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 was held at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, March 9, 2012, at the home of John and Sue Bozeman.

With this neat picture taken in Train Tunnel Entrance of Jester Cave on February 11, 2012, Dave McDermott's light casts shadows from the bats which amazingly looks like a bat itself!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

*The March meeting will be at the Bozeman's house, Friday, March 9, 2012.

MINUTES

CENTRAL OKLAHOMA GROTTO

Minutes of the February 10, 2012

Host: the home of COG member John Talbot.

Attendees: Dale Amlee, John and Sue Bozeman, Duane Del Vecchio, John Talbot, John and J.T. Van Dyke, Jon and Kelley Woltz, S. Beleu

Grand Imperial Chairman Amlee opened the meeting at 8:00

OLD BUSINESS

We talked about the conclusion of the 6-year survey of Broken Horn Cave. Mapper Dale Amlee talked about the various types of mapping software that he might use to draw the map. The cave is about 1.1 miles long.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Sue began planning the next monograph in the *Oklahoma Underground* series, asking people to do this and that. We each have our assignments.
2. Duane talked about our chances of ever, ever getting back into Carlsbad Caverns to do a day of work. Alas, the chances lessen each month and bitter tears run down our cheeks.
3. Sue talked about what Dr. Caire expects from us when we conduct our bat count this year, including taking soil samples and counting bats in caves that we don't normally include.
4. We discussed the request from some Texas cavers to join us. We may invite them to join us to work in the caves that we survey in, especially if we ever restart work in the southwestern caves that we haven't been in for the last 6+ years (except for Jester's bat count). But COG doesn't have fun trips: we work in our caves. So if invited they would be expected to survey.
5. Duane proposed then withdrew a motion to give each person who hosts a meeting in their house $20 for food and drink.
6. Sue told us about a book that the University of Oklahoma Press has published about the cave life of Oklahoma and Arkansas. We declined to buy it for our "grotto library". Here is intel about it – http://www.oupress.com/ECommerce/Book/Detail/1623/cave%20life%20of%20oklahoma%20and%20arkansas

TREASURER'S REPORT

John Talbot gave his treasurer's report.

END: we ended the meeting at 9:23.

TREASURER'S REPORTS

February, 2012

INCOME		**EXPENSES**
Dividend	$ 0.01	
Dues	$ 95.00	
Newsletter Sales	$ 18.00	none
TOTALS	**$ 113.01**	
CASH ON HAND	$ 89.10	
CHECKING	$ 340.70	
SAVINGS	$ 2,132.51	
TOTAL FUNDS AS OF 2/8/2012	**$ 2,562.31**	

PREPARED BY TREASURER JOHN TALBOT
NSS#30254RE

TRIP REPORTS

Vickery Bat and Nescatunga Caves Bat Count 2012
February 18, 2012
Cavers: Becky Hunsinger, Jon Woltz, and Sue Bozeman
Data supplied by Sue Bozeman

There were NO signs of WNS whatsoever in either Vickery Bat or Nescatunga Caves on 2/18/12.
Cavers counting these caves were Becky Hunsinger, Jon Woltz and Sue Bozeman. The soil samples we took were delivered to Dr. Caire's office on 3/2/12.

Here are totals for the bat count by cave. Vickery Bat Cave; 3 Myotis velifer and 2 Corynorhinus townsendii (big-eared bats). The Rock temperature was 46 degrees F; air was 43 degrees F by the bats,
and at the entrance the air was 44 degrees F and the water was 43 degrees F

Vickery Bat and Nescatunga Caves Bat Count 2012
February 18, 2012
Cavers: Becky and Mark Hunsinger, Jon Woltz, and Sue Bozeman
Written by Becky Hunsinger

The NM (Becky and Mark) and OK (Sue and Jon) groups met around 10:30 at the Whitlaw Ranch tractor-mailbox. The weather was typical for Bat Count, actually a little better than normal--light wind, no precipitation, temperature in the 30s. It was a little nippy for strolling to the cave, but good for hibernation (mine or the bats—your choice). Recent moisture made the roads iffy, but they all turned out to be passable as far as we needed to go.

We caravanned to the valley to contact the current caretaker. No answer at the door, but a cute pup was overjoyed to see us and did his best to entice us to play. Sue was just a finishing a note when a man appeared at door. Despite having his Saturday morning interrupted, he was very pleasant, and agreeable to our request. From the ease with which he produced release forms, we gathered that our request was an ordinary part of business. Sue got his address and phone information so that we can contact him in the future before coming. He agreed that would be best, so that he can coordinate groups. He directed us to the best place to park, and said to let him know if we needed the tractor to get us out.

We proceeded back up the road, then to the right, and down to a flat but muddy well pad. We chose our parking spots carefully, to optimize our chances of getting back out after a few hours of sinking into the mud. We geared up, put on warm clothes over our caving clothes, and set off to find the Window entrance of Nescatunga. Sue was the only one who was familiar with the cave, and it had been years since her last trip, so we looked at the map and struck out in the general direction.

We trooped over the ridge to the next drainage. This was typical gyp-cave-looking country—aaahhh; sparsely vegetated, ridges, and forested sinks. Our travel was obstructed by piles of downed trees; nearby stumps were sawn off near ground level. Many of the trees were piled in the sinks, making navigation difficult to impossible. We spotted a likely looking entrance, but had to work our way through the brush piles to the sink floor. There was an entrance to north was inviting; the one to the south far less so. But the skim of green moss on rock and trees and the slightly--very slightly--warmer air indicated cave past the inviting mouth to the north. Sue thought this might be the resurgence entrance of Nescatunga, and the southern entrance might be the northern entrance (are you following me here?) to Vickery Bat. We decided to try it.

Because we were not yet certain of our location, Sue took a soil sample but used a baggie rather than one of Dr. Caire's vials. We got temperature and GPS readings. We reluctantly removed our warm outer clothes, eagerly turned on our lights, and entered.

We found bats within the first thirty feet. I took notes while Sue and Jon counted. I was impressed at what a nice cave this was, but Sue explained that this was the cave where she had learned the difference between what cavers and non-cavers call "walking cave." After promising her parents "walking cave," they later explained that this cave required scrambling, ducking, some crawling, and always watching your feet. Not walking cave. I still think that if you can stand upright most of the time, it's "walking cave." But it was a great lesson in communications.

We proceeded slowly, counting myotis as went. The air temperature remained cold (30's????). Within a couple hundred feet, we could see daylight filtering in ahead. This turned out to be the Window, which confirmed Sue's identification of the resurgence entrance. The Window is another pleasant walk-in entrance (caver's standards at work here). A confirmation of the cold temperatures was the snow still drifted at the dripline. Now that we were sure of our location, we took another GPS reading and a soil sample—to official protocol--at the dripline.

We continued upstream, counting singles, groups, and mats. Sue determined a packing rate of 240; Jon later determined a packing rate of 306. The air warmed somewhat as we proceeded, now that we were beyond the flow through between the Window and the resurgence. Jon and I often stopped to admire the beautiful crystalline ceiling, massive crystals in a ceiling pocket, anhydrite bubbles, and other classic gypsum cave beauties. We encountered a couple springs feeding the cave stream; the first a pencil-sized squirt, the second a larger flow. At the entrance to the Jewel Box, we decided to finish the main cave, then return for the side trip. We counted up to the pool before the Tiger Tank. Beyond that, it was doubtful we would find anything worth counting. I worked on my lights while John continued to Tiger Tank, hugging the narrow mud ledge a couple feet above the stream on the left

(continued on page 4)

side of the passage. He announced that Tiger Tank still looked to be swimming depth, with a perch.

We took soil samples, then returned downstream and entered the crawl to the Jewel Box. Years of eager elbows and knees—and bellies and toes—had trenched the crawlway to a pretty comfortable height. We soon encountered patches of gypsum needles sprouting from the clay. The needles were about half an inch or more, creating a frosty white layer over the floor. We attempted to bridge them as much as possible. After twenty feet or so, they disappeared. The crawl remained beautiful, however, with the macrocrystalline ceiling and walls and occasional gypsum threads. One cluster was about an inch long and wide. Gypsum crystals, crusts, clouds, popcorn, and coral made it an enchanting side trip. The evidence of former hacking was depressing, but the cave is still beautiful. All of our pipistrels were encountered in the Jewel Box side passage, which was significantly warmer and drier. (Air was 60; soil 52!)

After the counting was completed, we exited at the Window. Sue returned to the cars to get more sample vials, and we went back to the north entrance (at the south side of the sink—remember?) to Vickery Bat. Getting into VB was not as straightforward as Nescatunga. The sink wall had several small holes, and one larger one, but most were blocked by downed trees and none went very far. At length, we pulled enough brush away from a high hole to get into a broad, hands-and-knees crawl that went for thirty

we pulled enough brush away from a high hole to get into a broad, hands-and-knees crawl that went for thirty feet or so before turning left and pinching out

feet or so before turning left and pinching out. The floor was littered with gypsum chunks that had spalled from the ceiling, and large layers still on the ceiling were obviously preparing to join them. Hmm. We counted five myotis. But wait! As we were leaving, Sue took another look at a pair of myotis and announced they were big-ears! Indeed, they were Townsend's. The ears were completely folded and mostly under the wings. How did she spot that?

Since this side of Vickery had failed to produce much, we decided to go the main entrance. We scrambled up the sink walls and overland to the trail to the south entrance. But the trail didn't go the south entrance. It ended at a sheer drop-off where the trail used to be. We peered around the corner in awe at the massive breakdown that now mostly blocked the entrance to the freetail summer roost. Amazed, we walked to the other side of the sink and ogled some more. Breakdown happens. Glad we weren't there.

The afternoon was waning, and the OK folks still had to drive back to the city. We returned to the cars, peeled off the muddier layers, and headed to Waynoka for dinner. We ended up at the former Harvey House at the train station and enjoyed hot food and cold beer as the freights rumbled by. Dang good trip.

Jester Bat Count – 2012
Saturday - Feb. 11, 2012
Cavers Dave McDermott, Del Vecchio, Dale and Carole Town, John and J.T. VanDyke
Pictures credits by Dave (IMG series) and Duane (100 series)
Written by Duane Del Vecchio

EDITOR: A COMPLETE PHOTO REPORT CAN BE SEEN AT OUR WEBSITE
http://www.okcavers.com/bat%20counts/2012/jester2012/jester2012.htm
DUANE AND DAVE TOOK SO MANY MAGNIFICANT PHOTOS YOU HAVE TO GO AND SEE THEM!

(Report taken from COG Web Page) Time for the annual Oklahoma Bat Count for 2012! Dave and I got there about an hour early so we decided to start on a small section called Train Tunnel Entrance to count bats. Dave counted and I was the recorder.

Typically we find some big ears in here... worth the trip! Alas, not this year just some Cave Myotis. But when we turn off the flash we get an AWESOME picture, (even though it is blurry), check out the shadow from the bats combined they make a bat shadow!!! WOW!!

We have this new handy dandy digital thermometer! Whoo Hoo! We'll take air temperature, water temp, rock temp, mud temp... all to help scientists with the studying of bats in hibernation.

We saw the common cave bat (Myotis Velifer), they hang around solo or in pairs or GIANT mats and are sound asleep (in hibernation).

Our caves were in the (air temp) upper 30's while the outside air was 25 degrees today....brrrr!!!

Since we are worried about WNS (White Nose Syndrome) we take LOTS of pictures of bats for the scientists to examine for signs of infection.

We met up with Dale, Carole, JT and John VanDyke and went to the resurgence of Jester - The South Entrance. There is a little anti-room before the cave really begins due to collapse so this is where we all get our gear all together before darkness. We didn't go far this year at all before we got the little mats appearing!

A lot of bat pictures we took are close ups to help

the scientists who are looking for WNS and the presence of GD. You can see all of these on the website. Other than the usual ear parasites, these guys all look pretty healthy.

This picture is for those of you who have been in south entrance before... this is the spot where you have to almost kill yourself to stay dry. All of these people would normally be AT LEAST up to belt line in water... now dry!! The drought we had in Summer 2011 is still seen here! NO WATER IN JESTER!! Unbelievable!!

But again the bats look healthy from every angle and good sign!! We did not find any bats on the ground nor any that looked in a sick or weakened state. A bat ravaged by WNS will have scars, holes, and sores on his wings. We didn't see any of this which is good, we don't want WNS here!!

Then it's time to climb out the short exit rather than walk all the way back to the resurgence! You sure need a when it is 25 degrees with a 25 mph North wind in our face for the 3/4 mile walk back to our cars!

The North Entrance is where the main water entrance actually enters Jester. Off to the north entrance... the rest of the gang went in Glade Entrance while we (D, Dave, & JT) went into Homestead Entrance.

AMAZING WHAT A BIG GUY WILL CRAWL THROUGH TO SEE BIG EARS!

This was the prize we look for…. they look like Myotis the common cave bat, but you have to look really close to see their ears... these are Long Ear Bats! Pretty rare around these parts!! Three here are a prize! They are very solitude type of bat and do not like to be disturbed. They roll up their ears while they sleep! Amazing the tight spots a fat guy will go though to see long ear bats!!! Also saw a Cave Swallow. It looks like the sides have worn away going up and this means Cave Swallow A barn swallow will be just a cup - no sides.

When we connected to Glade Entrance we found a pretty fresh dead raccoon! Only about a week old... still pretty preserved! At one point Dale T. shows us his impression of a dead raccoon! (actually, Dale is famous in the club for being able to sleep on ANY mud bank!!)

Usually at the beginning of Glade we can measure mats of bats in the feet (like 3 feet by 4 feet) but not so this trip there lots of little clusters. Again looking closely, these bats seem to be quite healthy. Saw a opossum that didn't look too healthy... actually we took a picture of him this time last year. There was a bit more decomposing and we've had no rains to wash him away last summer!

Again looking closely, these bats seem to be quite healthy. Saw a opossum that didn't look too healthy... actually we took a picture of him this time last year.

We took four soil samples in the north wing of the cave in the same places as last year. These samples will be micro analyzed all the way to the molecular level for signs of GD.

The four samples were taken at the entrance, twilight area, bat roosts in darkness and further in the cave in total darkness. Each sample was taken separately with a new spoons to keep from cross contamination if one site tested positive. Then we shipped them off to UCO to our expert for analysis.

With our job finished here we trucked back to the cars and went to find grub!

Trip (Web) report completed by Duane (D) on Mon. Feb. 13, 2012

Wichita Bat Caves - 2012 Bat Count
Sunday - Feb. 26, 2012
COG Members: Dale Amlee, Steve Beleu, Duane Del Vecchio, Dale and Carole Town, and Jon Woltz.
Pictures credits and report by Duane.

(Report taken from COG Web Page) Time Start by going in what appeared to be a Nice big opening... you think ... this might be nice!! Until you get into the cave and the ceiling gets about a yard off of the water and closer on the mudbank! Carole had always done just walking passage cave, we're about to throw her into the mud - quite literally! The WBC (Wichita Bat Count) team! This was the cave I first showed off my new digital camera (about 2 decades

ago) which I then I lost down a rock crevice here! <grin>. Now off to do the start of the count.

We are going to take 4 soil samples through-

out the cave to ship to scientists for analysis (and to see if GD is present) There were cool tree roots sticking into the cave! Steve is keeping book... recording temperatures and counts No signs of WNS (White Nose Syndrome from the counters. The bats we saw seemed to be healthy. 37 rock temperature, 36 water, 36 mud, 39 air temp . At one point Dale did what he does best in a cave.. found a mudbank and got a quick snooze!!!

We were working pretty hard at crawling that we were putting off a lot of heat... which creates a fog that rises.... pretty cool.

I took a lot of pictures of bats (duhh!) for the scientists to look at more detail on the bats. These can be seen on the website. Nothing like taking a break on a 36 degree mudbank! (It does soak though!!) <grin> Finally we got out of part 1 of 3 parts of this cave.

Everyone was glad to STAND UP after about an hour in the cave! Everyone was happy to take a break and soaked up some sun!! (Isn't that great... getting all of tha Vitamin D! (Not that they were worn out... of course not!!) :)

As the entrance to the 2nd part has collapsed, we had to go to the other side and work our way back to the entrance. This entrance is a nice little pit but crumbling all to pieces... soon this section won't be accessible either!! One at a time each person came down. First Dale, Carole, and then Steve (then Jon snuck in before me!) It was cooler in this cave and lots more bats! The mats were also bigger in this area. I took a picture of one bat that was on his back in a crack....not holding on at all! (and yes, he was alive). Peak-a-boo... I see you!

We took 4 soil samples - Entrance - Twilight - Under bats in darkness - and 1/2 way though cave with bats present. Now all that as left was the climb out!!

There are whole SLABS of rock calving off in this area... we fear soon we might not be able to get into this section of the cave anymore like the entrance!!

Then there was a hike to the 3rd and final part of the cave. It was all connected but due to collapse over the past 100 years it is now 3 separate cave entrances. It is much like taking a rolling pin

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It is much like taking a rolling pin and smashing a loaf of french bread in two places leaving 2 flat parts (the collapse parts) and 3 wholes (the cave).

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and smashing a loaf of french bread in two places leaving 2 flat parts (the collapse parts) and 3 wholes (the cave). The collapse parts then just eroded away into deep creek between cave entrances.

The last entrance is a nice tall ceiling (up to 20 feet) but FULL of water. There were Lots of bats in this cave, individuals and also big mats! You could also see some good size trees that were washed in and jammed up together from a flood .

Jon perched himself between two rocks about 10 feet above the floor to get close to a pretty big mat!! Yep, all clean nose!

Another mat had clean noses...but you couldn't say the same for the ears... lots of parasites in their ears! (yellow bugs) Usually they can keep themselves clean but while asleep, they don't wake up and preen themselves...

Wow, we saw LOTS of animal prints in the mud in this cave!! Also saw mountains of old guano... now just a cave cricket
gathering place!

There was one pip only about 3 feet off of the floor... amazing he wasn't eaten or washed away! You could see the debris above him.

After a while... your neck starts to hurt from having to look up all the time. Then there was an amazing find... in the ceiling in one area (about 400 feet from the exit) we found a rat snake! In this temperature he was still a bit active!! Pretty cool... probably hunting bats for a meal. They can climb walls and trees so he had no problem getting up there!

There in the fog we saw Daylight! We exited to gunshots and machine gun fire... not at us but still scary! (we kinda high tailed it to the cars!!)

Ahhh...the after bat count dinner in Weatherford!! Good job gang! Very enjoyable!!

POTPOURRI

Google Street View Heads Underground in Japan

February 16, 2012 / Cavingnews.com Japan, Asia
http://cavingnews.com/20120216-google-street-view-heads-underground-in-japan-akiyoshi-do-cavern-akiyoshi-dai-quasi-national-park

Google Street View, which provides 360-degree street-level imagery around the world, recently moved off the street.

Google sent one of their teams to record Japan's Akiyoshi-do Cavern in it's full 360-degree glory.

Located within Akiyoshi-dai Quasi-National Park, the 10 kilometer (6.2 miles) long Akiyoshi-do Cavern is the largest limestone cavern in the Orient.

Check out the amazing results.

If that's not enough, the team also gave the same treatment to Japan's old Okubo-mabu mine as well.

What an exciting way to experience caves, and other locations, a world away. While very few will likely be disappointed with the next stop, the Brazilian Amazon, lets hope more caves are in the queue. Google Street View Takes You Inside Ancient Japanese Caves [Mashable]

Tour Group Rescued From Flooding Kentucky Cave

March 2, 2012

A tour group exploring Kentucky's Hidden River Cave were rescued after a freak storm let loose a torrent of rain and quickly began flooding the cave.

The tour group, which included eight out-of-state teenage students, one teacher and a guide, were 2.4 kilometers (1.5 miles) deep inside the cave on an off trail tour and unaware of the situation.

Rather than waiting it out, executive director David Foster and guide Joe Forsythe decided to enter the cave, water already 1 meter (3 feet) high, to rescue the group.

There were two options here, we could have the group sit and wait in out in the back higher sections of the cave, which could have been a day or more than a day, the scary thing about it is when you have a line of storms coming you don't know how long that could be, we made a decision to go in there after them quickly, David Foster Hidden River Cave Executive Director to wbko.com

He had a hand line with him and we used it to get us through the water, I tied it around my waist and swam through the river, everyone else was following along holding onto the hand-line, when we could stand up we did, other times we were swimming, and the whole time we were in the water it is rising and on top of it the current was very strong Joe Forsythe Hidden River Cave Guide to wbko.com

Although everyone exited the cave safely, by the time they made it out the water had risen over 2 meters (6 feet) high.

Cave officials are now re-evaluating their tour protocols.

Researchers Retrieve Historical Climate Record from Florida's Caves

December 8, 2011 / Florida, United States, North America
Photo by Philip Larson/flickr

As part of a three-year climate research project a group of researchers from Florida State University are looking to Florida's caves in order to find more information about the historical climate of the Gulf in order to offer a comparison to modern meteorological patterns.

With permission from the Southeastern Cave Conservancy Inc. (SCCI), the team recently harvested two stalagmites from a Northwest Florida cave in order to analyze them. As per the agreement, the stalagmites – one 4,000 years old, the other 25,000 years old – had to be replaced with exact reproductions. Over time these reproductions would be covered over and appear natural.

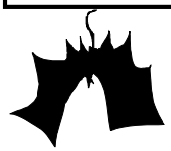
The six member team, which includes scientists, researchers and graduate students, are hoping to create a high-resolution timeline of monthly weather patterns in the Northern Gulf region that span thousands of years. This would allow them to study monsoonal weather patterns, similar to what India and China experience, and to get a better handle on predicting future weather patterns, especially in light of climate change.

Some of their work has already been published in the journal Geochimica et Cosmochimica Acta, and new research is expected to be published in the journal again soon. Another article for the Journal of Hydrology is also in the works.

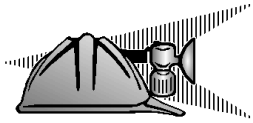
Researcher finds key to ancient weather patterns in Florida's caves [PhysOrg.com]

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 Town, 25692 Mosier Circle, Conifer, Colorado 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

Decontamination protocols specific to WNS have been developed and will continue to be revised to incorporate the best available information. 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**
Duane has put the decontamination protocols in the COG website http://www.okcavers.com/wns



The March meeting will be held at The Bozeman's Friday night, March 9th, 2012.



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