CENTRAL
OKLAHOMA
GROTTO
OF THE NATIONAL
SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY,INC

C.O.G.nizance

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WILL KEEP YOU POSTED WHEN AND WHERE THE NEXT MEETING WILL BE HELD.

JANUARY 2022
OUR FIRST ONLINE MEETING EVER!
ALSO THE FIRST MEETING SINCE COVID STARTED AND KEPT EVERYONE HOME.
THANK YOU BECKY FOR SETTING US UP IN GOOGLE MEETING.
NEXT MEETING WILL BE
FEBRUARY 11, 2022 AND BECKY WILL SEND OUT AN INVITE TO EVERYONE.
Those present were John and Sue Bozeman, Becky Hunsinger,
John and Kelly Woltz, Duane Del Veccho, Lil Town, Steve Beleu,
and John Talbot by phone with no photo.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

*No trips planned at the present time

*Next meeting may be February 11, 2022 on Google Meet. Becky will send out invitations.

We have decided to keep the slate of officers for 2022 the same as last year's – namely:

JON WOLTZ —VICE CHAIRMAN
STEVE BELEU — RECORDING SECRETARY
DUANE DEL VECCHIO — WEBMASTER
DALE AMLEE — CHAIRMAN
SUE BOZEMAN — CORRESPONDING SECRETARY
TREASURER — JOHN TALBOT

WHITE-NOSE SYNDROME DECONTAMINATION PROTOCOL, October 2020

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/static-page/decontamination-information

MINUTES

Ye Olde Central Oklahoma Grotto Meeting, January 21, 2022

Our virtual meeting began from 8:00 through 8:05 as attendees connected online and overcame occasional connectivity problems.
Attendees: Sue and John Bozeman, Duane Del Vecchio, Becky Hunsinger, John Talbot, Lil Town, Jon and Kelley Woltz, Steve Beleu

The big news of this issue is that we are now conducting monthly meetings via the online Google Meet app. Becky Hunsinger is our facilitator for this and future meetings and we thank her immensely.

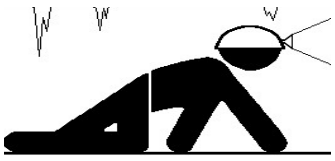
We elected these candidates to posts in 2022 –
Jon Woltz, Chairperson
Dale Amlee, Vice Chairperson
John Talbot, Treasurer
Duane Del Vecchio, Webmaster – this is the first time that Duane has been named to this now officially recognized post though he's been our webmaster for years.
Steve Beleu, Secretary and Sergeant at Underarms

Olde Business - none

New Business –

1. Duane gave the most recent report of the bat committee of which he is a member. There were only two bat counts in Oklahoma in 2021. This year an OU professor has conducted one bat count. The committee is revising their bat identification book for publication. Pipistelle/Tricolored bats are soon to be on the Federal Endangered list. When that happens, cavers, including us, enter a cave that contains Tricolored bats we will probably need to apply to the appropriate federal agency for a permit.
2. Sue reported that Gary Souel, NSS member, wrote a short tourist guide to Alabaster Caverns as part of an ongoing effort by the NSS to have written and then publish a series of tourist guides to our nation's commercial caves. This Oklahoma volume is published and features only this one cave, but not pseudo-caves such as the Rock Rooms of the Wichita Mountains or Robbers Roost Cave.

John Talbot gave his report. The meeting concluded at 9:00.



Wildlife Health Bulletin 2022-01
National Wildlife Health Center
Jonathan Sleeman, Center Director
January 31, 2022

Winter 2021/2022 Bat Submission Guidelines and Highlights of the 2020/2021 White-Nose Syndrome Surveillance Season

Summary

The USGS National Wildlife Health Center has released updated guidance for bat diagnostic submissions for the 2021/2022 white-nose syndrome (WNS) surveillance season. During the 2020/2021 surveillance season, WNS was detected for the first time in Wyoming and Montana, increasing the number of states where WNS has been confirmed to 37. Field testing of several vaccine candidates to prevent WNS in susceptible bat species is ongoing, and field vaccination has proven to be safe in WNS susceptible animals.

Updated guidance from the USGS National Wildlife Health Center (NWHC) is now available for bat diagnostic submissions for the 2021/2022 white-nose syndrome (WNS) surveillance season. These guidelines are posted on the NWHC WNS web page and replace all previous NWHC bat submission criteria.

TREASURER'S REPORT

JANUARY 1, 2021 TREASURERS'S REPORT

1/1/2021	**BANK BALANCE**	**$2,004.56**
	CASH ON HAND	**$ 103.05**
	TOTAL	**$2,107.61**

INCOME			**EXPENSES**
Dues	$		Printing
Dividends	$	.98	Postage
Pub. Sales	$		Tax
Donations	$		
TOTAL	**$**	**.98**	

12/31/2021

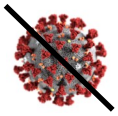
BANK BALANCE	$	2,005.54
CASH ON HAND	$	103.05
CHECKING	$	
TOTAL	**$**	**2,108.59**

PREPARED BY TREASURER JOHN TALBOY NSS #30254

1/14/2022

TRIP REPORTS

SORRY NO TRIP REPORTS BECAUSE THERE HASN'T BEEN ANY TRIPS!



POTPOURRI

DESTINATION SLOVENIA
Predjama: The world's largest cave castle
John Malathronas, CNN Updated 17th January 2022
https://www.cnn.com/travel/article/predjama-castle-slovenia/index.html

In a hole: Castles don't come much more strategically placed than in the mouth of a cave. Predjama Castle in Slovenia is a spectacular fortress embedded in a limestone landscape.

(CNN) — Predjama is one of the most extraordinary castles in the world, built in the mouth of a cave complex at the end of a valley in southwest Slovenia.

Set halfway up a 400-foot (123-meter) vertical cliff face, it appears in records from 1202 and is listed by Guinness World Records as the world's largest cave castle.

With a Renaissance facade dating back to the 1580s, the word "majestic" doesn't even begin to describe it. Yet for tour guide and historian Vojko Jurca, one of the highlights is, on first appearances, a little underwhelming.

"This is it," he says proudly, indicating an outhouse toilet with a sloping roof and a boarded-up door.

It may look unremarkable, but the story behind it isn't.

The story focuses on robber baron Erasmus von Lueg, a local Robin Hood hero who fled to the castle in the mid-1480s after killing Count Pappenheim, Marshal of the imperial Habsburg Court, in a duel whose legitimacy was disputed.

In retaliation, a siege was ordered on Predjama by Habsburg Emperor Frederick III.

But Erasmus stood firm, aided by a network of secret tunnels burrowed into the rocks that allowed him to bring in provisions and collect rainwater.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 4)

He mocked his opponents by sending them fresh cherries brought in from the Vipava Valley, 13 miles west, using those underground passages.

The end would come, after a year and a day, when Erasmus was betrayed by a servant.

As Jurca tells it, when Erasmus went to the outhouse located on a third-floor terrace, the servant lit a wooden torch as a signal. Moments later, a cannonball came whistling through the air, killing Erasmus in the middle of his last bowel movement.

The outhouse has clearly been rebuilt in the intervening years.

The manner of Erasmus's death hasn't escaped the attention of "Game of Thrones" fans who point at the similar, undignified end of Lord Tywin Lannister, who was shot with a crossbow while on his bathroom throne.

They also note that Predjama's last owners, the Windisch-Grätz family, who used the castle as a hunting lodge until the end of World War II, have on their coat of arms a wolf, the seal of the Stark noble house.

As it happens, author George R. R. Martin visited the castle one evening in June 2011, after a book signing event in Trieste.

"On the way home, we stopped at the most amazing castle, built into the mouth of a huge cave. Definitely have to model some castle in Westeros on this one, it was an eyeful, especially by night," he says in a blog post.

Legend and history are only part of the appeal of Predjama castle. You really have to visit to comprehend how human enterprise was so organically bound to nature.

Approaching the castle from any direction, it's almost completely hidden, only visible at the last moment -- whereas sentries around the castle would've been able to spot anyone coming immediately.

Once inside, it's obvious that safety rather than comfort was the biggest concern in the Middle Ages -- the castle is impregnable but the cold and damp make it almost unlivable.

Nowadays, entering the castle involves passing through a drawbridge. The original entrance was higher up where two faint doors can be glimpsed. They were reached via ladders that could quickly be withdrawn.

Back in the day, visitors would first enter the courtroom, where rough justice was dispensed. Few of the ruler's subjects would be allowed further than this, unless they were unlucky.

Behind a thick wooden door there's a torture room, which, uniquely, is situated in an actual cavernous dungeon. The preferred punishments here were the rack, on which prisoners were stretched, and the horse, a painfully pointed triangular device they were made to straddle.

One of the most pleasant spaces follows. The dining room is insulated by walls that are nearly five and a half feet thick, and warmed by the small but functional kitchen, in which a fissure doubles as a natural extractor hood.

You can also inspect an original latrine, a protruding seat over the cliff that allows gravity to do its dirty work. Erasmus would have used straw, dried moss and cabbage leaves instead of toilet paper, or at least he would have before he was blown to smithereens.

A climb up more stairs to the third floor reveals the gun loops, arrow slits and murder holes used to pour boiling oil or molten resin on to the besiegers.

That's where the open terrace is located. Here there's a view of the whole valley, as well as the most famous outhouse in Slovenian history.

Next to it is the bedroom. It's the warmest room, as it's the only one with a fireplace. Castle keepers lived here until the 1980s.

Upstairs is an attic that served as a barracks and a lookout. The views down the Lokva Valley are uninterrupted and gorgeous.

The barracks have been converted to an armory museum showcasing medieval weapons like battleaxes, halberds, crossbows and flails.

Interestingly, a passage here leads straight to the torture room. Presumably anyone sleeping on duty could be unceremoniously dragged down into it.

From here you can also enter the innards of the cave, exploring until the light from the entrance dwindles to a speck, letting you contemplate the surroundings.

The extensive limestone cave system in southern Slovenia is called karst, after the Latin name Carsus given to the plateau above Trieste.

As it was the best-known limestone terrain for centuries, the word has become generic, describing any limestone terrain with cavities like a Swiss cheese with holes.

Beneath the castle, one large cave stretches for 8.7 miles, second in length to the nearby complex of Postojna.

There's no tourist infrastructure at this large cavern, but it is possible to visit during summer months with proper caving gear, lamps and a specialist guide. It's closed in winter because a colony of Schreiber's long-fingered bats uses it to mate and hibernate.

Back in the castle, a one-way system leads back down to the knights' room, notable for its Gothic niches and a ceiling painted with oxblood.

There are glimpses here and there of how the structure's builders made efficient use of their rocky situation. One small shaft near the exit became a kennel for hunting dogs, while a cave mouth under the castle served as stables.

Leaving the castle, guide Vojko has one more stop on his tour -- a nearby village where an ailing linden tree is being propped up in the cemetery of Our Lady of Sorrows.

The church was consecrated around 1450 by the bishop of Trieste, future Pope Pius II.

"Legend has it that this linden tree was planted on top of Erasmus' grave," Vojko says.

The tree was badly damaged by fire in 2001, but it meant so much to the villagers that tree surgeons were called in, and its trunk split and repaired.

It still proudly survives, like Predjama castle itself.To find out more, visit: postojnska-jama.eu/en/predjama-castle.

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.
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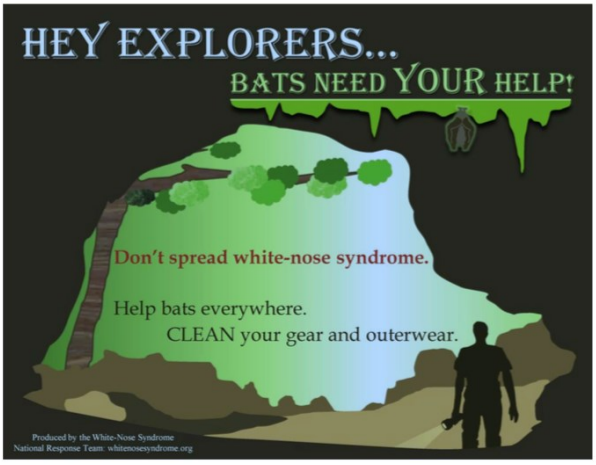
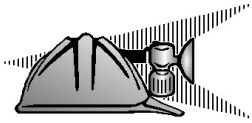


February 11, 2022
will be a virtual meeting.
See you online!



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