



CENTRAL
OKLAHOMA
GROTTO
OF THE NATIONAL
SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY, INC

C.O.G. nizance

July, August, September, 2004



June's Meeting is at
the Woltz house



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Congratulations are in order to Steve Beleu

The Arts and Letters Section of the National Speleological Society has published some of Steve's submissions in the June 2004, issue no. 8 of *Illuminations*. This is quite an honor since the publication is published twice a year! Way to go Steve!

The following Verses were published:

"The Cave Temple at Chandragutti", "Fire Salamanders", and "Ombra".

The music that was published was:

"Gypsum Caving Bagatelles - 10" (for piano; one page of music)

and an article published was:

"Leonardo Da Vinci's Thoughts About Caves"

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 September meeting will be at Jon Woltz's house, 1312 Jefferson St, Weatherford, OK. His phone number is 580-774-2235.

MINUTES

CENTRAL OKLAHOMA GROTTO

Minutes of the June 4, 2004 meeting

Host: the abode of Duane Del Vecchio in Lawton, who grilled burgers and wieners for us and had all sorts of other foods and beverages that we feasted upon and rejoiced over

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

Vice-Chairman Woltz began the meeting at 9:00. Our late start was due to an hour or so of eating in which we were each dutifully engaged.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Duane reported that he is attempting to find a cheaper website host for our forthcoming "Okcavers.org" website. As our webmaster Duane wants many megs for few bucks. Several attendees noted various Internet provider services with which they were familiar. Research continues.
2. Duane discussed our upcoming trip to Carlsbad Caverns on June 11-13. He reported that we were not able to procure the CRT cavers hut. Nobody cared, since we're all staying in local motels. John Van Dyke proposed that we decide at our next meeting—which will not occur until September—when we'll next go to Carlsbad Caverns in 2005.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Lil commented upon the Maverick Grotto trip report to Jester Cave that she reprinted in

our most recent newsletter. She also noted that the Mavericks, whose grotto is based in Fort Worth, have issued a general invitation to COG to join them on a caving trip in Texas sometime and somewhere.

2. Sue proposed that our annual summer fun trip be to the Caverns of Sonora. We discussed it and think it a swell idea. It will take about 9 hours of driving to get there. Our tentative dates for it are Friday, July 30 through Sunday, August 1. Much more later. For their website, see—
<http://www.cavernsofsonora.com/>

TRIP REPORT

Lil reported about our last trip to Cattle Cave and what remains to be done before she can conclude the cave map and we can conclude the cave's surveying and mapping.

TREASURER'S REPORT

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

Vice-Chairman Woltz concluded the meeting at 9:57.

Minutes by me, who am I.

TREASURER'S REPORT

DIVIDEND	\$	4.90
DUES	\$	36.00
TOTALS	\$	40.90

CASH ON HAND	\$	68.47
CHECKING	\$	396.47
SAVINGS	\$	2,581.05

PREPARED BY TREASURER
JOHN TALBOT

TOTAL FUNDS AS OF 7/4/04 \$ 3,046.48

TRIP REPORTS

Trip Report: Tying up Loose Ends

Location: Cattle Cave

Date: 15 May 2004

Personnel: John Bozeman, Lil Town, Dale Amlee, Esteban Beleu

Written by: Dale Amlee

The plan for the day was to venture up to the Selman ranch to tie up a few final loose ends in the mapping of Cattle Cave. John needed to take another look at the geology for the final report on this cave system, and Lil needed to check several areas to ensure the accuracy of the mapping. In addition, there were some questions regarding one small side branch off of the main room that we wanted to clear up with another visit. This was the little spur that had been connected by smoke to another spot (Salamander exit?) on an earlier trip, but we wanted to squeeze in there to see if further human progress could be made with tinier individuals in the fore (Moi).

We had decided ahead of time to allow ourselves a little bit more sleep in the morning and depart from the Bozeman's at 8:00 a.m. instead of our normal 7:00 start time. On our way driving up to the ranch, we had a near close call with a traffic accident in the dense early morning fog, and the ensuing detour delayed our caving start time even more. As a result, we didn't actually get in the cave until past noon. It was a beautiful summer day, not too hot, not too windy. Very unusual weather for Oklahoma.

The first item on our agenda was to check out the small smoke hole. Glancing in there, we saw that it was a water/mud filled crawl, and we decided to postpone this job until the end of the day right before we left the cave. We proceeded next to the Cave's South arm, walking along and allowing Lil the chance to verify that the map she was carrying was an accurate portrayal of the actual cave arm. There did appear to be a couple of confusing bits on the cave data log, and we were frequently mentally kicking ourselves for failing to put in more semi-permanent labeled survey markers along the cave arm when we had done our detailed survey of this arm last year. We plodded down past the main bat room, where the gnat population was delightfully low at this time of the year, and went on through to the next section of the cave. The portion of the map between the bat room and the Trumpet Funnel appeared to have some inaccuracies, and we spent much of our time tromping back and forth, trying to determine whether the map

was wrong, or the cave was wrong. Esteban voted that the cave was wrong, and offered to re-structure it to make it agree with the map. His suggestion was soundly voted down by the rest of the group.

Armed with additional information, Lil determined where the clarifications needed to be on the map data. She made copious notes, and we turned back without going past the trumpet, since it was already past 5:00 at this time. Helping to make our decision was the fact that the funnel itself, a challenging vertical crawl under the best of conditions, was very slick with mud from earlier rains this spring.

We had saved the exploration of the small squeazy crawl near the main cave entrance for last.

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small squeazy crawl near the
main cave entrance for last.**

As a group, we went through the portion of this sub-arm as far as it was easy to go, then I plopped myself down in the mud to check out the rest of the passage. Lil had told me what she had seen on her last visit through this passage. My exploration basically verified the description she had given me regarding her last visit to this spot, up until a point. She had recalled being stopped by a tight squeeze at one point, and unable to proceed through it, remembers that the passage beyond was large and walkable. When I got to the same point, however, I was able to go through the tight squeeze, only to be stopped in my tracks by a very tight meandering passage just a few feet further on. I sat there staring at the passage in front of me for several minutes trying to envision how I could get through, and finally convinced myself that even if I could get my body through it, it would be a one way trip. Backing out would be extremely challenging, and help would not be able to get to me to assist me if I got stuck. I made my best guess as to direction and distance of the passage which I could see, then backed out of the passage to re-join the group.

Muddy and tired, we left the cave feeling good about the work which we had accomplished this day, but saddened by the realization that there was quite a bit of additional loose ends to tie up yet. ❧

Trip Report: Texas Show Caves

Date: July 30– August 1

COG participants: Anne Ault, Steve Beleu, Duane Del Vecchio, Sue and John Bozeman, Dale and Lil Town, and Jon Woltz

Compiled by Lil Town, using excerpts from Duane's web report.

At our June meeting we talked about some of the beautiful caves in Texas. There were some members who had not seen these caves, and we decided that would be our summer fun trip, a trip to Texas! It was a great idea, but as things worked out, the ones who had not seen the caves were not able to go and those who did go had already seen the caves!

After much planning and discussions we decided, with the help of trip leader, Anne, that we would go to the Caverns of Sonora, Cave Without A Name, Cascade Caverns, Austin Bat Flight (Congress Ave. Bridge), and Inner Space Cavern. After seeing Sonora, the rest didn't seem near as impressive!

We met at Duane's and started our trip south in a three car caravan. Anne had made reservations for us at the Best Value Inn-Twin Oaks in Sonora. At first, we were uncertain about our suites, but all turned out well and we had a comfortable stay.

We got settled in our rooms early enough to go to the cave and get on the last tour of the day. Our tour guide was a young boy that was pretty knowledgeable about the cave. With a little help on vocabulary and a few cave facts from the group, he is on his way to be a real pro! We were so impressed with the cave we decided to go back to it the next morning and see parts we missed during the first tour!

The rest of the trip report is taken from Duane's web report. Be sure to go to okcavers.com to see all the great pictures that were taken.

The cave of Sonora starts as a normal cave with a few decorations... ok but not spectacular.. but those are coming... More evidence of a Vast Shallow Sea... Gosh...I guess Lil was right all along! Then the cave started showing some decorations.... and by the end of the tour they turned out to be Phenomenal!! Sonora is known for the helictites that grow in every direction and...whole rooms decorated from head to toe. This cave was incredible! They brag that it is one of the caving wonders of the world... Maybe Lech has a one up on it but not much of one! Actively growing everywhere in the lower sections, the formations are wall to wall, floor to ceiling. This cave is well maintained and an excellent tour! The cave management has done their utmost to present the cave in an unspoiled manner and keeps all man made stuff hidden. The guides are constantly watching you (right Dale and ddv?) making sure you don't touch any-

thing! It is a shame it's stuck out in the SW corner of TX but maybe that's good! It's very well preserved! Good job Management! Well worth it! The Jewel of the Texas Show Caves!!!"

Our next cave was Cave Without A Name, discovered by a deep sinkhole blowing steam one winter. Nice LARGE formations here, not the delicate formations like Sonora, but mostly impressive. Basically it was a giant open cavern with some decorations in the middle... but most of the decorations were on the wall. Our tour guide was quite humorous with some of the comments and thoughts.

All of the Texas caves were quite wet this trip as it just finished raining quite a bit in the area. When we were near the Queens Chamber our guide did a really neat thing... he played on his flute. The resonance of the room made the music quite thrilling and whole.

We were told that while a group was doing trail restoration in the cave they found that the ENTIRE floor was rimstone dams under the gravel floor. Here's one cave that is doing something towards restoration... keeping the people on trails.... While the other part of the cave is being restored back to original. Beautiful. The groups who are doing the restoration are taking out the gravel floor that had been put in and covered the beautiful rimstone dams.

After a bit of a drive...Cascade Caverns Park - Bathroom Break! E-GAD!! The filthiest I've been to since a five day concert! (and it goes downhill from there!) You come in here and you start feeling the Tourist Trap! Money doesn't improve the cave... A sad sight when a natural cave has been changed so much! It does have some nice stuff but is very ill kept! The wires are all exposed with no attempt to hide them from the tours. And the lights are kept on all the time. Thus... pretty lush plant life grows. The guide even bragged that this was the only cave that had such extravagant growth (I hope so!!!!) we even saw band of lights being used to mark trails!!! Every cave should have some of these! Oh yeah... don't forget the two inch flexible pipe that snakes under your feet the entire trail!

Pumping from one end of the cave to the other it was right smack in the middle more than half the time... I guess they are unique in that too! And there were only about 40 people on our tour... there were times they all couldn't fit into the room where the guide was talking. But it was a wet cave!! Lots of water dripping and being pumped out onto the trail. They advertised a 100 foot waterfall..nice, but the one place where light would have been nice it was

(Continued on page 4)

absent.... sigh...

We raced like a bunch of possessed people to make Austin in time for the Bat Flight under Congress Ave. Bridge. We made it with an hour to spare! (Scared the daylighters out of the occupants in the car though!) There are over a million Mexican Free-Tailed bats living in the crevices under the bridge and they fly out every night! Tons of people sit out in the park next to the bridge to see the flight. Bat Conservation International has people there educating the public on Free-Tails. People even line the bridge itself.... I wonder if you stay dryer up on top than under the bridge?? Then just about at dusk, the stars of the show take off!

There are Ooh's and Ah's from the crowd...but don't keep your mouth open long! You might get a surprise drop from the skies! People on the river underneath sit on tour barges along with people on the opposite bank in hotel rooms overlooking the bridge. You know... this would be a lot easier to take pictures if they flew out in daylight!

Our final cave before heading home was the Inner Space Cave. (I won't even go into the evening in Austin trying to find a hotel fiasco) A very nice cave... parts of all the other caves put together. Large rooms, small walkways, empty passages, rooms full of decorations, pristine ponds.

The guide told us that the cave was discovered while engineers were drill bore holes to build I-35. They had drilled a hole and found nothing... so

a highway worker was lowered in to check things out. Using just a hand light he saw a formation and had mistaken it for a cave monster! Cave explorers were called in to check things out. These were the first humans ever to be in the cave.

For a show cave, very professionally kept and well maintained. The tour (which is about an hour) only touches about 5% of the cave. Lots of growing active formations here too! There are also passages that look like they go go go!!! Lots of colors from white to the rusts as different minerals make up the formations throughout the cave.

There was tons of water dripping in the Discover room You could even get cave wet from these drips as they were right by the trail!

This is a cave for the family traveling down I-35 to see nice and easy walking, good tour guides, good trail, and nice formations.

We had a great time and enjoyed our loop around Texas to see some of their show caves. Hopefully we'll be able to see more of the unlighted Oklahoma caves in the near future! Be sure to see all the great pictures that were taken at <http://okcavers.netfirms.com/trip%20reports/texas/index.htm>

And to end this summary of the Great Texas loop, Anne would like to thank Mr. Del Vecchio for giving her a pencil from Sonora Caverns as a reward for being the Texas Show Cave Trip Organizer of 2004! 📏

Potpourri

Cave Explores Find Deep Pit in Croatia

Cave explores find what they think is the deepest pit that has ever been found at nearly 1,700 feet. To read more this discovery, go to <http://www.msnbc.com/id/5659995/> 📰

THE DEEP CAVES

By Steve Beleu

Vast oceans beneath earth
silently rise and fall and rise
until they flood deep caves
No human will ever enter.

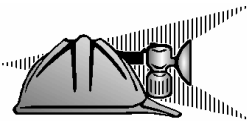
The Hope of all Digging

By Steve Beleu

Bat, you've awoke me when all I wanted
Was to sleep in this cave on this dirt—
Not on dried or wet mud but real dirt—
And dream about, I hope, nothing.
But I'm awake now, and work awaits—
More hard digging into a new room,
Or so we hope, and beyond that room
More cave spiraling under the ridge,
Opening into a borehole, dry and warm,
That goes and goes and never, never ends.

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 September meeting
at Jon Woltz's Place, Friday, September 10



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