CENTRAL OKLAHOMA GROTTO
OF THE NATIONAL SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY,INC

C.O.G.nizance

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The February meeting of the Central Oklahoma Grotto

will be held at the home of John Van Dyke at 8:00 p.m.

Friday, Feb. 11, 2011

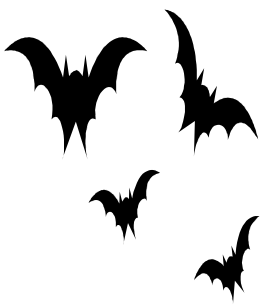
Decontamination protocols specific to WNS have been developed and will continue to be revised to incorporate the best available information. All current protocols will be available at the following website: http://www.fws.gov/WhiteNoseSyndrome

Source: DRAFT WNS Plan - v. 10.21.2010 from **A National Plan for Assisting States, Federal Agencies, and Tribes in Managing White-Nose Syndrome in Bats**

Sue

Duane has put information about WNS on the COG website at http://www.okcavers.com

This page also has Facts and News to help cavers.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

*The 8:00 February meeting will be at the home of John VanDyke's,

Weather permitting Bat Count will be this weekend.
Contact Sue for NW and Corn Cave count, and Lil for SW count!

Final Salute to Sam

Sam Martinez finally succumbed to pneumonia on February 3, 2011. Theresa indicated that there were many other underlying problems that Sam had to deal with as his health gradually deteriorated. The initial stroke several years ago really was deadly -- that he lived this much longer is testament to his supreme health. Such a sad end to a very brilliant person.

For those who only met Sam once or perhaps never at all, he was a superb caver. Nearly fearless, he was an extremely independent soul. He helped us survey in even the nastiest of Jester Cave passages. He was a tireless detailer of cave locations from historical documents and landowner rumor. His handwriting was precise and tiny. Any time he took notes on survey, you knew you'd have a beautiful product.

Sam was also extremely persistent. When computers first came on the scene for cave surveying purposes, John Bozeman began developing a program to handle our data and print out a line plot. Once finished, I used it for some of our shorter caves that came along in the same time frame as we were surveying Jester. Jester Cave took 5 years. We were well into the survey and hand reduction of Jester's survey data by the time John's program was completed. Sam asked me why I wasn't entering Jester's data points into the computer. I looked at him like he was nuts! I already had something like 20,000 data points! We were nearly done with the cave. I already had hand drawn maps done at 1 inch to 20 feet, 1 inch to 50 feet, and the final done at 1:200. NOW Sam wanted me to enter all the data into the computer??? I fought that for months ... and finally, to get him off my back, I gave in, grumbling with every keystroke.

In an era when many cavers were calling for total disclosure of cave locations, the Central Oklahoma Grotto held the line on the promises extracted by our cave-owning landowners and declined disclosure to non-COG members. Sam was in total agreement with this view and since he was a Tulsa Grotto member, it was nice to have someone on our side in their grotto.

When Sam and Theresa moved to Helena, Montana, in the late 1980's, we were happy for them, but knew we would miss Sam's caving presence. Theresa had come along with us to survey and explore, but caving was never her primary focus. She was totally understanding about Sam's passion for caving, however, and Sam would attend a survey trip or Carlsbad Cleanup if he got a chance.

In fact, the last trip that he had with us before his stroke was at Broken Horn Cave. It was an exploration trip and when John told him he could explore a bit up one particular passageway until the rest of the group caught up, off he went. Unfortunately, in true Sam fashion, his solo exploration took him out of the cave via an at-that-time unknown pit, but left the rest of us worried about his whereabouts and launching a ... well ... not a rescue, but a "Find Sam" mission!

That was Sam! He will be missed.

Sue Bozeman, February 6, 2011

Note: Theresa Martinez will write a personal obituary soon -- this is just my personal final salute to Sam. We offer condolences to Theresa and their son, Joe, and much luck during these upcoming transition months. Theresa and Joe are trying to get the Helena house in shape to be sold. Theresa intends to move back to Tulsa. Joe will be attending college in Ohio this fall.

MINUTES

CENTRAL OKLAHOMA GROTTO
Minutes of the meeting of January 14, 2011

Host: the home of John Talbot, where we ate chili, cornbread, and brownies, and tossed down beers. You won't find better grub even if you got a bucket of boiled cooter meat and squirrel tails sat in front of you.

Attendees: Host John Talbot, Dale Amlee, Anne Ault, Duane Del Vecchio, John Talbot, John and Jeremiah Van Dyke, Jon and Kelley Woltz, Lil Town and her guest Mart, Dale Town and his guest Carol Buescher, and S. Beleu.

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

OLD BUSINESS
none

NEW BUSINESS

1. Anne Ault asked for someone else to host the March meeting since she is in the process of finding, buying, and moving to a new house. We instead resolved to hold no meeting in March.

2. We decided on the dates for the 2011 bat count: February 12 for the Washita Bat Caves, February 19 for all other caves.

3.Duane noted that Alabasters Caverns has cancelled their usual bat count because Dr. Caire wants to have himself, his students, and a few other cavers selected for their manly toughness—including Duane --- to work through the usual caves at the state park, but more to look for signs of WNS than to count the bats. He plans to have his crew take photos of the bats as documents of their either not exhibiting or exhibiting symptoms. Of WNS. General discussion: several of us thought that we too should take photos as documents of WNS presence or absence in the bat caves that we will be counting in on Feb. 12 and 19. We also agreed that if we find dead bats we will send samples of them to Dr. Caire for necropsies.

4. Dale Amlee told us about "Disto" survey technology. This tool takes compass and azimuth readings and measures distance, but requires regular calibration, perhaps monthly calibration. But Technocaver Dale Town is a professional calibrator, so if COG decides to adopt this surveying technology he can perform regular calibrations on our Distos. Read about these products at http://www.distagage.com/

5. Dale Town told us about a LED lightstick he saw that features 65 LEDs in a device small enough to fit into a caver's backpack. He didn't have the product name with him, but noted that the Altus Wal Mart sells it in their automotive department.

TREASURER'S REPORT
John Talbot delivered his report.

We concluded the meeting at 9:07.

TREASURER'S REPORT

The March newsletter will have the January Treasurer's report. Yes John, they didn't make the trip back to Altus!

TRIP REPORTS

Looking for WNS in Oklahoma during Bat Counts

Report by: Duane Del Vecchio
Feb. 3, 2011

On Saturday, January 29, 2011 various scientific surveys were undertaken in the NW part of Oklahoma to look for signs of WNS (White Nose Syndrome) in the hibernating bats in our caves. Teams were made up of bat specialists, naturalists from the state parks dept., biologists from Oklahoma Dept. of Wildlife Conservation (ODWC), university professors and graduate students. Their goal: to look for any signs of WNS in the hibernating bats of NW Oklahoma caves. This was done with many methods. One such method was to take detailed pictures in high megapixel images for close ups for experts to 'examine' the bats that might not be apparent to the naked eye in a cave. This is a non-evasive method (providing you don't flash all day long while they are asleep!) J Temperatures of rock, air, soil, and water along with humidity readings were taken at set intervals as the fungus is known to like a higher humidity cooler areas. Other methods were carried out that were more detailed but don't need to be covered in this report.

Dr. Caire and his group took care of the Selman Caves and area while we were assigned Alabaster Caverns itself. As we were going to look at bats in the first place, it was also decided to do an official bat count while we were there. I took photos throughout the cave at five megapixel size for the detail analysis later. Pictures can be seen at: http://www.ddvude.com (Alabaster bat count). The bats did not seem to be in large groups as we have previous seen, but I've been in enough bat counts to know what you think you see doesn't always come out that way. <Grin> During the count, we did not see any signs of WNS present on any of the bats in the cave.

While on count, I did talk at length with Melinda Hickman of ODWC and what was up with the "WNS in Oklahoma thing". Whereas only about 12 caves in the state fall under any state or local jurisdiction (most are on private lands), organizations like ODWC and others are rather limited in stopping the spread of this disease. With that, ODWC would like to establish an Oklahoma WNS Response Team made up of representatives from various groups, agencies, and people who come in contact with bats and caves. Some of those are ODWC, Oklahoma Dept. Tourism and Recreation, USFWS (US Fish & Wildlife Service), UCO, DOD (Ft. Sill), The Nature Conservancy, TROG, and COG. This group would be able to assimilate info from Oklahoma though reports from said organizations, actual surveillance, and contacts from the field and pass out the information to all other groups that may be affected by WNC, in particular, private land owners, stakeholders and user groups with cave management, and opening up a place for dialog between all such groups and to avoid the often non-factual rumors that float around this kind of thing.

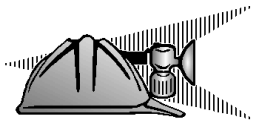
With this coordinating team, communication plans can be made for response to detection of WNS which would include all agencies to be kept in the know and an agreed upon decontamination protocol along with disease surveillance and research protocols provided though a set Scientific Collectors permit (which is already in place).

I found a very interesting part of reading that Scientific Collectors permit that may not be known to us cavers. Part of the ODWC Scientific Collector Advisory on Considerations of White-nose Syndrome in Bats during Scientific Collecting Activities states the following: Any equipment (nets, traps, gloves, etc…) that has been in contact with bats outside of Oklahoma must be disinfected with a 10% bleach solution, or other USFWS recommended disinfectant, before being used in Oklahoma. Any equipment that has contacted bats or has been inside caves or mines in confirmed WNS-affected states may **NOT** be used in Oklahoma.

With all of this going on in the background, the annual bat count this year has more importance than previous years. Not only will we be doing the count, but we will be the extra eyes that will be looking for WNS in our caves. You'll note that the maps of WNS show a red mark in Oklahoma but you need to look carefully: it is not confirmed. If we can show documented proof through the studies mentioned above, photo evidence, and a total lack of any diseased specimens, then it is possible to relax some of the tension and rumors of shutting down the state caves and mines like in other states. There is a lot going on with this topic and it does affect 'us cavers' so it's good to be kept in the know.

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!*

Remember the February meeting is Friday, February 11th at John VanDyke's.



Central Oklahoma Grotto
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