **Jeff Patton**

Richard Schreiber Award - **Justin Huffman**

Alexis Harris Conservation Award - **Mike Moser**

Larry S. Adams Landowner Appreciation Award - **Tommy Griffin and Melinda Sutton-Griffin**

Avis Moni Hospitality Award - **Homero Rivas II**

SERA Meritorious Service Award - **Don Hunter**

Outgoing Chair **Jon Zetterberg** thanked everyone for everything they did in a very difficult year and adjourned the meeting.

**Josh Brewer** invited everyone to attend the Nashville Grotto Cartography Section "Survey Talk" happening every other Tuesday online.

## Treasurer's Report

Beginning Balance: \$367.46 (Handover from John Hoffelt on 12/31/2020)

### Income

Upper Cumberland Grotto: \$102.50 on 2/3/2021 (2020 SERA CC Tax)

Alan Hatcher: \$50.00 (SERA Award Offset Donation)

Anonymous: \$50.00 (SERA Award Offset Donation)

### Expenditures

2021 SERA Cash Awards: \$100.00

Current Balance: \$469.96

### Notes:

Three of the award participants declined to accept the cash award. Alan Hatcher and a donor who wishes to remain anonymous covered the other two award amounts totaling \$100, so no money was spent during the last fiscal year. There was also no SERA Cave Carnival in 2021 so no income was generated from that.

I do anticipate spending a small amount to have the plaques engraved with the 2021 and 2022 winners but will cover that myself as a donation to SERA.