CENTRAL
OKLAHOMA
GROTTO
OF THE NATIONAL
SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY, INC

C.O.G.nizance

Inside this Issue

Announcements ……..… 1

Treasurer's Reports: December 2025 …… 1

Minutes: November 2025 ……. .....… ……..... 2

Trip Report : Virtual Report – WNS Testing……. 2

Potpourri

**In 1962, A Geologist Went Into A Cave.
2 Months Later, He'd Accidentally Invented A New Field Of Biology. ……3-4**

Subterranean Fiction: 10 Books That Dive Deep into Underground Worlds ……..4-5

ANNOUNCEMENTS

There are no caving trips planned this month.

***The Next meeting is January 9, 2026 at 8:00 pm central time on Google Meet. Becky will send out invitations.**

The National White-nose Syndrome Decontamination Protocol (March 2024) outlines procedures to effectively clean and disinfect clothing, footwear, and equipment that may have been exposed to *Pd*, and can help reduce the risk of human-assisted spread of the fungus. The recommendations are based on the best available evidence to date.

Key changes to the current update compared to October 2020 include the following:
-Ethanol, Formula 409 and Hibiclens are removed from the approved disinfection product table.
-Isopropanol concentration is narrowed to 50-70%.the previous protocol, >50% isopropanol was approved.
-The WNS management areas map is updated to reflect the current status of Pd and WNS occurrence in the US. Hawai'i, Alaska, and Puerto Rico are added to the map of management areas.
- Guidelines for movement of gear and when to decontaminate gear are stated in a bulleted list rather than a diagram.
-Additional information is provided regarding decontamination of mist-nets, harp traps and acoustic equipment.

from https://www.whitenosesyndrome.org/mmedia-education/national-wns-decontamination-protocol-u-s

TREASURER'S REPORT

December 2025 TREASURER'S REPORT

INCOME		EXPENSES
Dividends	$ 0.17	
CASH	$ 6.05	
CHECKING	**$ 300.61**	
SAVINGS	**$ 1235.41**	**PREPARED BY TREASURER**
		JOHN TALBOT NSS #30254
TOTAL	**$ 1542.07**	

11/6/2026

MINUTES

CENTRAL OKLAHOMA GROTTO MEETING
DECEMBER 12, 2025

In attendance: Becky Hunsinger—virtual meeting facilitator, Duane Del Vecchio, Jon Woltz, Steve Beleu; Kelley Woltz made a cameo appearance
Start time: 8:05
PRESIDING: Jon Woltz

OLD BUSINESS

– various reports about the bat swabbing of Jester from Duane and Jon: it wasn't a bat count but a swabbing (the count will come later); there were few bats in Train Tunnel, hence no swabs; but much washed-in debris; they spent about 20 minutes there; there was a total of only 12 pips in the entire work area of the cave; humidity was 94 percent; the team took 80 swabbing samples with each bat getting its own rock temperature recorded; it took them about 3½ hours to complete the work; 30% of the bats were flying; there was no WNS.

NEW BUSINESS

Here are our officers for 2026 –
CHAIR – Dale Amlee
VICE CHAIR – Jon Woltz
TREASURER – John Talbot
SECRETARY AND SERGEANT AT UNDERARMS – Steve Beleu
TREASURER'S REPORT – we had no report

Meeting ended 8:24
Report by Steve Beleu

TRIP REPORTS

Virtual Trip Report – WNS Swabbing – Jester Cave

Saturday - December 6, 2025
Participants: John, JT, and Andrew Van Dyke, Jon Woltz, Duane Del Vecchio

Duane did a little documentary on the WNS Swabbing trip to Jester and put it on his web page.

Web Address: https://ddvdude.org/old news/2025/wnstest25/index.htm

Official Bat Count is still on for this month and will be addressed in our virtual meeting on this Friday – January 9, 2025.

POTPOURRI

In 1962, A Geologist Went Into A Cave. 2 Months Later, He'd Accidentally Invented A New Field Of Biology.

Written by Dr. Katie Spalding
Dr. Katie Spalding | IFLScience

Katie has a PhD in maths, specializing in the intersection of dynamical systems and number theory. She reports on topics from maths and history to society and animals.

The year is 1962. The place: Scarasson, a glacial cave in the French Alps. Climbing out of the abyss for the first time in more than two months is a lone man, eyes covered in dark goggles to protect them from the light of the Sun. He has no idea what the date is; he has not interacted with another human in seven weeks. His thoughts are slow; he feels, in his own words, like "a half-crazed, disjointed marionette. "What the hell happened to him?

Who was Michel Siffre?

"You have to understand, I was a geologist by training," Michel Siffre told Cabinet magazine in 2008. Nevertheless, he admitted, "without knowing it, I […] created the field of human chronobiology."

Siffre's story started in 1939, in Nice, on the Mediterranean coast of France – but itwasn't until 1962 that the events that made him famous began to unfold. Now a fresh-faced graduate of the Sorbonne, he had returned home to investigate the geological properties of a newly discovered glacier – but fate had other ideas.

"At first, my idea was to prepare a geological expedition, and to spend about fifteen days underground studying the glacier," Siffre recalled, "but a couple of months later, I said to myself, 'Well, fifteen days is not enough. I shall see nothing.' So, I decided to stay two months."

"I decided to live like an animal, without a watch, in the dark, without knowing the time," he said.

For 63 days, then, he lived 130 meters (427 feet) below the surface, in an icy cavern devoid of natural light or any timekeeping device. The temperature was below freezing; the humidity was 98 percent. He had no contact with the outside world.

"I had bad equipment, and just a small camp with a lot of things cramped inside," Siffre told Cabinet. "My feet were always wet, and my body temperature got as low as 34°C (93°F)."

It was, it seems, no vacation. But it was worth it: when he returned to the surface, he brought with him a whole new area of scientific research – one significant enough that it would one day merit a Nobel Prize for Siffre's academic successors.

At the time, however, it wasn't clear how important his endeavor would be: he was, after all, just a rock-licker with a weird idea for a field trip, and nobody expected the results he discovered.

"I raised the funds myself, picked the two months arbitrarily and invented the experimental protocol," he told New Scientist in 2018. Other scientists, he said, "thought I was mad."

What did Michel Siffre discover?

But what was it that so earned Siffre the ire of the scientific establishment? Not the gall of living underground for two months – it was the 1960s, after all; they were all too busy mentally torturing people (for science!) to worry about some dude in a French cave – but rather, what he learned there: that the human body had its own internal "clock", independent of the rhythm of the Sun.

"There was a very large perturbation in my sense of time," he told Cabinet. "My psychological time […] compressed by a factor of two."

This was true in the short term – in psychological tests during his stay, counting to 120 took him five minutes, corresponding to an internal clock 2.5 times slower than external time – and longer term, too. "I descended into the cave on July 16 and was planning finish the experiment on September 14," Siffre recalled. "When my surface team notified me that the day had finally arrived, I thought that it was only August 20. I believed I still had another month to spend in the cave."

But it was perhaps most evident in Siffre's circadian rhythm – or rather, his lack of it. Free from the time cues of clocks, schedules, and even the Sun itself, Siffre's body lost its connection to the Earth's 24-hour cycle, taking up for itself a longer sleep-wake cycle.

At first, his days went from 24 hours to 24.5 – but 10 years later, in a second period of cave-bound

(Continued on page 4)

timelessness, it stretched all the way out to 48 hours.

"I would have thirty-six hours of continuous wakefulness, followed by twelve hours of sleep," he explained. "I couldn't tell the difference between these long days and the days that lasted just twenty-four hours."

"I studied the diary I kept in the cave, looking cycle by cycle, but there was no evidence that I perceived those days any differently."

He wasn't the only one. Since his first trip underground, quite a few people have followed – some working hand-in-hand with Siffre himself – and all have reported weird, irregular, and unpredictable changes to their sleep-wake cycle. Some had 25-hour "days" followed by 12-hour "nights"; others would occasionally stay awake for three days at a time.

"In 1964, the second man after me to go underground had a microphone attached to his head," Siffre recalled. "One day he slept thirty-three hours, and we weren't sure if he was dead."

"It was the first time we'd ever seen a man sleep for that long," he told Cabinet.

Enlightenment in the darkness

Siffre faced a lot of criticism in his day – and not all of it was without merit. His style of research was flashy, people said; he was accused of being reckless with his own and others' lives in pursuit of headline-grabbing results. Cavers and environmental scientists feared that

This experiments might disturb fragile underground ecosystems, unused to the heat, light, and carbon dioxide brought by a human and his camping equipment.

But claims that his place as a non-specialist in biology made his results dubious, or that his work was somehow trivial or unimportant, were shown to be unfounded. Siffre's work not only kickstarted the entire field of human chronobiology – an area that today has yielded insights into issues as diverse as avoiding jet lag, gene transcription, and even how certain cancers can develop and spread.

And Siffre's work would prove too tempting for the US and French military to ignore. "I came at the right time," he told Cabinet. "It was the Cold War […] Not only was there a competition between the US and Russia to put men into space, but France had also just begun its nuclear submarine program. French headquarters knew nothing about how best to organize the sleep cycle of submariners."

"This is probably why I received so much financial support," he added. "NASA analyzed my first experiment in 1962 and put up the money to do sophisticated mathematical analysis."

While Siffre's very hands-on, personal brand of experimentation is unlikely to be recreated any time soon – not least because spending lengthy amounts of time alone underground has proved distressing and injurious to just about everyone who's tried it, Siffre included – its knock-on effects are still echoing through science today.

"Caves are a place of hope," he said in 2008. "We go into them to find minerals and treasures, and it's one of the last places where it is still possible to have adventures and make new discoveries."

Subterranean Fiction: 10 Books That Dive Deep into Underground Worlds
by Cole Salao
http://www.tckpublishing.com/subterranean-jfiction/

Life underground seems to be a terrible thing—unless you're a dwarf. It's dark, damp, and the constant threat of being buried alive tends to quickly sour even the mere idea of it. Still, we humans seem to have an enduring curiosity for what's deep within the earth. We mine it for resources, explore its cracks, and write subterranean fiction.

What is Subterranean Fiction?

Subterranean fiction is any writing that focuses on underground settings. It's largely based on the Hollow Earth theory, a concept that suggests Earth is hollow and can support life.

It's a popular concept that frequently shows up in literature. Some common elements include mole men, lizard people, proto-humans, lost civilizations, cryptids, and extinct animals living under the surface.

However, for a story to fall under subterranean fiction, the underground has to be a major element of its narrative. As such, most books that fall into this category happen deep below the surface, sometimes even at the center of the Earth.

Best Subterranean Fiction Books

Here are some of the best stories that delve into the mysteries below the Earth's surface.

1. **Journey to the Center of the Earth** by Jules Verne

A coded note from an ancient manuscript sends a geologist, his nephew, and their guide deep within the bowels of the earth. Inside, they find a hidden world complete with its own ocean, giant mushrooms, and living dinosaurs. *(Continued on page 5)*

2. **At the Earth's Core** by Edgar Rice Burroughs

Two men pierce through the earth's crust, finding an entire world within, lit by its own sun and inhabited by creatures both undiscovered or believed extinct. The inhabitants are intelligent and civilized, but still in the Stone Age. The two must then navigate this new world, encountering lost wonders and escaping its primal nature.

3. **Gregor the Overlander** by Suzanne Collins

11-year-old Gregor is at home watching over his sister when she falls through an air duct in the basement. Diving after her, he finds himself in the Underland—home to sentient bats, rodents, insects, and humans with near-translucent skin. Caught up in a brewing war, Gregor is reluctant to fulfill a prophecy naming him a warrior. That is until he learns that his father, long disappeared, may still be alive and held prisoner.

4. **Artemis Fowl** by Eoin Colfer

12-year-old Artemis Fowl is a genius, millionaire, and criminal mastermind. And right now, he's scheming to steal a ton of fairy gold. Only, these fairies aren't the ones people read about in folklore. Because deep beneath the surface—unknown to humanity— lies an entire civilization equipped with cutting-edge technology and magic.

5**. City of Ember** by Jeanne DuPrau

For 200 years, the city of Ember has served to house the last of humanity. But now it's starting to fall apart. As lights flicker and supplies run out, Lina Mayfleet finds an ancient message that might hold answers to Ember's problems. With her friend Doon, they must figure out the clues and find a way to save the city and those in it.

6. **Tunnels** by Roderick Gordon and Brian Williams

14-year-old Will Burrows shares a strong passion for archeology with his father. So when the latter disappears, Will and his friend Chester immediately set out in search of him. In their search, they stumble upon an underground civilization called The Colony. And though they learn surprising truths, they must descend further into the Deeps if they ever want to see Will's father again.

7. **Metro 2033** by Dmitry Glukhovsky

A nuclear war forces much of Moscow's surviving population into the city's metro system. They eventually settle there, forming factions and establishing cities.
Artyom has never ventured outside the limits of his Metro Station-City. However, an event spurs him to travel deep within the metro system, warning what's left of humanity about an impending threat.

8. **The Descent** by Jeff Long

Driven by his obsession with what's beneath the surface, a billionaire assembles a team to explore a seemingly bottomless cave system in the Himalayas.
There, they discover a hostile world inhabited by creatures that thrive in the darkness and hunger for human flesh. Amidst these creatures' relentless pursuit, the surviving members of the expedition uncover shocking truths that will redefine humanity's existence.

9. **Wool** by Hugh Howey

In the future, the outside world has become toxic and uninhabitable, forcing humanity to live in an underground silo. In this structure, society survives through a rigid class system and a strict set of rules. Juliette Nichols, a mechanic, unexpectedly becomes sheriff after the previous one meets a suspicious death. And as she dives deeper into the case, she learns more about the outside and a web of secrets carefully hidden from the rest of the population.

10. **Neverwhere** by Neil Gaiman

Richard Mayhew's ordinary life is derailed when he stops to help a bleeding girl on the sidewalk. Little did he know that his act of kindness would plunge him deep into London Below—a world of darkness, labyrinths, and angels. There, he meets Door, the mysterious woman he rescued in London Above. The only way home is by accompanying her on a dangerous quest to uncover her family's killers and save her world.

Reading Books With Underground Settings

There's a special kind of wonder in discovering the secrets of the world. This carries into subterranean fiction, where the protagonist and the reader set out on a journey into hidden realms, whether literal or symbolic.

The possibility of a hidden world just below the surface tickles the explorative child within you. It takes away the ordinariness of everyday life, letting you have fun by delving into imaginative landscapes and alternate realities.

Central Oklahoma Grotto is a non-profit organization and a chapter of the NSS (National Speleological Society), 6001 Pulaski Pike, Huntsville, AL, 35810-1122 USA. Phone (256)852-1300. Dedicated to cave conservation and safety, C.O.G. publishes general information in a monthly newsletter ($6.00/year) and detailed cave surveys and related Speleological items in a yearly publication, *The Oklahoma Underground* ($3-$8/issue) Membership is by sponsor and is $12 per year for adults, $6 for spouses and students, and $3 if under 18. Central Oklahoma Grotto meets once a month on the second Friday of each month. For information, write Lil Town, 25692 Mosier Circle, Conifer, CO 80433: All submissions to the newsletter should be sent to the editor: COG Editor, 25692 Mosier Circle, Conifer, CO 80433: E-mail: cavemoose@gmail.com.

The deadline for submissions for any particular month's issue is the 20th day of the previous month. If you wish material returned, please include an SASE with submission. All materials in this newsletter are available for reproduction, provided proper credit is given with the article when you print it. Trade publications are welcomed. *Cave softly and safely!*

Friday
January 9, 2026
There will be a virtual meeting.
See you online!

New Year and Older Cavers Publications
2125 Holly Oaks Lane #105
Weatherford, TX 76087