CENTRAL
OKLAHOMA
GROTTO
OF THE NATIONAL
SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY,INC

C.O.G.nizance

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The March meeting of the Central Oklahoma Grotto will be held at the Anne's house at 8:00 p.m.

Friday, March. 12, 2010

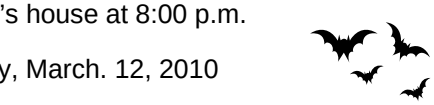


Photo taken by Jon Woltz; Mary Hicks and Steve Beleu going into one of the Washita Bat Caves for bat Count, Feb. 2010.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

*Northwest trips are scheduled the third Saturday of every month. Contract Sue or John Bozeman for details.

*The 8:00 meeting will be at Anne's house, Friday, March 12th at 8:00 pm.

MINUTES

CENTRAL OKLAHOMA GROTTO

Minutes of the February 12, 2010 meeting

Host: the home of COG members John and Jeremiah Van Dyke

Attendees: Anne Ault, John and Sue Bozeman, Duane Del Vecchio, John Talbot, John Van Dyke, Jon and Kelley Woltz, and S. Beleu

The Honorable Jon Woltz began the meeting at 8:09:32

OLD BUSINESS

none

NEW BUSINESS

- Duane talked about our not being able to visit and work in Carlsbad Caverns this year. But it may be possible for us to go there this fall. *Stay tuned as Duane continues to communicate with Carlsbad NPS staff!*
- Sue proposed that our summer fun trip be made to Timpanogos Cave, Utah sometime in June, July, or August. *Want to learn more? –*
  http://www.nps.gov/tica/index.htm
  http://www.nps.gov/tica/planyourvisit/cavetours.htm
  Watch for detailed trip planning information from Sue in coming months!
- Anne made note of two articles in the new *NSS Bulletin*, one about a cave formation known as "cave fingers" that doesn't exist in gypsum caves, the other about White-Nose Syndrome that doesn't exist in our gypsum caves. But it was good to hear from her.
- Sue reported that Dr. Caire told her that we COG cavers need to be careful and not contaminate his UCO caves with White-Nose Syndrome (WNS). We are unlikely to come into contract with WNS since we cave only in western Oklahoma.
- We discussed the upcoming batcount.
- Mary Hicks became a COG member.
- We talked about the events of March 5/6 concerning Mary Jo Fletcher Cave. Three of us are going to Woodward on Friday, March 5; on the morning on the 6th more cavers will join them.

TRIP REPORT

Jon talked about the cave trip that he, Mary, and Dale Amlee made to Broken Horn Cave. They have yet to write and submit a trip report about this surveying trip.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Esteemed Treasurer John Talbot gave his treasurer's report.

We concluded the meeting at 9:17.

TREASURER'S REPORT

INCOME

DIVIDEND	$ 0.09
DUES	$ **36.00**
TOTAL	**$ 36.09**

EXPENSES

NONE

CASH ON HAND	**$ 220.35**
CHECKING	**$ 440.77**
SAVINGS	**$ 2,703.86**

PREPARED BY TREASURER
JOHN TALBOT

TOTAL FUNDS AS OF 2/7/2010 **$ 3,364.98**

TRIP REPORTS

Trip Report: Broken Horn 2009 BROKEN HORN CAVE - Trident Room Survey
Date: December 19, 20000
Personnel: Anne Ault, John & Sue Bozeman and Jon Woltz
By Sue Bozeman

We had high hopes for this day's survey. Planned to tie in two hanging surveys and exits. Well, the short story is that neither happened!

We began at the Trident Rock, but got stuck in some deeply sucky muck in the middle fork. Not wanting to slog all day in a passage with no floor and heartened that at least the pool of water had diminished to mere sucky muck, we figured another month or so of winter's drying air would be a boon.

We shifted our view to the final fork which we knew came out Leaf Crawl Exit. John, Jon and Anne pulled tape and John experimented with the Fluke Laser distance machine. It has a learning curve and the in-cave use proved out well against the tape. So we packed up the tape and happily just used the laser from then on.

What did not work out so well was John's vision. When the ceiling got down to a foot high, he couldn't focus on the laser -- too close. This was his first survey trip since the ARN ate his left eye's retina and the limitations are severe. He transferred the laser to me and Jon and I continued the survey.

We got to a dome room that just appeared like a bubble. The crawl comes in at the floor -- there's this huge, hothouse mud dome -- and the crawl continues out the other side even lower! That continuation to the exit would take three people, Jon and I figured, so we took temperatures and mud dome measurements all called it quits.

The temperature at the floor was in the low 40s, while the top of the mud dome was 56 degrees F.! Dome height was lasered in at something around 20 ft.

We haven't named it yet, but Hothouse Dome sounds great!

and the widths were 35 x 25 feet. We haven't named it yet, but Hothouse Dome sounds great!

We all left the cave by retreating out Jay's Entrance and Anne bid us a fond adieu. She need to get warm!! John and I went to find Leaf Crawl Exit and were later joined by Jon. John and I pulled out nearly a full tree's worth of logs and branches. We'd never have been able to get OUT from the low crawl -- it would have looked like a jail from underneath! So accidentally, retreat had proven the wisest course.

Jon entered the now-empty hole and squirreled around to look down passage. I was hoping he would see the cairn we'd left behind under the Hothouse Dome. He did not. (sigh) The next trip should e easier just because we know that the exit is exit-able!!

Trip Report: Selman Living Lab Bat Count - Ooh-Aah/Square Sink/ Skylight Count and Don't Know Entrance to Spring Bat Room Count.
Date: February 13, 2010
Personnel: John and Sue Bozeman, Mark Hunsinger, Rhonda Roby (guest) and Carol Langenhauser ?? (guest)
By Sue Bozeman

The annual bat count came off well this year. Thanks to Becky and Mark's coming over from Los Alamos, we had enough people to do the full count with two groups. The other contingent (newest member Mark Hicks, long-time COG caver Becky Hunsinger, and fearless Jon Woltz) went in Don't Know, but headed for the southern arm and started counting at SExit.

We lost Carol quickly. She was not happy with this wild caving business and had warned us that this might be the case. John ushered her back to the car and suggested she head over to Alabaster Caverns for the tour and a nice place to hike in the interim. She did that and was pleased with the day at its end.

The rest of us persevered and we quickly indoctrinated Rhonda into the methodology of bat counting. She had not had a clue what to expect and was quickly fascinated by the kinds of bats we had in our caves and thought they looked like oysters or something akin to it. Rhonda was invited along as she is the niece of Mary Jo Fletcher and we were going to try to re-find MJF Cave the following day, ahead of the Fletcher Family Reunion in early March.

We all had an enjoyable time and managed to finish our count by about 4:30. Rhonda had the chance to test herself on fitability -- not fitness, mind you, but 'will I fit'-ness in the Don't Know entrance crawl. No pressure from us, but we did give her the time to 'make the place feel like home' and her decision was 'to give it a shot'. It is low there -- probably about 10 inches, but that doesn't last long. Three feet later and you're in walking passage!

Our count's down this year, but it sounds like the bats may have moved to the southern arm. Let's hope so.

SW Bat Count – Jester Cave System
When: Saturday – Feb. 13, 2010
Participants: Duane Del Vecchio, Dave McDermott, John Talbot, Jason Talbot, Cole Talbot, Lil Town, John VanDyke, J.T. VanDyke.
Report by: Duane Del Vecchio

It was a thick foggy morning when I got up and headed to Cache to pick up Dave and head to Altus. But once we hit the Altus city limits, the fog was gone… it seemed it was the same area that the snow cover ended from the snows the previous days. (Snow fog??) We picked up Lil and headed off to the T to meet with the OKC gang to start the count. We got there a bit early and Jason came by saying the OKC gang were just about 10 minutes out and he'd be back with them.

While waiting Jim McAden came by and visited with us and minutes later the rest)of the gang appeared John, John, and J.T. from OKC and Jason and first time caver Cole. (*Continued on page 4*)

This was Cole's first 'official' trip into the cave (all of the Talbot clan has a rule you can't cave until 10).

We geared up, Jim left, and we started down the very muddy road lined with snow toward the south entrance. I was thinking this should be a good bat count as we have had every kind of cold precipitation this winter (Snow and sleet abound!!) and the bats should be very cozy and deep asleep! We got to the entrance, got our eyes accustomed to the lack of light and started counting.

The moisture from the past month of wetness above was seeping and dripping throughout the cave. We found more than one mat totally covered in dripping water… they looked like drowned rats hung up to dry! (Pretty pitiful!) But other mats were just fine. However, it was quite noticeable that the mats were not too big and few and far between. The cave felt cold…the water WAS cold… first time I actually started to get tingles in my legs while standing mid-thigh in it! We split into two teams with Dave, Lil, J.T., and I going ahead into the wet part and taking in the warm pip tunnel. Again… a very small sampling of pips in this area…we finished, met back with the others and hiked back to the cars.

While at the cars we decided the side of the road probably wouldn't take our vehicles weight and we'd sink to the axles so one group would go on to the north side and do Glade and Homestead entrances and the other would do Train Tunnel and then go in the exit (actually Stoveleg Entrance) and work toward the other group that came in Homestead.

Dave and I went into Train Tunnel and saw only 38 myotis and no long ears… this is where we sometimes see a few long ears but no avail this trip! Then back to the truck and on to the gate by the road where we would then hike toward and in Stoveleg to meet the other group.

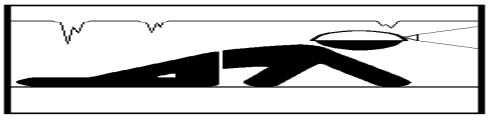
Going in the typical out is definitely different!! First we had to find the dang exit and then slide down into it. We got in the water passage and found only 2 myotis all the way from the exit to the waterfall. We backtracked and got to the maternity room where we heard the voices of the other group.. We met up and compared notes. Their side in the past had vast mats of bats and the majority of our count., This time gone… with small clusters but no large mats. A very disappointing bat count as far as numbers go but then again, we didn't total them up but sent them to Sue to tabulate. Hopefully the numbers are better up north and the bats just booked more northern climates for their winter stay. The Talbot clan disappeared into the horizon and we made our way to Blair only to find Lugi's closed… sigh… definitely not a good bat count! <grin> So we were on our way home rather early than in comparison to other years!

POTPOURRI

THE MAZE CAVES IN US
written by Steve Beleu

Made not from water rising from below
Nor from water eating down through stone
Maze caves remain a mystery because
To understand them is to remove the mazes
From our lives in which we pace back and forth
Not walking but only *moving* back and forth
Because it's difficult for us to leave
These mazes we work so hard to build
From our earliest years to our end.

This is why we humans are fascinated
By the convolutions of maze caves
Twisting, writhing, infolding in all
Three dimensions that we perceive
And in the fourth we only feel.



IN THE WASHITA BAT CAVES
written by Steve Beleu

Remnants of rimstone dams above us
Tell us silently how deeply this cave
Has cut down through the gypsum
We wade through in frigid water
Ankles deep and knees deeper
That storming currents have scooped
Out from rock to made pits
Invisible in these muddy waters
That we step into up to our hips.

Bats are here, but what we seek
Is to convert their lives into data
Because when we count anything
We change it from qualitative life
To quantitative history and after
We record those numbers
They become data, echoes,
Shadows, ghosts...
Life that exists outside us, Distant, removed, apart...

Anne found the following article and with all the snake encounters we've had over the years, this shows that snake problems are nothing new. Look at the date and the manner of writing.

A Snake Story

The Intellegencer October 23, 1850

The Charlestown (VA) *Free press of the 13th related the following singular circumstance:*

"A negro in Dinwiddie county came to his death a short time since in the following singular manner; He was sent into a field on an errand, and not returning as soon as expected, search was made, and he was found lying on the ground nearly dead, his eyes strained from their sockets, and exhibiting the appearance of strangulation. On approaching nearer it was discovered that a large snake had crawled down his throat. They attempted to drag out the snake by its tail, which extended a few inches out of the negro's mouth, but it drew it in two, and the negro died at the instant. It is supposed that he lay down on the ground and fell asleep, and the snake finding an entrance in the open mouth of the negro crawled down his throat, thereby causing its own and the negro's death."

Newsletter Editor: may this be a warning to sleeping cavers!

Newsletter Editor: And as if we don't have enough to be concerned about with bobcats and lions, we need to continually be careful about where we trend. Could a new threat be coming our way.

Python Snakes, An Invasive Species In Florida, Could Spread To One Third Of US

ScienceDaily Feb. 24, 2008

http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2008/02/080223111456.htm

Burmese pythons—an invasive species in south Florida—could find comfortable climatic conditions in roughly a third of the United States according to new "climate maps" developed by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS). Although other factors such as type of food available and suitable shelter also play a role, Burmese pythons and other giant constrictor snakes have shown themselves to be highly adaptable to new environments.

The just-released USGS maps can help natural resource agencies manage and possibly control the spread of non-native giant constrictor snakes, such as the Burmese python, now spreading from Everglades National Park in Florida. These "climate match" maps show where climate in the U.S. is similar to places in which Burmese pythons live naturally (from Pakistan to Indonesia).

A look at the map shows why biologists are concerned.

The maps show where climate alone would not limit these snakes. One map shows areas in the U.S. with current climatic conditions similar to those of the snakes' native ranges. A second map projects these "climate matches" at the end of this century based on global warming models, which significantly expands the potential habitat for these snakes.

Biologists with Everglades National Park confirmed a breeding population of Burmese python in the Florida Everglades in 2003, presumably the result of released pets. Python populations have since been discovered in Big Cypress National Preserve to the north, Miami's water management areas to the northeast, Key Largo to the southeast, and many state parks, municipalities, and public and private lands in the region.

"Wildlife managers are concerned that these snakes, which can grow to over 20 feet long and more than 250 pounds, pose a danger to state- and federally listed threatened and endangered species as well as to humans," said Bob Reed, a USGS wildlife biologist at the Fort Collins Science Center in Colorado, who helped develop the maps. "Several endangered species," he noted, "have already been found in the snakes' stomachs. Pythons could have even more significant environmental and economic consequences if they were to spread from Florida to other states."

Control of exotic species is often prohibitively expensive once they have become established. Therefore, prevention through screening and risk assessment is of great importance, especially when protecting continental areas from invasive reptiles, said USGS invasive snake expert Gordon Rodda, also of the Fort Collins center. USGS scientists and their partners are seeking to compile the scientific data necessary to guide management efforts to prevent further introductions, control existing populations of snakes, and contain their spread.

Burmese pythons have been found to eat endangered Key Largo woodrats and rare round-tailed muskrats.

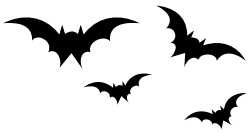
"This makes it that much more difficult to recover these dwindling populations and restore the Everglades," said park biologist Skip Snow, "and all the more important that pet owners be responsible in their choice of pet and dispose of it properly should they need to. Releasing them into the environment is bad for that pet, bad for native species, and also illegal."

Currently, scientists with the USGS and Everglades National Park are investigating the behavior and biology of these snakes - that is, what are their requirements for survival? This information will help refine predictions of where the snakes might go next and their likelihood of survival. USGS researchers are also conducting a risk assessment for nine species of giant constrictors (including boa constrictors and yellow anacondas) that are prevalent in the pet trade and as such, potential invaders in the United States.

Due to be completed by early 2009, the assessment evaluates the risk of invasion for these species and the potential for social, economic, and environmental impacts. The two agencies are also developing and testing tools to control invasive snake populations and prevent their spread, especially to the Florida Keys where several listed species would be threatened by the presence of pythons or other constrictors.

Central Oklahoma Grotto is a non-profit organization and a chapter of the NSS (National Speleological Society), Cave Avenue, Huntsville, AL., 35810. Dedicated to cave conservation and safety, C.O.G. published 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 3208 Gettysburg Dr., Altus, Oklahoma, 73521. All submissions to the newsletter should be sent to the editor: Lil or Dale Town, 3208 Gettysburg Dr., Altus, OK 73521: Telephone: (580)477-4027: E-mail: oklmt@cableone.net. 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 a SASE with submission. All materials in this newsletter is available for reproduction, provided proper credit is given with the article when you print it. Trade publications are welcomed. *Cave softly and safely! Web Page:* http://www.okcavers.com

The February meeting is at Anne's house,
Friday the March 12th.



Remember to reset your clocks, Daylight Saving Time Begins Saturday, March 14th!

Central Oklahoma Grotto
C/o 3208 Gettysburg Drive
Altus, Oklahoma 73521