CENTRAL OKLAHOMA GROTTO
OF THE NATIONAL SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY,INC

C.O.G.nizance

December, 2006

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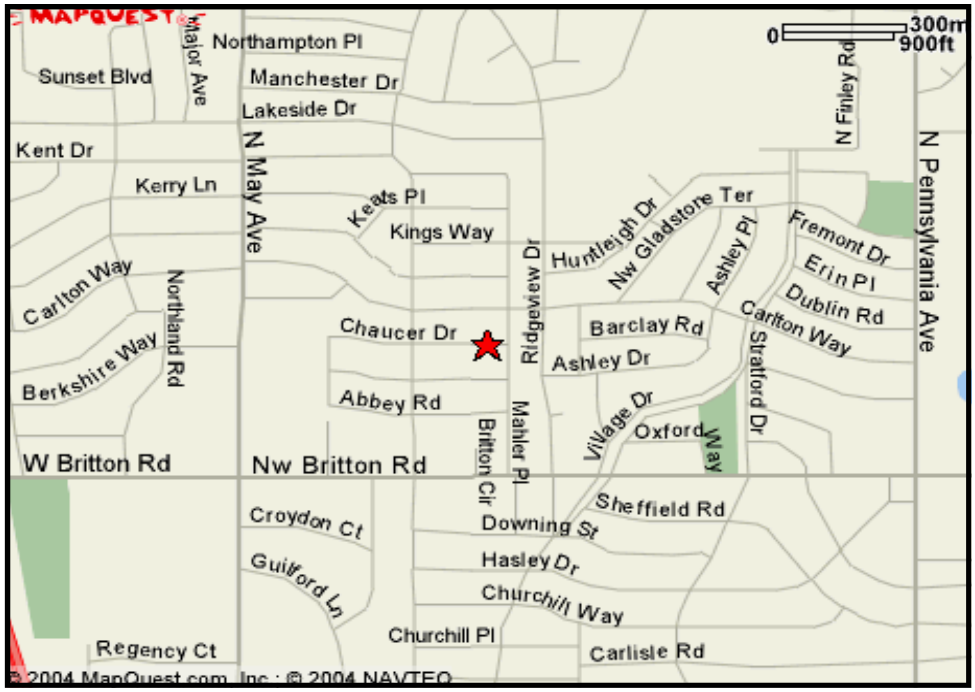
The December meeting of the Central Oklahoma Grotto will be held at the home of Sue and John Bozeman at 8:00 p.m. on Friday, December 8, 2005.

Address: 2624 Chaucer Drive

Telephone: 405-755-3587

Remember that the December meeting is at the Bozeman's and it's the annual grotto Christmas Party. Be sure to bring a goodie to share!



Directions to the Bozeman's: The Bozeman's house can be found by turning east from May Ave. onto NW Britton. Go down to Sunnymeade and turn left, then make a right on Chaucer. You will find them at 2624 Chaucer.

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 December meeting will be at the John and Sue's house, 2624 Chaucer Drive, The Village. Their phone number is 405-843-5292. Don't forget to bring goodies, it's a Christmas party!

MINUTES

CENTRAL OKLAHOMA GROTTO
Minutes of the November 10, 2006 meeting

Host: Roy and Nicole Diehl
Members present: Dale Amlee, Anne Ault, Sue and John Bozeman, Duane Del Vechhio, Mark Miller, John Talbot, Lil Town, John Van Dyke, Jon Woltz, and Steve Beleu
Cassandra Diehl began the meeting at 8:13

OLD BUSINESS

Dale has yet to make any progress concerning our proposed summer 2007 work at Carlsb Caverns, ahem.

Sue distributed copies of the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation's 2005 publication, **A Field Guide to Oklahoma's Amphibians and Reptiles,** by Greg and Lynnette Sievert, to current members in good standing. In 1999 COG had voted to contribute money to help pay for the printing and publication of this guide. Two weeks before our grotto meeting Sue had asked a contact at ODWC if COG could get the five copies that ODWC had originally promised us for our moolah. When I went to ODWC the week before our meeting they gave me 20 copies!

Treasurer Talbot reported that he had sent the $50 to the NSS that we voted to contribute at our October meeting to help them pay for Great X Cave in Wyoming.

Great X Caving Expedition Lead Officer Anne Ault reported that she had been attempted to reach someone about our possible caving there in the summer of 2007, but she hadn't been able to contact anyone. She will continue trying. The NSS website for Great X Cave—http://www.caves.org/greatx/

NEW BUSINESS

Sue passed around a recent issue of *National Geographic* that included an article about a cave in Papua, New Guinea.

Here are our grotto officers for 2007. May they rest in peace—
Chairman—Roy Diehl
Vice-Chairman—Jon Woltz
Treasurer—John Talbot
Secretary and Sergeant-at-Underarms—S Beleu

Here are the locations for out monthly meetings in 2007. May they have adequate homeowners insurance—

January—John Talbot
February—John Van Dyke
March—Dale Amlee
April—Lil and Dale Town
May—Mark Miller
June—Duane Del Vecchio
July, August—no meetings
September—Jon Woltz
October—Art Wallace
November—Roy Diehl
December— Sue & John Bozeman

TREASURER'S REPORT

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

TRIP REPORT

We talked about our failed-due-to-bad-weather previous month's surveying trip to Broken Horn Cave.

Cassandra Diehl ended the meeting at 8:59

TREASURER'S REPORTS

INCOME		**EXPENSES**	
Carbide sales	$ 3.00	Postage	$ 15.19
Newsletter Sales	$ 24.00	Donation	$ 50.00
Dividends	$ 0.11		
Publication Sales	$ 9.25		
TOTALS	**$ 27.13**		
CASH ON HAND	**$ 29.30**		
CHECKING	**$ 588.15**		
SAVINGS	**$ 2,634.07**		

PARED BY TREASURER
JOHN TALBOT

TOTAL FUNDS AS OF 11/14/06 $ 3,251.52

TRIP REPORTS

Trip Report: Broken Horn Cave
Participants: Dale Amlee, John & Sue Bozeman, Duane Del Vecchio, Roy Diehl, Lil Town, Jon Woltz
November 18, 2007
Report by Duane DelVecchio
Complete report with photos on line at
http://okcavers.netfirms.com/trip reports/brkhorn2/index.htm

Oklahoma - Where the wind comes sweeping down the plains.... Cavers from Oklahoma City, Altus, Lawton and even Weatherford converged to continue the mapping of Broken Horn Cave.

A week before Thanksgiving these turkeys are off

to pick up where the previous teams had left off. At the site we would split into two teams... one downstream... one upstream. The Target - That bowl...at the bottom is this little bitty hole people like us enjoy squeezing though! So Dale, Roy, and D head down. There was a lot of warm air blowing out of the hole!! Much warmer than the 55 degrees of the outside air. Hummm... do we have to go though there? Where's the stairs? the escalator? Elevator??? Oh boy....here we go... and it's a tighty!!

It was pretty muddy as the last trip they had a lot of rain and couldn't do the cave survey. Lots of stuff washed in.

There were LOTS of our little pinching friends (crayfish) in the pools while we hiked to the start point.

What the cave was named for... Broken Horn - A broken horn with part of the skull and vertebrae still attached. This was worth another look on the beginning of Oklahoma's Centennial Celebration.

Contrary to popular belief, See...I actually go in caves too ... it was quite warm and I was sweating my rear

off! Proof I enter caves on other trips besides bat count!

We finally got to the point where we were to pick up where Dale left off last time. They left the flagging on top of a high rock (about 12 feet up) and it was covered in mud and gunk! Which means the cave floods to the ceiling in this area!!

Roy ran book while Dale took readings. Duane learned how to use a Brunton and hence...took a long time to do each point... sorry gang!

We only saw one pip in this part of the cave. It was just too hot! 62 degrees!!

After meeting back up with the other group, we had our traditional pizza and headed to our respective homes.

Trip Report: Broken Horn Cave
November 18, 2006
Survey Team: Lil Town, Jon Woltz, Sue Bozeman and John Bozeman
Report written by John Bozeman

The Oklahoma City contingent for this trip met at Port Bozeman for the scheduled 7 AM departure. The passenger manifest: Roy Dehl, Dale Amlee, Sue Bozeman Bozeman. Two people, Steve Beleu and Anne Alt, who had previously booked passage were unable to join this enterprise due to Oklahoma's gift-to-mankind, allergy related sinus crud.

The Bozeman's had earlier successfully removed the Bozemobile from dry-dock and determined it to be sea-worthy, except for under inflated pontoons. After a quick stop at the 7-Eleven pontoon inflating facility, the aforementioned passengers embarked for that exotic port-of-call Woodward County. A mid-course change of pilots - for the safety of the passengers, due to the near-blindness of Pilot. J.Bozeman - was made at Watonga Station. (Oklahoma allergy related crud does not limit its expression to sinuses!)

With a competent pilot at the helm, our destination was successfully reached. The OKC contingent and the others (Lil Town, Duane Del Vecchio and Jon Woltz) met and girded themselves for their encounter with Broken Horn Cave. Two survey parties were formed with some banter (for which the COG is famous) and after an *ad hoc* survey instrument calibration. The other survey crew will dazzle us with their exploits, but it has fallen to me, JB, to detail the survey by LT, JW and SB.

Our crew headed to the North and picked up from the upstream insurgence for the cave. The archaic lamps of JB and SB required quite a bit of remediation, since they had not been properly attended to since their last usage to illuminate the dark recesses of the netherworld of gypsum caves.

(*continued on page 4)*

In fact, the carbide "lamp" of SB, had a tip so blocked that she was reduced to using one of those electric thingamajigs that have recently become so popular with cavers who are not blessed with 300 lbs. of carbide in their garages.

Lil assumed the tough job of "Book" while Sue and Jon handled "Tape" with Jon also handling "primary compass and clinometer" (Suunto) and John running "backsighting compass and clinometer" (Bunton). We, intelligently, by-passed the muddy\watery passage to the right which earlier reconnaissance had determined to be the middle tine of the Trident Room passages. Our chosen survey route was to the left, which passage is assumed to connect with the north tine of the Trident. This route kept us high, but not dry, as this entire portion of the cave exhibits evidence of recent flooding to-the-ceiling. The passage floor was tacky and plant debris depended from the ceiling in numerous spots. We passed a couple of not-humanly-negotiable passages which have obviously delivered vast amounts of water to this section of the cave.

The passage rarely reached stand-up height but was generally pretty commodious (pun intended) although Jon and I seemed to forever be in awkward positions shooting high–angle shots favoring one of the compasses but not the other. Really, just the typical survey of a gyp cave when there is breakdown involved. We managed to survey around 200 feet of passage before the agreed-upon-stopping-time of 4 PM. We made our way out of the cave and happened to emerge within minutes of the other crew.

Neither of the crews had surveyed really muddy passage segments, so we performed some minimal cleanup and headed to the Pizza Hut in Woodward. Jon had lodged a complaint over the fiasco of our last Pizza Hut stop in Fairview. He had received coupons for 2 free pizzas for his efforts and, generously, used them for us all. Everything was quite good and we were even lucky enough to have an excellent Fireworks Display visible from our table. Fun was had by all and then the various contingents took their leave. The good-ship Bozemobile managed the return-leg of the cruise and awaits it next assignment.

POTPOURRI

Historic Town Plagued By Millions of Bats

Written by Elliott minor
Copied from Times Recorn; Page 10A
Friday, Nov. 3, 1006

AMERICUS, GA. — The grand historic mansions of this Southern town have become infested with millions of bats — so many that the sky turns black with each sunset. So many that not even the neighborhood Batman can help."

This town is in bad shape," said George Perkins, a bat remover who often makes public appearances in the caped crusader's costume and drives his own Bat Mobile, a retro-styled Chrysler Prowler with bat emblems.

Homeowners are not laughing. The bat problem began about a decade ago and got steadily worse as (he number of animals grew: Perkins alone cannot do the job anymore, and now the state has promised to help, proposing a yearlong program to capture and move the flying mammals to "bat houses" where they will 'no' longer be a nuisance.

"They're perpetual crap machines," said Tripp Pomeroy, who spent $1,500 trying to evict bats from the attic of his 96-year-old home in Americus, a town of 17,000 people 116 miles south of Atlanta. Bats are the leading cause of human rabies in the United States and that makes Pomeroy reluctant to let his children sleep in their upstairs bedrooms.

Many of the bats have settled into the town's historic district, known for its antebellum and Greek Revival mansions built in the 1800's and Victorian homes from the early 1900's. Many of the homes have white columns, wide porches and other touches that look like something straight out of "Gone with the Wind."

The homes "are the like art," said Deanna Burgess, who recently moved into a house, built in 1856. "They need to be brought back and preserved for future generations."

Free-tailed bats, as the animals care called, normally dwell in caves in Texas and farther west but have been making their way into the Southeast, particularly over the past three decades. Experts say they art-drawn to American because it has an unusually large number of old houses, which are not as well sealed-up as new homes and have lots of crevices in their attics that allow bats to slip in.

The bats swarm out in the evening, helping to curb the insect population by eating mosquitoes and other pests. But as the sun comes up, they return to their dark attic lairs, where they urinate and leave piles of smelly guano.

"In some areas, the odor is unbearable on hot summer days," said Lane Tyson, 26, who fights to keep bats out of his early- 1900s home.

Residents are not allowed to kill the bats because they are protected under Georgia law. Killing even one carries up to a year in jail, and a $1,000 fine.

So homeowners try to keep them out by plugging openings in their homes. But that is often a futile task, since bats can squeeze through holes as small as a dime.

From 1990 to 2005, 31 of the 39 reported cases of human rabies were linked to bats, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Alabaster Caverns: Nature's beautiful work only 30 miles away

Written by Lavanya Jaganathan
Copied from the Northwestern News,;
November 16,2006; page 5

Did you know feat Freedom is the home to the largest developed touring gypsum cave in the world? The Alabaster Caverns State Park in Freedom is just about 30 miles away from Alva.

Charles Grass was the first person to develop the guided tour through this marvelous cavern, which is now improved with rail lightings to accommodate the cave enthusiast. Water flowed through the caverns for hundreds and thousands of years cutting into the sedimentary layers of the gypsum and shale deposited here about 270 million years ago by the Permian Sea, thus resulting in the Alabaster Caverns today. The tour takes visitors through many sections of the cave and each is uniquely formed by these flows of water. At the deepest point of the tour you are 80 feet below the surface. Settlers used the cavern's a temporary shelter when Oklahoma was settled.

The most, breathtaking part of the cavern is the formation of the selenite crystals. Selenite is the purest form of gypsum and forms about one cubic inch every six to seven hundred years. An interesting fact about these crystals; They form only in sections. If you hold your light against a section on the veins of a crystal, only the particular section will light up. The early pioneers called it the glass icing. The size of these crystals varies from six inches to many feet, sticking out from the walls and ceiling. The blue spectrum light illuminating the glowing crystals, looked as if it should be in the sky instead of 80 feet below the surface. The cavern also houses white and black alabaster, another form of crystals. They are not translucent.

Alabaster Caverns is one of only three caves where black alabaster exists; one is in China and the other is in Italy. A sample of these black alabaster crystals is on display in the Smithsonian Institute in Washington D.C.

Another attention-grabbing section of the cavern is the dome room. The pressure of water flowing through the cavern was forced into cracks in the ceiling. The water movement allowed formation of the washout domes. Mr. Grass named these domes based on what the shapes looked like to him. One is the "Martha and George Washington's upside down bath tubs." These domes are formed by whirlpools and they look as if you are standing under a bathtub. Another one is the "Lyre Dome." It gets its name for the resemblance to the small handheld lyre carried by the angels.

The gun barrel tunnel is really a captivating section in the cavern. It is believed this was the part of the original pathway the early settlers would take to exit the caverns. They had a choice of two tunnels to use to exit. One required hands and knees, the other on your stomach. This is also the most important point inside the cavern; no natural light can come through. It is believed if you were to stay in that tunnel for two for two to four weeks in total darkness, it could lead to temporary blindness and a longer time can cause permanent blindness.

Besides housing creatures like raccoons and salamanders, the Alabaster Caverns is also a habitat to about five species of 40,000 bats. You can only see about 30 percent of the bats throughout the guided tour. Most are the Cave Myotis bat and the Eastern Pipiatreiles bat which only grows to about three inches long. The other species include the western big-eared, western big are a migratory species that only comes to the caverns during the summer to bear their young. The winter season is the time when all the bats go into hibernation mode.

Starting March 1 the park will have a guided wild caving tour which will give cavers an opportunity to explore the 70 percent of the undeveloped cavern. This tour will also include a special photography session covering the selenite crystal rooms.

The gift shop is also another appealing place to discover. The western diamondback rattle snake, yellow-belly water snake and a huge tarantula are some of the creatures displayed in the Nature
Centre inside the gift shop. There are also some rare wish stones for sale.

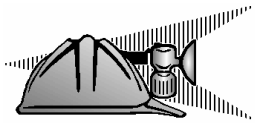
The park also offers RV and campsite areas with hookups to electricity and nearby to, water source, for a minimal fee. A scenic overlook, a 2.5 mile hike, lantern caving and bat watching in spring are also added features to the park.

There is an entrance fee, which quite reasonable, required for the guided tour held every hour by knowledgeable tour guides. The tour takes about 45 minutes to complete with about ¾ of a mile of walking during which you will need to climb up or go down a total of 330 stairs.

Alabaster Caverns State Park is located six miles south of Freedom on Highway 50, then half a mile on Highway 50A. The park office can be reached at (580) 621-3381.

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 December meeting at the Bozeman's house, Friday, Dec. 8!



Central Oklahoma Grotto
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Altus, Oklahoma 73521