

There has been a lot happening behind the scenes regarding HydroGeo, hidden from the rest of the Grotto by the elusive HydroGeo “Steering Committee” and Geary’s private actions while presenting a different public front. Case in point, Geary’s legal threats to the Grotto officers for misappropriation of funds but publicly he says he just wanted to make sure it was legal for the Grotto to spend its own money. I think that when you read the timeline of events and how they escalate, Geary’s true intentions and motivations will become apparent.

Exact Dates Unknown

Geary Initiates Talks with New Mexico and Alabama

Before the vote to spinoff HydroGeo on October 19, 2017, Geary was already in talks about starting workshops in at least two other states. Apparently, he is not as “indifferent” as he claims in his email on November 27, 2017, and was already taking steps to spinoff HydroGeo and take it national.

October 19, 2017: Post-HydroGeo Committee Meeting

Geary Attempts to Misappropriate \$5,000 without Consulting Grotto

Post-HydroGeo meeting at Geary’s house, consisting of Geary Schindel, Sue Schindel, Mike Harris, MJ Gibbons, Pam Campbell, and Bennett Lee.

1. Pam directly asks Geary what he wants to do with HydroGeo: spinoff into its own nonprofit, or keep it with the Grotto.
2. Geary said he wanted to spinoff. (Note that Geary said it first—that he wanted to spinoff HydroGeo. He never said he was “indifferent” as he publicly claims. And as we’re about to find out, he is already in talks with other groups around the country.)
3. We then vote and unanimously agree to spinoff.
4. Geary says he’s already in talks with New Mexico about starting a HydroGeo workshop there, and he asks for seed money to pay for his airfare, hotel, and food to travel to New Mexico. Mike Harris suggests \$5,000.
5. Geary suggests taking the money out of this year’s HydroGeo profits without consulting the Grotto. To be clear on this, **Geary wanted to siphon \$5,000 out of the Bexar Grotto accounts without bringing it to the Grotto for a vote.** Ironically, Geary’s suggestion would amount to misappropriation of funds, which is what he falsely accuses the Grotto officers of doing.
6. MJ, Pam, and Bennett strongly object and are adamant that the Grotto get to vote.
7. Geary, Sue, and Mike Harris agree to start working on a Constitution and Bylaws for a separate HydroGeo entity and filing the paperwork to establish it as a 501(c)(3).
8. We adjourn, and Sue tells us not to discuss the final numbers at the next Grotto meeting.

This last item is interesting. Why not discuss it? We already knew all the numbers: exactly how much we received from sponsors, exactly how much we received in registrations, and exactly all our expenses. That becomes apparent at the next meeting when Geary and Sue make several plays for the profits.

November 1, 2017: Second Post-HydroGeo Committee Meeting

Geary and Sue’s First Attempt to Cry “Misappropriation of Funds”

Second post-HydroGeo meeting with more members in attendance.

1. With more members in attendance, vote again whether to spinoff. Again, unanimous to spinoff.
2. Geary brings up additional ways to spend money post-HydroGeo, such as \$2000 in scholarships and increasing CWAN honorarium by another \$500.
3. Bennett points out that we have a budget of \$10,500 and we already spent \$10,115.

4. Sue cries misappropriation of funds, and says that sponsors gave us money to put on HydroGeo. If we have any profits left over, it's misappropriation of funds.
5. Bennett points out that each year sponsorships never once covered the full cost of the event and thus all donations were spent on HydroGeo (see separate *Finances* document).
6. \$5,000 seed money is again brought up. Geary adds that in addition to his travel expenses, he now wants to pay for New Mexico's venue.
7. Some discussion that \$5,000 is too much, but likely Grotto will vote to give something.
8. Pam points out that regardless how much Grotto votes to give, we cannot write a check to Geary. He must have 501(c)(3) established first.

We adjourn, again with the understanding that Geary, Sue, and Mike Harris should be establishing a separate HydroGeo 501(c)(3) nonprofit.

November 13, 2017: Bexar Grotto Meeting

Geary's Deceptive Presentation to Solicit \$5,000

Thinking that we were waiting on the creation of a separate 501(c)(3), we were unprepared for Geary's ambush with his deceptive presentation and false claims.

1. Geary forces Arron's Giving Policy to be tabled until the following meeting. Note that Geary needs this tabled so he can immediately request \$5,000 unencumbered by Giving Policy.
2. Geary manhandles his USB stick in the laptop and forces an unscheduled presentation despite the meeting already running late.
3. During his presentation, Geary proclaims he brought in \$25,000 in sponsorships with no help from anyone else, and presents a slide with missing data so that it deceptively appears Geary is responsible for all the Bexar Grotto profits (discussed in detail in the *Finances* document).
4. Geary attempts a motion to spinoff HydroGeo and receive \$5,000 in seed money.
5. Motion is never completed because Bennett points out that Geary does not need the Grotto's permission to create his own nonprofit.

Exact Date Unknown

Geary Consults Legal Counsel

After his attempt to siphon \$5,000 from the Bexar Grotto coffers without notifying the Grotto is blocked (October 19, 2017), the initial claims of misappropriation of funds was disproven (November 1, 2017), and his attempt to request \$5,000 from the Grotto never comes to fruition (November 13, 2017), Geary consults multiple attorneys in an attempt to forcibly acquire all the Bexar Grotto's funds.

November 25, 2017

Geary Tells Rob Bisset of His Impending Legal Threats

November 26, 2017

Geary Threatens Grotto with Misappropriation of Funds

Geary sends an email to Bennett that says Geary has consulted attorneys and threatens Bennett and the other officers with misappropriation of funds unless they hand over all the Grotto profits to HydroGeo. His email is too lengthy and rife with too many inaccuracies to cover here. It is discussed in detail in the separate *Misappropriation* document where Geary's multiple claims are proven false.

Note that Geary sent these threats to Bennett Lee and Pam Campbell, who were primarily responsible for blocking Geary's multiple attempts to obtain \$5,000 of the HydroGeo profits to fly himself around the country without consulting the Grotto and without an established 501(c)(3). If Geary's intentions were truly benevolent as he claimed several meetings later (December 11, 2017), then why would he not alert the entire Grotto or at least all the officers to this potential legal liability? I believe this was a blatant attempt to bully Bennett and Pam into submission.

November 27, 2017

Bennett Consults NSS Legal Committee

Geary claimed in his threatening email that attorney Jay Clark from the NSS Legal Committee supports Geary's claims of misappropriation of funds. Subsequently, Bennett consulted Jay Clark to explain his legal opinion, as well as Ted Lee, also an attorney on the NSS Legal Committee. Ted Lee, in turn, consulted a tax attorney. **All three attorneys rejected Geary's claims of misappropriation of funds.** See *Misappropriation* document for details.

November 27, 2017

"Indifferent" Email from Geary

Geary sent an email to the Grotto stating:

"It was not my idea or my intent to move the Workshop from the grotto."

and

"It is also not my intent to create a "national event."...I've had caver/geologists express interest in holding a similar event in New Mexico and Alabama. More power to them but I also warn them that it is a lot of hard work."

Geary has told the HydroGeo committee repeatedly over the previous four years that HydroGeo could grow into a national and even international event. And at the time he wrote this, he was already in discussions with both New Mexico and Alabama for at least several weeks, if not months. This is certainly beyond the scope of our local Grotto and clearly counter to his statements above.

November 27, 2017: Bexar Grotto Meeting

Geary Effectively Kills Grotto "Giving Policy"

At the previous Grotto meeting, Geary ambushed us with his deceptive presentation. At this meeting, Geary ambushes the Grotto again. He brings in Eric Holman and Alf Hawkins. They both join the Grotto that night. Despite having never been a member or on the Grotto email list, Eric comes with a pre-printed amendment to the Giving Policy. Eric acts as Geary's mouthpiece to amend the motion while Geary chastises Arron's parliamentary procedures and steers the meeting toward his own agenda.

Note that with the Giving Policy effectively squashed, this opens the doors to future ambushes, where Geary or anyone else could show up to a Grotto meeting with a large contingent of non-members who join that night, and force through a proposal to acquire thousands of dollars in Grotto money.

November 28, 2017

Geary Calls Allan Cobb to Tell Him about Misappropriation

Allan Cobb was in Mexico when Geary called him to tell him about the alleged misappropriation of funds. Why? Allan did not volunteer for HydroGeo, nor was he an officer. Again, Geary is not alerting officers to this potential legal liability. Instead, he's either looking for allies or trying to spread fear.

November 29, 2017

Geary Talks to Attorney Ted Lee and Realizes All Misappropriation Claims Are False

November 29, 2017

Bennett Publicly Outs Geary for Consulting Attorneys to Threaten the Grotto

In a Facebook thread discussing what to do with all our Grotto money, Tanya Leach (a friend of the Schindels), accuses the Grotto of being selfish cavers. There is some debate about the unwarranted accusation, and Bennett responds with:

Maybe Tanya means the guy who has threatened to take HydroGeo away from the Bexar Grotto multiple times; flat out said he doesn't need the Grotto to put on HydroGeo; just gave a presentation at the Grotto where he proclaimed that he and he alone brought in ALL the sponsorship money, and even when Pam protested that other people helped, he stood fast in his assertion that he brought all in that money all by himself; and when we didn't give him money that meeting, he has since been consulting attorneys to threaten us with misappropriation of funds in a move to seize it all. Maybe she means that selfish caver?

Note that no one is specifically named. However, all these things are true about only one person: Geary Schindel. And he has just been publicly outed for consulting attorneys and threatening the Grotto.

December 11, 2017

Geary Claims Benevolence When He Consulted Attorneys

Let's do a quick recap.

1. Four years ago, Geary presents HydroGeo to the Grotto as a great moneymaker for the Grotto.
2. For four years, Geary does not raise an issue with Grotto receiving profits from HydroGeo.
3. Geary votes to spinoff HydroGeo. Committee refuses to immediately give him give him \$5,000 cash to fly himself around the country.
4. Sue claims any profits are misappropriation of funds, but is disproven.
5. Geary bullies his way into showing a deceptive presentation and attempts to request \$5,000.
6. With three previous attempts squashed, Geary consults attorneys and privately threatens Bennett and the other Grotto officers with misappropriation of funds unless all profits are handed over to HydroGeo.
7. Bennett publicly announces Geary's legal consultation and threats.

Suddenly, Geary's public story is that he consulted attorneys to check if it was "legal" for the Grotto to spend the HydroGeo money. Look over the list above. Each step becomes more aggressive, culminating in Geary consulting legal counsel in an attempt to seize all the HydroGeo profits.

What do you think? Was Geary's legal consultation altruistic?

If you're unsure or you think this timeline is unfair to Geary, read the *Misappropriation* document. Read Geary's own words and his multitude of false claims as he repeatedly attempts to seize control of Grotto funds. Read his threats in his own words. Then decide for yourself is Geary's legal consultation was altruistic or if it was malicious and self-serving. And think of that the next time Geary comes to Grotto asking money.