



C.O.G.nizance

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The May meeting of the Central Oklahoma Grotto will be held at 7:30, Friday, May 12, 2008, at the home of Anne Ault.



Music Room in Carlsbad National Park. Picture taken by a COGer who remembered a camera!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

*Northwest trips are scheduled the third Saturday of every month. Contact Sue or John Bozeman for details.

*The 7:30 May meeting will be at Anne Ault.

MINUTES

CENTRAL OKLAHOMA GROTTO

Minutes of the meeting of April 11, 2008

Host: the home of Lil and Dale Town
 Atttendees: Dale Amlee, Anne Ault, Sue Bozeman, John and Mrs. Talbot, S. Beleu.

Presiding Vice-Chairman Amlee began the meeting at 8:32

OLD BUSINESS

We talked about the soon-coming trip to Carlsbad Caverns.
 We decided to not cave in Oklahoma this month due to our Carlsbad trip.



NEW BUSINESS

Duane will take over the printing of *Cognizance* from the April issue on. Since he is using duplicating equipment owned by the Lawton school system, he will charge us .2 cents per side of a page (.4 cents total per leaf). We noted to send him a COG check for \$25.

Dale Amlee noted that he received an e-mail from a youth group that is going to Alabaster State Caverns. They want one or more of us to accompany them through the cave—and possibly the “wild caves” there?—to point out spe-lunkeological facts to them. Several members volunteered to do this.

TREASURER'S REPORT

John Talbot gave his report.

We got it done at 9:08.

TREASURER'S REPORTS

INCOME

Dividends	\$ 6.18
Publication Sale	\$ 10.00
Postage Credit	\$ 2.00

TOTALS **\$ 18.18**

CASH ON HAND	\$ 149.55
CHECKING	\$ 441.80
SAVINGS	\$ 2,674.42

UNDEPOSITED FUNDS	\$ 5.00
TOTAL FUNDS AS OF 4/8/06	\$ 3,270.77

EXPENSES

Postage	\$ 5.99
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\$ 5.99

PREPARED BY TREASURER
 JOHN TALBOT

TRIP REPORTS

CAVE: Carlsbad Caverns , Music Room and Trail

DATE: Saturday – April 26, 2008

TEAM LEADER: Duane Del Vecchio

TEAM MEMBERS: Dale Amlee, Anne Ault, John Bozeman,
Sue Bozeman, Dale Town, Lil Town .

TIME ENTERED: 9:30 a.m. **EXIT TIME:** 4:30 p.m.

We arrived to see Tom Bemis in the Cave Recourses office at 8:20 a.m. After being briefed that we were to do cave restoration in the Music Room and that it had not been worked on for 15 years, we got pretty psyched up! After filling out all of the paperwork, obtaining supplies, and getting geared up, we finally were ready to go do this new project. Tom led us down the Natural Entrance and into the cave and once in and starting on the cutbacks, took us off trail and to the side of the cave. Not knowing what we were to encounter we brought one 2 ½ gal. sprayer (full), 3 little sprayers (half gallon?), one spray bottle (like a window cleaner), two white buckets (5 gal paint buckets), 10 sponges, 7 brushes, 2 toothbrushes, and 2 knee pads. Once off trail, the humidity of the cave and the heat of our bodies scrambling over the rocks started to fog those who wore glasses to see. One of our party (Lil) was so fogged that she couldn't see to move (and you needed to see where you were going on this stuff!).

This off trail experience was different as we were able to see “behind the scenes” with electric wiring laying on the ground, being blinded by bright light shining up on a formation, and seeing water lines that used to be used in the former hosing of the trail. The path taken became more and more rugged and finally we had to think safety and split the group. Anne, Dale Town, and Lil stayed while the rest continued. Tom would give those that stayed a different project on trail. He then continued to show the rest the way. It was tough (and scary) in some places as equipment had to be handed across chasms, down drops, and over climbs. We finally made it to the music room where Tom told us what he was looking in the future for this room to look like. Basically, we were to clean the room up of the

red mud that was tracked about in the past so that future trips of cave personnel and special groups like geologists etc... would have to use aqua (water) shoes for the room. He left us some tape to mark a trail and then went back to the others to get them started on their project. Dale A, Duane, John, and Sue were the workers in the Music Room. After scouting about, we decided on the trail of least impact yet keeping safety as a concern and taped off the trail from the entrance, up the side next to a flowstone, crawling under a shelf, and into a path that leads to the “balcony” which overlooks the switchbacks in the national entrance section of the cave and looks down into a long drop-off below. (Even the ones with good tolerance of heights were a bit leery of looking over the edge!!) <grin> It is hundreds of feet straight down! It was also very neat to know that you were on the ceiling of Carlsbad with the trail far, far below!!



We discovered what we think is an old electrical spool lying on a ledge right next to the drop-off... we didn't go there but did take pictures as it is about an eight foot drop to the ledge with no way to get back up without proper gear (cable ladder, ascending gear, etc..). We also did not want to touch it as it probably counts as “historic” being older than us! Picture is of that spool to the right. We then proceeded to start cleaning sections of the room next to the trail. The trail will be the last to be cleaned as everything would
(continued on page 4)

basically be swept down to it to be collected. Two groups formed, Duane on an area we dubbed "Wonderland" and Dale, John, and Sue on the large flowstone at the start of the climb towards the back and balcony.

Duane started high on the area next to the column, removing the broken fragments of stalactites, putting them on the side, then sweeping the debris, then spraying and sponging the clay out and finally, after exposing the natural rock, replaced the fragments in a random fashion. A sign was left in a watertight Ziploc bag marks where the work stopped for the trip so that future clean-up groups will know which area has been done and where to pick up the next section. It is weighed with a large fragment so as not to go anywhere!

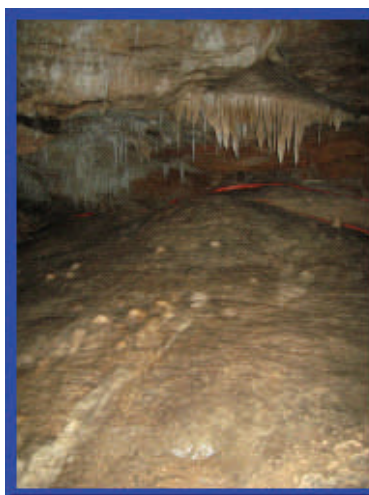
Also when dusting a shelf, Duane also found at first what he thought was grass or twigs only seconds later realizing that they were little bones. Upon looking closer at other areas of the shelf, one can see a collection of bat bones across the shelf. We took a couple of pictures for the website and left them alone. (We'll clean around that area in the future but leave them be!)

Meanwhile, Dale, John, and Sue started working on the flowstone next to the ascent area of Music Room. First a brushing



down of free particles that were kicked over by other travelers, then a soaking and scrubbing and finally sponging off the loose red clay to finally expose the natural rock of the flow. It was naturally, most messed up by the trail and least so on the opposite side. But by end of day, the entire flow was back to natural state.

At approx. 2 p.m. we packed our equipment back up and started back to the visitors trail. Tom (thankfully) had left a ribbon to mark the way back or we would have been very lost indeed. As it was, it was a very strenuous,



difficult journey back with the equipment, the trail, and the tired bodies. There were points where I personally was not sure about the safety of our party. This is not an area for one who gets spooked by 200 foot pits on either side of your 2 foot wide path nor one that is physically unfit

as it contained climbing as well as not being able to use at least three points of contact (as we're always told for safety) as we were carrying large (and heavy) water containers, buckets, and sprayers. We, as a party, were quite uncomfortable in a few places coming back. We finally did indeed, find our way back to the visitor's trail and headed down toward the elevators for the way up. It was on the way down that we bumped into the rest of our crew, with Tom, scrubbing away on a very dirty rock on the side of the trail. Their story next....

The other group – Rock Scrubbers – Anne, Dale, and Lil waited for a bit and then headed back up and climbed back to the visitor's trail where they waited for Tom's return. They served as trail interpreter talking about caving, cave restoration, and tried to answer questions until Tom's arrival. Tom had a pet rock he wished them to work on to see if years (decades literally) of dirt could be removed from a rock snuggled next to the trail. This rock was almost black from the old custom of hosing off the trail to get it clean. The splash and dirt of the trail really blackened and covered it up and even though they don't do that kind of clean up any more, the damage had already been done.

When the group split, one bucket and two little sprayers and a couple of brushes and sponges stayed with the scrubbers. Tom led them to the location and had them get to it.

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Rapidly, the water ran out and as the restrooms and facilities down in the cave are closed, they



had to return to the surface to obtain more water. They went back to the Cave Resources Office where Dale was given a 5-7 gallon backpack water carrier and a 3 gallon sprayer to carry. The others also refilled their bottles. They once again started at the Natural Entrance to go down the switchbacks down to their new project. Feeling sorry for Dale carrying both big water bottles, Anne and Lil took the smaller one and took turns woman handling it down the path. Dale just knew he was going to be shorter after the trip was over from carrying all the water! Lil named the water bottle 'Baby' and started sliding it down the railings instead of carrying it. Anne did the same when she took over.

What a thrill it was like to go another 3/4ths of a mile, 45 degree angle with switchbacks every 25 to 30 feet, walking backwards to keep toes and knees from hurting! Sorry Steve, no bloody toe pictures to share!

At the point when there weren't any railings, Tom said he would carry it and we said thanks. On the way down the trail, the sprayer's straps came down around Tom's legs and he fell face first down on the trail. He recovered with a skinned knee, two skinned elbows and we know a bruise or two the next day!! The trail also took its toll on the knees and toes as the weight of the water added extra weight while coming down.

When they finally returned to their site, the water (with the extra elbow grease) and scrubbing actually brought the original rock back. Tom said we might need to bring in a

light just for the "new" rock! Before and close to After pictures are shown below.



Same piece of rock.... A before (on left) and a close up of the real rock coming though

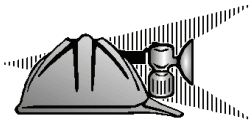


The other group came down the trail and joined up and scrubbed another rock until all had no water remaining. Then we started the long trek to the elevators. We had to wait awhile as only one elevator was working and the King's Palace tour had just got there. We went to Cave Resources, cleaned and hosed off Tom's equipment, and headed to town for the traditional dinner and Fat Tire!

Suggestions: For restoration of music room – DO NOT take large sprayers as they are too heavy and bulky for the trip to the music room. The weight and bulkiness of the large sprayer was a dangerous addition to this adventure in the areas where at least three points of contact were needed for safety sake. The less excess weight as well as "hands free" as possible would help for a trail of this caliber.

We would like to thank the Carlsbad Park Service once again for allowing us to do restoration work in that beautiful cave. Such beauty should not be hidden under the dirt and man-made muck.... It feels great to see the cave's natural beauty! We look forward to coming again.

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!*



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