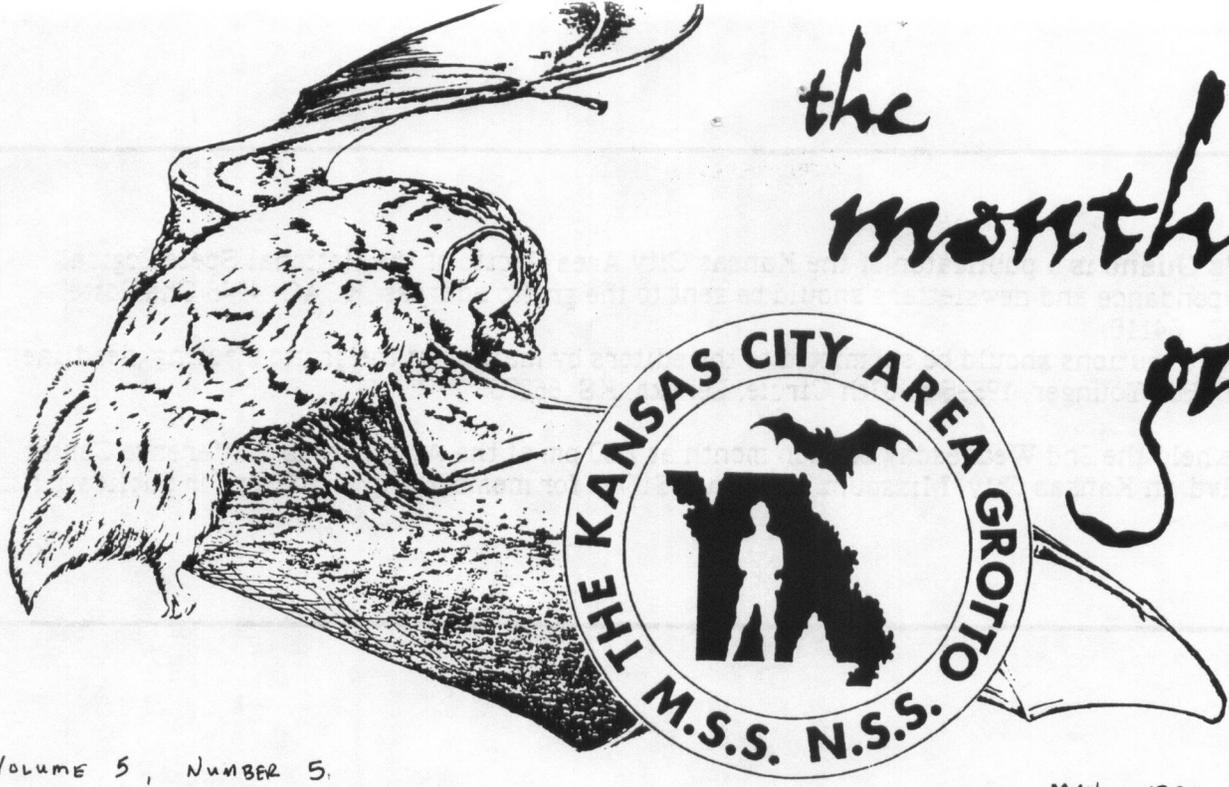


the
month's
gleanings



VOLUME 5, NUMBER 5.

MAY, 1991



"No man knew the cave. That was an impossible thing."
- Tom Sawyer

The Month's Guano is a publication of the Kansas City Area Grotto of the National Speleological Society. Correspondance and newsletters should be sent to the grotto address: KCAG, 4046 Charlotte, Kansas City, MO. 64110.

Newsletter contributions should be submitted to the editors by mail or at the grotto meeting (deadline). Editors address: Bob Younger, 19595 w. 87th Circle, Lenexa, KS 66220.
(913) 888-6349

Meetings are held the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 7:00 pm at the Arthur Mag Conference Center at 425 Volker Blvd. in Kansas City, Missouri. Dues are \$10/yr for membership and \$5/yr for publications.

Side Notes...

I am elated and excited to announce that I have been offered a job by the National Park Service. I will be spending the summer at Wind Cave National Park in South Dakota. 50% of my time will be spent as a curator of a museum. I will identify, catalog and enter into a data base archeological finds and historical items. The other 50% will be spent working in the visitor center, campground and giving campfire talks and, of course, giving cave tours. I hope that all KCAG members will be able to take a short ten hour drive to the Black Hills for some good cave trips. While I am gone, please submit Guano items to Mike Jones. I am leaving the 19th of May and will be back around the 20th of August. If you do think you would like to take a trip to the Black Hills, write and I might be able to arrange some special cave trips.

Bob Younger
Wind Cave National Park
RR1 Box 190 - WCNP
Hot Springs, SD 57747-9430

Included in the Guano this month is some information that Richard Cindric mailed about the Fitton trip. Get a hold of Richard if you have questions or need more info.

Spring MVOR, 1991

The spring, 1991 MVOR was held April 26, 27, and 28 in Pulaski County, Missouri. Hosted by SNAG, the MVOR proved to be a relaxing weekend away from the hoo haa of every day life. The site was at the large entrance to Tunnel cave. With three caves on site, it was impossible to go the weekend without seeing some poor, wretched caver covered head to toe with mud or wet cave clothes. This MVOR set a record for attendance with over 400 cavers preregistered! Another record was set with the most children ever represented at an MVOR. Although mud and rain did make it a little sticky, SNAG offered a traditional, non-sticky dinner of Hawaiian-roasted pig, turkey and beef. Saturday, the camp was filled with the shouts of "On rope!" or "Rock!" and even "Get me the hell down from here!!!" as vertical cavers challenged the 100+ foot entrance to Tunnel cave. With so many cavers around, both tunnel and Bat cave were literally caver highways as short and tall, young and old, and expert and novice enjoyed the passages of these favorites. All in all it was a wet, fun, muddy, cavernous weekend in Pulaski County. See ya all in the fall!

TRIP REPORT -- 4/6/91

Mike Jones, Jerry Cindric and I went caving in Arkansas the weekend of April 6 and 7. On Saturday, we went into Bone Pit. That's a cave with a 40' pit entrance and about twice that much in horizontal passage. Mike and Jerry both had some new vertical gear and it seemed an ideal place to break it in.

Bone Pit is well named: It's where Arkansas cows go to die. But that's okay because none of them were fresh, and you can have a wonderful puppet show with the skulls. The cave is roughly 10 miles south of Ponca on the east side of the Buffalo River. The entrance is a sink that's about 12' wide. There's a very small waterfall at the end of the horizontal passage.

It should have been easy for us to find the entrance since we had good directions (located precisely on a topo'), but instead it took an hour. In our journeys through the hills, Mike found another creek with promise and we did some ridgewalking there afterwards. The highlight was when Jerry discovered a short cave by falling in it. He claimed 3' of leaves as an excuse. Some are born to greatness; others stumble into it. The only other thing of note was a cave at the top of a bluff. There was breakdown rock from the entrance to the creek. The cave went down at a 45 degree angle away from the creek, for maybe 70'. There was another small cave below this one that had water coming out of it, no doubt from the one above.

The rest of the day was spent ridgewalking near Edgeman Creek, about five miles south of Ponca. Mike and Jerry discovered and went through two short caves with double entrances and small passages. Overall, it was a lot of sweating for little return.

On Sunday, we searched for Third Cave along Beech Creek. We found a cave half way up a bluff and several sinks at the top of the bluff, but we doubt that any of them were Third Cave. The first cave we found had a good size entrance (maybe 15' by 8') but that turned out to be the largest part of the cave. It quickly narrowed to belly crawls before opening into a small room. The end opposite where we entered was a slope of flowstone interrupted by a slot. Going through there led to a tight squeeze: This was no cave for fat boys. It soon ended in mostly vertical passages with some flowstone and even boxwork. The total length of the cave may have been 250'.

We went up the bluff from there and found perhaps eight sinks of which two could be entered. Jerry went in one to a depth of 30' to 40'. Mike went in the other. This one had about 20' of horizontal passage. At the end was a pile of bones with a collar in the middle. It seems the coon came out on top this time.

Richard Cindric

4/24/91

Fellow cavers,

I was unable to get a permit for Fitton Cave for Saturday, May 18, but I was able to get two permits for that Sunday. I was on the phone to the Park Service at 7:59am on April 18, but somebody had called a minute before me.

The plan for Fitton won't change very much, except one group can have a shorter trip if the people in that group want to leave Arkansas early to return home on Sunday night. The other group can still have a long trip for those who can stay Monday, or are willing to drive back very late. It's about a 5 1/2 or 6 hour trip back to KC.

On Saturday, we can do some of those items that had been planned for Sunday or Monday. There are some horizontal and vertical caves nearby, canoeing on the Buffalo, hiking, etc. So even if you choose not to go into Fitton, there are things to keep you busy. And a chili dinner will be supplied on Saturday night.

For the sake of car pooling, I've listed the names of the people below who are going or are interested in going. I'm planning on leaving KC on Friday afternoon and leaving Steel Creek on Monday afternoon. I'm also interested in finding someone who'd like to share a canoe with me on the Buffalo on Monday (short trip - probably about 5 hours).

For those of you who are considering the trip, please let me know as soon as you decide. We're limited to a maximum of 8 people per permit. See you at the next Grotto meeting.

Richard
262-2006

GOING

Tim McClain
Mike Jones
Mike Drossman - St. Louis
Dave Foran
Bill Klimack
Richard W. Crabb (W.?)

INTERESTED
IN GOING

Sue Schooler
Bob Younger
Michelle Van Nice
Amy and Mike Kirch
Randy Bruegger
Dean Beauchamp
Bob Parks
Mark Pankratz
Wade Frerichs

FITTON CAVE TRIP

WHERE Fitton Cave, located by the Buffalo River near Ponca and Jasper. *

Camping will be at Steel Creek, a free campground (no showers) just east of Ponca. Ponca is about a 5 1/2 hour drive from Kansas City.

WHEN The weekend of May 18. **

PROBABLE AGENDA Saturday -- Leave the campground at 9:00am. Go caving in Fitton all day. Free chili dinner that night.

Sunday -- There'll be a trip to Copperhead Cave. If we start at 10:00am, we'd probably be out about 2:00pm.

Sunday PM and Monday -- More caves (horizontal and vertical), canoeing on the Buffalo (best to do on Monday), hiking (Lost Valley, Hemmed-in Hollow and others), etc.

CONTACT Richard Cindric
5937 Hadley
Merriam, Ks.
66202
(913) 262-2006 ***

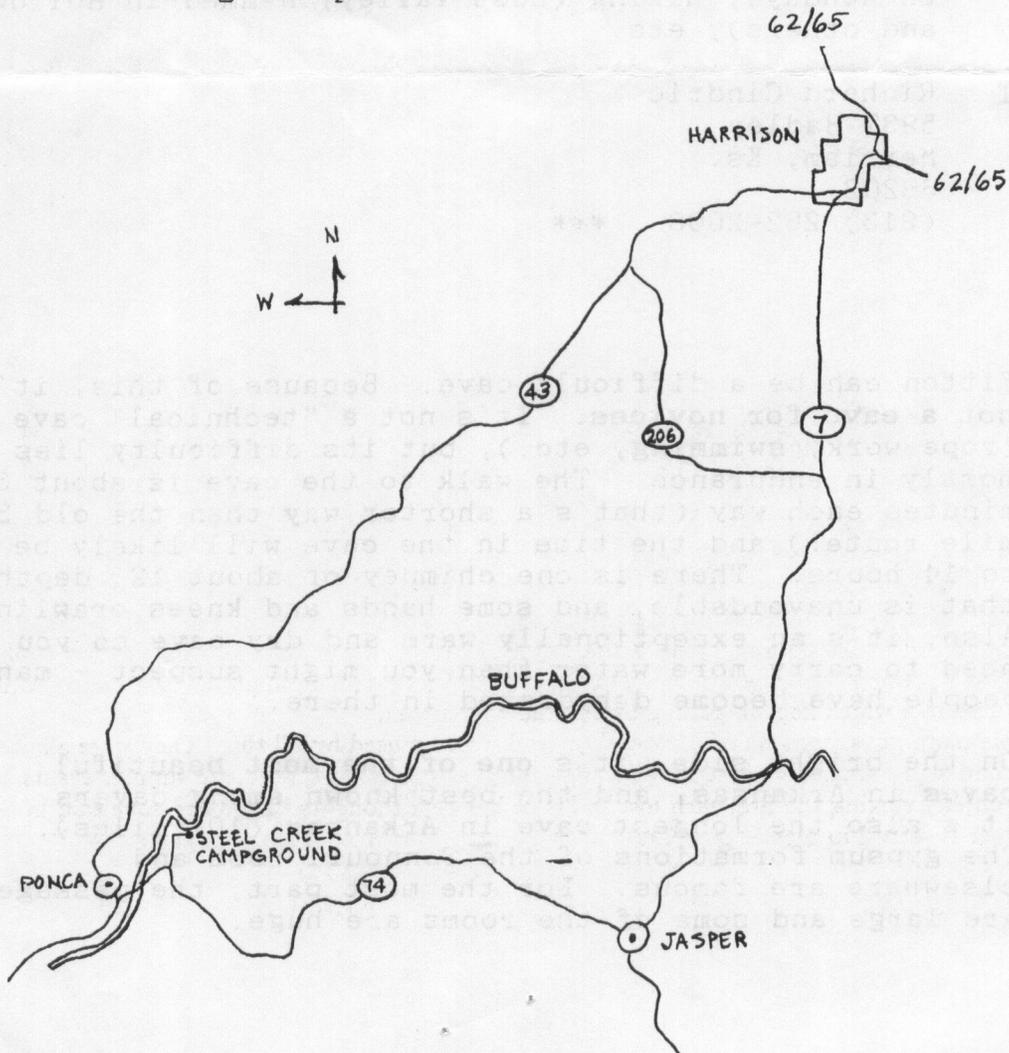
* Fitton can be a difficult cave. Because of this, it's **not a cave for novices**. It's not a "technical" cave (rope work, swimming, etc.), but its difficulty lies mostly in endurance. The walk to the cave is about 30 minutes each way (that's a shorter way than the old 3 mile route!) and the time in the cave will likely be 8 to 14 hours. There is one chimney of about 12' depth that is unavoidable, and some hands and knees crawling. Also, it's an exceptionally warm and dry cave so you'll need to carry more water than you might suspect - many people have become dehydrated in there.

On the bright side, it's **one of the most beautiful caves** in Arkansas, and the best known among cavers. It's also the longest cave in Arkansas (10+ miles). The gypsum formations of the Tennouri room and elsewhere are famous. For the most part, the passages are large and some of the rooms are huge.

The weekend of May 18 was chosen because it's the first weekend after the Bat entrance is open. That means that, if we're in the mood and the water isn't high, we can enter through the traditional entrance and exit through the Bat entrance (or vice versa). The route to the Bat entrance includes a stream passage, the "21 Jumps" passage, the Round Room, and a 40' waterfall.

** Entrance to Fitton is by permit from the National Park Service. Permission for a permit is not granted until 30 days before the date of the permit. In other words, **we can't be certain of getting a permit for May 18 until April 18!** We'll try for May 19 if the 18th is already taken. If there's a date change, anyone who signs up will be notified ASAP.

*** Please let me know by April 17 if you want to go. The Park Service limits the number of people who can enter the cave at a time to 16. And that would have to be in 2 groups because they require a group to be from 4 to 8 people. I'll need to know the number of permits we'll need by April 17 because I'll request the permit(s) first thing on April 18.



Strange Rituals at Friar's Hole

by Bill Klimack

Sometimes strange things happen. Strange things frequently happen to cavers. At the Pig Roast of 1989 a bunch of us were camped at the lower campground at Friar's Hole. We were all sitting around the fire after carb'ing up subsequent to a day of caving. Besides myself, Dottie Eckert, Joe Kaffl, Kim Fleischmann, Steve Luke, and a couple of guys from G.A.G. were there.

We were all having a good time, so I guess that we were in a giddy mindset, but we were all pretty damn sober. A few hadn't even had a drink. If we had all been drunk, it would have been easier to explain.

At some point, Steve Luke stuck a plastic bag on the end of a stick and waved it over the fire. He explained that he used to do this as a kid, and that some bags melt and catch fire and drip. "So," we all thought. Steve added that the dripping, molten, flaming plastic made great sounds; if you had the right plastic.

Well, hey, he had the right stuff. The bag shriveled down onto the stick, forming a polymer cocoon, before it caught fire with an indigo flame. The bonds began to break and the plastic crept toward the underside of the stick.

Then, suddenly, "WOOP ... WOOP ... WOOP ... WOOP."

The plastic dripped into the flames, the speed of the air rushing past the drops threatened to put out the flames trailing from the molten thermoplastic resin. The battling drops kept their incandescent cloak, but the fight between the flames and the air made the sound that would have fit in perfectly on the set of Star Wars.

We were surprised. This was great. We grabbed all the plastic bags in the area around the campfire. These were impaled on branches and subjected to the heat above the flaming logs. Some plastic wouldn't cooperate. But some started whooping it up. This began to prompt some comments. Someone pointed out that since some bags didn't woop, "You have to know your trash."

We thought of several of the symptoms of bag burning that parents could watch out for:

the kids know the hefty deliveryman at the local supermarket
triple-bagging produce
the Man from Glad is a regular house guest
your trash can liners are always missing
food in the refrigerator is always sitting directly on the shelves

By then we were out of left-over bags. Food still in bags was consumed to provide plastic. This supply quickly ran out. Then someone discovered a bag stash in the outhouse! Obviously a bag-burner had hidden his plastic by disguising it as waterproofing around the toilet paper.

Luke had become a chain bag-burner by this time, lighting the next from the vitrified carnage of the last, sending a geyser of sparks wafting into the jet of the West Virginia night. Pyrolactites hung from below the branch clutched in his hands. Mark Fanto later said that at Tim Walker's cabin they could hear the shouted "woop ... woop" echoing up from our camp and the sustained laughter. Everybody came up with many witty remarks which kept us rolling but are now forgotten.

A couple more guys from G.A.G. showed up and were amused by all this. They were amazed that we were sober and still found all this so fascinating. Having exhausted the plastic supply, events tapered off and we sat quietly ringing the fire, each lost in his or her own thoughts. Then someone said in a soft voice "At OTR beer is served in plastic cups ..."

Bat Bits

Delayed Ovulation and Fertilization taken from Bats, A Natural History

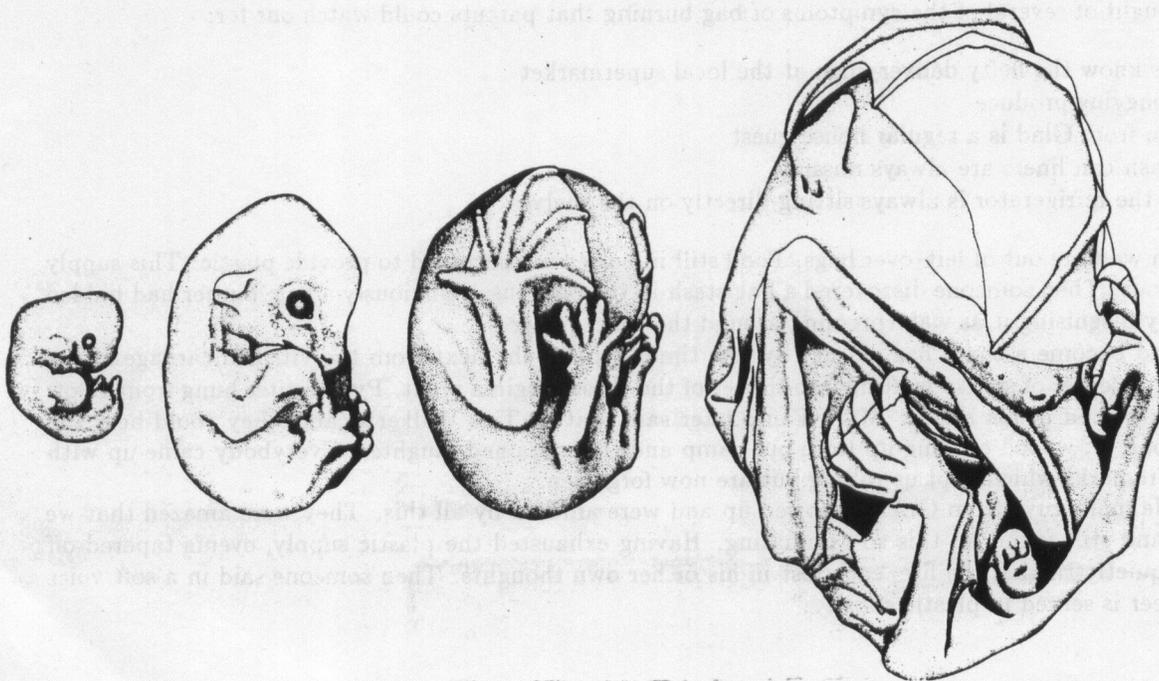
This unusual reproductive pattern is found in temperate species of the genus *Rhinolophus* and is widespread in temperate species of *Myotis*, *Pipistrellus*, *Eptesicus* and a few others. This pattern is perhaps the most specialized, because it involves two phenomena—delayed ovulation and over winter storage of sperm in the female reproductive tract.

In males, the testes descend into the scrotum soon after the bats leave hibernation in the spring. This is triggered by an increase in testosterone. Sperm production reaches a peak in late August and September. By November, sperm production ceases.

By mid- to late summer, adult females have weaned their young and begin an estrous cycle in August. In the meantime (mid to late autumn), males copulate and inseminate the females. Copulation may occur during temporary arousals from hibernation throughout the winter. However, the sperm cannot fertilize the egg, because it is not in the female duct system. Instead, the sperm are stored in the uterus or in the oviduct. This site varies with the species. The time between copulation and ovulation can vary from 35 days to 2 months.

Ovulation and subsequent fertilization occur in late February or March while the females are still in the hibernaculum. The young are born in May or June after a gestation period of 50-100 days.

This ability of sperm storage in some species is a remarkable trait. It allows for the survival of the female during hibernation without the loss of energy necessary for an embryo's development. Without this special adaptation, certain species of bats found in temperate zones would have a much larger mortality rate amongst females during winter months!



These embryos were taken from wild caught females and therefore the ages are not known. Note the development of the wings and hindlimb buds. The embryo on the far right is near term.