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 will be held at 7:30, Friday, March 11, 2004. at the home of Dale and Lil Town.

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 March meeting will be at Dale and Lil's house.

MINUTES

CENTRAL OKLAHOMA GROTTO

Minutes of the February 11, 2005 meeting

Host: John Van Dyke
Members present: Dale Amlee, Anne Ault, Sue and John Bozeman, Roy Diehl, Duane Del Vecchio, G'Ann Ellis, Lil and Dale Town, John Talbot, Jon Woltz.
Guest: Roger Kubilis.

Chairman Diehl began the meeting in the vicinity of 8:00.

OLD BUSINESS

March 26, 2005 is the confirmed date for the Jester Cave trip for the Green River Grotto and Maverick Grotto. Permission was gotten for camping at Jester. How many and who will be coming to Oklahoma is still pending. All C.O.G. members were encouraged to be available for this event since we will be the hosts.

Bat Count 2005 scheduled for February 12. A mandate was issued stating that "Bat Count will happen on February 12. Come rain, sleet or snow, we will go!"

Duane reported that Alabaster re-opened at the end of January. He told us about the new lighting system and the new handrails. He said a marvelous job has been done with this refurbishing of the cave. Duane also had pictures of the incredible snowfall at Alabaster. Unfortunately, not all of us got to see the pictures.

Duane reported that he had contacted Tom Bemis to confirm our Carlsbad Caverns trip for the first weekend in June (June, 3,4,5) but had not yet heard from Tom.

NEW BUSINESS

Chairman Diehl discussed with members the various cave trip offers from Boston Mountain Grotto for our annual Fun Trip. Boston Mountain Grotto is based in Northwest Arkansas. Our Fun Trips are scheduled in August, so Mike Cross of B.M.G. explained that August was a good time to visit because it was so hot and muggy, most tourists had left the area. He also warned about it being peak tick season (it's always peak tick season, there). Mike said that to get to some of the caves, it would require about a mile of backcountry trail breaking.

After discussion of these offers, some of which failed to elicit pictures of a "fun time", Chairman Diehl declared that most of us were whiny crybabies, wimps, wusses and scaredy-cats. Some made a few manly-man responses, but the rest of us, at that time, were unable to counter the charges.

The discussion will continue at the next meeting.

TREASURER'S REPORT

John Talbot read the report and it is included in this newsletter.

TRIP REPORT

Chairman Diehl was not at the January meeting as he accompanied his Father on a trip to Big Bend, Texas. As a reward for being a good son, Roy's Dad let him go to Sonora Caverns. Roy gave us his impressions of the Caverns.
Meeting adjourned at 8:48 by Chairman Diehl

SHOW AND TELL

Roy brought some of his impressive rock, mineral and fossil collection for us to enjoy.

Minutes submitted by A. Ault, filling in for S. Beleu who had other plans for the evening. Any and all corrections, additions, complaints, etc. may be addressed to Steve Beleu, the elected minutes man.

TREASURER'S REPORTS

INCOME		EXPENSES	
DIVIDEND	$ .10	POSTAGE	$ 12.58
DUES	$ 54.00		
NEWSLETTER SALES	$ 18.00		
TOTALS	**$ 72.10**		**$ 12.58**
CASH ON HAND	$ 49.16		
CHECKING	$ 494.29		
SAVINGS	$ 2,591.22		

PREPARED BY TREASURER
JOHN TALBOT

TOTAL FUNDS AS OF 1/12/04 $ 3,134.67

TRIP REPORTS

Trip Report: NW Bat Count
Date: February 12, 2004
Personnel: John and Sue Bozeman, Duane Del Vecchio, Dale Amlee, G'Anne Ellis, and Lil Town

We had a team of 6 scoot up to The Selman System for Bat Count: Duane Del Vecchio, Lil Town and G'Ann Ellis comprised one team; John and Sue Bozeman and Dale Amlee formed the other.

The outside temperature was 45 degrees -- as was the cave internal temperature for the most part. Sky was cloudy and looked like it could turn nasty, but it didn't. We had a darned nice day for February 12th, 2005.

Duane had suggested that his group begin by going IN at Square Sink and then up to Betty's Chair, retracing their steps to White Mountain and then out Ooh-Aah. The only problem was that they had a bit of hike and lots of fun finding Square Sink! It had always been the way they'd come out, not gone in. Regardless, they got things done and took about 15 minutes less time than the others.

We 'others' went in at Don't Know, carefully avoiding the huge boulder that has been creeping down and away from the cliff above these past 2 years.

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It's still 'coming down', but hasn't decided to fall yet. As much as some of us might think it wiser to just help it down, we always wonder just how much else would collapse in the process ... and gently scoot on by. We'll leave nature do its work in its own good time.

As is our custom, the Bozemen/Amlee crew headed for the Spring Bat Room end first. Unusual was the absence of large mats this year. Water temperature just inside Don't Know in the running spring was 44 degrees F and the rock was 40. We got clusters of 30 and 50 quite frequently -- but for the most part we had 1 to 3 square foot mats (7 was our largest) and one heck of a lot of ones and twos. The

We got clusters of 30 and 50 quite frequently -- but for the most part we had 1 to 3 square foot mats (7 was our largest)

Myotis velifer were really spread out throughout the whole cave this year. It is probably reflective of the weird cold and warmup pattern we had experienced this winter. It never got cold and stayed cold for very long.

After finishing up just past the Spring Bat Room, we retraced our steps and headed up and over the breakdown under Skunkeater, slithered through the Sexit and counted toward the Resurgence. We had another area of frozen dead bats hanging on the wall where water drips over hibernating bats and they just never wake up. Its been that way almost every year and in that very same place. Sad to see -- 12 bats this time, which is at least fewer than last year. We also saw a good bit of what

(Continued on Page 4)

Looked like coyote scat in the vicinity of Skunkeater and a well-worn trail of raccoon tracks throughout the cave along the stream.

The area under Cedar Shaft was littered with freshly broken juniper branches and a flashlight with batteries that still worked! It looks like somebody tried to tie off on the cedar tree at the top and was unsuccessful in negotiating the drop. We have NO idea who it might have been -- trespasser or legal UCO prof or student. Curious.

It took us from 12:30 to 4:15 p.m. to count our sections. The packing rate was 308 this year for M. velifer. We saw a bunch of pips, but no big eared bats this year. Betty had just had her birthday and we helped her belatedly celebrate by eating a ton of delicious cake and ice cream. Nice reward for our bat counting efforts! (Many thanks and Happy Years Ahead, Mrs. S.!)

The Duane, Lil, G'Ann Team: Continuation by Lil Town with excerpts taken from Grotto's website. See the website for more of Duane's pictures.

We followed our fearless leader and did finally find Square Sink.

Square Sink is turning more into an entrance than an exit. Even in the surveying days it was a pain getting out. Now, over time, most of the so called hand grips of gyp have fallen off, and it is turning into a square pit with smooth walls! At least going in you have gravity on your side!

Anyway, once in, we went past White Mountain to Betty's Chair and on to Skylight. Finally, we exited through the Oooh Ahhh Entrance. That is a good exit, you can walk out!

Bats just hanging around!

Picture shows bats climbing higher to drop and fly.

Areas that had a lot of water where almost dry. This was something we didn't expect. The areas that had large concentrations of bats last year, had few this year. The bat concentration was more in areas that usually had low counts before. Much different year.

This was G'Ann's first bat count, and she showed right away she could spot the different species when she pointed out a big brown and said that it didn't look like the others! From that point on, Duane and G'Ann counted and I took the notes!

Some of the mats were packed tight, and at one point one wiggled and made a section fall to the floor. We helped the one that fell up to a ledge and they flew off, glaring at us!

I grabbed Duane's camera and took some pictures of him so people would actually believe he did indeed go into caves!

Usually, I'm part of the SW team, and it was fun going north for a bat count.

"Hey dude, where are the bats?"

Report of the LABCC, 2005

Caves: Washita Bat Caves--North, Central, and South
Date: February 12, 2005
Personnel: Jon Woltz, Gary Harrington, Steve Beleu

On a day that threatened rain but withheld it until we had finished our assigned task, the Librarian and Archivist Bat Count Crew braved dark skies and chill winds to count bats in these Weatherford-area caves. We found far fewer bats than in past years, probably due to the fact that winter this season has afflicted us neither severely nor for long. Evidence of this: temperatures in all three caves were consistent not only with each other but also between the three sampling stations of rock, mud, and air temperatures: 43º to 45º. We saw nothing but Myotis velifers, and the only mats of them we encountered were a few in the Central cave, which is the deepest of the three and usually the coldest. Next year we may not even be able to get into the Central cave: its low entrance that has been blocked before by washed-in wood is now almost completely sealed, and the cave's other entrance has suffered from severe collapse and is very unstable.

WASHITA BAT CAVE NORTH – 369
WASHITA BAT CAVE CENTRAL – 1,113
WASHITA BAT CAVE SOUTH – 546
TOTAL – 2,028

This compares with last year's 2004 count of 7,863 Myotis, 112 Pips, and 1Big-eared bat. All caves, particularly the Central cave, showed signs of recent visitation, and were much warmer than usual. Report by Steve Beleu.

POTPOURRI

While looking for the grotto's webpage, I typed in 'Oklahoma caves' and saw a link to **Canyons and Caves**. (http://www.nps.gov/cave/pdfdocs/C&C30.pdf) Curious, I went to it and found an article written by Tom Bemis in the Carlsbad Caverns National Park Newsletter, **Canyons and Caves,** issue no. 30, Fall, 2003, page 8-9, about the grotto's clean-up trip in 2003. I've reprinted the article below in case you hadn't seen it yet. Be sure to go to the address above because there are a few of Duane's pictures that have also been printed. Dale Town is in one of the pictures, and I'm not sure who the others are. What's your guess?

Central Oklahoma Grotto Attacks Cave Muck

By Tom Bemis

Areas of Carlsbad Cavern's Big Room, blackened by splashing water from trail cleaning, are regaining their lost beauty, thanks to the efforts of the Central Oklahoma Grotto (GOG). Led by Duane Del Vecchio, nine members of COG volunteered 63 hours on June 7, 2003 performing restoration tasks in the Big Room.

Trails throughout Carlsbad Cavern were regularly washed with garden hoses for a number of years. From this washing, a black material which was tracked in from the surface and worn from the soles of shoes, had accumulated on trails and was splattered on walls as high as three to four feet above the trail from there trail washings. While cleaning these grime-splattered walls had just begun, COG members have made a good first effort.

The group of cavers traveled from Oklahoma to spend a day on their hands and knees cleaning various areas of the Big Room, including the grime covered walls. The slow process required using sponges, scrub brushes, toothbrushes, water, and a lot of work to clean the areas.

Other projects worked on by the group were removal of mud that had accumulated in a dry pond from the same trail washing project, and continuation of removal of mud remaining from an abandoned trail.

Mud is removed from a dry pond. (Photo courtesy of Central Oklahoma Grotto)

BAT COUNT 2001-2005 CENTRAL OKLAHOMA GROTTO

MYOTIS VELIFER (Cave Bat)

CAVE NAME	CAVE NUMBER	2/17 2001	2/16 2002	2/8&16 2003	2/5 2004	2/12 2005
Jester	GR-011	14186	12561	17844	25970	17839
Selman: C.O.G.	WD-041	32357	4484	12118	9207	64882
Selman: U.C.O.	WD-041	40339	71912	52565	68103	45296
Washita Bat: North	WA-039	73	62	173	83	369
Washita Bat: Center	WA-038	11026	602	2304	6322	1113
Washita Bat: South	WA-040	15	11448	7420	1460	546
Wired	GR-020	117	6	0	nc	nc
TOTALS		98113	101075	92424	111145	130045

CORYNORHINUS TOWNSENDII PALESCENS (Big-eared)

CAVE NAME	CAVE NUMBER	2/17 2001	2/16 2002	2/8&16 2003	2/5 2004	2/12 2005
Jester	GR-011	0	12	13	9	17
Selman: C.O.G.	WD-041	0	0	0	0	0
Selman: U.C.O.	WD-041	0	0	0	0	0
Washita Bat: North	WA-039	0	0	0	1	0
Washita Bat: Center	WA-038	0	0	0	0	0
Washita Bat: South	WA-040	0	0	0	0	0
Wired	GR-020	0	0	0	nc	nc
TOTALS		0	12	13	10	17

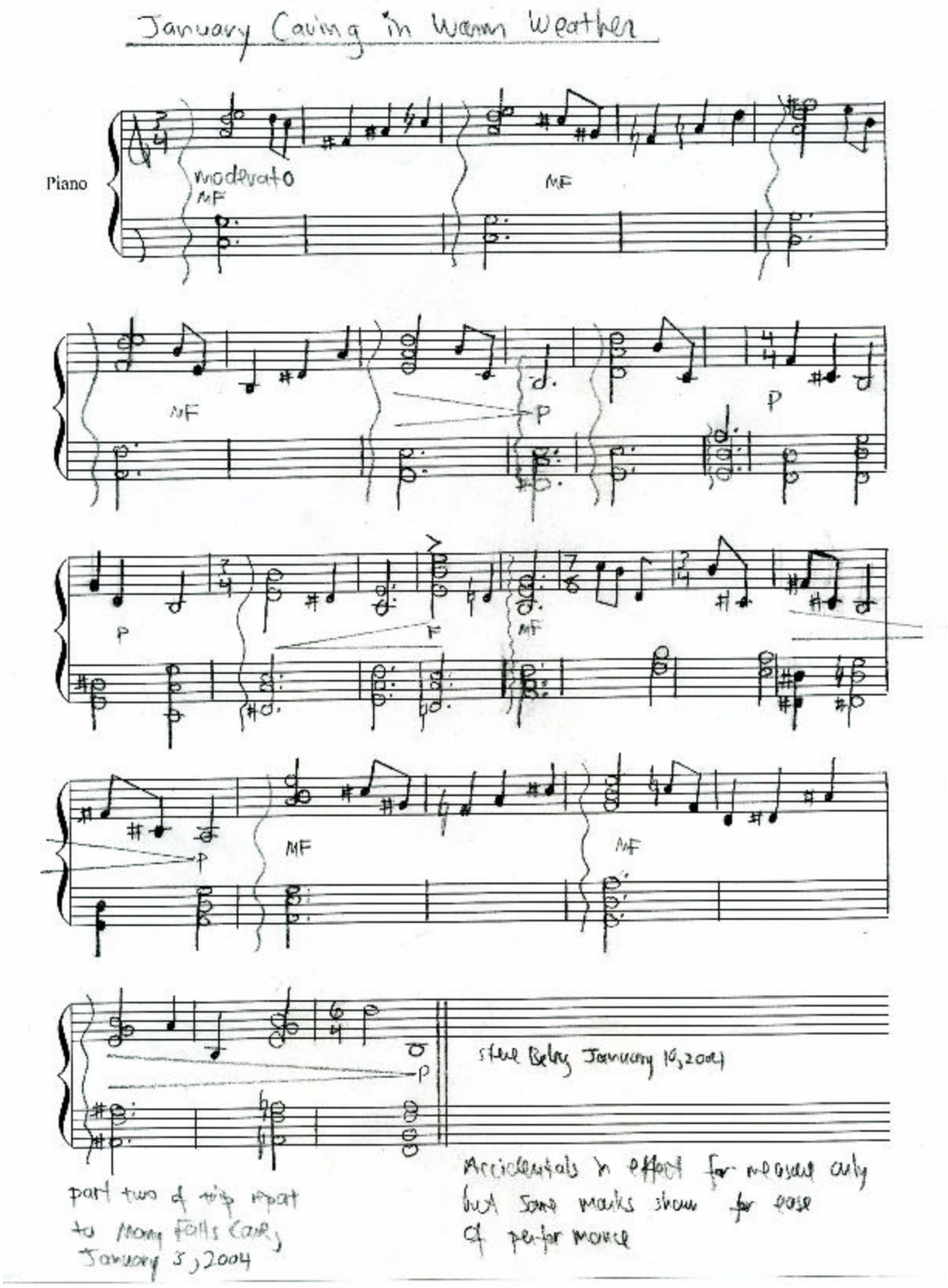
PIPISTRELLUS SUBFLAVUS (Pipistrel)

CAVE NAME	CAVE NUMBER	2/17 2001	2/16 2002	2/8&16 2003	2/5 2004	2/12 2005
Jester	GR-011	116	56	44	52	203
Selman: C.O.G. (area)	WD-041	48	44	22	47	35
Selman: U.C.O. (area)	WD-041	10	18	46	39	89
Washita Bat: North	WA-039	41	0	39	42	0
Washita Bat: Center	WA-038	3	0	0	4	0
Washita Bat: South	WA-040	32	0	0	66	0
Wired	GR-020	1	4	0	nc	nc
TOTALS		219	122	151	184	327

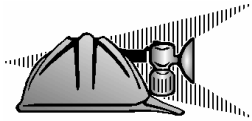
EPTESICUS FUSCUS (Big Brown)

CAVE NAME	CAVE NUMBER	2/17 2001	2/16 2002	2/8&16 2003	2/5 2004	2/12 2005
Jester	GR-011	0	0	0	0	0
Selman: C.O.G.	WD-041	0	0	0	1	1
Selman: U.C.O.	WD-041	3	0	0	1	0
Washita Bat: North	WA-039	0	0	0	0	0
Washita Bat: Center	WA-038	0	0	0	0	0
Washita Bat: South	WA-040	0	0	0	0	0
Wired	GR-020	0	0	0	nc	nc
TOTALS		3	0	0	2	1

January Caving in Warm Weather

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 March meeting at the Town House in Altus, Friday, March 11.



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