

First of all, for the benefit of those that don't know me, I would like to tell you a little about my professional background. I am an electronics engineer and computer scientist that has worked in the IT/IS Industry for over 30 years. I now specialize in data secrecy and cryptographic algorithms and have done so for the better part of the past 5 years. As much as I enjoy the sciences I also very much enjoy the outdoors and is one of the reasons that I have also been teaching scuba for the last 16 years. I am currently a NAUI Course Director and focus my "open water instructional time" primarily toward developing new Open Water Instructors. Additionally, I am also an active Full Cave Instructor and Cave 2 instructor that lives in North Florida, just 20 minutes from both Ginnee Springs and Manatee Springs. I love scuba and have been diving for approximately 30 years and that is why I continue to be engaged as an independent instructor to the present day.

I first joined the NSS-CDS around 2003. Since joining the NSS-CDS I have been primarily focused on the activities of the Cave Diving Section. I have always been interested in the dry caving aspects of speleology as well but just never pursued it. Around a year ago I joined a local Grotto because I wanted to learn about and explore the "other side of caving". It has been interesting so far and basically I have discovered that I have a lot to learn in the "dry cave realm". That being said one of my positions as a board member would be as follows:

1. I am opposed to any breaking of ties between the CDS and the parent organization.

I am not however opposed to maintaining a distinctly separate level of membership for those that are interested in only certain aspects of what the CDS offers. It doesn't have to be an all or nothing proposition with the NSS and I would work toward keeping the relationship between the CDS and NSS active and healthy. At the same time, it would be nice to see the CDS continue to offer the CDS specific memberships as an alternative option. I will, however, never vote for the separation of the CDS from the NSS.

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Voluntarism is a core value that has a place of importance in my personal life. Currently, I hold both the positions of Abe Davis Coordinator and the Awards Committee Chairman with the NSS-CDS. I also currently volunteer time to the AMVETS, Post 42, in Chiefland as the SOA 1st Vice Commander. I have been an active officer at that post in various positions for the past 6 years volunteering my time supporting our military veterans. Additionally, I also volunteer my time to the Civil Air Patrol, US Air Force Auxiliary, where I currently hold the staff officer position of (A6IT) Assistant Director of Information Technologies for the Florida Wing. The Florida Wing IT Department

provides IT services for not only the Wing but also 6 Groups and 70 squadrons across the entire State of Florida.

So you ask, how has my voluntarism already benefited the CDS and it's members?

I have always said, if you are going to volunteer to do a position, well be prepared to actually **do the work required of the position.**

Upon stepping into the Awards Committee Chairman position in May of 2018, I cleared a looming backlog of overdue pending awards within the first week. As of the moment I am writing this platform statement, I have already **PROMPTLY** processed 31 awards over the course of just 9 months. Ask anyone that has received an award during the past 9 months and they will verify that their application was processed typically within about 24 hours of my receiving their application, not months. These 31 awards are comprised of 25 Abe Davis awards, 4 Henry Nicholson awards and 2 Sheck Exley awards. This attention to detail and a willingness to do the job is an example of the level of dedication and detail that I would also provide to the CDS as a board member. This brings me to my next position:

2. I am not running for the board to gain a TITLE. I am running for the board because I believe in the organization's mission and want to do my part to help it operate effectively and efficiently. I will always place the interests of the organization first.

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Since we are talking about voluntarism and giving of one's time for the benefit of others, let's talk about one of my personal sore spots. That would be any potential CONFLICTS OF INTEREST. Voluntarism should never be for personal gain. A personal belief of mine is that if you are in the retail or wholesale dive business, a manufacturer of scuba equipment, a board member or active officer/employee for another certification agency then you should NOT be allowed to hold a position on the NSS-CDS board of directors. Does it not create too much of a potential for a conflict of interest? It is difficult to believe that one can serve only the interests of the NSS-CDS while sitting on the board of another training agency. It is not that a problem currently exists inside the NSS-CDS, but it would be wise and proactive to make sure that it never becomes a problem in the future. Also, this is not just a concern for the NSS-CDS in specific, but for any non-profit type organizations that exist on member contributed funds. Therefore another one of my positions:

3. I am for the implementation of policy that will prevent potential conflict of interest situations by preventing certain groups of individuals employed/working in specific industry positions, especially agency competitors, from holding an NSS-CDS board position.

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Modern up to date online services are key to the continued success of any organization. People, especially the younger generations, are now expecting effective tools and services to be available to them through their desktop, tablets and mobile phones. Starting with a complete redesign of the Awards Processing System (for entering and processing of CDS awards) I would like to see the implementation of new digital services and bringing existing ones up to date. One example of a simple new “digital service” could include an app for Android and Apple devices that allows CDS Members access to their c-cards and/or membership status in a digital format. This could include an easy way for a CDS property manager, such as for Cow Springs, to easily verify online, and in real time, a members current membership standing. These functions would be easy to add but also very useful. This is just an example as there are many other ideas that I have which I want to bring before the board, as a board member, to discuss and hopefully see approved for implementation.

If you spend any amount of time in Cave Country talking with fellow cave divers, you already know that there is an exceptionally high number of IT professionals among us. One of the things that I would like to see is a “Volunteer Information Technology Team” created that would consist of IT professionals willing to volunteer a little bit of their time towards the development of software tools and apps that would be useful to Cave Divers and fellow CDS members. All around us certification agencies are deploying e-learning, digital c-card apps, gas calculation tools and so forth for their certified divers to use, what is the CDS doing? There is no reason that we can not do the same thing as I truly believe that we would have enough volunteers, including myself, that would be willing to donate some of their time developing these tools. So one more of my positions:

4. Focus on modernizing the existing platform systems and developing new modern useful CDS branded digital assets for members. Additionally, explore the possibility of forming a “development team” to help spread out the workload among numerous qualified IT professional volunteers so that no one individual becomes overwhelmed or overtasked.

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Unfortunately, it is frequently common in non-profit organizations for members to feel that their opinions and viewpoints are not heard or valued. Often members of these type organizations also feel that they have no input in the direction of an organization and that can be quite frustrating. I want to make it known right here and now that I will **always maintain an open channel of communication with any member that feels they have something valuable to contribute**. Quarterly board meetings are infrequent and not always the best venue for a member to initially introduce a question, concern, idea or suggestion. There will be an openly provided telephone number and email address for any member that wishes to directly contact me can easily do so. It is my goal to be a voice **for all the members**, not just select sub-groups, cliques or vested parties. So another position of mine is:

5. I will always maintain a direct channel of communication for members to contact me by telephone and/or email. My goal is to act as a voice on the board for all of our members. Of course, this assumes that the topics presented by the member are legal, relevant, reasonable, proper and appropriate to the organization as a whole.

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There are so many more details that I wish I could share with you in regard to ideas and the general direction of the organization. My platform statement is already longer than average so therefore I will instead wrap it up with a simple statement.

“I believe that I have a lot to offer to the NSS-CDS membership and would bring with me new ideas and a unique perspective. I ask for the opportunity to represent you and YOUR interests by earning YOUR vote.”

If you have any questions about my position on any issue or even just want to talk with me about ideas, please feel free to reach out to me at brettfloren@gmail.com. If you wish to talk by telephone email me your telephone number and I will contact you.

Thank you for your time.

Very Respectively,

Brett E. Floren