



**CENTRAL
OKLAHOMA
GROTTO**
OF THE NATIONAL
SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY, INC

C.O.G.nizance

December, 2004

Inside this Issue

Announcements	1
Minutes	1
Treasurer's Report	2
Trip Reports	2
Potpourri	
Caverns' New Upgrade Illuminating	
From Nov. 7, 2004 Oklahoman,	
page AF:.....	2-3
Interested in a Wet Suit?	3-4
Poems written by Steve Beleu:	
Earth Tides, Cave Pearls, Moonmilk,	
Geode, and Manganese	4



The December meeting of the Central Oklahoma Grotto will be held Friday, December 10, 2004, at the home of John and Sue Bozeman. The Christmas Party will begin when people start arriving!

**Remember, the December meeting is
a Christmas Party!**



ANNOUNCEMENTS

*Northwest trips are scheduled the third Saturday of every month. Contact 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 John and Sue's house, Don't forget to bring goodies, it's a Christmas party!



MINUTES

CENTRAL OKLAHOMA GROTTO

Minutes of the November 12, 2004 meeting

Host: Anne Ault and dogs

Members present: Dale Amlee and son, Sue and John Bozeman, Duane Del Vecchio, Roy and Nicole Diehl and daughter, John Talbot, Lil and Dale Town, John Van Dyke, Steve Belev

Chairman Diehl began the meeting at 8:34 because we were all eating the metric ton of food that Anne prepared for us as our sacred duty.

OLD BUSINESS

1. None of us looked at the "Cave-X" program that Roy told us about during last month's meeting.
2. Roy noted that he hadn't had a chance to contact any grottoes in eastern Oklahoma or western Arkansas about our rambling through Fitton Cave for our Summer 2005 Fun Cave Trip.
3. Roy noted that he also hadn't had time to work on his promised article for the *Oklahoma Underground*.
4. Duane said that he could produce a CD-ROM as an appendix to the next *Oklahoma Underground*. He noted that he couldn't estimate any costs at this time. We then had a general discussion about the proposed CD-ROM supplement, with attendees generating many good ideas for it.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Sue reported that the Green River Grotto of Bowling Green, Kentucky (whose football team OU beat 40-24 in September), which is a student grotto, wants to tour Arkansas, Missouri, and Oklahoma. They want to go to a gypsum cave in our state. She noted that perhaps only 6 out of 20 members might actually come here. We would take them through Jester Cave. She asked them if they wanted to help us with our bat count in February, but since they're university students, this is a bad time for them. So if this happens at all, we will take them through Jester in March during their spring break.
2. Anne noted that the Maverick Grotto of Texas, as is recorded in their grotto newsletter, continues to discuss the possibility of a joint trip with COG. We await their invitation.
3. Lil shared some amusing "I are a caver" e-mails with us.
4. We elected officers for 2005. The officials, as voted by us entirely via popular vote, no Electoral College here, will be as follows. May their souls rest in peace!
Chair – Roy Diehl III
Vice Chair – Jon Woltz
Treasurer – John Talbot
Secretary – Esteban Belev

TREASURER'S REPORT

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

Chairman Diehl concluded the meeting at 9:31. Minutes by The Crazy Monkey this month.

TREASURER'S REPORTS

INCOME		EXPENSES	
DIVIDEND	\$ 0.08	Postage	\$ 15.81
T-Shirt Sales	\$ 20.00	Equipment Repair	\$ 27.08
		Phone calls	\$ 1.05
TOTALS	\$ 20.08		\$ 43.94
CASH ON HAND	\$ 51.45		
CHECKING	\$ 383.36		
SAVINGS	\$ 2,585.92		

PREPARED BY TREASURER
JOHN TALBOT

TOTAL FUNDS AS OF 11/3/04 \$ 3,020.73

TRIP REPORTS

Sorry, There were no trips made since the last meeting. There is one planned on December 18 to the northwest. We need to do one last overland trip to Cattle to tie in the external no-go for humans entrances. Any who can go please come! We need at least 3, Two to 3 go inside and one to two to stay out. Afterwards we may try to do a bit on Black Skink.

POTPOURRI

Cavern's new upgrade illuminating

Copied from The Oklahoman
Sunday, Nov. 7, 2004, page AF

For more than 50 years, Alabaster Caverns state Park near Freedom has drawn visitors from across the country. The panoramic splendor of mesas, canyons and rocky terrain that surrounds northwestern Oklahoma location provides a picture-perfect retreat for guests.

DISCOVER OKLAHOMA

Although the view from the top is spectacular, the other visual attraction to this unusual park lies far below the surface in the impressive cavern for which it is named.

For years, viewing the underground world required a maze of lights throughout the cavern, complete with the electrical wiring that snaked along the rocks.

Although the lighting was enough to identify

the different areas, it didn't showcase the distinctive features of highlight the rare geological formations found in the cavern.

Stepping into the present

Early this past summer, with funding provided by a grant from the Land and Water Conservation Fund and matching money from the state Tourism and Recreation Department, the cavern was temporarily closed to the public, and work began on the long-awaited project to relight and rewire Alabaster Caverns.

Frank Florentine of Annapolis, Md., lighting designer for the Smithsonian Institution National Air and Space Museum in Washington D.C., was contracted for the project. Florentine recently designed the lighting system for Kartchner Caverns State Park in Benson, Arizona.

"We wanted someone who is one of the most
(continued on page 3)

Renowned resources for lighting design, in an effort to produce world-class lighting for the cavern,” said Kris Marck, director of Oklahoma Tourism Conservation and Planning.

Florentine developed the concept that the light should flow over the rocks, much like the water that created the cave while enlarging space for visitors. However, the most important factor was to find a way to encourage the natural development of geological growth and protect the habitat inside the cavern.

Alabaster Caverns is home to several species of bats, with one species that migrates every year from Mexico to breed. Months of research and planning assured that work on the project would not disrupt the reproduction of the bats. The design and implementation of the lighting system are unobtrusive and environmentally friendly.

As important as the ancient cavern has been to the history of our state, improvements were needed to preserve the resources. One addition you’ll notice as you enter the mouth of the cavern is the first of a series of 10 computerized stations where naturalists or tour guides can control the lights with the touch of a button.

“As a tour proceeds through the cave handrail lights will come on and direct you through the flow and down the steps into another area.,” lighting designer Florentine said. “Once you’re down so far, the lights behind you fade away and the lights in front of you invite you to move forward.”

He said, “The lights are not meant to stay on all the time.” This helps assure the creatures that life in the cavern a more typical setting and at the same time does not stimulate growth of algae or fungus.

The computerized system also allows trail guides to carry a telephone, with a line linking directly to the park office that can be used in emergencies. In the event of a problem, guides can automatically dial and request help from a specific numbered station and not have to rely on exiting the cavern before seeking assistance.

Highlighting nature’s beauty

Being “first and only” is a claim man would like to make. Alabaster caverns is the

only gypsum show cave in the nation, and the largest in the world developed for touring. It has the distinction of being one of only three caves in the world where a rare form of gypsum called black alabaster is found. Particular efforts have been made to draw attention to this extraordinary geological feature by including multicolor lights that focus mainly on the black alabaster and other large crystals found around the cavern. What was once illuminated by the beam of a flashlight is now a dazzling view of natural wonder.

“The varying colors of the LEDs highlight the different veins of the alabaster, from whites to pinks to the blacks. It is really quite magical,” Florentine said.

Most spelunkers will agree that no cave is ever the same, and each one takes on a personality of its own. The inside of Alabaster Caverns is like Mother Nature’s map, showing the roads and streets identifying the formation of the caverns.

One particularly sizable region, formed by large whirlpools of long ago, is known as the dome area, where tall ceilings with openings high above seen to reach forever skyward. The more elaborate domes, including “George and Martha Washington’s Bathtub” and “Cathedral Dome,” have been lighted to display their features. One of the last distinctive areas, near the exit, is a section known as the channel, where the sleek and smooth ceilings and walls reflect the pathway of water that cascaded through and carved the cavern.

The cavern will open for public and group tours beginning Thursday, with tours scheduled on the hour from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. during winter months. For convenience, the park office accepts reservations, however they are not required and will allow for a time that best fits your schedule. There is an admission charge for all visitors.

There’s a whole new world down below at Alabaster Caverns state Park, and a promise that visitors will have a de-light-ful experience.

By Kell Clark, Special Correspondent

Interested in a Wet Suit?

I recently received an e-mail from a organization that has wet suits for sale. Thought I'd pass this information on in case some might be interested in purchasing one.

"Hello, my family runs a whitewater rafting business called Crab Apple Whitewater, Inc. We have run trips in Maine, Massachusetts and Vermont since 1983. This summer I was contacted by another caving group that was interested in buying used wet-suits. They bought a nice load and I want to follow up on the same idea for other caving groups. I have over 100 used suits for sale at my shop in western Mass. I have both jackets and farmer johns (overalls) that I sell for \$15-\$25 (\$180-\$240 new) depending on condition. All are structurally sound, good zippers, faded with nicks and worn areas at the hard use areas - knees, elbows and seats. I can meet individual and group orders. Sizes range from youth (50 lbs) to XXL. To determine sizing I need height and weight and I can send the right size. Please forward this to members of your club and let me know if you have any interest! These suits are perfect for individual use, especially in caves where they take a beating!

Frank Mooney
Crab Apple Whitewater, Inc.
www.crabapplewhitewater.com
413-625-2288
best e-mail:fjmooney@msn.com

Speleology

Poems written by Steve Beleu

1 EARTH TIDES

Earth bends out toward both sun and moon
In twice-daily tides, flexing joints in rock
Until caves appear after thousands of years.

So like all oceans, all rivers, streams and lakes,
Caves pulse out through space towards light
Either radiant or reflected and dim

Like water flows up and down
In right-angled joints, honeycombs of stone.

2 CAVE PEARLS

Chaos creates pearls in caves.
Constant agitations and rotation
Polish them in their pools
Around and round in circles
As calcite adheres to calcite
And a small speck of sand
Metamorphoses into perfect spheres,
Smooth, white, shining

Like planets are created
In their solar systems.

3 MOONMILK

White gnome-milk, soft like clay
Oozes out from cave walls.
Born from bacteria and calcite,
It makes this wall of the cave
White and soft as moonlight.

4 MANGANESE

Layered like stalactites, black manganese
Covers cave walls like deep soot, its crystals
So minute they escape analysis by microscope.

Touch it and like unending night
It will stay on your hands until dawn.

5 GEODE

Flat as the sky, beneath the horizon
Caves roll and tumble
360 degrees in every direction.

Cavers slide through them
Smoothly as wet mud,
Encased in scales of wet mud,

30 feet under the surface,
100 feet or 10,
Down deep pits or crawling

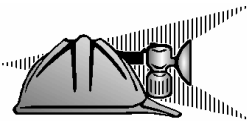
Beneath ceilings 1 foot high
Or 100 feet high,
Cavers deep in a geode,

A living, breathing geode.

S. Beleu
August 3, 2004

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: Email: oklmt@cablone.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 place, Friday, December 10.*



Central Oklahoma Grotto
C/O 3208 Gettysburg Drive
Altus, Oklahoma 73521