LOTS TO DO IN CARLSBAD AT NMAM 2015!

The local planning committee cannot wait to show you the surprises we have in store for you at the NMAM Conference 2015! Remember that the theme is “Unexpected Treasures in NM: Can You Dig It?” The word “unexpected” suggests surprises, and we all love surprises.

Before the body of the Conference even begins, there are plenty of surprises in store for those that come a bit early to take part in the Wednesday activities. For those who have dreamed of a really GUIDED tour of Carlsbad Cavern, this is your chance. And for the more adventurous, you can even get a little “Indiana Jones” action in some of the more physically challenging tours. You will be introduced to a Carlsbad you probably don’t even know and have a chance to get up close to the menagerie of indigenous animals that live in this Chihuahuan Desert.

You will be amazed that a Conference in Carlsbad can take place in such a serene setting as is the Pecos River Village. It may be hard to keep you from wandering off down the river, but the sessions hold such a scholastic appeal that you will be riveted to the classrooms during those times. In keeping with the renowned Carlsbad hospitality, the entertainment will be spectacular and the food is guaranteed to be amazing. And thanks to our sponsors, you are able to participate in all this at a remarkably minimal expense.

So leave the stresses of your workplace behind and join us for a bargain of a Conference! You will be glad you did!
BOTTLE OF WINE WITH THE FIREBALLS: A CELEBRATION OF THE CAVERN THEATRE

Friday evening, November 20, we will celebrate the 1951 Cavern Theatre and the City’s plans to rehabilitate it into a first-class Performing Arts Center. The theme: Fabulous Fifties, and who better to help us celebrate than NM treasures, The Fireballs, New Mexico’s first Rock ‘n Roll band to become internationally known in the late 50s. George Tomsco, the founder of the group, will be on hand with the Johnny Mulhair backup band to rock us with the swinging sounds of the 50s and 60s.

All five original members were Raton, NM high school graduates ’56 thru ’58. George was the writer of the guitar-driven instrumentals and cowriter of vocals that started their career with Norman Petty recording studio in Clovis, NM in 1958. Norman had already established worldwide success with Buddy Holly and the Crickets, and liked the “uniqueness” of the Fireballs. In January 1960 the band performed on Dick Clark’s American Bandstand in Philadelphia. In 1963, with the Amarillo vocalist Jimmy Gilmer in the band, The Fireballs experienced the success of having a #1 recording with Sugar Shack selling over 1.4 million records. The late 60s saw The Fireballs singing their way to another top 10 tune with Bottle of Wine.

Another NM treasure spending his childhood years in Carlsbad will act as Master of Ceremonies for this fabulous event. Bill Brooks has had an illustrious career in radio, theater, production, music, recording and announcing that spans 40 years and even holds a doctorate in Theology. During a span of six consecutive years Bill was voted Entertainer of the Year in Texas by the Country Music Revue Association.

From 1990 through 1994, Brooks was Director of Marketing for Kingdom Development Company for The Promise, a spectacular musical performed in the Texas Amphitheatre in Glen Rose, Texas, in Branson, Missouri and in the Olympic Stadium in Seoul, South Korea in 2004. Since that time he has served as a producer of a musical on the life of Jesus called His Life—The Musical, an award-winning musical that has recently played before capacity international audiences.

Brooks provides voice-over services to clients world-wide from his recording studio located in the Dallas Communications Complex in Irving, Texas. He spends much of his time narrating/producing audio books that are available on Audible.com, Amazon.com and iTunes.com. He now serves as President of the Executive Board at Artisan Center Theater in Hurst, Texas. He has a long history as a recording artist with his brother Randy (The Brooks Brothers) and recently released his first solo CD, You Can Come Home.

Combine this professional entertainment with Carlsbad chef Kevin Zink of K & P Catering and you have an evening that could be called a NM Treasure in itself. Kevin was named the winner of the International Iron Chef Canada Hot and Spicy competition in Toronto, Canada in 2010. Also the Cavern Theatre Committee will present a raffle of NM Treasures that will benefit the rehabilitation and certain of our Conference Thought Leaders will provide insight into historic preservation and their growing-up years in Carlsbad.

Don’t be the guy who has to feel left out next year when everyone is still talking about the wonderful Friday evening production in Carlsbad. There’s plenty of time to get your ticket and be a part of this magnificent event that is sure to go down in NMAM history!
CAVES, KARST, AND MUSEUMS

As NMAM comes soon to Carlsbad, everyone expects to hear something about caves. After all, Carlsbad is home to Carlsbad Caverns National Park, one of the greatest caves on the planet and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. What you may not know is that Carlsbad is also home to our country’s congressionally created cave study group, the National Cave and Karst Research Institute (NCKRI).

NCKRI is a non-profit corporation, created in partnership with the State of New Mexico, through New Mexico Tech, and the City of Carlsbad. Our primary goals involve cave and karst research, management, and educating the public about these valuable and poorly known resources.

So what is karst? It’s a type of landscape that covers 25% of this country, yet most people have never heard of it. Unlike mountains, beaches, and other landscapes, karst is less obvious, formed over thousands of years by the slow dissolving of certain bedrock. Much of it is “hidden” underground in caves. Other typical karst features include sinkholes, underground streams, and the world’s largest springs. The City of Carlsbad was built around a karst spring.

Congress created NCKRI because cave and karst science is generally not known or well understood by most researchers, managers, and educators. Its importance is a national mystery hiding in plain sight:

- Over 40 million Americans, including everyone in Carlsbad and much of southeastern New Mexico, depend on karst aquifers as their only or primary water supply.
- Bats save American agriculture an average of $28 billion/year in pesticides, not counting over 450 foods, medicines, and industrial products that depend on bats in various ways.
- Many of the world’s greatest archaeological and paleontological sites are found in caves.

On the flip side, sinkholes cost our country a minimum of $300 million/year and probably closer to $1 billion when their impacts are better calculated.

The NMAM conference's two Wednesday workshops are led by NCKRI staff. They will focus on how karst and related natural resources tie into the understanding of the world around us to enhance our museum exhibits, programs, and experiences.

The workshops will begin at the NCKRI parking lot, with time for people to visit NCKRI Headquarters for a few minutes. We are currently in the design phase to establish our cave and karst museum and will be glad to visit with you throughout the week about our upcoming plans. Once fully open, we’ll announce that broadly and hope you will think of us when you consider vacation and educational destinations.

For now, we host occasional temporary exhibits, distinguished lectures, and workshops. We are also happy to travel to lecture and teach at other locations. Dianne Joop, our Education Director, will be at the conference all week, and would love to talk with you.

As we all understand, connecting with the public requires multiple approaches. Not everyone relates to scientific details. Art will be an important component of our museum and we've already made an excellent start. Come by our headquarters to see our fabulous sculpture of Jim White, the primary explorer of Carlsbad Cavern. Nearby you'll find an abstract cave in limestone as well as natural limestone blocks.

Though our permanent museum exhibits are not yet built, we appreciate the support and friendship of the museum community in southeast New Mexico. We look forward to expanding those friendships across the state and across the country. Check us out on Facebook, Twitter, and at www.nckri.org.

Dr. George Veni, Executive Director
National Cave and Karst Research Institute
THE STORY BEHIND THE THEME

As the Local Planning Committee sat around the table and brainstormed about the theme for this year’s NMAM Conference, it occurred to them that many of Carlsbad’s amenities, its wealth of professional talent past and present, and the wonderful setting provided by our conference center on the river would come as a surprise to many participants. We came to realize that many of these things we take for granted are real treasures and in fact our entire state is packed with treasures. With so many Carlsbad residents engaged in underground ventures and many scientists and explorers involved in research of the many caves in the area, Dr. George Veni threw in the tag line Can You Dig It?

Dr. Veni then reminded us of the origination of that phrase which was made popular in 1969. One of the most likeable and vocally cohesive singing groups of the late 60s and early 70s, the Friends of Distinction was formed by Harry Elston, Floyd Butler, Jessica Cleaves and Barbara Love in 1968. They were managed by football great Jim Brown and signed with RCA Records. Their first single, Grazin’ In the Grass hit the top 5 on both Pop and Soul charts in 1969. The lyrics were memorable and it was suggested that those working in museums could still relate.

. . . There are so many groovy things to see while grazing in the grass (Grazing in the grass is a gas, baby, can you dig it?) Flowers with colors for takin’ everything outta sight in the grass (Grazing in the grass is a gas, baby, can you dig it?) . . .

. . . Everything here is so clear, you can see it And everything here is so real, you can feel it And it’s real so real so real so real so real so real Can you dig it? Ooh . . .

I can dig it, he can dig it, she can dig it We can dig it, they can dig it, you can dig it Oh, let’s dig it, can you dig it, baby? . . .

As an extension of this idea, the group decided to invite several “treasures of Carlsbad” as speakers, rather than having a single key-note speaker. These professionals all spent their childhood years in Carlsbad, then went on to stellar careers in their respective fields. Most of them know one another. So the Committee stuck them with the moniker, Friends of Distinction to harken back to the 1969 musicians who coined the phrase. Can you dig it? https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_G984cNO3RM

SILENT AUCTION

We are soliciting items for our annual NMAM Silent Auction that will be held Thursday and Friday at the Conference Center. Remember, proceeds from this auction benefit future conference scholarships. Think of bringing a unique item, something that cannot typically be found in a store. People are more eager to bid if they realize this is a once-in-a-lifetime chance to own this object. Seek input from your Board and volunteers. People who like to hang out in Museums typically have the most interesting things lying around the house, something handmade or a unique piece of vintage jewelry.

And remember once you get to the Conference, visit the Silent Auction room often and let’s get the bidding wars going!