CENTRAL
OKLAHOMA
GROTTO
OF THE NATIONAL
SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY,INC

C.O.G.nizance

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The Fletcher Family Reunion in the entrance of the Mary Jo Fetcher Cave.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

*The May meeting will be at Dale Amlee's House, Friday, May 14h.

MINUTES

Central Oklahoma Grotto
Minutes of April 9, 2009

Location: Home of Dale & Lil Town – Altus, OK
Members Present: Dale Amlee, Anne Ault, John and Sue Bozeman, Duane Del Vecchio, Dale & Lil Town, and Jon and Kelly Woltz.

Meeting was called late at 8:17 a.m. as Steve was not there to bang the gavel and no one knew how to proceed until a substitute could be found (spoon on table) and someone else saying Oyae, Oyae, Oyae…this meeting will come to order. Once that was said, Chairman Dale Amlee relaxed and finally could proceed with Old business. We spent 38 minutes discussing the Reunion that many of us participated and filling in with the others that did not what happened and the reactions of all involved both COG'ers and Reunion'ers. We were very happy everything went well (no accidents) and everyone left in great sprits.

Carlsbad cleanup was brought up but Duane reported that we were told not to inquire until late April or May as the new person would finally be there to start scheduling cave cleanup time around then. We are planning a fall trip this year if they will have us.

We then went NW with the discussion on Broken Horn Cave with needing new over land tie-in's for some previous unknown entrances and the areas that still needed to be finished. A trip will be the next Saturday a week after this meeting to get some of those done.

We had no treasurer's report as our treasurer, John, could not be there. (We missed ya man!)

The May meeting will be at Dale Amlee's house.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:02 p.m.

Minutes taken (in between watching Shrek II) by Duane

TREASURER'S REPORT

INCOME			EXPENSES		
Dividends	$	3.44	Newsletter printing	$	8.64
TOTAL	**$**	**3.44**	**TOTAL**	**$**	**8.64**
CASH ON HAND	**$**	**196.80**			
CHECKING	**$**	**458.95**			
SAVINGS	**$**	**2,707.20**			
TOTAL FUNDS AS OF 4/6/2009	**$**	**3,362.95**			

PREPARED BY TREASURER JOHN TALBOT NSS #30254RE

TRIP REPORTS

Corrected and added reports to the Mary Jo Fletcher Cave, March 5, 2910

Steve's comment to Sue after reading the April, 2010 Newsletter:

I tried it a second time with a proper mind and got through no problem and caved through up to the second squeeze. But as a man I should have got through the second squeeze; my manhood failed me.

Sue Bozeman replied:

Sorry, Steve, As far as I knew, you corked like Lil did. In fact I swear I heard you say, "Did I look like THAT when I tried to get through?" indicating Lil's unsuccessful efforts to get through, which I thought I remembered because it was such a ... you ... statement.

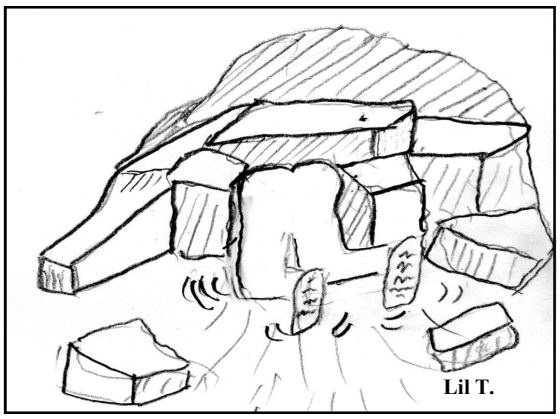
That statement was not made?

Or, it was made but then you made it through upon a second try? I must have missed it?

Lil tells me the newsletter is gone early.

If you need to substantiate your 'throughness' please do so in an independent article.

The initial entrance into the cave passage.



Steve's Response:

Please enter this amendment unto Mrs. Bozeman's trip report.

Sue's trip report for Fletcher Cave is inaccurate in regards to my keister: she states that I didn't make it through "Squeeze #1" but in fact I did get through Squeeze #1 and on into Fletcher Cave. When I came up to "Squeeze #2" I had a mental failure of nerve (read: cowardice) and didn't even attempt to get through Squeeze #2, although thinking about that squeeze now I realize that I could have done it. I must walk The Walk of Shame, I must live in perdition.

Lil's addition to the Fletcher trip:

I tried to get through the entrance to the passage, but didn't have the upper body strength to pull myself in. There was quite a slope getting to the squeeze, and I couldn't get enough traction on the ground to use my feet to help push me through. I wasn't sure what was ahead and didn't want to be victim for cave rescue practice when I was suppose to be an *seasoned caver!* Thought it would look bad for the club so I opted to stay in the main entrance and help entertain the younger children so their parents could enjoy the cave.

The entrance of the cave is quite spectacular as you see in the photo of the family members who were able to get down the ravine. I armed one of the little girls with a flashlight and after explaining we didn't jump from rock to rock, we explored along the cave walls, looking into every nook and cranny to see what we could find. Along the far left wall we discovered a beautiful little alcove that was heavily decorated with popcorn and crystals that shined in the light! Then a bat flew around the entrance awing the little girl. We then proceeded to look for bats.

The entrance was a massive heap of breakdown and we carefully walked over and across the rocks shining the flashlights under any rock we could looking for bats. Unfortunately none were to be found, but we did find and play with numerous rolly-polly bugs.

Excited with our day's adventure, it was soon time to leave the cave.

Looking for bats!

POTPOURRI

White-nose Syndrome spreads west

From: **Bat Conservation International**
newsletter@batcatalog.com, Wed, Apr 21, 2010
Contributed by Duane Delvecchio

We have heartbreaking news from biologists monitoring White-nose Syndrome. History's worst bat-killing disease has now spread still farther west. After decimating bat populations in the eastern United States, WNS has now reached Missouri, on the edge of the American Midwest. It is also confirmed in Tennessee, at a cave in Great Smokey Mountain National Park that is home to the state's largest colony of endangered Indiana bats. And White-nose Syndrome has moved northward into Ontario and Quebec in Canada.

This terrible disease has killed more than a million bats since it was discovered at a single cave in northern New York State in February 2006. Mortality rates approaching 100 percent are reported at some hibernation sites, and entire colonies have been virtually destroyed. WNS has now spread across 12 U.S. states and biologists fear bats throughout North America are at imminent risk.

White-nose still defies the efforts of top scientists to find a cure or at least a way to slow it tragic spread. Bat Conservation International is working with many concerned partners on the search for solutions. Our White-nose Syndrome Emergency Response Fund supports critical research efforts. But much more is required to stop White-nose Syndrome before it drives bat species into extinction across Canada and the United States.

BCI's WNS grants program has provided initial funding to allow urgent research projects to get under way quickly - in most cases faster than government agencies can respond. We are examining existing research efforts to identify critical gaps in which our funding can have the greatest impact. BCI is also working closely with federal, state and private groups to set guidelines for White-nose Syndrome surveillance, monitoring and mitigation.

For more information about White-nose Syndrome and all of BCI's conservation efforts, visit our website at www.batcon.org.

Thirty four members of the reunion made it into the cave entrance.

Pictures and comments from the Fletcher Family Reunion trip to the MaryJo Fletcher Cave.

Other pictures can be seen on our website and they are in color!

Here niece of Mary Jo (Rhonda) tries on Mary Jo's original carbide (and working) helmet

The gang (minus picture taker Dale Town). L to R - John, Sue, Lil, Steve (on sign), Anne (below sign), Dale A, and Duane.

Left: As everyone came down the long road from the cars, we settled above the cave to get organized with the family members

Seven actually squeezed though and got a full tour of the cave. A very pleasant experience for all

Archaelolgists: 50,000 Years Old Volcanic Cave Discovered in Syria

By H. Sabbagh
Sunday, January 3, 2010
http://www.english.globalarabnetwork.com/201001024226/Culture/archaeologists-50000-years-old-volcanic-cave-discovered-in-syria.html

Syria (Damascus) - The Syrian Society for Exploration and Documentation discovered recently in Sweida city (Southern Syria) the largest volcanic cave in the country, naming it Soua'ada Cave.

Secretary of the Society Khaled Nuwailati said the exploration and documentation committees organized a walk in December 18 2009 after receiving information on undiscovered cave in that area.

Soua'ada cave was found after removing a large boulder blocking its entrance, revealing volcanic geological formations that are over 50,000 years old. There are numerous spaces that become larger deeper into the cave, with air currents showing that the cave has another opening. It is estimated that the cave is over 3 kilometers deep, which makes it the largest cave in Syria.

According to head of Sweida Department of Archeology Wasim al-Shaarani, the cave was formed by the flow of volcanic lava that cooled down and formed a long rectangular hollow area that expands the further one goes into the depths of the cave, which isn't fully explored yet.

The volcanic caves of Sweida date back to the Paleolithic age which began around 40,000 BC and ended around the end of the third millennium BC. Some of the oldest volcanic rocks found in the governorate date back to the Miocene and Pliocene ages.

The Syrian Society for Exploration and Documentation is a society licensed by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor. It aims to shed light on important and unexplored historic and natural locations in Syria, exploring archeological locations and virgin forests, organizing field activities, and training volunteers for archeological expeditions. (SANA) **Global Arab Network**

Kitum Cave

Copied from the internet http://atlasobscura.com/place/kitum-cave

A salty cave excavated by elephants and the location of a deadly disease vector

When the Kitum cave was first discovered the many marks, scratches and furrows along its walls were assumed to have been the work of picks wielded by ancient Egyptians searching for gold or diamonds. In fact, the excavated sections of the cave are the result of something altogether much stranger.

The Kitum cave is found on Mount Elgon, an extinct shield volcano and the cave itself developed as the result of cooling volcanic rock. The cave which extends some 600 feet into the mountain has walls covered in salt, and it is here that the mysterious cave diggers reveal themselves.

Each night for hundreds (possibly thousands) of years animals have traveled into the cave in the dead of night to use it as a giant salt lick. Buffaloes, antelope, leopards, hyenas, and most of all elephants bumble blindly through the cave (the elephants often bump their heads in the process) making their way to the salty walls of the cave. It is the elephants that have done the digging.

Using their massive tusks they scrape the the salt, the elephants pull off chunks of the walls to crush and lick up the salt. Over the centuries this has resulted in a noticeable increase in the size of the cave and walls covered in tusk marks. The trip to the cave is not without dangers and there is a deep crevasse into which many younger, more inexperienced elephants have fallen leaving behind an elephant graveyard.

The Kitum cave is more recently famous for a very different sort of lifeform, a deadly virus. In 1980 and again in 1987 visitors to the cave contracted Marburg virus, a deadly virus very similar to Ebola. The cave and Marburg virus rose to notoriety when it was featured in bestseller "The Hot Zone." It is believed that the bats in the cave may carry the virus and that their powered guano may act as the disease vector.

The Salamander Muses About What He Has Seen

Written by Steve Beleu

No other predator tromps as recklessly as they do,
Neither raccoon nor skunk, porcupine nor mouse
That all move with stealth, and they think invisibility
Though we salamanders sense every change
In the air pressure of our caves as they hunt.

So we wait until they pass, safe under a stone
And they return outside to hunt there and eat
Or be hunted, killed, and eaten by killers
With sharper teeth and claws and skills.

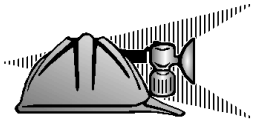
But these other predators tromp and stomp
So loud they must not be hunting us; therefore
They must graze like the other creatures outside
That feed on grass and bushes. So why wander
Here into our home? None of us know why, not even
Our Council of Elders renowned for their wisdom
Not only of life here in our cave but knowledge
Of the strange lives of the creatures outside.

Surely these are the most unknowable of those
Who invade our home for they are completely
Beyond all salamander reason and therefore
Must not be from this planet and are aliens
From the moon or sun or from those stars
That fall though the sky in flames, so I say

Alien, they're alien! Hide from them, under
This stone or that stone, be quick!

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!* Our Website*:* *http://www.okcavers.com*

The May meeting will be at Dale Amlee's, Friday, May 12th.



Central Oklahoma Grotto
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