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I was drawn into caving in 2001 while studying electrical engineering at MIT. On an early trip, I met Emily Davis at SpeleoBooks. I didn't know who Emily was, but she gave us great info about water levels in Gage's and encouraged us to have a fun, safe trip. The thrill of exploration hooked me, and I began leading MIT Caving Club trips. These didn't always go as planned, but I was hooked harder by experiences like digging a friend out of a low crawl with my helmet.

After joining the Southern Colorado Mountain Grotto in 2008, I was introduced to formal cave rescue. During a Colorado Cave Rescue Network training, I learned that cave rescue is a fantastic partnership between cavers and agency folks. I also found that rescuers sometimes unnecessarily damage caves during mock rescues. This inspired me to invent CaveSim, an artificial cave which teaches visitors not to touch formations, disturb artifacts, or harm cave life.

I initially thought CaveSim would be used only for rescue trainings, but I found that non-cavers (especially kids) love to explore the system and learn about cave conservation. I now use CaveSim mostly to teach young people about caves and conservation. I believe that caves, bats, and groundwater need as many advocates as possible, and that the best way to get support for conservation is to get the public to love what you want them to conserve. If elected to the BOG, one of my top priorities would be to try to increase the conservation education and outreach that we do as an organization. I believe that increasing our education of young people will also lead to a long-term increase in NSS membership, which I believe is important for the health of the organization. Acquisition of additional caves by the NSS or affiliated organization is also something I am passionate about and I would work toward that if elected to the BOG.

While I wish I had time to go on big expeditions, I do most of my caving close to home in Colorado. My wife and I love taking kids (including our 3 year old) and adults on beginner caving trips with fellow grotto members. I also love bringing the mobile version of CaveSim to regional caver events, which I would obviously continue to attend as a BOG member in the interest of meeting more NSS members and learning about your perspectives and priorities.. For me, cavers are an amazing group of people from wide-ranging backgrounds who come together to support one another and share the joy of exploration. I am excited about being able to give back to the caving community by listening to you and bringing your perspectives to the BOG (both by attending the BOG meetings and by working with other BOG members between meetings). While I'm humble about my business experience, I hope the BOG will benefit from what I've learned as the small business owner and patented inventor of CaveSim. I'm also humble about my rescue experience -- I've only participated in one real large-party rescue (in Alabama), but I am so grateful for this experience and I believe that it gives me the insight to understand the importance of NCRC. If you agree that it is important for us to (1) get young people excited about caving, (2) educate the public about cave conservation, and (3) work to acquire additional caves, please consider voting for me.