

# The Cascade Caver

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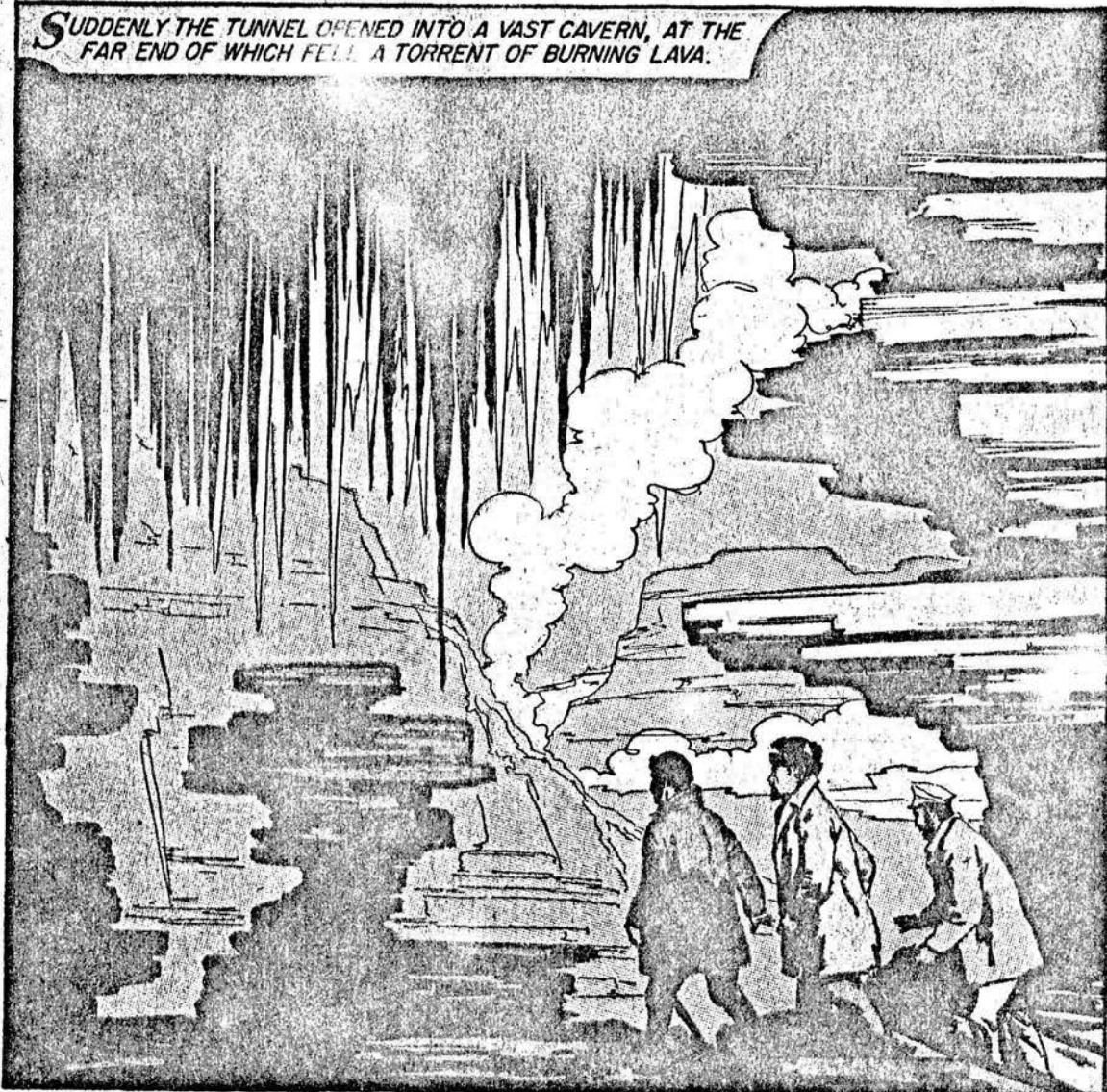
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CLASSICS *Illustrated*

**S**UDDENLY THE TUNNEL OPENED INTO A VAST CAVERN, AT THE FAR END OF WHICH FELL A TORRENT OF BURNING LAVA.



SPELUNKING ON A COMET

(according to Jules Verne - "Off on a Comet")

(as interpreted by CLASSICS ILLUSTRATED, #149, March 1959)

# Cave Resembling Subway Uncovered

By MARCIA LIEURANCE  
Statesman Staff Writer

VALE — There's an old saying — "There's nothing new under the sun" — but it doesn't hold true for new discoveries below the earth's surface.

This week four Bureau of Land Management men acted on a second-hand tip and found a natural phenomenon that could well be a significant geological discovery for Malheur County. It is a huge cavern or lava tube extending for miles under the earth's crust roughly 60 miles from Jordan Valley.

At the site Joe Yraguen, Gail Weiland, Max Lieurance and Maurice Hurd lowered themselves through a small and dangerous opening on the desert floor, down two ledges and an incline. They were unprepared for the vast cavern that

lay ahead. They had heard that a huge cave extending for many miles could be found in this particular area and after a four-hour search, found the opening. An old man from Harney County reported he had visited it as a youth and his directions proved to be fairly accurate.

It is a place that appears to have been unknown even to the Indians as there are no signs of any ancient artifacts, writings, or other symbols. However, the long cavern has been visited by a few people wearing shoes — and some carried spray cans of paint for infantile defacing of the walls near the entrance. Apparently they were not aware that such a cavern could be of significant value as a possible tourist attraction or geophysical phenomenon.

The entrance to the cave is a collapsed portion

of the ceiling and the loose rocks are particularly dangerous. It opens abruptly and without warning on the desert floor. A man on a horse or in a vehicle could easily plummet to the first ledge as unwary desert animals, including rabbits, coyotes, and possibly even sheep and cows had done previously. Skeletons testified to the danger at the mouth of the cavern.

The men found it necessary to lower themselves about 16 feet to a small ledge, down a 200 foot incline that leads to another 16 foot ledge to the floor of the lava tunnel. The walls are 35-40 feet wide apart and the ceiling is estimated at 50-60 feet high. It is reminiscent of a subway and almost appears manmade. The elderly informant said he visited it as a youth and believes it to be 40 miles long. However, the BLM men went in a

## in Malheur Desert by Spelunker Trio

little less than a mile. The tunnel appears to be approximately the same throughout. Lieurance said the tunnel should be extensively explored by a knowledgeable crew of geologists rather than by curious amateurs.

The entrance is dangerous and the sides have collapsed and blocked portions of the tunnel in the first mile. For this reason the three-man party will not disclose the exact location of the tunnel except to say that it is in the middle of the desert and nearly impossible to find without precise directions. Plans will be made to explore it further, to find the exit and to determine the length.

The men were well prepared for this first attempt at "spelunking." At first they were skeptical of the 40-mile length but now believe it en-

tirely possible. Fresh air is present which indicates another opening. The main tunnel goes in a northerly direction and conceivably could exit high in Owyhee River Canyon.

The tunnel is not a fault in the earth. The explorer team theorized it to be a lava tube created when the lava crust cooled, later breaking away at a distant point whereby the liquid lava flowed out making the tube. The lava flow is much older than the Jordan Crater flow some 60 miles distance. Another theory is that it could have been created by water action although no water is present in the cave.

The uniform markings on the walls are puzzling. Some believe they could have been made by a solid object such as ice or extremely hard rock that was forced through the opening. All are questions to be answered by the experts.

## THE IDAHO DAILY STATESMAN

Second Section

BOISE, IDAHO, WEDNESDAY MORNING, JUNE 21, 1967

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### Lava Tube Was Overestimated

VALE, Ore. — (AP) — Bureau of Land Management scientists have found that a big lava tube in Southeastern Oregon is less than a

mile long, instead of the 40 miles originally reported.

B. L. M. officials and other scientists measured the cave as 40 feet wide, 40 feet high, and eight-tenths of a mile long.

The cave is in Malheur County, across the Owyhee River from the Jordan Crater and lava beds.

COMING EVENTS:

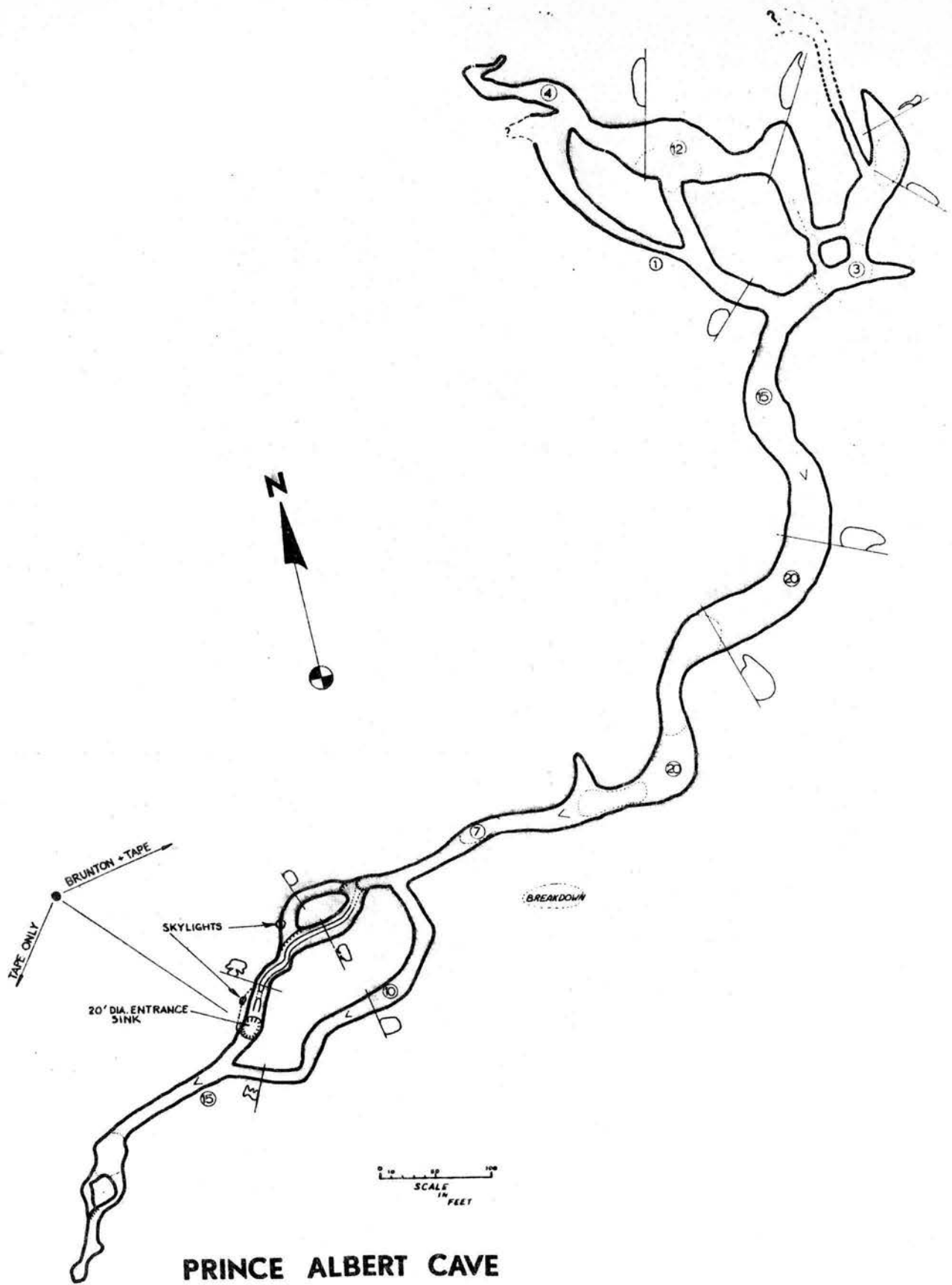
July 8-9 joint trip with Oregon Grotto to rear sections of Dynamited  
July 17 8 PM regular meeting 1117 36th Ave. E., Seattle Cave.  
July 20-25 joint trip with Oregon Grotto to St. Helens area  
July 29 or 30 scouting trip to Mt. Baker area  
Mid-August: Mt. Adams trip  
Labor Day weekend: Papoose Cave  
Sept. 9-10 regional meeting at Mt. Adams. Caving, companionship  
and slide show for preparation of NSS slide series on lava tubes

NO FIELD TRIP REPORTS THIS MONTH. So much has been going on that  
no one seems to have had time to write anything up.

ONE BIT OF NEWS: on the state Civil Service exam for the new  
position of Civil Defense Coordinator for Search and Rescue, 9 of  
the 136 questions on the written test were: "Search and Rescue -  
Cave". Other states take notice.

HELP STAMP OUT THE BUREAU OF RECLAMATION!

Other grottos please copy slogan cribbed from THE WRETCHED MESS NEWS  
of West Yellowstone, Mont., Vol. 4, #3. p.1 - and the Seattle Times  
Mag. Sec. of Jan. 29, 1967, p. 10!



## PRINCE ALBERT CAVE

TAPE AND COMPASS SURVEY  
4-9-67 BY CHARLIE & JO LARSON

This cave, near Bnt Cave, Skamania County, has been the site of much recent work by the Oregon Grotto. The joint July field trip will probably include this cave.