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Mount Adams area semi-fiasco trip - by Bill Halliday

Frankly, it's surprising that anything was accomplished on the grotto trip on July 30-31 to the Mount Adams area. Meeting place was to be Dynamited Cave, late Saturday morning. Running a bit late, Len dropped Pat and me off to map the uppermost section of the Red-Butter-Stairwell complex, then headed for Dynamited to drop Jerry Frahm as planned. So they got lost. Eventually everyone turned up at Ice Cave Campground, much much, much later.

Lunch further delayed things, but Don Dilley found a guide who took us to some sinks in a tumulus about 1½ miles south of Trout Lake. From the western end, a low tube leads to a large, low irregular room with unusually fine floor flow patterns.. At the other end of the sinks, Don moved a rock and found another room, smaller but more spacious and with an intruded mass of lava welled up from below, and an odd rounded lava boulder about 5 x 5 x 15 feet (guesstimated) sitting in the middle of a smooth lava floor as if the lava had flowed around it without any ripples. It definitely did not come from the ceiling.

On the south side of the same sink Bill Simpson found still another hole that went, but he would have had to crawl over a nest of some reddish ant-like creatures so desisted. These sinks have long been used as trash dumps (Jerry found some license plates back to 1921 for his antique car club) and the nearby dirt road is locally known as the Picnic Ground Road, so these are the Picnic Ground Road Dump Caves. This admittedly is over the dead body of Don Dilley, who wanted to name "his" new cave something nobody could possibly spell right. A chain of sinks leading west was not checked in detail.

So Don & Co. rushed off to meet another guide at the scheduled time of 6 PM. We followed more slowly - an error even despite the choking dust. At the meeting point we were pointed on up the road. So we went and went and went and went: no Don. So being nearly at Dynamited Cave anyway, we looked to see why Jerry got lost. It turned out the new road west from Peterson Guard Station doesn't follow the old one shown on the maps, but goes by Spearpoint Cave instead.

So our car and the Stitts adjourned to Trout Lake for a shack, a rest and some cool liquids, plus a short look at Community Park Cave around the corner. Don's car finally returned. When all were filled and rested, we took off in the dark for Pillar of Fire Cave and David's Den, south toward Hood River, then east on a dirt road. Then north on a dirt road. Then south on the dirt road- host again. Don got way ahead of us, and suddenly we were back on the state highway. So back toward Trout Lake, a hundred feet or so, whereupon Don's car passed us doing 70, headed (seemingly) for Hood River and Seattle where he was due next morning. So to the sack. So at 11 PM Don arrived with the glad news that they'd finally found the caves. Even I wouldn't get up.

So at 10 AM next morning we rendezvoused where we were supposed to meet a guide, but it turned out he hadn't come home last night yet. So the Stitts and Jerry went to Dynamited to work in the Sand Passage; Pat and I checked out the trench between Cowbones Cave and Stairwell Cave - it proved to be an interesting outlier of the Butter-Stairwell-Red system, cut off by lava seal. Only we forgot the tape.

Naturally we were late getting back, and our guide had come and gone. So we headed out, stopping to pinpoint Snowpatch Cave and 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ sinks 1/8 mile east of the Hood River road just over 1 mile south of Trout Lake. The Stitts had a look for White Salmon Cave - a new report of the Oregon Grotto - on the east side of the White Salmon River in sec. 35, T5N, R10E, but couldn't even find the bridge.

Who's a lava gopher?

Strong cold air currents were blowing down-tube from the upper ends of BOTH branches of the uppermost cave in the Red-Butter-Stairwell system on the hot summer day of July 30. The left hand passage is narrowed by a tumulus in a complex area, the right hand passage is a barely passable crawlway which I did not attempt. Connection to a postulated Lava Bridge System seems possible - W.R.H.

Sumas Mountain Cave and nearby sinks are mentioned on page 16 of: Moen, Wayne S. 1962. Geology and mineral deposits of the north half of the Van Zandt Quadrangle, Whatcom County, Washington. (Wash. Div. Mines & Geol. Bulletin 50). Locations of many additional limestone outcrops are shown in detail.
