CENTRAL OKLAHOMA GROTTO
OF THE NATIONAL SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY,INC

C.O.G.nizance

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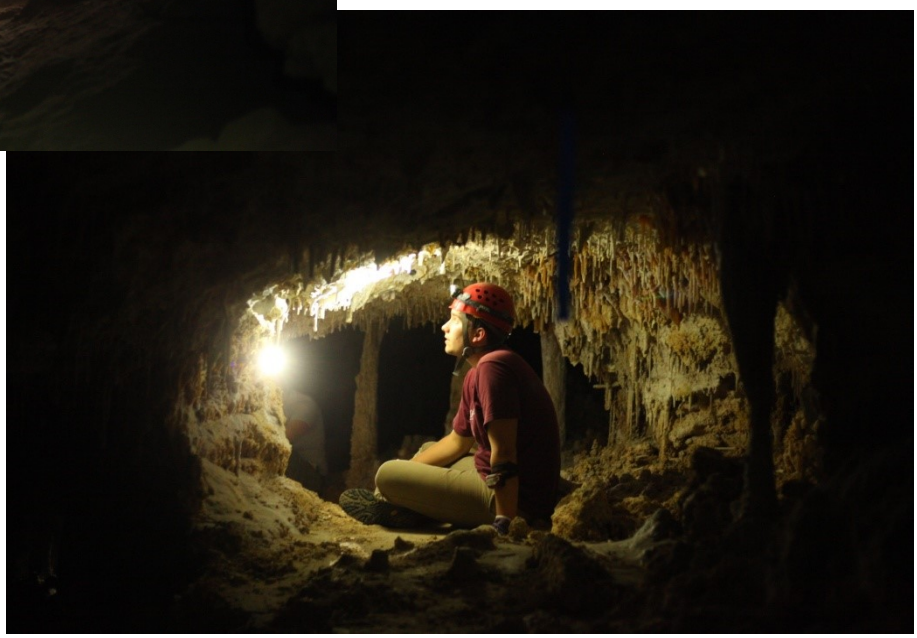
The May meeting will be Friday, May 12, 2017 at 7:30 p.m. The meeting will be at the home of Dale Amlee.

Above: Pallette Cave and Spiders

Left: lower Entrance to sand cave

Below: Soda Straws



Pictures taken by Matt Brasher.

To see the complete article and excellent pictures go to

http://www.okcavers.com/newsletters/2017/GUMO%20Spring%202017.pdf

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

*The May meeting will be Friday, May12, 2017 at the home of Dale Amlee..

WHITE-NOSE SYNDROME DECONTAMINATION PROTOCOL, APRIL 2016

This is the latest formal revision of the national decontamination protocol to prevent spread of the fungus that causes white-nose syndrome. This document is the product of a collaborative effort with multiple federal and state agencies and several non-governmental organizations.

Go to this website to view the detailed suggestions listed to help stop the spreading of WNS.

https://www.whitenosesyndrome.org/news/national-white-nose-syndrome-decontamination-protocol-april-2016

For the latest information about WNS visit this site:

https://www.whitenosesyndrome.org/

MINUTES

CENTRAL OKLAHOMA GROTTO

Minutes of the meeting of April 14, 2017

at the home of Carol and Dale Town

Attendees: Dale Amlee, Sue and John Bozeman, John Talbot, Carol and Dale Town, Jon and Kelley Woltz, The Skillful Ogre

Exalted Grand High Potentate Jon Woltz began the meeting at 9:00

OLD BUSINESS

Matt, Sue, and Dale A. presented our caving presentation on Monday, April 10 to the Boy Scout troupe that had requested it. They reported that it was well received by 15 attendees at Goodrich Methodist Church in Norman.

NEW BUSINESS

1. We discussed the possibility of COG's partially or fully hosting (read: $) the portable cave that some caver is touting about as a way of introducing cavers to caving safely in caves so they don't knock stalactites and drapery off the ceiling, kick over stalagmites, or break helictites apart with their caving helmets. We voted to donate $100 to this project, which is partial funding. The only person voting against was a feckless curmudgeon, me.
2. John Talbot proposed publishing the newsletter every other month rather than every month to save postage and printing costs. At the time of the meeting he asked that we take no action, but to think about it and consider it at our next meeting in May.

TREASURER'S REPORT

We concluded the meeting at 10:00. Dale and Carol had grilled a steaming heap of burgers and weiners so we ate well and tossed down many beers.

TREASURER'S REPORTS

APRIL 2017 TREASURERS'S REPORT

INCOME			EXPENSES	
Dividends	$	00.27	Donation	$100.00
TOTAL	**$**	**00.27**		**$100.00**
CASH ON HAND	**$**	**226.62**		
CHECKING	**$**	**128.13**		
SAVINGS	**$**	**2,139.14**		
TOTAL	**$**	**2,493.89**		

Balance as of **04/29/2017**

PREPARED BY TREASURER JOHN TALBOT

TRIP REPORT

Looking For Another 'Lost' Cave!
Personnel: Jon Woltz, Dale Amlee and Sue Bozeman (Report by Sue)
Date: 4/15/17

We intended to find John Bozeman's 'mystery cave' this fine day!

John swore that there was yet another unsurveyed passage between Broken Horn and Cherylsbad. He had found it when he was ridge walking, solo, and explored it (shamey shamey!) by himself for a bit. He swears that he took his spouse, moi, back there and she/I went in only a little ways, saying something like, "Why don't we survey this rocky crawl instead of chewing up our knees more than once?"

However, I don't remember any of that. It was, after all, several years ago and since one gyp sink looks amazingly like another out on the Gyp Hills of western Oklahoma, who could censure me? Yes, there are always those ... but I object to unwarranted castigations. Even John has looked for that 'mystery hole' again and been unsuccessful! Hence, the reason for our trip.

We started out at the well pad north of Cherylsbad's Neighbor Entrance. John described his 'entrance' as being north and east of Broken Horn, but south of Cherylsbad. So, we started out at the resurgence of Cherylsbad and walked/climbed the ravines of the breaks, spreading out to follow diverging gullies. After we exhausted the possibilities, we found ourselves back on top of the plateau separating the two systems and came upon a ranch road.

Jon had his phone with him and used its GPS function to track where we were. To our east was the external creek; to our south should eventually be Broken Horn -- and to the west and southwest should be the other entrances of Broken Horn. The threat of afternoon storms came into play in our thinking because we were far from the vehicles that might not make it out if it started raining! We determined it best to return to the trucks and go in the Broken Horn property from the west and ramble on the ranch roads from that side.

Little did we realize that that ranch road had not been graded for what looked like several seasons. Since we'd completed Broken Horn and started on Cherylsbad, there was no reason to use those roads. We got as far as Jay's Entrance and just parked the truck as the Jeep did not have skid plates (we'd left Jon's Element at the guest house). We hiked the road to the north and east, looking for anything with an entrance. Nothing. We chose to go south of the ranch road, fanning out to catch any minor blips in the surface.

Nothing ... until we saw a very large sink lined with trees. We were almost upon it when its configuration struck: that was Broken Horn's Resurgence! It cannot be entered due to impenetrable breakdown, although the water flows constantly out from under shelter entrance. Resigned to failure, we trudged back toward the trucks, heading west/northwest.

We identified several Broken Horn entrances as we passed them. Coming to one we thought was Jay's Entrance, we expected to see the vehicles just around the corner of a bluff. Nope. No vehicles! We hiked on and still farther along we came to the real Jay's Entrance with the trucks around the side of the bluff where they were supposed to be. So ... what is that other hole?

THAT may be John's mystery entrance!

It IS east and north of the main Broken Horn system. It could be 200-300 feet of rocky crawl to a drop-down into a water passage: going left to a bit of daylight but with no easy out (maybe the Resurgence from inside?) and going right in a muddy water passage that John did not pursue -- being ALONE(ahem). The logic fits as well, since we cannot follow the main water course beyond a sump in Broken Horn -- and cannot enter from a blocked resurgence -- just maybe John has found an intermediary entrance to an area between the sump and the resurgence!!!

Time will tell. IF we can re-find that hole!!!

TRIP REPORT: Sand and Pink Dragon Cave in New Mexico
April 7-8th 2017
Will Becker, Ethan Becker and Matt Brasher
Written by Matt Brasher

To see the complete article and excellent pictures go to http://www.okcavers.com/newsletters/2017/GUMO%20Spring%202017.pdf

For this trip Will and I planned to take Will's cousin Ethan to visit Sand Cave and Pink Dragon cave. Will and my brother in-law Phil and I had made a trip to this Sand cave last December. We really enjoyed this particular cave because it resembles a maze. There are lots of rooms and side passages. On that trip we had to spend some time finding the exit. Thankfully there was survey flagging with alpha-numeric labels to help us find the way back out!

As we started the drive I had only received a permit from the forest service to visit Pink Dragon cave on Saturday. This cave is only open in April and September so it was perfect timing to check it out. I had emailed the BLM office about obtaining a permit for Sand Cave for us to check out on Friday. I tried calling multiple times that week but had heard no response. If we did not get a permit I planned to make a day of hiking. We started our drive from Lubbock around 8 am Friday morning. Once we were about 20 minutes from Carlsbad I received a call from the BLM cave specialist, Jim. He asked if we still wanted to go caving. Yes! We were 20 minutes away from his office so we headed straight over.

After we picked up the BLM and forest service permits we headed out of town for McKittrick Hill. This area is on hilly arid land northwest of Carlsbad. The drive to get there requires driving 5-6 miles down terribly rough dirt roads. Once we got close to Sand we decided to take a look at the entrance to Dry Cave. Previously I had stopped here to look at the gated entrance and remembered that it was impressive because of the steep angle of the floor. As we walked up to the cave mouth I warned Will and Ethan to watch out for snakes. No sooner had I finished that sen-

(Continued on page 4)

tence when we heard a rattler give us a warning. He was at least 4 feet long. There was a second much smaller rattlesnake closer to the entrance that scurried away under a ledge. Yikes!

We continued over to the parking near Sand Cave. We gathered our caving gear and hiked over the fence and down to the entrance. Sand has two entrances, one requires rope and the other is more easily accessible. They are separated by at least 40 yards and both are small holes in the ground with gates.

We headed into the cave and our first plan was to revisit the lowest of the three levels of the cave. The main entrance and first passage of the cave is extremely dusty and I have to guess that this is how the cave gets its name. To our knowledge the only way down from the main level was to shimmy down a short vertical shaft. We had no issue getting down the shaft and found ourselves in a large room. The ceiling was well over 30' at one far end of the room. The rest of it had a ceiling that was just over walking height. The ground and ceiling was tilted at 10-20 degrees. We pushed the outside edge of the main room, finding several side rooms. The main room on this lower level was very large. I would estimate 40-50 yards in diameter.

After 30 minutes we decided to head back up to the middle level and visit the upper entrance. We shimmied back up the vertical shaft in a Ninja like fashion, hands and feet on both sides. We headed back to an area just below the upper entrance. From here the cave had another more sloped shaft that dropped 20-30' into another passageway. At the bottom of the drop there were two passages. To the left I was familiar with more maze passages and rooms to look through. We decided to go that direction first. That initial branch had several long and narrow rooms with spectacular formations and very high ceilings. There were several holes in the floor that dropped down 20'-30'. I did venture down one of the easier to climb shafts but it appeared to be a dead end. There were several rooms off of this large passage. Some of the more interesting ones had 4' ceilings with tons of soda straws and several uniform stalagmites.

We explored several side passages that required bear crawling to avoid damaging the ceiling formations. We decided to head back to one of the larger rooms. We took some time to shut down our lights and enjoy the darkness. After all the hunched over crawling we decided we could use a short nap! About 20 minutes later we were up and headed back to the base of the sloped shaft descending near the upper cave entrance. From there we took the passageway to the right. This passageway had lower ceilings and led us to much more maze passageways. Further in, I made my way around a corner and recognized a familiar looking room. I realized we were back at the bottom of the first vertical shaft near the lower cave entrance. I was happy to know it all connected as the ninja crawling up the shaft was not ideal. We headed out of the cave dusty and exhausted.

From McKittrick Hill we headed back down the dirt road to NM 137 and turned towards Queen and the forest lands. The plan was to head for a favorite campsite located adjacent to a dry river bed. The site was great for camping and had several amenities such as Bermuda grass, flat ground for a tent as well as several fire pits and stacked wood! The weather was perfect over night and into the next day.

The next morning we loaded up the car and made the drive up forest road 69 towards the Guadalupe Ridge. This route put us back on rough roads! At the top of the ridge are a fire watch tower and some antennas. From here you can take in a great view of Cave, Black and Gunsight Canyons. On another trip, we had parked at the watch tower and hiked in to visit Black Cave. Our destination was two more miles past the watch tower. I had to utilize 4x4 and help from spotters to nagivate some obstacles in the road. We finally make it back to the 'parking lot' for Pink Ridge. The parking lot was a small area of cleared brush and a fire pit. From here we began using a step log for the two mile hike to Pink ridge. There was a faint trail we could make out from time to time but most of the hiking was through very pokey brush. The step log also included a satellite image with Pink Dragon and a second cave called Pink Panther labeled on it. They appeared to be no more than 300 yards apart so we decided to take a look at the entrance to Pink Panther before heading to Pink Dragon.

The satellite image was very high level and not much help for getting us more than 40 yards to the Pink Panther. We began descending from the ridge at 6500'. The terrain and brush was challenging. There were a few cairns to help with identifying points to descend. The slope was around 45 degrees with a few rock benches to climb down. We ended up moving toward a large rock fissure with a steep drop to the canyon below. We were starting to think we would not find the entrance. I ended up peeking around a corner and below I found a cave opening. We climbed around and found a plaque labeling this as Pallette Cave. This cave had a small initial room with a tall ceiling that went back 20'. At the back was a 4 feet wide and 1 ft high squeeze that led to a larger passage. We saw at least 5 spiders, one a brown recluse, guarding the passage.

We slithered through to enter another medium sized room that went back 20 feet. This cave was in great condition. The stalactites on the ceiling 10-15' above were very impressive. The cave continued backaround some stalactites but the ceiling back around stalactites **(Continued on page 5)**

but the ceiling and walls closed in. I would venture to say that very few people make a visit here as there was no prominent trails leaving this cave.

We headed back out to the surface and hiked further at the same elevation. In about 30 yards we came upon a very small, ~2' opening in the ground. There was no monument marker. I took a peek inside and the cave was only one small room with some standing space.

The Forest Service Cave Specialist said this was a new cave entrance that showed up after some heavy rains. Apparently, there is a third cave nearby called Pink Damn that we never found.

While I was crawling out of this cave, Will hiked upwards towards the base of a rock wall. He let us know he found Pink Panther. This cave had a very serious gate. The entrance was near vertical! We also found a narrow slit 15' away that was probably 1' by 2' on the side of a sheer rock wall. This was also protected with rebar. We had a blast hunting for this cave.

We hiked back up the ridge and headed towards Pink Dragon 'tree', a lone Ponderosa marking the beginning of the trail. Pink Dragon was much easier to find and was about 300' below the ridge on another rocky outcrop. The trail was marked fairly well with cairns. The entrance was very large. Once inside the opening the cave had a stairway type of slope that led us down 20'. From there it made a right turn and a drop of 5'. About at this point we lost the light from the entrance and found ourselves stand at the top of a slope leading down to a loarge straiht room. This room was 20' wide aqnd maybe 40' high and 150 ' deep. Along the sides were large stalagmites.

In my mind I would describe Pink Dragon cave as being in the shape of a capital "T". The main passage we were in would form the base. Near the intersection of this cross was one small area that required a ll over loose rock.

After the crawl it opened back up to the intersection. Above us was a spectacular formation that looked like a dragon spreading its wings. We chose to go left initially and explored straight passageway like the previous room. The back of it came down to a pinch where I found several crickets…

The Pink Dragon. Do you see it?

My guess is we were very close to the surface. We back tracked and headed to the right arm of the cave. This passage descended at a shallow angle and required some climb ing around cave formations. The acoustics of the cave changed in this section. Our voices no longer echoed. The walls and formations looked to be covered in mud. Upon closer inspection it was small brown crystals covering everything; even the floor in the back part of the cave. It was here that we saw a very large 'bottomless' pit. The permit mentioned a 60 meter pit and we figured this had to be it. Most of this cave was off to mark where we could and could not step. With the flagging we couldn't get anywhere near this pit to look down as it would require stepping on the crystals covering the floor.

We had been hiking and caving for about 5 hours at this point and decided it was time to hike out. Ethan, Will and I really enjoyed visiting the caves as well as the hiking and camping. I think they are both on board to plan another trip in the future.

EDITOR'S NOTE: PLEASE GO TO website to see the complete report and fantastic pictures!
Web Link:
http://www.okcavers.com/newsletters/2017/GUMO%20Spring%202017.pdf

POTPOURRI

Hello!

We now have the lab results from all 5 of the gypsum caves in western Oklahoma that were sampled this winter. Bats swabbed from the 5 caves were negative. Bats swabbed included Cave Myotis and Tri-colored Bats. Caves surveyed included Selman Bat Cave System, Alabaster Caverns, Jester, Washita and Nescatunga.

Bat Population Totals during the survey dates:
Alabaster Caverns:MYVE - 18,834; PESU - 172; EPFU -4
Selman Cave System: MYVE - 106,910; PESU - 93;
COTO - 1
Washita Cave: MYVE - 20,649; PESU - 41
Jester Cave: MYVE - 14,720; PESU - 84
Nescatunga Cave: MYVE - 9,048; PESU - 101; COTO - 1
Melynda

SUZ NUZ

I got a news flash from the Cave Sim guy, Dave -- that's the group that has the travelling cave with sensors that teaches people/kids to 'cave softly' that we have chosen to donate $100 to at the last meeting. They will be in OKC in May. Take a look:

Hi Sue,

I don't know if this is too far for you to drive, but we're doing a free CaveSim event in Oklahoma City on May 6th. It will be at Science Museum Oklahoma from 9AM-6PM, and we'll have the CaveSim trailer, carbide lamp demos, Sked practice, cave rescue phones, SRT demos, squeezebox, and more. If you know any cavers (or people with kids) who might be interested in going to this free public event, please feel free to let them know about it! By way of an update, we have raised about 44% of the money that we're seeking for getting to Convention. Hope to see you on May 6th! Dave NSS #60740

REPORT FROM OKLAHOMA BAT COORDINATING TEAM

Report from OK Bat Coordinating Team
Date: Tues. May 2, 2017

What it is about: The Oklahoma Bat Committee consists of representatives from across the state that deal with contact with bats and their habitat (primarily caves but does include forest habitat. The OBCT (Oklahoma Bat Coordinating team) was created to implement a communications plan to facilitate information flow to partners, scientific cooperators, interested parties and stakeholders about bat and cave management, bat research and bat diseases in Oklahoma. The team serves as the Oklahoma contact for the Western Bat Working Group, which is a partner of the Coalition of North American Bat Working Groups. It is composed of representatives are from BCI, COG, Cherokee Nation, Ft. Sill Natural Resources, The Nature Conservancy, ODWC, OK State Parks, TROG, University Bat Scientists (Rogers State, UCO, USAO), and USFWS.

What it has done so far: Past work included the issuing of the Bats of Oklahoma Field Guide & poster; preliminary guides to landowners and bat facilitators in Oklahoma on what WNS is all about and suggested practices; bat research including swabbing and sampling to set a baseline for Oklahoma caves before the inset of the disease; and a resource to share with other states on information on WNS and other bat related concerns.

Now… Part I of The Report: Whew… got that done! We typically meet twice a year - Early January and August. January usually catches us up on national news and all share what has happened locally along with new concerns and options for the team to work towards. We also coordinate the bat counts and swabbing across the state. The August meeting is the same as January but usually longer because of hands on training of bat related activities. Getting a summon for an emergency meeting then in April was something out of the ordinary.

COG (and others) have been involved since 2012 (?? - I don't remember exactly) doing testing for WNS on the western gyp caves of Oklahoma and our samples have been reported as free of the disease with our bats during this entire time. Even this year (2017) we continued to do so. We just received confirmation (see article in this newsletter) that once again our samples of our bat swabs were free of the fungus that precedes WNS.

However just over the border in the Texas panhandle the fungus (Pseudogymnoascus dstructands (Pd)) was discovered in Jan/Feb of this year in six north Texas counties.

The discovery set a whole bunch of people wondering why in TX there were positive results while just 50 miles away in OK there were negative readings. It seems we have been using two methods in testing. Oklahoma was using the National Wildlife Health Center tests while Texas was using Univ. of California Santa Cruz tests. The difference is the Santa Cruz tests set a much lower threshold measure (register 40 in the tests) vs the NWHC using 50 as the baseline. The six counties in Texas registered basically 40 - right at the threshold and thus are not high enough for true indicators the fungus is present for the NWHC test.

Note that the discovery of Pd is what the WNS Center calls a suspect occurrence. Two counties in Oklahoma last year were suspect. As the fungus multiplies over the years it finally gets intense enough to overwhelm the bats. Thus this year one county in OK has been confirmed WNS while we now have 4 suspects all of which are in NE Ok.

So now the arguments get to start on the standardizing of what makes the border of where this fungus is just there and where it crosses the threshold to become a threat. This is being discussed at the national level and hopefully will be decided before our next winter sampling take place.

Next month I'll cover the other topic we widely discussed: Oklahoma's Suggested Best Practices to Address White Nose Syndrome. This includes Monitoring Effects and a four point set of working standards to use in the state when dealing with caves and bats.

Texas WNS Release Article
http://tpwd.texas.gov/newsmedia/releases/?req=20170323c

Report by: Duane Del Vecchio
COG Grotto Representative to OBCT

TRAVAILS THROUGH JESTER CAVE

Mud to the left of them,
Mud to the right of them,
Onward through Slug Wallow
Crawled the gypsum cavers.
Mud in front of them,
Mud behind and under them;
Mud beneath their clothes
Where mud should never go.

Where Sucker Tube meets Slug Wallow
Beneath a 2-feet wide, 3-feet high ceiling
The thinnest of the thin pushed and pulled
Then declared "This survey is done!"
With only the Ugly Way left
To be connected by smoke bomb.

To this day no one returns
To this tortuous junction.
No one can: time has grown
Too much caver flesh over caver bone.

Pushing mile-long mud passages,
One arm in front, one arm behind,
They became world experts
At keeping mouths shut and chins high
And snaking forward on stomach muscles.
Will we cavers never learn to not crawl
Down a 2 feet by 2 feet hall?

The few who through Jester travailed--
By long day's end Jester had prevailed
And they returned home bone weary and worn
But didn't care: Jester had been overcome.
The survey was done.

By Steve Beleu
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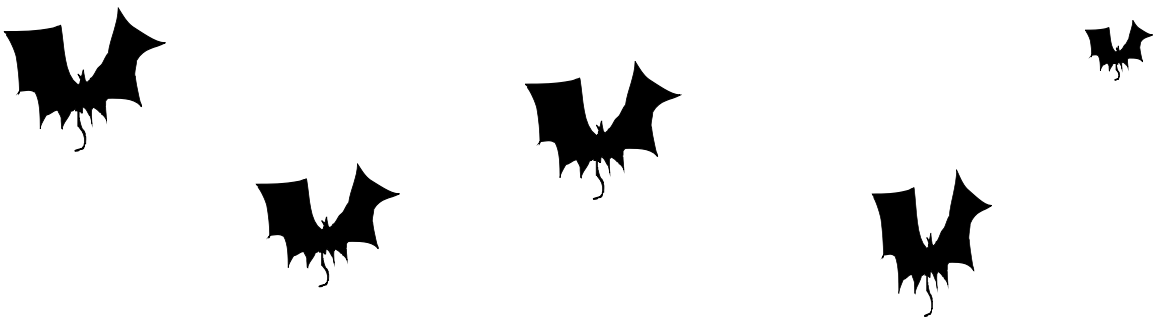
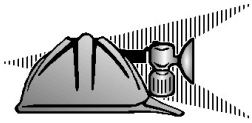
Central Oklahoma Grotto is a non-profit organization and a chapter of the NSS (National Speleological Society), Cave Avenue, Huntsville, AL., 35810. Dedicated to cave conservation and safety, C.O.G. published general information in a monthly newsletter ($6.00/year) and detailed cave surveys and related 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 Lil Town, 25692 Mosier Circle, Conifer, CO 80433: All submissions to the newsletter should be sent to the editor: Lil Town, 25692 Mosier Circle, Conifer, CO 80433: Telephone: (580)471-1238: 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 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!* Website: http://www.okcavers.com

The May meeting will be at the home of Dale Amlee
Friday, May 12, 2017





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