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CASCADE CAVE REPORT #3

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BETTER LATE THAN NEVER - EVEN IF VERY LATE  
First official Cascade Grotto trip to Bend area

At 7:11 AM April 27 one carload from the Cascade Grotto including Phil Gilhausen, Bill and Len Halliday and Howard Jackson, a free-lance writer, left Seattle for the lava tubes of the Bend area of Crater (see CCR #2). Aside from a minor altercation with the law in Lemond and the necessity for checking section markers in a snowstorm every few minutes for the last 12 miles, the trip was uneventful until we approached our first target, Skeleton Cave, at about 3:30 AM. Then an eerie light appeared through the trees about 10' off the ground. As we approached, it resolved into a Coleman lantern, balanced atop a rear on Gene Hanson's car. The occupants, however, were nowhere to be found and we were in no mood to hunt them up. Phil grabbed his sleeping bag and headed for the cave to get out of the sleet - the others were too tired to get out of the car.

Some three hours later we were awakened by a startled shout from the depths of the cave - the Portland-Vancouver contingent of Hanson and Surt. Hjort of Fort Vancouver. N. W. had awakened and stumbled over Phil on their way out. As we were breakfasting, Johnellis Jones and another mountaineer friend drove in from Seattle.

Skeleton Cave, which we explored and mapped, is a lava tube about 5000' long, with interesting lava flow patterns. Only one branch passage exists, entering the main tube about half way in. Here was found the fossil bear which gave the cave its name. Hjort, with wide experience in the lava tubes of Hawaii, pointed out repeatedly examples of the different patterns of lava flow.

On emerging, we found H.R. Tonseth, Fort Rock District Ranger, who subsequently acted as our guide, awaiting us. Following his truck, the cavalcade headed for Arnold Ice Cave, a small remnant of a lava tube which was formerly the source of ice for the city of Bend. Entered through a small hole leading to an almost vertical slope of ice, moderately expert rope work is required.

A short distance away is Wind Cave, 5000' of extremely rough floor and many great piles of rock, with many impressive chambers of a size rarely encountered in limestone. The portion of the party which reached the rear found a few names indicating that contrary to local opinion, the cave had been completely explored before. Of interest in this cave were small ice stalagmites growing beneath a hole in the roof.

The next target was to be Derrick Cave, some 25 miles to the south. The storm, however, had reduced the road to the point where logging trucks were stuck in the mud, so the second car from Seattle dropped out to head for Crater Lake, and the others bunked in at Cabin Lake Ranger Station. Surveyors Ice Cave was still snowbound.

South Ice Cave, visited early the next morning, was found to be at the critical point for ice deposits and held worthy of meteorological study. The 300' of the major end was explored, and the ice domes, lake and stalactites well photographed.

Here the party disbanded for the long pull back. The Vancouver-Portland car, however, visited the Fort Rock Shelter area before returning. It was felt that despite the weather and the distances involved that the trip was well worthwhile and the area most interesting. Future trips to others of the many caves in the area are planned.