

I can sum up my platform with one simple statement: It is my belief that the actions of anyone holding any elected office should reflect the wants and needs of the electorate and not his own personal agenda.

So I guess you'd want to know a bit about me.

I've been diving for over thirty years and full cave and trimix certified for well over twenty. In 1991 I was part of the first (helium) mixed gas program offered by IANTD during which the standards and procedures in use today were developed. I believe a mentor is far better than a course and that the best path to advance ones diving is to dive. During the 1990's I did quite a bit of cave diving in Mexico with my dive buddy Ralph Fenton who has since hung up his fins. I have also dived most of the (known) caves in Florida.

After a particularly horrific double fatality in Mexico I authored an article for Underwater Speleology titled "The Traveling Diver" as part of an effort to improve diver awareness. I also promoted the notion that cave diving needs a mentoring program and some form of suggested standards should be issued for guides. I still hold these beliefs and will work towards those goals if elected.

When Eagles Nest Cave was opened to the public the guidelines were in deplorable condition. I requested gold line from the CDS and recruited a team of divers whose individual talents enabled us to reline the cave over several weekends. We reinstalled the original line arrows in an attempt to preserve history and donated the old line to the cave diving museum. It is my firm belief that this relining has made The Nest a much safer place to dive. I am also the NSS-CDS Safety Officer for Eagles Nest Cave.

As a result of my experience with remote deep wreck exploration, I would like to encourage more wreck divers to pursue cave training because I think it will greatly enhance safety. I believe the methods and techniques pioneered in caves transfer well into that venue.

I have a Bachelors degree in Business Administration and have run my own auto parts business since 1981. I authored the "Advanced Wreck Diving" book for IANTD and wrote a chapter in "The Exploration and Mixed Gas Diving Encyclopedia". I also write "The Loop", a column in the NSS-CDS publication "Underwater Speleology" which concerns itself with rebreathers. In 2009 I was elected a member of the prestigious Explorers Club and I currently host and maintain the website for the local chapter, "The Southern Florida Chapter of The Explorers Club, Inc."

I think the primary goals of the CDS should be to focus on cave safety, preservation and access. It should always strive to be the standard bearer from which other likeminded organizations model themselves.

My goals would be to:

- * Initiate some form of a mentoring program
- * Publish suggested (not mandatory) standards for dive guides
- * Begin a membership drive to attract both new members as well as those divers who strayed away from the CDS
- * Encourage membership participation through electronic media
- * Seek out new corporate sponsorship.
- * Revisit the access issue to the caves in Tallahassee

I will not suggest that if elected I will perform miracles, effect radical changes or anything similar. I think the people currently in office are doing a fine job. My only pledge will be to always do the right thing to the best of my abilities.

Joseph Citelli