

The Month's Guano

January 2001

Kansas City Area Grotto

Volume 15, Issue 1

Put together a suitable first aid kit

David Gonzales - Columnist

Date: 11/18/00 22:15

Last summer, while pushing a raft off a rock on the Middle Fork of the Salmon River in Idaho, I cut my shin open to the bone. The gash was ugly, but the aftermath was uglier.

A doctor cleaned and stitched the wound just six hours after the incident, but infection set in. Two days later I could barely walk, my entire lower leg was swollen, and I had a 102-degree temperature. Before the leg healed, I paid four more visits to medical clinics, spent \$500 in medical fees, received several dire warnings about hospitalization and amputation and finally understood the importance of a decent first aid kit.

Until this incident, I'd always carried the same pathetic first aid kit while traveling and backpacking: a piece or two of moleskin, a few Band-Aids, aspirin and earplugs for Third World overnight bus trips. For anything more serious than a blister or a Nepali bus driver's bad taste in music, I was completely unprepared. No longer.

Fortunately, my hometown, Jackson, Wyo., is an outdoorsy, adventurous community, and the doctors here are old hands at helping travelers compile medical kits. After local general practitioner "Buzz" Bricca restitched my leg, I asked whether he would give me some first aid advice. "Love to," he said, having advised several Himalayan expeditions on their medical kits.

I wanted a basic kit for traveling overseas and backpacking in this country. I didn't want anything too bulky, heavy, complicated or expensive. An avid backpacker, Bricca could sympathize, but he still suggested a methodical approach to compiling a kit. "Start with the skin," he said, "and go in."

Which means the first ingredients are sunblock ("strong as you can get") and an antibacterial soap like Hibiclens, which Bricca prefers to iodine or Be-

tadine for cleaning cuts and scrapes.

To close gaping wounds, use Steri-Strips, which are easier to use than suture kits. Bring a disposable razor to shave off hair that might interfere with the Steri-Strips' adhesive, and swabs of tincture of benzoin, which makes Steri-Strips stick better. Because it toughens skin, tincture of benzoin can also be rubbed into ankle and toe spots susceptible to blistering.

For dressings, bring medical tape and several gauze pads. By folding and refolding gauze and affixing it with tape, you can make any size dressing. No need for adhesive gauze pads or rolls of gauze.

For cuts and minor infections, an over-the-counter triple antibiotic such as Neosporin is "better than nothing," but Bricca prefers the prescription antibiotic mupirocin (sold under the brand name Bactroban).

Bring tweezers to pull out foreign matter driven into a wound, a sewing needle to dig out splinters, scissors to cut tape, moleskin for blister prevention and alcohol wipes to clean hands. A small unbreakable mirror is vital if you're alone and have cut your face or must remove something from your eye.

For sprains and other musculoskeletal mishaps, Bricca suggests two elastic Ace bandages of different widths and bandannas, which can be made into arm slings, head bandages and splints. He did not recommend, however, pain medications stronger than aspirin or ibuprofen.

"I try not to use narcotics (such as Tylenol with codeine), because narcotics make people goofy and impair judgment," Bricca said. "It's better to deal with pain than walk off a cliff."

To save money, buy first aid items in the United States rather than overseas. Friends and I learned this lesson a few years ago while readying for a two-week mountain trek in Peru. In the Andean town of Huaraz, where we bought our provisions, food was

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ridiculously cheap, but many medical supplies, because they were imported, were not.

Also, consider carefully how many supplies you'll need. In this regard, Barry Williams, a photographer from Atlanta, isn't taking any chances. Soon to embark on a 10-month journey through Asia, the Mideast and Africa, Williams opted for an extensive Atwater Carey first aid kit. If you're traveling for months in the Third World or want to be outfitted with every medical bell and whistle, such kits, available in outdoors shops, are inexpensive alternatives to buying everything individually.

Williams spent an extra \$60 on pharmaceuticals for his kit. He could have saved even more money, however, if he'd bought his medications overseas. Unlike bandages, antibiotics and similar drugs are far cheaper elsewhere in the world. But beware of shoddily manufactured or counterfeit drugs in the Indian subcontinent and Africa, warned David Shlim, former medical director of the Canadian International Water and Energy Consultants Travel Medicine Center in Kathmandu, Nepal.

"The more life-and-death the drug is, the less reliable this strategy can be," said Shlim, editor of **Medicine-Planet.Com**. "I really only recommend you buy drugs overseas if you have experience treating yourself and know how your body responds to those medicines."

Travelers should carry a full course of antibiotics such as Noroxin or ciprofloxacin for diarrhea and cephalexin or Zithromax for respiratory and skin ailments. Replace medications when they expire.

As for whether to carry syringes, Shlim thinks the odds of requiring an injection while traveling are pretty small, as are the odds of having the appropriate needle-syringe combination with you.

"Besides," Shlim said, "if you need an injection and are worried about needles, you're probably in some crummy hospital you'd want to get out of anyway." Finally, before leaving home, consult the Centers for Disease Control Web site (www.cdc.gov/travel/) or www.MedicinePlanet.com to learn exactly which travel inoculations you need for your destination. But don't go to your family doctor for your shots. State or county departments of health usually offer travel inoculations at better prices.

One more thing: Modern medicine has done wonders for keeping travelers healthy and disease-free. But it hasn't done much for the musical tastes of the developing world's bus drivers. Don't forget those earplugs.

More for Less appears the third Sunday of the month.

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Kansas City Area Grotto is affiliated with the National Speleological Society, The Missouri Speleological Survey, and a Founding Member of Missouri Caves & Karst Conservancy.

Meetings held every second Wednesday at 7 p.m. (**alternate site in May**), Magg Hall, behind Spencer Laboratories, Volker Blvd. & Cherry, Kansas City, Missouri. Annual Dues: \$ 10 for Full Members (3 caving trips with KCAG, nomination and vote of membership required.)

NCRC Callout number Emergency use only

Central Region 502-564-7815. This number may be used for cave rescue emergencies in the states of, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Michigan, **Missouri**, Ohio and Wisconsin.

UPCOMING EVENTS

REMEMBER OHG HAS AGGreed TO LETS US CAVE WITH THEM. IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN A TRIP YOU MUST CONTACT THE TRIP LEADER.

Omitted For Security Reasons



From:
Barbara Moss, NSS #13678RL
Environmental Education Committee
IMAX Committee

Re: IMAX Theater Contacts

Please find, below, the letter John Scheltens has written concerning you and your grotto's involvement with the IMAX premieres this Spring.

Thank you !!
Barbara Moss
=====

Your local theater contact for : Kansas City MO
Kansas City Zoo
(816) 513-5800
Kathy Jarboe Theatre/Marketing Director
March 17, 2001
=====

John P. Scheltens, NSS Past President
Chair, IMAX Production Committee
HC 52, Box 172
Hot Springs, South Dakota 57747

November 10, 2000

To: NSS Internal Organizations

It is with great pleasure that I announce the arrival of the first big screen IMAX® movie on caves entitled "Journey Into Amazing Caves". The film will debut starting in March 2001 in theaters throughout the United States and around the world.

MacGillivray Freeman Films of Laguna Beach, California, produced the film in association with the Cincinnati Museum Center with major funding provided by the National Science Foundation. MacGillivray Freeman is the premier producer of IMAX-theater films, including the recent productions "Everest" and "Dolphins".

For the past two years, the NSS has worked closely with MacGillivray Freeman as a consultant on the "Amazing Caves" project. Many NSS members have been involved in various aspects of the film to ensure

that the film portrays scientific and technical accuracy, as well as stressing cave conservation and safety.

"Amazing Caves" features the work of two real and well-respected NSS members, Hazel Barton and Nancy Aulenbach. Their journey takes them to remote caving locations in search of microbes that live in extreme environments. MacGillivray Freeman has produced a film that is exciting, educational and encourages appreciation and conservation of caves.

We expect that this film will be seen by millions of people worldwide. The NSS believes that this film can be used as a vehicle to educate viewers on the importance of caves and cave conservation. Through the gracious cooperation of MacGillivray Freeman Films, Grottos are encouraged to contact the local IMAX theatre in your area to explore ways of working together. Some ideas could include conservation displays, educational workshops, lectures, and conservation projects. Enclosed with this letter are materials from MacGillivray Freeman that list the name of the local theater, the contact person and the tentative opening dates. These theaters will also be receiving the name and contact person of your Local Grotto.

Please be aware that each theater is individually owned and operated, so cooperative arrangements for participation are to be determined between each Grotto and theatre.

The NSS and Project Underground have worked closely with MacGillivray Freeman to develop an educational teacher's guide and a cave-themed brochure that will be distributed to each viewer. The brochure contains safety and conservation messages about caves as well as directing interested viewers to the NSS for additional information.

Resource materials to assist Grottos are being developed by the NSS and will be available on the NSS web-page (www.caves.org). Look for "Learn More About Caves" on the NSS home page.

Sincerely:
John P. Scheltens, NSS Past President
Chair, IMAX Production Committee

Hi Bryon - I got your message regarding your caving group. Journey Into Amazing Caves opens on March 23, 2001 at the Sprint IMAX Theatre. We will have Dr. Hazel Barton (who is in the film) here from March 20-22 for educational workshops and press events. If you and your group are interested in helping us promote the film or want to join us when the speaker is here, etc., please let me know. This film is spectacular, and we want to make sure the caving community knows about the film! Let me know what you are interested in. Thanks.

Kathy Jarboe
Director of Visitor Services
Sprint IMAX Theatre

Road Trip anyone?

Greetings Cavers,

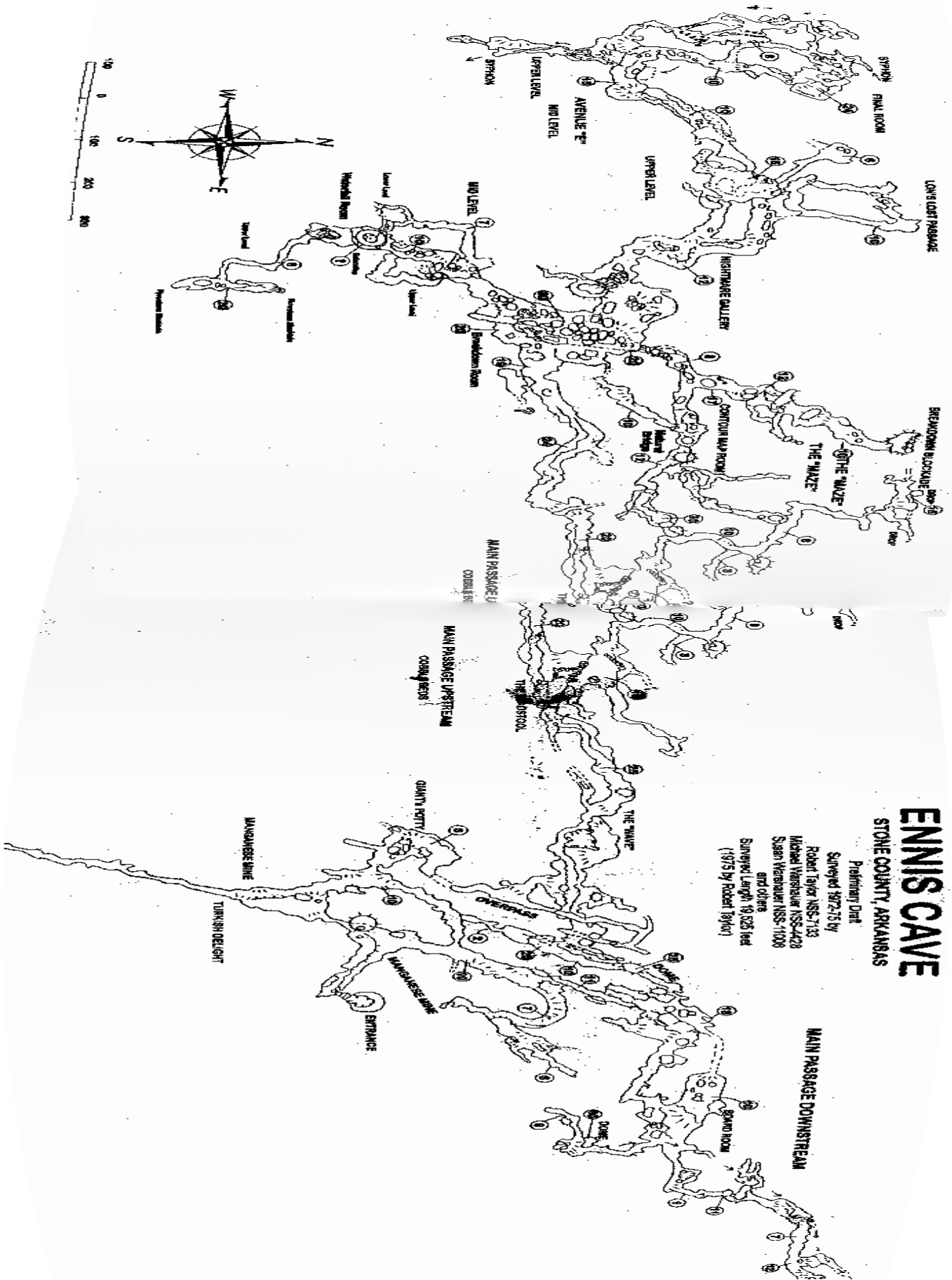
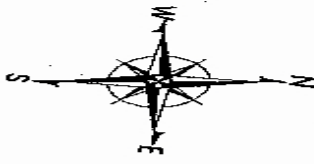
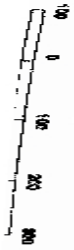
The 20th Annual Crawlathon is January 26-28, 2001. This is a regional caving event attended by over 600 people. Over 80 cave trips of various skill levels are offered throughout the weekend. In addition to the cave trips there are evening programs, the "Squeeze-O-Rama" competition, a new climbing wall and caving vendors onsite. The event is sponsored by and held at the Carter Caves State Resort Park in northeastern Kentucky.

For the first time the Crawlathon has a web site. It is:
<http://www.crawlathon.com>

Visit the web site to get information about the Crawlathon. You no longer need to wait for the mailed Crawlathon brochure to register for the event. Get the brochure and a registration form from the web site! Sign up soon for the cave trips that you want. Each trip has a limit and the trips fill up quickly. Registration is going on now.

Cave softly,

Andy Niekamp
Crawlathon Staff



ENNIS CAVE

STONE COUNTY, ARKANSAS

Prepared by
 Surveyed 1972-75 by
 Robert Taylor NSS-7133
 Michael Werthman NSS-4428
 Susan Werthman NSS-11008
 and others
 Surveyed Length 19,225 feet
 (1975 by Robert Taylor)

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Kansas City, Kansas 66104-1009

Your
Mailing
Label
Goes
Here

Editor's Corner

Be sure To visit KCAG's Website.

<http://members.tripod.com/~kcagrotto/>

<http://www.wheresbernie.com>
This Is Bernarhd's site

<http://www.texasroperescue.com/09>
Site sep up for Joe Ivy's Accident

2001 KCAG Officers Election Ballot

Please fill out and submit your **Election**



President: _____

Vice President: _____

Secretary/Treasurer: _____



Please Return At the December Christmas Party
or mail to:

Jeff Page
10420 Conser #2H
Overland Park, KS 66212