



INTERNATIONAL SHOW CAVES ASSOCIATION

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ADDRESS DELIVERED ON BEHALF OF DAVID SUMMERS BY BRAD WUEST AT THE ISCA CONFERENCE IN TURKEY ON 8th NOVEMBER 2012

“SIX REASONS WHY A SHOW CAVE SHOULD BE A MEMBER OF THE INTERNATIONAL SHOW CAVES ASSOCIATION”

A MESSAGE FROM DAVID SUMMERS THE PRESIDENT OF ISCA



I am frequently asked why a show cave should be a member of the International Show Caves Association. The answers are multifold, and when this question is usually posed to me, there never seems to be time to respond properly and fully.

The reasons why a show cave should be a member of ISCA are important. I would like to take a few minutes to list, and dwell lightly, on six of the primary reasons why I think a show cave should be a member of ISCA. This list does not claim to be exclusive.

Before listing these reasons, let me first of all address a very serious fundamental misconception that is frequently raised, and that is the perception that ISCA is only appropriate for large show caves. This is far from the truth. The problems and elements that usually apply to large show caves are usually the very same problems and elements that apply to small show caves. These problems and elements are invariably the same. The only difference is usually that of scale.

The benefits of membership are consequently as applicable to smaller show caves as they are to the mega “power house” show caves. It is very important that the misconception that ISCA is only for large show caves be put to rest, whenever the suggestion crops up. This is something that all of our members should be standing by to do. It is a misunderstanding that can only disadvantage smaller show caves.

To overcome the disparities of scale, ISCA has created a very fair progressive scale of annual membership dues. This progressive scale covers the difference in size, in as fair a way as possible.

In listing these six reasons, no attempt has been made to arrange them in any order of priority. The view is taken, that if an attempt was made to do that, we could all be here until tomorrow debating the merits of such a prioritized list

The first reason that I offer you for a show cave to be a member of ISCA is NETWORKING. The benefits of interacting with others to exchange information and ideas cannot be underestimated in this advanced age, with all of its technology and development.

The useful contacts that exist within ISCA, effectively ranging around the globe, are an incredible resource available to all of our members. Problems encountered in any single show cave are very rarely unique. Invariably, the same problem has been encountered by another show cave somewhere in the world. ISCA provides the forum for the exchanging of ideas and thoughts on a global basis.

All that a member of ISCA has to do is take advantage of the networking opportunities around them. The person to your left and right has almost certainly some experience with the current problem, or problems, that you are confronted with. All that it takes, to benefit from the incredible networking opportunities in ISCA, is to initiate discussion.

The second reason that I offer you is that we have the incredible opportunity to attend ISCA CONGRESSES AND CONFERENCES. The benefit of attending these meetings should never be underestimated. They are not only opportunities to network, but also a very effective way of gaining knowledge about the business of operating a show cave and the need for the preservation and conservation of caves.

Every four years members of ISCA gather together, in one of our member countries, for our quadrennial Congress. These Congresses are always well attended and

provide the organization with the opportunity to share experiences and conduct our business. This is the time that we encourage the delivery of papers. In addition, there is always the opportunity to visit show caves in the host country.

In between the years that we hold Congresses, we hold Conferences. These Conferences were introduced in ISCA in 2006, with the adoption of our new Constitution.

Attending ISCA Congresses and Conferences provides incredible opportunities for our members to come together and truly indulge themselves in the world of show caves.

We are all familiar with the claim that the world is becoming smaller. We all naturally consider this in terms of distance. My experience over the past ten years has been that the world has truly become smaller, not just in terms of distance, but also in our communications through language. Huge strides have been made in this direction during the past ten years alone.

Interpretation into a common language is no longer the huge impediment that it used to be.

Attending ISCA Congresses and Conferences leads us to the third reason for show caves to be a member of ISCA and that is that it provides a splendid opportunity to VISIT AND LEARN FROM SHOW CAVES IN OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD.

The occasion to visit show caves in other parts of the world is an incredible benefit for members of ISCA. How many of us would ever have had the opportunity to visit the caves of Slovakia in 2010, if we had not been members of ISCA. This opportunity would have been greater if we all took part in the pre and post Conference tours in the Czech Republic and Hungary, respectively.

During the past several days we have had the opportunity to see some of the show caves of Greece. Now we are poised to visit some of the show caves of Turkey. In 2014 we will see some of the show caves of Australia.

Visiting show caves in countries other than our own, can only serve to expand our knowledge of show caves. The more knowledge that each of us has, the more effective we will be, as custodians of our own show caves.

The fourth reason that I offer you for a show cave to be a member of ISCA is that it can only serve to help with the **MARKETING EXPERTISE** for the member’s own show cave.

Membership in ISCA provides every member with exposure to marketing techniques from around the world. This exposure can start with ISCA’s own website and progress from there.

The important thing to bear in mind is that the members of ISCA are not in competition with each other, but rather, they complement each other. When a visitor has an enjoyable experience in one show cave, this can lead that visitor to visit another show cave.

The willingness of the members of ISCA to share their experiences with each other is one of the incredibly strong points in the organization.

The fifth, and penultimate, reason that I can offer for a show cave to be a member of ISCA is the **UPDATING ON THE CONSERVATION AND PRESERVATION OF CAVES**. The cave is the most critical part of a show cave. Without it there would be no show cave.

Advancements in cave conservation and preservation measures are always being made. In the early days of show cave development little was known about what was needed to conserve and preserve caves. This knowledge has grown significantly over the several hundred years, since caves were first used as show caves. The knowledge that has been brought about during the past quarter of a century has been amazing.

ISCA provides its members with knowledge regarding the conservation and preservation of caves through its Congresses, Conferences and the dissemination of information as it becomes available.

The sixth, and last, reason why I think a show cave should be a member of ISCA is the **DISSEMINATION OF THE LATEST CAVE DEVELOPMENT CONCEPTS**.

It is absolutely essential that show cave operators keep themselves up to date on the latest cave development concepts. It is impractical to expect every show cave to undertake the testing of all the materials and equipment that it could use. The sharing of information about materials is essential.

Recent years alone, have seen a veritable plethora of innovations and concepts relating to caves. I am confident that each one of us knows of some disastrous occurrence relating to the use of inappropriate material in a cave.

The use of light-emitting diodes (LED) is a good example of a subject that a show cave operator needs to be updated on. The prospect that traditional incandescent lights will eventually be phased out, and no longer be manufactured, makes it essential that show cave operators be familiar with the alternatives.

ISCA provides its members with the opportunity to share information and the dissemination of the latest concepts in cave development.



As stated at the beginning of this address, I offer these six reasons as some of the primary reasons for a show cave to be a member of ISCA. They are not, by any means, the only reason. I am always delighted to learn of additional reasons that others may have.

Thank you, and may good fortune be with you all.

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