CENTRAL
OKLAHOMA
GROTTO
OF THE NATIONAL
SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY,INC

C.O.G.nizance

Inside this Issue

Announcements ……..……...…….....2
Minutes……...……..……...……...…2
Treasurer's Report ……..……...…...3
Trip Reports
Broken Horn, New Survey: Jan. 22, 2006
edited from Duane's report on the website…..… 3-4
Washita Bat Count: Feb. 13, 2006
by Steve Beleu ……..…….. 4
SW Bat Count: Feb. 12, 2006: written by Duane
DelVecchio, edited from the website by Lil ….4-5

Potpourri

NSS Convention Information ……..…… 5
Carlsbad 2006 Clean-up Trip ……..… 6
Stalagmite Fuels Climate Debate
copied from BBC News website ……...…….. 6-7
Results of Bat Study at Rocky Mountain Arsenal
copied from the U.S. Wildlife Service…..……. 7
Information about Orient Mine Bat Tour Guide ..…..7-8
Subterra 16, Gypsum Nodules 4, and **The Origin of Caves 4:** Poems written by Steve Beleu……...……...…8
Once Past : music by Steve Beleu ……...……..….9

This is the entrance to Broken Horn Cave. The cave is quite nice and open, as Duane put it, caver friendly, but as Duane found out, the entrance is a bit tight!

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 Amlee's house.

* I would like to thank everyone for all their thoughts and prayers for us while we went through my surgery and now the healing. Everyday is better than the day before. The Editor

MINUTES

From the Editor: Since there wasn't a newsletter published in February, a copy of the January and February minutes will be published in the March newsletter.

CENTRAL OKLAHOMA GROTTO
Minutes of the February 10, 2006 meeting

Host: the house and home of John Van Dyke and family

Members present: Dale Amlee, Sue and John Bozeman, Duane Del Vecchio, Roy Diehl II, Gary Harrington, Mark Miller, John Talbot, Jon Woltz, and Steve Beleu

Chairman Diehl began the meeting at 8:01

Sue updated us about the condition of Lil Town, who is recovering from a brain tumor operation. We all wished her well.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Duane, Lead Officer for our annual pilgrimage to Carlsbad Caverns, told us that if one of our work crews there intends to construct a protective screen for "National Geographic Pit" we need to send park staff our plans and specifications for the screen soon. The purpose of this project is to replace the corroded screen currently in place over the pit to keep small change and objects from going into the pit—tourists love to make a wish and then throw in minutiae from their pockets. We discussed some of the specs for the screen: do we need to replace the mesh of the screen or the mesh and its frame also?; both mesh and screen need to be non-degradable, therefore they can't be made from nylon or wire; we will have to have at least two layers of mesh to catch both small and larger objects; we agreed that the main problem will be the mesh, not its PVC frame. This year we may have to survey and measure the size of the frame and mesh that we need to install, and actually install it next year.
2. I asked if anyone wanted to stay an extra day and cave on Sunday in one of the wild caves that NPS lists in their "Backcountry Caves" brochure. There has to be a minimum of three of us who apply to go into one of these caves to get park permission. Here is the web address of their two-page brochure—
   http://www.nps.gov/cave/pdfdocs/permitcaves.pdf
3. We talked about the start of the survey of Broken Horn Cave on January 21. In addition to Broken Horn Cave, we currently have 5 hanging surveys.
4. We signed new legal releases to enter Selman Bat Cave as required by the OK Dept. of Wildlife Conservation.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Bat count this is year is either Saturday or Sunday, February 11 or 12.
2. Sue noted that the Boy Scouts of Holdenville continue to ask for a cave tour of caves in the Arbuckle Mountains, land under which COG has no permission to cave. We came to no resolution of this problem except to continue to recommend that they journey forth to Alabaster Caverns State Park and to refer them to TROG.

TRIP REPORT

We discussed the start of the Broken Horn Cave survey.

TREASURER'S REPORT

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

Chairman Diehl concluded the meeting at 9:00
Minutes by The Skillful Ogre, such as it is.

CENTRAL OKLAHOMA GROTTO
Minutes of the meeting of January 13, 2006

Host: John Talbot, *Other members present:* Anne Ault, Sue and John Bozeman, Duane Del Vecchio, John Van Dyke, Jon Woltz, and S. Beleu.
Vice-Chairman Jon Woltz began the meeting at 8:12

OLD BUSINESS

•Sue reported that the survey of Cattle Cave is finished. Now we await these articles and other work prior to publishing the next issue of the *Oklahoma Underground* this spring—

- From Lil Town—the map of Cattle Cave
- From John Bozeman—an article about gypsum and minerals and rocks associated with gypsum
- From Dale Amlee—an article about the possible creation of a whistle that will prevent bats from flying into the turbines of wind turbine farms and getting sliced and diced
- From Roy Diehl—an article on the geology of Cattle Cave
- From John Talbot—a crossword puzzle on Cattle Cave

- Our continuing survey of Greenes' Cathedral cave will be postponed until this summer. At this point of its survey only low passages crawling through water and over mud remain for us to negotiate, and we want the warmer weather to exit the cave into that we will have soon.

NEW BUSINESS

- We'll begin the survey of massive Broken Horn Cave next Sunday.
- Annual bat count this year will occur on either February 11 or 12, depending on the decisions of each bat count crew.
- We will return to Carlsbad Caverns on the first weekend of June. Interested? Contact Lead Officer Duane Del Vecchio for more information and to sign up--only eight of us can enter Carlsbad Caverns.

TREASURER'S REPORT

John Talbot read his report.
Jon concluded the meeting at 9:33.

Grotto Meeting Schedule for 2006

Here is the list of the lucky people who offered their homes for the 2006 Grotto meetings.

Feb-06	John Van Dyke	Aug-06	xx
Mar-06	Dale Amlee	Sep-06	Jon Woltz
Apr-06	Lil and Dale Town	Oct-06	Art Wallace
May-06	Anne Ault	Nov-06	Roy Diehl
Jun-06	Duane Del Vecchio	Dec-06	Sue & John Bozeman
Jul-06	xx		

Remember, there is not a scheduled meeting in the months of July and August, but often there will be a fun trip scheduled for those who are interested in going.

TREASURER'S REPORTS

February, 2006

INCOME

DIVIDEND	$	.12
DUES	$	12.00
TOTALS	**$**	**12.12**
CASH ON HAND	$	66.16
CHECKING	$	587.28
SAVINGS	$	2,614.47

PREPARED BY TREASURER
JOHN TALBOT

TOTAL FUNDS AS OF 2/06/06 $ 3,267.91

TRIP REPORTS

Trip Report: Broken Horn Cave, New Survey
Participants: Anne Ault, John & Sue Bozeman, Duane Del Vecchio, Roy Diehl, Dale & Lil Town, Jon Woltz
Written by Duane Del Vecchio

How does one map a cave?? You have to have at least 3 people. One for reading a compass and an elevation device (to tell if the passage is going up or down!), one for pulling the measuring tape and setting the survey points, and a recorder who writes down all of the distances called out by the other members of team as well as drawing a "rough draft" of the passage they are in. Then the team enters the cave and begins their job. Look at http://okcavers.netfirms.com/trip%20reports/brkhorn/jan06/brkhorn2.htm to see Duane's pictorial of a cave survey trip.

There was a special Sunday Trip!! Special because they are usually on Saturday and Duane isn't able to go. Sunday Jan. 22nd, a group of COG'er's meet at Mrs. Selman's Ranch House for a new cave mapping experience! After all got together, we drove out to the new cave site and got ready for a day of mapping a new cave!

The Crew is divided into 2 parts.. one for the upstream passage of the cave and the other for the downstream. Then everyone went down to the cave entrance. I was told, no problem, no belly crawls, but they left off the "EXCEPT FOR THE ENTRANCE" part!!! Once inside the cave immediately turned into cave popcorn and very unique rock patterns in the alabaster gypsum. We came into the cave and immediately felt a high humidity-while it was 50 outside!

Surveying the passage means the one on point tells the Azimuth and Heading (up or down and which direction) for the recorder. Then the other person on the other end confirms it by read-

(Continued on page 4)

ing his/her instruments. Another person runs the tape (a giant 100 ft. measure tape) from point to point where the surveyors take the readings. Another person on the survey team runs "the book". That person records each survey point, the measurements of right of the survey, left, up, and down as well as sketches the area. Some markers for the other group to tie their survey into an existing survey point so that when the final map is made, then all points match the actual drawing.

Though we haven't had precipitation for the past 4 months, we still had mud and a water passage. The other group had running water which meant they probably had a underground stream. D left his group for a while and went to see how the other group was doing (Ann, Dale, Lil, and Roy). They were surveying a side passage. One of the problems the recorder has during a mapping trip is keeping the notes 'clean', free of mud and other cave obstacles! The point for a survey marker can be a rock, major landmark, or a temporary landmark (such as the mud gollum trapped in the stonehedge!). Some markers are temporary and others are terminate.

Finally we finish for the day and it's time to exit the cave. The cave was very nice to us today giving us lots of room to maneuver, that is until the entrance/exit where it a nice tight belly crawl You always find out what the biggest part of your body is when you go thorough a tight squeeze! When the last one is out it's time to change into fairly clean clothes (so you don't' dirty your car!) and then off to the nearest town for some pizza and refreshments!

Trip Report: Washita Bat Caves, Bat Count,
Date: February 13, 2006 3:43 PM
COG Personnel:
Report by Steve Beleu

Here is the data--

North 196 Myotis, 1pip, 1 Leopard frog
Central 2,798 Myotis
South 416 Myotis
Total: 3,410 myotis, 1pip

Here is the trivia--

For all 3 caves--mud and water as never before North cave--much evidence of recent breakdown at entrances of cave and within cave Central cave--about a dozen or so bats roused themselves and started flying about South cave--evidence that someone had lit a flare deep within the cave.

Here is the comic relief--

Before entering Central cave I relit my carbide lamp only to see its base burst into flame along it's bottom seal. I moved with great rapidity to blow out the flame, looked at the lamp, didn't see anything wrong, and relit it. It lasted all the way through Central Cave, then pooped out.

Later when we were packing out I saw that about 1/2 of the base of the lamp had detached itself from the sides of the lamp where its seal should have been--that was where the flame was flaring from.

So I got out another of the loaded carbide bases I always carry (I usually carry 3 spare, loaded bases), fired up my carbide lamp again, and this is the sequence of events just as they happened in the rapidity with which they happened-- I turned around to enter the cave my head went under water.

As I turned around on the mudbank where I was changing lamp bases, the mudbank on which I was standing collapsed under my feet and sent me head first into the pooled water at the entrance to South Cave. I was 100% wet in all possible places. After a spree of cursing that would embarrass Satan and make him repent, I joined the others and we finished South Cave. I kept moving to try to stay warm, and after we finished South Cave I busted my ass up back to the cars and changed as quickly as I could right on the road. Today, all is well.

Trip Report: SW Oklahoma Bat Count 2006
COG Participants: Duane Del Vecchio, John Talbot,
John VanDyke, Mark White
Date: Sunday - Feb. 12, 2006
Report by: Duane Del Vecchio

On the average, this is the coldest weekend of the winter, perfect for the Oklahoma Bat Count. Teams are organized and counting takes place in the NW, Central, and SW of the state during this weekend. Bats at this time are 'usually' at their deepest hibernation and won't be disturbed by our presence in the caves. These counts are made across the state and reported to various state agencies and universities that use the data to see how our winged friends are doing.

So it's time for another Bat Count! Brave volunteers take on the only cold weather this winter so far! But this has been one very warm winter (Jan. was the warmest on record!) and everything is dry dry dry! So we did not drive to the entrances, we walked. That way our catalectic converters wouldn't burn down half the state (we are in extreme fire danger) (with 20-30 mph North winds today!)

(Continued on page 5)

We had a new bat counter with us this time. Mark was learning the ropes and getting his first exposure of one of our SW Oklahoma caves, Jester Cave System.

We didn't know what to expect, a severe drought and a very warm winter so far, yet it was 28 today with a very cold north wind. The pond at the resurgence was at a very low point and covered in a small layer of ice. The main passage had little or no water present where there used to be a running stream.

John was our recorder. The counters call out the numbers as they see them and it is the recorder's job to hear and get it all down. You have to look everywhere! These little guys love little cracks where they weggie themselves up into for the winter! Jester is a great place for a bat count... at least for us! Very little low spots.... LOTS of standing and walking spots!

As we went further into the cave...it got quite warmer. It was 45 degrees near the entrance and 58 in the back tunnels were we were meeting the pips.

Our Total count was: 15,572 Myotis, 100 Pips, and 2 Long Ear.

We left the southern entrance and went to another section called train tunnel and typically we have long ear bats here, something kinda rare and worth the extra trip. This time was a bust! We saw 5 myotis,1 pip and that's it!!

We then headed to Glade Entrance (the Northern Entrance). Here we usually find at least some long ears in the Homestead entrance area. We didn't find any bats at all in the area, but there was High temperatures here though, 62 degrees. But inside Glade is where the place to be for hibernating goes on! Giant mats of myotis are on the walls. We look in all kinds of nooks and crannies for our sleeping friends. We do have to say this was the driest we've ever had a bat count! Typically we're wet up to our knees! Today, our shoes barely had get wet! But we finally finished and it's time to exit the cave and go home.

POTPOURRI

Come to the NSS 2006 Convention!

Bellingham, Washington: August 7 – 11, 2006

Bellingham is located about halfway between the two great Northwest cities of Seattle, Washington and Vancouver, British Columbia on Bellingham Bay. The weather in Bellingham is superb in August, with typical temperatures in the upper 70s during the day, and clear, cool nights.

Western Washington University is uniquely located above the city of Bellingham and has some of the best facilities (and views) for the NSS Convention you will ever find. From the time you arrive and sign in, you will find the Northwest atmosphere surrounding you with beautiful alpine vistas on all four points of the compass and lush vegetation only the northwest can provide.

The Bellingham area will provide you with many non-caving attractions. There are many museums in the area you might like to visit; Bellingham Railway Museum, The Radio Museum, Whatcom Museum, and Lynden Pioneer Museum all might be of interest. The Mt. Baker scenic Highway to the Mt. Baker ski area provides stunning views that are always a treat. Water sports abound in Western Washington (we get enough of it in the winter after all) with sea kayaking on Bellingham Bay or in the San Juan Islands or one of many whale-watching cruises.

But what about the caves? Well, we thought you would never ask. Even though the area is not as rich in caves as the southern US we do have caves that you will enjoy. In the local area, we have a several small limestone caves, talus caves, and snow caves (and we will even help you find them, or give you tours). The longest limestone cave in Washington State is a daytrip from Bellingham, accessible by hiking in the foothills of the Cascades.

A bit over an hour drive from Bellingham, in lower British Columbia, is the Chilliwack caving area. The Chilliwack has high alpine karst caves as well as low valley caving. The area sports vertical as well as nice horizontal caving options, and the Chilliwack scenery is truly spectacular.

The largest concentration of limestone caves in Washington State is about three hours from Bellingham and east of Seattle. These caves require a beautiful, but challenging hike. At the top, you will find numerous caves including Washington's deepest cave, Newton, at nearly 700 feet deep.

Southern Washington state, five or more hours drive from Bellingham, hosts a huge concentration of lava tube caves in the Mt. St. Helens and Mt. Adams areas. If you want the big caves, then Vancouver Island is your destination. A 1-hour drive and 2-hour ferry trip to Vancouver Island will bring you to some spectacular international caving. The Chilliwack, Vancouver Island, Victoria, and Vancouver, British Columbia Canada all require crossing the border. You must have your passport or other valid identification on hand to cross the border.

At this years convention you have a range of accommodation options from camping to motels and fantastic dormitories with fine dining in the cafeteria or one of many restaurants a short distance from the campus. If you are traveling far and want to travel light, you might consider one of the dorm rooms near the registration area. If you want to reserve a dorm floor for your grotto or a group of friends then let us know.

For up to the minute convention information, check the convention web site at http://www.nss2006.org. For more Bellingham information, check the Bellingham Whatcom County Tourism web site at http://bellingham.org/.

Looking forward to seeing you in August! Michael McCormack and the NSS 2006 Convention Staff

POTPOURRI

Carlsbad 2006 Cleanup Trip

Plans are being made for the Annual Carlsbad Cleanup trip to be June 3, 2006. Park regulations only allow for 8 to actually to participate on the clean-up crew and space is running out. Contact Duane for more information and if there are any slots still available. The group will caravan leaving Friday morning June 2, working the 3rd, and returning home June 4th.

Not everyone who comes works, some go not to work, but just to enjoy the cave and the park and meet the workers afterwards for dinner. Years past there has also been a putt-putt tournament and excitement at the go-cart track! If you want to just join the group, let Duane know and he'll give you more details about the trip.

Another option that's available this year is a group is interested in staying an extra day to hike, or tour one of the wild caves that are in the area.

Jon and Gary have voted to tour a wild horizontal cave with those who choose to stay one more day at Carlsbad and cave on Sunday will have a permit to enter. They have chosen Corkscrew Cave. According to printed NPS information, Corkscrew Cave must be entered by chimneying into it and back out of it, so you must have some climbing experience in caves to do this because we don't plan to take any gear with us to set up a safety belay--you'll be climbing free-hand style.

A quote about this cave: "Portions of the cave are very delicate. A very large shield is present in the first chamber below the entrance passage". *We have room for one more caver, since the maximum number of cavers who can enter Corkscrew Cave is four.* If you want to be this fourth caver, have experience chimneying up and down in a cave, and are willing to stay one extra day at Carlsbad, let Steve know, first-come, first-serve.

Since the wild caves only allow a limited number of people on each trip, anyone one else who is interested can always apply for a permit to tour one of the other caves that are available in the area. Steve has information if you are interested.

It's always a weekend of fun, and our New Mexican friends have said they may meet us there for the weekend! More will be discussed at the March meeting.

Stalagmite fuels climate debate

By David Whitehouse Science editor
Copied from the BBC News website

A stalagmite from an Alpine cave may indicate that global warming is not as unusual as many think.

Deposits laid down in the stalagmite have enabled a European team to probe past climates confirming a Medieval Warm Period between AD 800 and 1300.

The warm spell is also indicated in some studies of tree-rings, ice-cores and coral reef growth records.

Writing in Earth and Planetary Science Letters the researchers suggest that global warming is a natural process.

Other scientists, however, say phenomena such as the Medieval Warm Period become less significant when broad sets of so-called "proxy data" are calibrated and synthesized to give a truly global picture - not just regional ones.

When this is done, they argue, the warming witnessed in the past few decades appears to be very unnatural.

Prolonged, stable record

The latest research was performed by Augusto Mangini and Peter Verdes, of the Heidelberg Academy of Sciences, Germany, and Christop Spötl, of the Institute for Geology and Palaeontology, at the University of Innsbruck, Austria.

SPA-12 is a 20cm long stalagmite recovered from Spannagel cave in the Central Alps, a remote part of an extensive high-altitude complex of caves extending for at least 10 km.

At an altitude of almost 2,500m the conditions inside the cave have remained relatively constant for possibly the past 5,000 years and certainly the past 2,000 years. Any changes there have been, the researchers believe, due to long-term changes in climate.

Several factors enabled the team to use SPA-12 to reconstruct the Alpine climate over the past two millennia.

For one, the relatively high radioactive uranium content of the mineral-rich liquid dripping from the roof to form the stalagmite makes it possible to date the time at which the various layers were laid down.

In addition, the stable environment in which SPA-12 has grown makes it relatively straightforward to relate its isotopic composition to the temperature at which various parts of the stalagmite formed.

'Little Ice Age'

SPA-12 also shows evidence of the so-called "Little Ice Age", a temperature dip between roughly 1400 and 1850 when there is complimentary evidence from tree-rings and glacier advances that at least Northern Europe chilled a little.

The long-term changes in temperature as revealed by SPA-12 are at odds with the temperature change profile adopted by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). *(Continued on page 7)*

The IPCC temperature curve only shows small variations during the last 1,800 years with an abrupt temperature increase after 1860 - the so-called "hockey stick" - which is generally ascribed to the increase of greenhouse gasses in the atmosphere.

But the researchers analyzing SPA-12 say that the stalagmite's temperature record is corroborated by ice-core records from Greenland and sediment deposits on the sea floor near Bermuda, both of which show evidence for a Medieval Warm Period.

The implications of SPA-12 will stoke up what is already an acrimonious debate between global warming skeptics and the scientific "consensus".

The latter say the hockey stick profile of recent temperature change is now evident from several studies using different raw data and methodologies.

The former argue the present climate is experiencing a natural rebound and that the IPCC should abandon the hockey stick and return to its 1990 position when the existence of the Little Ice Age and the Medieval Warm Period were recognized as more significant climate events.

RESULTS OF BAT STUDY AT ROCKY MOUNTAIN ARSENAL REFUGE DUE IN FEBRUARY
COPIED FROM THE U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
JANUARY - FEBRUARY 2006

Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge in Colorado will release in February findings from a two-year study of the refuge's bat population. The national wildlife refuge is a valuable bat foraging area, particularly for breeding big brown bats.

The refuge's bat study began in May 2003, examining species composition, relative abundance and contaminant levels. The study, which complements one conducted in 1997-1998, will indicate the effectiveness of remediation in reducing wildlife's exposure to contaminants, and contribute to more effective bat conservation and management. Many bat species in North America have been declining for the past several decades.

Because bats are vulnerable to contaminants, they are good indicators of environmental pollution. Levels of dieldrin, DDT, DDE, and mercury in big brown bats have been evaluated by the study. The big brown bat is the most abundant bat species at the refuge, where the silver-haired bat is also found.

For more information, contact Noelle Ronan, Wildlife Biologist, Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge, Noelle_Ronan@fws.gov; (303) 289-0908.

From the Editor: Occasionally someone talks about wearing wetsuits. When I received this e-mail I thought I would pass the information on to anyone that may be interested.

Hello, our family runs a whitewater rafting business called Crab Apple Whitewater, Inc. We have run trips in Maine, Massachusetts and Vermont since 1983. For the past few seasons we have sold used wetsuits to cavers and caving clubs. Our inventory includes 3mm and 5mm suits. We have been selling to caving clubs since November, so our stock is getting low in some sizes. Suits are priced according to wear, with $20 being the cheapest and $45 in "like new" condition. Manufacturers include Northwest River Supplies, Atlan, Henderson and Deep Sea. We can meet individual and group orders. To determine sizing, we need height, weight, shoe size and we are good at getting the sizes correct.

Please forward this message to members of your grotto or club and let us know if you have any interest. These suits are in good condition, reasonably priced and are perfect for individual use, especially in caves where they take a beating!

References can be provided from cavers that have bought our suits in the past.

Contact Frank and Jennifer Mooney, Crab Apple Whitewater, Inc. 413-625-2288 9am-4pm EST
www.crabapplewhitewater.com

Note from the editor: Since a February newsletter wasn't published, this information may be a little late for anyone who may be interested, but hey, there is always next year!

Stay a Month with us this Summer!

Steve found this on the web and wanted to share the information about the opportunity to be a bat tour host, and stay free in southern Colorado for a month.

Have you ever wished you could stay at Valley View Hot Springs for a month, or longer. Now is your chance! We need volunteers to live onsite and work this summer. We have three volunteer opportunities for summer 2006 – Discovery Host, Orient Mine Bat Tour Guide and Camp Host / Volunteer Coordinator.

Discovery Hosts will staff the Welcome Center (in conjunction with front desk staff) and be the orientation point person, greeting and informing visitors on the many unique aspects of Orient Land Trust, including layout and amenities of Valley View Hot Springs. Time and interest permitting, Discovery Hosts may also lead tours of OLT's hydroelectric facility or other features.

Orient Mine Bat Tour Guides will lead evening walking tours to the Orient Mine to watch the bat outflight, managing the integrity of the bat habitat and educating visitors on the history of the Orient Mine as well as the natural history of Mexican free-tailed bats. Time and interest permitting, Orient Mine Bat Tour Guides will also lead daytime tours of Orient Land Trust's hydroelectric facility.

Camp Hosts / **Volunteer Coordinators** will manage Orient Land Trust volunteers and serve as an OLT ambassador to visitors.

For more information, to review a job description or to print an application, visit www.olt.org/programs/volunteer/volunteering.htm or email programs@olt.org or call 719.256.5212.
The deadline for applications is February 28, 2006.

2006 Bat Count Data

February 11, 2006
Compiled by Sue Bozeman

Washita Bat Caves:

North Cave - 196 Myotis velifer, 1 Pipistrellus subvlavus
Central Cave - 2,798 Mv
South Cave - 416 Mv
Total: 3,410 Myotis velifer, 1 Pipistrellus subvlavus

Jester Cave

15572 Myotis velifer
100 Pipistrellus subflavus
2 Corynorhinus townsendii (big eared)

Selman System
72,695 Myotis velifer
62 Pipistrellus subflavus
1 Eptisicus fuscus (big brown)

Grand Totals:
91677 Myotis velifer
163 Pipistrellus subflavus
2 Corynorhinus townsendii
1 Eptisicus fuscus

Beer Cave

Steve said he saw a sign going into Shawnee on SH 177 that advertised a convenience store that was touting its special feature, "The Beer Cave". They maintain their beer is at 32 degrees. COG members concluded the beer wouldn't freeze because it was alcohol. Relax guys, I really don't think there are flowstones or stalagmites of beer, probably just cans or bottles.
The Editor

Subterra 16

By Steve Beleu

Variations on the beautiful and sublime
Unexpected as we crawl beneath
Fifty feet of gypsum rock where above us
The winds of winter gust and stab
Strong enough to blow over trees
That have stood wide and rooted deep
In the red soil a hundred years,
Roots piercing porous gypsum
Down into a cave ceiling radiantly
Lit by our lamps to reveal
Glistening cave coral and pendants,
Tides and currents of flowstone rippling
From beneath our feet to beside to above us,
One stone that surrounds us, a billowing wave.
The rimstone dams beneath our feet
Repeat and repeat like an ostinato.
Calcium rafts float, but some no longer,
In pools we carefully step in and out of
Continuing down passage, stretching
Survey tape from rock to rock,
Notebook secured in zipped coveralls,
Our minds attempting to soak up the memory
Of the meanders, squeezes, and crawls
That this cave spirals through as it falls
Down through gypsum against bedrock
Where water continues to create new cave,
Eating it in a feast of beautiful carnage
That began centuries ago and won't stop
Until the cave is gone, dissolved, collapsed,
A ravine marking the end of the process
That is its haunted grave: you will hear faint echoes
Of bat's wings and see carbide lamps' shadows.

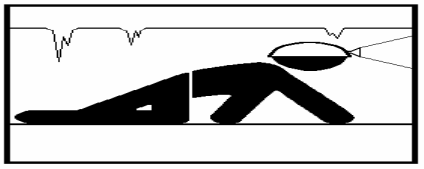
THE ORIGIN OF CAVES

By Steve Beleu

After land separated from ocean
To rise eons later as mountains
Much of Earth dried out in the sun's heat
And the mud that had covered the land,
That had once been ocean bottom,
Was banished to river-and stream-sides
And fields after hard rains. Such mud
Could dry out, broken and crackled,
Into plates whose edges curled up.

But in the mud that sank down
Into deep caves or shallow caves,
Caves vast or narrow or deep pits,
That mud never dried out but became
After long millennia a substance
Made equally of mud and water.

This mud that has caked onto us
Is mud that survives from those eons.



Once Past

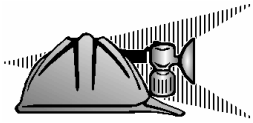
Written by Steve Beleu

Buffalo National River CS4: The entrance to the cave was through a rectangular concrete hole; once past the entrance the cave eventually opened from smooth, narrow passage into well-decorated larger passage.

Accidentals in effect for measure only but some marked across measures ease of performance

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 Dale Amlee's, Friday, March 11.



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