CENTRAL
OKLAHOMA
GROTTO
OF THE NATIONAL
SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY,INC

C.O.G.nizance

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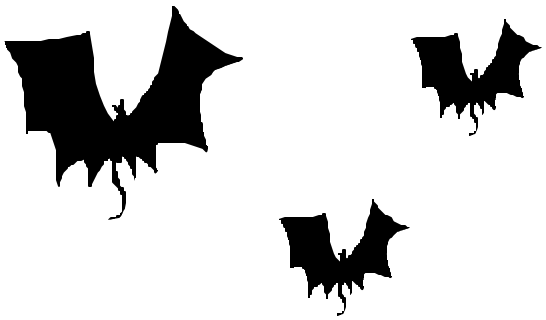
The February meeting of the Central Oklahoma Grotto will be held at 7:30, Friday, February 11, 2004. at the home of John van Dyke.



Read about bats deaths due to wind turbines.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

*Northwest trips are scheduled the third Saturday of every month. Contract Sue or John Bozeman for details.
*Southwest trips are scheduled the first Saturday of every month. Contact Lil Town for details.

*The 7:30 January meeting will be at John Van Dyke's house.

MINUTES

CENTRAL OKLAHOMA GROTTO
Minutes of the January 14, 2005 meeting

Host: John Talbot
Members present: Dale Amlee, Anne Ault, Sue and John Bozeman, Duane Del Vecchio, Lil and Dale Town, John Van Dyke, Steve Beleu

Vice-Chairman Amlee began the meeting at 8:20

OLD BUSINESS

1. None of us looked at the "Cave-X" program that Roy told us about in 2004.

2. Sue reported that the Green River Grotto of Bowling Green, Kentucky, an NSS student grotto, wants to cave with us the week of March 21-27. We will suggest a mid-week or Saturday cave trip to Jester Cave with them. She will e-mail the required liability releases to them. If we sponsor a mid-week trip it may not be easy getting enough COG members to cave in mid-work-week.

3. Anne reported that she had heard nothing new from the Maverick Grotto, Texas, about a proposed joint trip with us. We wondered aloud: could we have a mega-trip with both the Green River Grotto and the Maverick Grotto to Jester Cave?

NEW BUSINESS

1. Sue, as COG's Reporting Secretary-For Life noted that she had sent COG's "Internal Organization" annual report to the NSS as required.

2. We scheduled Bat Count 2005 for Sat., February 12.

3. Our next meeting will be at John Van Dyke's house.

4. We then volunteered to host the meetings remaining in 2005:

March – Lil and Dale Town
April – Dale Amlee
May – Anne Ault
June – Duane Del Vecchio
September – Jon Woltz
October – Art Wallace
November – Roy and Nicole Diehl
December – Sue and John Bozeman

5. Duane told us more about the cave-in at Alabaster Caverns. It will be months before they can reopen to the public. Convict labor will clear the rock fall and make the other repairs that need be made.

6. Sue talked about our need to recruit new members. COG's demographic is aging rapidly. We held a general discussion about this worsening problem. Here are some of our better ideas (I suggested recruiting Yetis from southeastern Oklahoma to swell our ranks, and rank they would be):

Anne—can we recruit Geology students?; John Van Dyke—can we hold a

fun trip with friends=potential new members?; Dale Amlee and John

Bozeman—can we deliver talks about caving to geology students? This

topic will remain open, and COG solicits your ideas.

7. Duane noted that our annual Holy Pilgrimage unto Carlsbad Caverns will happen on June 3, 4, and 5. He will again be our Lead Officer/Priest for this most holy of caving sojourns. Deo Gratias!

TREASURER'S REPORT

John Talbot read his report, which is included in this newsletter.

CORRECTION TO PREVIOUS MINUTES: The Crazy Monkey misreported that our 2005 vice chairman is Jon Woltz. The accursed creature repents its mistake: our new vice chairman for 2005 is Dale Amlee.

Vice-Chairman Amlee concluded the meeting at 9:11
Minutes by The Skillful Ogre this month.

UCO Secures NSF Grant to Enhance Learning at Selman Labs

A $50,000 National Science Foundation grant to enhance learning at the university's Selman Living Laboratory (SLL) will allow for the construction of an on-site facility to house researchers and education groups. Located in rural northwestern Oklahoma, the SLL was established as a Field Station in 1998 through a $300,000 grant to UCO. The site features an astronomy complex with observatories and telescopes as well as preserved caves, springs, creeks and grasslands. For more information, contact Charles Johnson, UCO News Bureau Director, at (405) 974-2315 or e-mail at chjohnson@ucok.edu.

TREASURER'S REPORTS

INCOME		EXPENSES	
DIVIDEND	$ 5.39	Postage	$ 31.45
DUES	$ 82.00	Labels	**$ 0.60**
		Christmas Cards	$ 3.00
TOTALS	**$ 87.39**		**$ 35.05**
CASH ON HAND	$ 37.16		
CHECKING	$ 456.77		
SAVINGS	$ 2,591.22		

PREPARED BY TREASURER
JOHN TALBOT

TOTAL FUNDS AS OF 12/31/04 $ 3,085.15

POTPOURRI

Researchers Alarmed by Bat Deaths From Wind Turbines

By Justin Blum
Washington Post Staff Writer
Saturday, January 1, 2005; Page A01

Jessica Kerns thought her survey of new power-generating wind turbines on a mountaintop in West Virginia would yield the standard result: a smattering of dead birds that were whacked by the whirring blades.

But the University of Maryland doctoral student turned up something unexpected amid the trees and rolling ridges of Backbone Mountain: hundreds of bat carcasses, some with battered wings and bloodied faces. "It was really a shock," Kerns said.

Thousands of bats have died at Backbone and on another nearby wind farm in Meyersdale, Pa. -- more per turbine than at any other wind facility in the world, according to researchers' estimates. The deaths are raising concerns about the impact of hundreds more turbines planned in the East, including some in western Maryland, as the wind industry steps up expansion beyond its traditional areas in the West and Great Plains.

The bat deaths, which have baffled researchers, pose a problem for an industry that sells itself as an environmentally friendly alternative to conventional power plants. Wind proponents already have had to battle complaints about bird deaths from the blades and about unsightly turbines marring pristine views.

The white turbines in Appalachia rise more than 340 feet above the ground -- well above the tree canopy -- and are lined up close to one another to catch the wind as it blows over the mountains and ridges.

The bat problem could worsen, conservationists fear, as wind developers rush to erect new turbines following the recent renewal of a federal tax break for a year. The wind industry, which had been virtually dormant since the last tax break expired a year ago, projects more wind turbines to be built around the country this year than in any previous year. In the areas near where bats have been killed in Pennsylvania and West Virginia, activists said, roughly 700 new turbines have been proposed or approved.

"Take the most conservative estimates of mortality and multiply them out by the number of turbines planned and you get very large, probably unsustainable kill rates," said Merlin D. Tuttle, president and founder of Bat Conservation International, whose Austin-based group is

(Continued on page 4)

leading the research effort in Appalachia. "One year from now we could have a gigantic problem."

Bats serve an important role in nature, and their populations are believed to be in decline, scientists said. The bats getting killed in Appalachia devour insects that pose grave threats to crops such as corn and cotton. They also feast on pests that can spread disease, such as mosquitoes.

On Backbone Mountain, at a facility called Mountaineer Wind Energy Center, the first dead bats were found in 2003, soon after the project's 44 turbines came online. Conservationists and the wind industry hoped the deaths were a fluke.

But Kerns and other researchers returned last year and now estimate the 2004 death toll at between 1,500 and 4,000 bats. Nearby, another group of researchers, working at the 20-turbine wind farm in Pennsylvania, which came online a year ago, found a raft of bat carcasses as well.

Researchers do not know why bats are flying into the turbines. Armed with radar and thermal imaging cameras, they are trying to come up with recommendations for wind power developers to avoid the problem. Researchers are uncertain whether bats are attracted to the spinning blades or if their sonar, which allows them to find food and avoid trees and other objects, fails to detect the turbines.

None of the species of bats found on the two mountains is endangered, said Albert M. Manville II, a biologist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The carcasses found include those of hoary, red and eastern pipistrelle bats. The deaths appear to violate no federal laws, Manville said, but the threat is serious. Unless a solution is found, he said, the turbines could get a reputation as being "bat Veg-o-matics."

The large number of dead bats caught the wind power industry by surprise, and now its leaders are scrambling to find a solution.

"It was something that when we found out about it we felt we needed to respond to immediately," said Laurie Jodziewicz of the American Wind Energy Association in Washington, which also is participating in the research. "What we wanted to do this year was to get a handle on what's going on. "

The wind industry confronted its biggest environmental challenge when early model turbines in Northern California killed large numbers of birds. The industry says newer turbines and more attention to site selection have dramatically cut the number of bird deaths in subsequent projects around the country, though some environmentalists say too many birds are still dying.

The turbines tend to attract a lot of attention as they pop up around the country, but they are responsible for generating a tiny amount of electricity in the United States.

Last year, the industry said, it provided nearly 17 billion kilowatt hours, enough to serve some 1.6 million households -- less than 1 percent of the country's electricity production. Analysts said future expansion of the industry will be tied largely to whether the tax break remains on the books.

Wind power is generally more costly than generating electricity by more conventional "We methods -- though analysts said federal and state subsidies make the alternative more attractive. In addition, they said that as natural gas prices rise, wind becomes more competitive.

An increasing number of states require that a certain amount of power come from renewable sources, such as wind. During debate over federal energy legislation in previous years, some interest groups called for a requirement that renewable sources account for a certain percentage of the nation's electricity production.

In the East, wind has only recently caught on, and the most preferable areas are on mountains where wind tends to be most powerful.

In West Virginia and Pennsylvania, the turbines are positioned on wide paths cleared amid maple, oak and other hardwood trees.

And that may have something to do with the bat deaths. Bats appear to be attracted to the open areas cleared by the wind developers because they can more easily find insects there, researchers said. But they are unsure why the bats hit the blades of the turbines -- whether they're attracted or accidentally fly into them.

Some of the bats are migrating south and others live near the wind farms, researchers said. Most of the deaths occurred between July and September, which includes the months of peak migration.

The two sites where researchers have found a large number of bat deaths are operated by FPL Energy of Juno Beach, Fla., the largest U.S. generator of wind power.

"There is something going on . . . that we don't fully have our arms around," said Steve Stengel, a spokesman for FPL, which has helped fund the bat research. "Our hope is that there are some suggestions based on the research of things that can be done to potentially reduce the number of collisions."

Some in the industry argue that there's no evidence that the bat deaths in Appalachia will be repeated on other wooded mountaintops or ridges in the East. Bat conservationists disagree, saying the evidence gathered so far

(continued on page 5)

suggests the problem will recur.

Several wind developers working in projects in Appalachia said they were concerned but planned to move ahead. Among them is Clipper Windpower Inc. of Carpenter, Calif., which is planning a project on a portion of Backbone Mountain in Western Maryland, about 20 miles from the Mountaineer project.

"We're hopeful that they're going to identify some of the major issues there and we'll be able to respond to those," said Kevin Rackstraw, the company's development leader for eastern North America. "I don't think it's an acceptable response . . . to stop everything until we have answers. You can't just bring everything to a screeching halt. You move forward diligently trying to respond to the concerns as best you can."

The bats' deaths have caused a painful split among environmentalists. Some continue to support new wind power projects, saying any harm they cause bats would be far less severe than the environmental problems associated with mining for coal and burning it to produce electricity. The industry concurs, saying the public needs to consider the overall harm other forms of energy production cause the environment compared to wind.

But other environmentalists are calling for a moratorium on development of wind projects on wooded mountaintops in the region until researchers figure out how to prevent bat deaths. Some, such as Dan Boone, spokesman of a group called Citizens for Responsible Wind Power and conservation chair for the Maryland chapter of the Sierra Club, said the amount of power generated by the windmills is not worth killing bats and birds.

We have an industry targeting that area, and it's not doing it sensibly," Boone said. "We're blowing the promise of wind as a good, renewable energy source."

Some other environmentalists who disagree have launched an Internet petition calling on Boone to resign from his Sierra Club position.

Kerns, who studied the problem in 2003 for a contractor for FPL and is now working with the bat conservation group, said she has started to see patterns in the deaths. She has not reached any conclusive findings.

For example, before and after large storms, more bats tend to die. On warmer nights when wind speeds are lower, more have died. But researchers do not know why.

Kerns feels a sense of urgency to complete the research as developers ready their plans for nearby mountains.

"It's likely the same thing will occur," she said. "I look at the areas that are around here and I worry about the mortality that will occur there."

Bat Saliva Drug May Improve Stroke Outcome

By M. Mary Conroy - Reuters

Copied from cavtex, submitted by Anne Ault

The results of a small study suggest that desotelase," an investigational clot-busting drug derived from vampire bat saliva, safely restores blood supply to the brain when administered up to 9 hours after a stroke occurs.

Dr. Anthony Furlan of the Cleveland Clinic Foundation in Ohio said that the rate of blood flow restoration in stroke patients who were randomly assigned to intravenous treatment with desmoteplase was 53.3 percent, compared with 37.5 percent in patients randomly assigned to receive placebo. Furlan presented results of the Dose Escalation study of Desmoteplase in Acute Ischemic Stroke (DEDAS) at a late-breaking clinical trials session on Friday at the American Stroke Association International Stroke Conference 2005.

A lower dose of desmoteplase was not superior to placebo. However this dose was effective in an earlier European study and Furlan said it will be investigated in a large, multinational study of desmoteplase that will begin enrollment in April.

In terms of safety, there were no symptomatic episodes of bleeding in the brain, a potential side effect of this type of therapy. An earlier study of desmoteplase reported one symptomatic bleeding episode.

"Combining both studies the hemorrhage rate was 2 percent, which is less than the 6 percent hemorrhage rate reported with tissue plasminogen activator," he said. Tissue plasminogen activator, or tPA, is another clot-dissolving drug, which is currently on the market.

Furlan presented the results for 37 patients who were treated within 3 to 9 hours after they had a stroke. All of the patients had a National Institutes of Health (news - web sites) Stroke Score (NIHSS) between 4 and 20. Eight patients were randomly assigned to receive placebo, 14 to low-dose desmoteplase and 15 to a higher dose of desmoteplase.

After 90 days, 9 patients in the high-dose arm had clinical improvement (60 percent) versus 2 in the placebo arm (25 percent) and 4 in the lower dose arm (28.6 per cent)

The study was funded by Paion Pharmaceutical in Aachen, Germany.

Check out this website Ted R. Blasingame found about the upcoming movie called "The Cave" today. http://www.darkhorizons.com/2005/cave.php

WILD WEST

The dark days of Oregon Caves: Two crusaders say the Park Service has botched management at the national monument and are pushing for a change.

Christopher Reynolds
October 26, 2004
Copied from la.com

Oregon Caves National Monument, Ore. — Step right up. Duck into the damp, 42-degree darkness and sidle this way. Mind the soda straws — that's what cavers call those small stalactites. Now you're under the mountain, with three miles of marble-walled passages radiating around you, and a controversy spilling out of each vein.

In the empire of the National Park Service, these caverns are a modest outpost: They lie in a rural, blue-collar corner of Oregon, fewer than 10 miles north of the California border, get about 90,000 visitors a year and close every winter. But they have been through big changes since the day in 1874 when a hunter and his dog stumbled upon them.

Most tours follow a standard route, a path that includes more than 500 stair steps and enough tight squeezes to make a claustrophobe's pulse go pitapat. It takes 90 minutes. Clammy breaths, napping bats, the tinkle of trickling water. In one of these dark corners, ranger Steve Bolton says, researchers found fossilized bear bones that might be 50,000 years old.

But what doesn't come up on the public tour is dissent over management of the caves. For three years now, a pair of hard-core cavers, Jay Swofford and Bill Halliday, have been tussling with National Park Service officials over management of this resource. It's a common problem for anybody who has ever had to balance recreation and preservation, and here, where a wayward breeze can destroy a millennium's slow dripping, the challenge is deeper and darker than elsewhere.

Swofford, 40, a Eugene computer security consultant and founder of Friends of the Oregon Caves, led tours here in the late '80s and early '90s and may know this place better than anyone. Halliday, a 78-year-old Tennessee resident, mapped these caves in the 1960s. Their campaigning began in 2001, when the Park Service laid plans to start taking some visitors beyond the standard route to a more remote area in back.

Hand-wringing over these caves goes back to 1909, when President Taft declared this system a national monument and put the Forest Service in charge. In 1934 — the same year a concessionaire put up a handsome six-story hotel, restaurant and gift shop — the Park Service took over in a government reorganization. And for more than 60 years, it left the guiding in the hands of concessionaires, approved measures to get more tourists into the caves, and did little to stop visitors from pocketing souvenirs. Tens of thousands of Oregonians and Californians have fond memories of those hands-on visits, but the fractured formations they left behind still stand like rows of broken teeth.

Meanwhile, looking to ease the way for tourists in the 1930s, workers blasted a new exit tunnel, widened main passages, filled side passages with dislodged rubble. That changed air-flow patterns, destabilizing temperatures and scrambling the way formations had been growing.

During the following decades, the Park Service approved installation of an electrical system and switched on lights that caused the growth of algae, which turned parts of the cave from white to green. Workers poured an asphalt floor, and the Park Service still gave guides and visitors a long leash. As recently as 1997, a major formation called the Bird of Paradise vanished overnight, apparently stolen.

But in the 1990s, the Park Service pendulum swung at last. In a preservation effort, rangers added doors to stabilize wind patterns and temperatures. They yanked out tons of asphalt, from which petroleum was leaking, and displaced rubble. In place of the asphalt, they poured concrete. Fewer side effects, so far as we know. They set up a new lighting system that returns caves to darkness when visitors aren't passing through and they started to spray the algae with bleach.

The biggest changes came in 2000 and 2001, when the Park Service beefed up staffing, let the old concessionaire's contract lapse and took over tour operations for the first time. Craig Ackerman, Oregon Caves superintendent, has called this "a new chapter" in the caves' history.

But Halliday and Swofford don't want Ackerman in charge. In June's National Speleological Society newsletter, Halliday and Swofford called for the Forest Service to take over the 480-acre site. They blamed the Park Service for "exaggeration and misinformation" about a cave system they say is smaller, less beautiful and more tourism-scarred than many others.

"What they're doing is over-managing it in some ways and under-managing it in others," says Halliday. Look at the brochure, he says: Here are images of a nonnative salamander and a bat species whose presence has not been confirmed. The monument's chief of interpretation, Roger Brandt, acknowledges that an updating of the brochures has been delayed by budget considerations. But rangers say they have no interest in giving up the park, and no plans to mess with their current tour arrangements.

The caves may not be unique, they say, but the six types of rocks along the route offer a window on "one of the world's most diverse geologic realms," not to mention the notable population of endemic insects and those old bear bits. Swofford and Halliday, Brandt suggests, are so emotionally caught up in the place that it's hard for them to watch anybody else run it.

Such wrangling is the nature of the ranger's job if your natural wonder is damaged goods and its educational possibilities are as great as these caves'. You're doomed to an eternity of arguable decisions. Keep offering tours? Sure. Now, where? How?

"This is very difficult terrain to navigate," Brandt says.

Sure is. The more careful you get, the more closely your critics watch. That's got to annoy a public servant. The very best thing for the caves, I'm beginning to think, would have been the disappearance of its discoverer in a sudden landslide at the moment of discovery. The dog, too. You can't trust witnesses.

To e-mail Christopher Reynolds or to read his previous Wild West columns, go to latimes.com/chrisreynolds.

Historic Bottles

Copied from cavtex
Submitted by Anne Ault
http://www.blm.gov/historic_bottles/index.htm

Unfortunately, a lot of sinkholes in Texas were used as trash dumps for the last 100 years or more. Fortunately, a lot of Texas cavers devote their spare time to cleaning the trash out, in hopes of finding the next Powell's or Honey Creek or Robber Baron. Even if you don't find a significant cave, you might find some interesting bottles. If you want to know how old they are, check out this website. It's a useful reference, even if you think you have better things to do than digging old trash out of holes in the ground.

These Cave Dwellers Have Lots of Money, As Their Elaborate Wine Cellars Prove

By SUEIN L. HWANG Staff Reporter of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL December 26, 2001

ST. HELENA, Calif. -- For thousands of years, man lived in caves. Recently some very wealthy men have spent millions digging their own. The locale is the verdant hills of California's Napa and Sonoma counties, a horticultural paradise where people lavish money on estates that celebrate and sell fermented grapes. The caves are engineering and architectural marvels, with stereo systems, limestone libraries, heated floors, catering kitchens, vaulted ceilings and Italian statuary. The competition among cave dwellers is intense. Like Europeans, who have fermented wine in caves for centuries, California vintners agree that nothing beats a cool, damp cellar for aging wine. The earthen enclosures offer naturally chilled air and enough humidity to limit evaporation. They also are a come-on for visitors willing to pay $100 a bottle for boutique varietals. And because they can't be seen by neighbors, wine cellars skirt debate about above-ground development. You can dig a cellar here without a building permit.

Still, the latest Napa and Sonoma caves are as much about making an impression as they are about controlling climate. "If you have a cave, you are a man," says Dan Lynch, a 60-year-old Silicon Valley investor and owner of Lynch Winery, in Napa. Down the street from Mr. Lynch's vacation home in St. Helena, workers are hollowing out a hillside belonging to his longtime associate Chuck McMinn, chairman of Covad Communications Corp., a broadband-communications company in which Mr. Lynch was the original investor. Inside the mountain, a 14,000-square-foot, semicircular cave is taking shape for Mr. McMinn's Vineyard 29 winery, including a capacious tasting room supported by Roman columns and a wood-beamed ceiling.

Mr. McMinn, 49, declines to say how much the cave is costing him, but he says he expects the results to be well worth it. "To me it's really about the ambiance and trying to set the right tone," he says. "You don't just see barrels at the entryway; you see barrels that recede into infinity." Mr. Lynch, for his part, is stuck among the cave-less because of the recent battering of his technology holdings, which include Covad, now in bankruptcy proceedings, and Exodus Communications Corp. Mr. McMinn, who retired from Covad in 1999 to vineyard life in Napa, sold a fortune in Covad shares before the dot-com bubble burst. His friend Mr. Lynch, a board member, says Mr. McMinn's take was "way over $100 million," but Mr. McMinn won't discuss it. He says his cave is being financed by the proceeds of several Silicon Valley investments over the years. He was brought back as Covad's chairman last November, nine months before Covad's Chapter 11 filing. Now, as Mr. McMinn's crews dig, Mr. Lynch watches from the sidelines. "I have cave envy," Mr. Lynch confesses.

Fifty feet underground, Amalia Palmaz presides over one of the most ambitious digs in Napa Valley. Soaring overhead is a 50-foot-high, 75-foot-wide dirt dome reminiscent of the interior of an ancient mosque -- a feat so novel that an article describing its engineering was recently published in a scientific journal called Rock Mechanics in the National Interest. Over the growl of rock-cutting machines, Ms. Palmaz, an elegant Texan whose surgeon husband, Julio Palmaz, co-invented the cardiovascular stent, points out the future sites of a wine-tasting room, which will be lighted by windows punched through the hillside. She envisions a bottling line, water-treatment plant and an elevator that will one day carry equipment to a wine-storage chamber 11 stories below. When complete, Napa's new Palmaz Winery -- all 50,000 square feet of it -- will be completely underground. "A geological achievement," she says. North on Napa's Silverado Trail, 63-year-old Gianni Paoletti, of the Paoletti Winery in Calistoga, is finishing up his terra-cotta-colored grotto, wired for sound and lined with 22 marble statues from Italy. Commissioned by Mr. Paoletti, a Los Angeles restaurateur (Peppone in Brentwood), the statues are of such figures as Leonardo DaVinci, Ronald Reagan and Mr. Paoletti's best friend, Jerry Weiner, a Dallas insurance executive. Mr. Paoletti also has plans to install a 12-foot wall of illuminated stained glass showing a medieval Italian scene of a king's court, no king in particular. "I love beautiful things," Mr. Paoletti says. Mr. Paoletti's 7,200-square-foot cave moved a poet-friend to verse:

Beautiful being magnificent majestic music Inspiring inside my heart ride through the Moist misty wetness.

Digging an even bigger hole is Darryl Sattui, the son of a taxi driver. He made his millions from St. Helena's V. Sattui Winery, which he started. Mr. Sattui's men are clawing horizontally into his hillside and going 25 feet down into the soft earth. For the past six years, Mr. Sattui says, he has plowed about $6 million of his savings into building an 89,000-square-foot castle with three floors of wine cellars, more than 60 rooms and -- for authenticity's sake -- a 1,000-square-foot medieval torture chamber to show off *(continued on page 8)*

his maces, manacles and racks. He has brought in 70 huge containers of handmade European bricks -- 350,000 of them -- to build his 14th-century castle, drawbridge, parapets and loggia. He hopes his new winery, which is to be called Villa Amarosa, will be finished in six more years. "It's probably stupid," he admits, "but I don't care, as long as I don't go bankrupt."

The recession has cooled real-estate prices but has yet to dent demand for new caves here, keeping busy a small army of diggers, geologists and engineers who otherwise would be working on subways and utility projects. Napa's cognoscenti still wait months for cave-building legend Alf Burtleson, veteran caver Glen Ragsdale, or up-and-comer Don Magorian to squeeze them in. Others settle for one of six new wine-caving firms that have entered the business. "Anything that has a waiting list has to be profitable," says Theodore Richardson of Anderthal Cave, of Healdsberg, Calif., which diversified into wine caves from sewage-treatment work two years ago. Not just anyone can design a wine cave, oenophiles say. Creating that romantic, aged look takes experience and the right eye. Just look at the warmly lighted walls of Far Niente in Oakville, an early wine-cave builder that has just completed a 10,000-square-foot expansion. Director of Winemaking Dirk Hampson says the winery dug individually recessed lights and buried more than 60 service pipes in the floor to protect the integrity of the cave's horseshoe shape. Or consider the new bathroom walls inside the cave of Oakville's Vinecliff Winery, which exude a special, Venetian glow from the painstaking, 28-layer application of Italian plaster. One of the most coveted caves among Napa-ites in the know is the one lying under Araujo Winery. Thanks to a fluke of local geology, Araujo's cave doesn't require any additional concrete support, allowing the natural rock look to shine through.

Most cave dwellers abandoned their caves eons ago. The damp chill that young wines love so much isn't nearly as catalyzing for human beings, especially ones clad in strapless dresses and open-toed pumps. So radiant-heated floors are a must in caverns where entertaining goes on. Caves are conducive to claustrophobia. John Lail, the designer whose firm drew up the plans for Mr. McMinn, Ms. Palmaz and Mr. Sattui, also advises wineries to locate entertainment areas near cave entrances, because "some people get paranoid and need to get out," he says.

Staglin Winery, in Rutherford, to make its cave less cave-like, is installing all-glass doors at the main entrance to its nearly finished cave to open bright views onto the Napa Valley below. The Staglin family, which owns the winery, has also invested heavily in lighting systems lining three sides of the cave to eliminate the dark, creepy look only a bat would love. "We used to be cave men, but we got out of caves," says Shari Staglin, who admits to finding most caves a bit too dark. "There's got to be a reason for that."

Ya Never Know

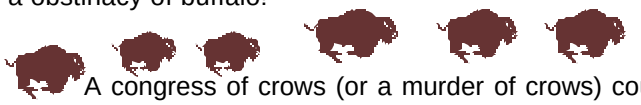
By Lil Town

If and when you take a caving trip, whether cave crawling or on an overland exploration, ya just never know what you might run into.

You might be near a river and see a sedge of cranes. Sometimes a sord of mallards will fly overhead. Unfortunately, we rarely see a shoal of bass in our rivers. There are also colonies of beavers along the creeks in northwest Oklahoma.

Traveling through brush you could come across a dule of doves. A dole of doves could fly away, or is it a cot of doves or a piteousness of doves? Anyway, they can startle you some. You really hope you don't meet up with a band of coyete, but you could see a mob of deer! Unfortunately, we often stir up swarms of insects! I keep thinking one day we could meet up with a sounder of boar. We might even see a husk of jackrabbits.

If we were caving in western Oklahoma a hundred years ago, we would certainly have seen a obstinacy of buffalo!



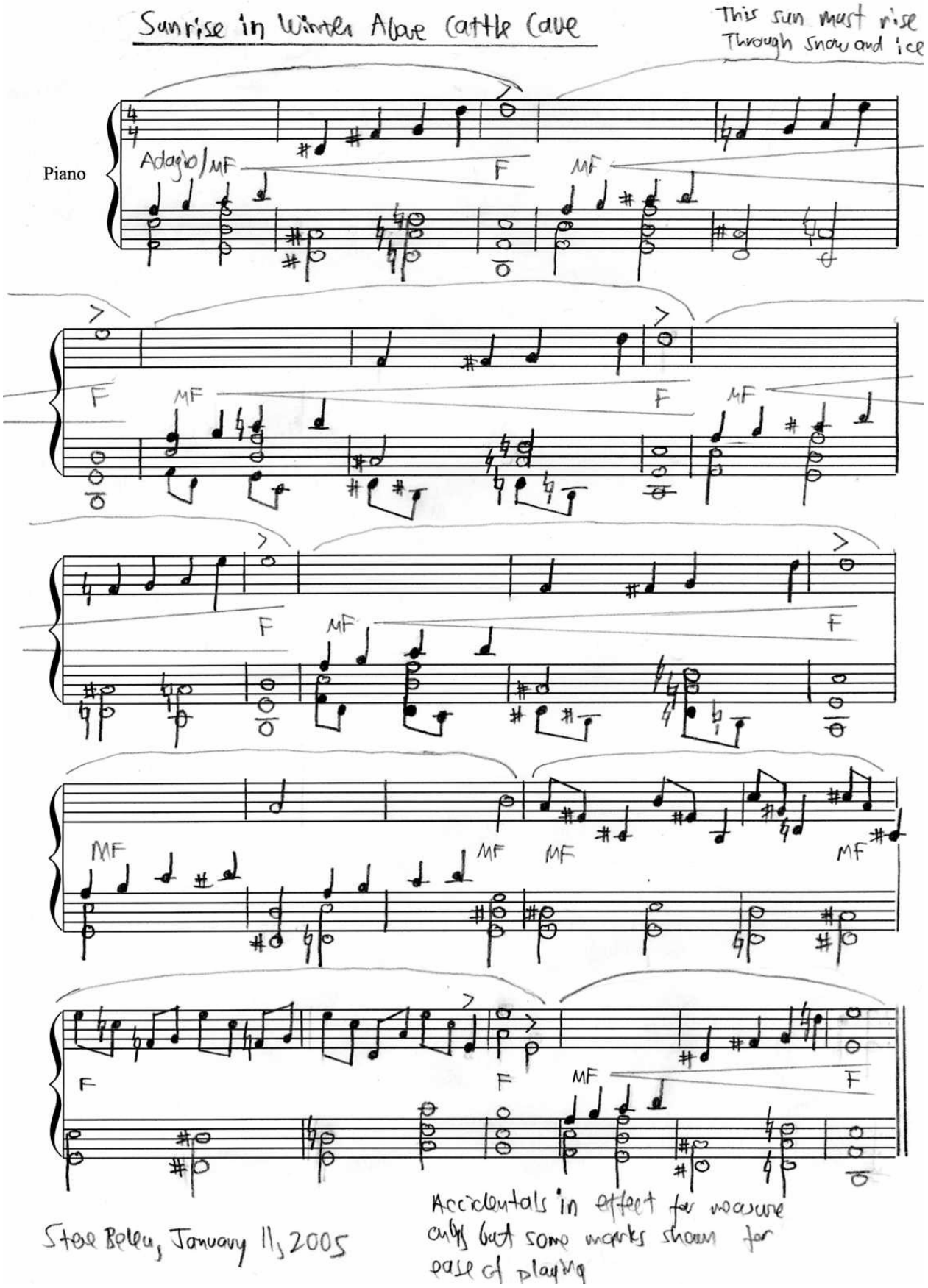
A congress of crows (or a murder of crows) could be watching you from the trees. A gaggle of geese, (or is that a skein of geese?) could fly overhead either going out for dinner, or coming back from dinner. Sometimes a brace of mallards fly by too. You might even be lucky and see a concentration of kingfishers or possibly a cast of hawks.

While tromping through the bushes hunting for a survey marker you could scare out a bouquet of pheasants, or is that a covy of pheasants? Possibly it's a nye of pheasants, or a nide of pheasants? It could be a nest of pheasants. No matter they can take your breath away! A bevy of quail has also been known to part through the grasslands of western Oklahoma. Once I spotted a rafter of turkeys. Someone else said it wasn't a rafter, but it was a muster. Anyway, they made a lot of noise!

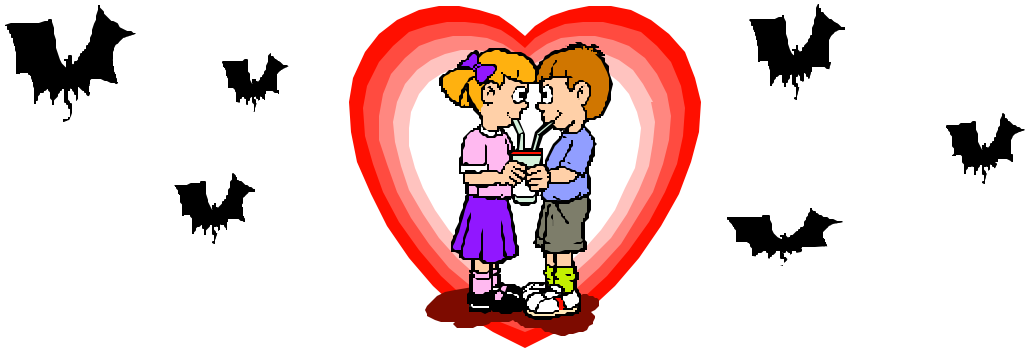
Now, when you get into a sink, you need to keep an eye out for a rhubma of rattlesnakes and/or a cloud of gnats. So far I've not see a pladge of wasps.

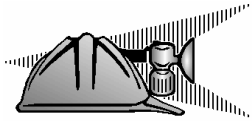
I just hope while in the cave I don't meet up with a sete of badgers, or a prickle of porcupines! A knot of rattlesnakes wouldn't be any fun either. A committee of vultures could be avoided though. We do always hope to find colonies of bats.

Anyway, keep your eyes open while g[illegible] from a cave. Ya never know what you could see, and some of them you might not want to run into!

Music written by Steve Beleu

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!*

Don't forget to come to the February meeting at John Van Dyke's place, Friday, February 11.





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