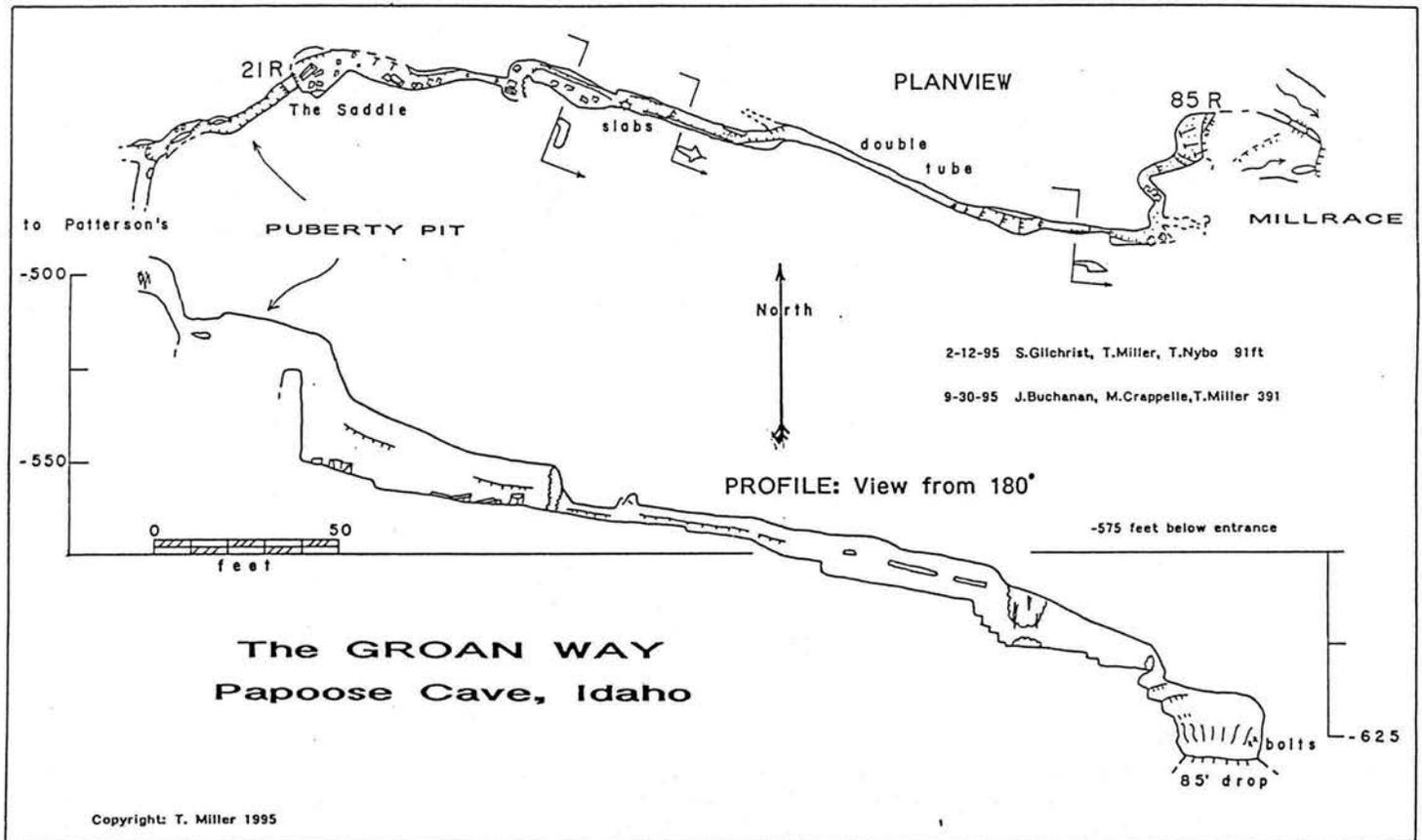


Cascade Caver

Newsletter of the Cascade Grotto of the National Speleological Society

November & December 1995, Volume 34 No. 8 & 9



Cascade Caver

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GROTTO MEMBERSHIP

Membership in the Cascade Grotto is \$10.00 per year. Subscription to the *Cascade Caver* is free to regular members. Membership for each additional family member is \$2.00 per year. Subscription to the *Cascade Caver* is \$10.00 per year.

GROTTO ADDRESS

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MEETINGS

Regular grotto meetings are held monthly at 7:00pm on the third Friday of each month at the University of Washington, Room 6, in the basement of Johnson Hall. Please see the map on the back cover of this issue.

UPCOMING EVENTS

December 15	Grotto Christmas Party	
	Paul and Katrina Ostby's	
January 1	Ballots must be returned	
January 19	Grotto Meeting	7:00
February 16	Grotto Meeting	7:00
March 15	NSS BOG Reception	
	Tom Strong's house	
March 16	NSS BOG Meeting	

COVER

This month's cover is a map drawn by Tom Miller of the Groan Way in Papoose Cave.

FRANK AND ERNEST / Bob Thaves



Christmas Party

This year's Grotto Christmas party will be held at Paul and Katrina Ostby's house on Friday evening, December 15th from 7:00 to 11:00. This is a potluck, with Paul and Katrina providing a turkey and hot spiced cider. Please see the map for directions.

Paul & Katrina Ostby's house
8220 NE 122nd Place
Kirkland, WA 98034

The Groan Way of Papoose Cave

by Tom Miller

Perhaps the cavers of the previous quarter century were fatter and less fit than at present. Perhaps that is the reason the name "Groan Way" usually causes a puzzled response in present cavers, because the passage strikes many as relatively mellow. It has a few crawls, some sections suitable for standup routines, and ends at the deepest pit yet dropped in the cave.

Well, Papoose Cave really WAS different in its initial exploration: the "Wet 40" was a true waterfall most of the year: the name wasn't just an anachronism, or the dim human memory of previous geological times.

Certainly, the (wimpy or tough) discoverers of Patterson's Passage (later called Bluewater Extension by a rival group) must have noted the half-tube that continued at the ceiling of Puberty Pit.

Like other cavers for the next several years, no one followed the tube very far past where the floor dropped away, to the bottom of the pit a hundred feet below. In times leads of this sort must pass into a sort of speleo-mythology, so obvious that they are automatically assumed to be cul-de-sacs; and so they stay until someone passes who doesn't know they are hopeless.

In mid-February of 1971 the caving club at Eastern Washington was finishing a week and a half "expedition" to Papoose, camping out of the snow in the shelter above the entrance. All the obvious passages had been followed years before, and we had begun to push the half-hidden shadows of the ceilings. One canyon ceiling had continued high to the start of the Gargoyle Passage-- on the final sortie of the project, before leaving, Denny Andrew and I were pushing and scooping the Gargoyle to an abrupt end. Here, the tunnel dropped suddenly into the ceiling of a high canyon, which we down-climbed to find ourselves at the start of Patterson's Passage.

Not knowing any better, Denny and I probed the half-tube high above Puberty Pit, stemming the walls as they belled out, and the floor fell away to the noisy waterfall room below. After eighty horizontal feet, I could make out a chockstone ahead, and we paused on it to rest. I became aware it was an odd chockstone, bedrock actually, and on its far vertical side, the walls seemed to curve in below so much that they appeared to meet. And what was more curious, the waterfall couldn't be heard on that side.

Finally in spring I could get back, this time with Stan Arlt; we freeclimbed the

vertical 20-foot drop, and found ourselves on solid floor. The chockstone was actually a thin spire, or saddle, walling off the passage ahead, from Puberty Pit behind. Stan and I followed this crawl-and-walk to a series of slick downclimbs at the lip of a very unclimbable pit, with no natural anchor points in fragile rock. The muddy sloping ledge was a parabola shape focusing on darkness enhanced by the sound of a large stream below.

In those golden days of Papoose exploration, one didn't simply abseil the flowstone wall of Puberty Pit-- a healthy stream of cold water continually splashed it's face. Even the "dry" bypass ledge merely deposited the caver beyond the immediate waterfall, but into a turbulent spray of wind and rain. Mechanical ascenders were barely known then and slow ascents and cotton coveralls made a trip to these lower levels more than a light undertaking. The stream continued down a series of falls and crawls past the pit, and to reach the Millrace Room usually required at least a partial soaking. The other route, the Wet Way, was an even more mythic trek, only ever done once, and never mapped.

In fact, none of the Eastern Washington cavers had yet reached the Millrace, twice routed on trips exceeding 20 hours. Stan and I were intrigued by the possibility of at least a drier path to the cave's end, if not a brand new virgin stream passage at the bottom of our new route.

Three weeks later, we drove to the cave and entered immediately on Friday night to place two bolts on the parabolic ledge and to christen the passage "Groan Way" following our second round-trip through

it. We slept briefly and re-entered early in the morning with Jim Krupke.

I had been previously convinced of the usefulness of surveying but with our primitive gear we could only make a pace and compass map of the Groan Way. Could we have plotted it first, we might have expected much less discovery at the pit's bottom. As it was, the drop was virgin and nearly free for 70 feet to a ledge, then a hop of a further 15 feet to the stream floor.

None of us recognized the place-- the thunderous noise level was compounded almost immediately with the confluence of a second stream, and we concluded from the incomplete map of that era that we had dropped into the junction of the Wet Way and Bluewater streams, at the Millrace Room.

The map showed the final pit of Papoose as close, so we scrambled to the edge of the Rotten 50 pit for a look, then began to head out. But our skein of new passages-- Gargoyle to Groan Way-- was not yet played out.

In checking the roof as we made our way back to the Millrace, I spotted a lead. I ran down it, past a single set of footprints that had stopped at a crawl and popped through into a complex maze, with a low, white flowstone-floored tube steeply dropping to the left.

Jim was tired and we left the new find for later. We emerged to find the Memorial Day group of cavers from all over the area preparing to gate the cave for the first time, already enlarging the entrance to place the present culvert.

By my August return with Jim Crail and two others, the cave was gated. We employed the dry Groan Way to reach the new lead, and fully explored the area, naming it "Lightning Complex" for the twisted angular stalactite "bolts" that hung from its ceiling. A year later, I was able to identify the footprints as those of Luurt Niewenhuis, a Seattle caver. In our 16 hours, we found the Lightning was often filthy muddy and we reserved the down-leading white flowstone tube for the next trip.

That trip was short-circuited, for I had been in the habit of sharing our cave news with the Xanadu Grotto. They had made an unannounced trip and pushed the flowstone tube through a tight squeeze to a new sump a hundred horizontal feet farther than the old end of Papoose, but at the same depth.

It was nearly a year later, on the Memorial Day weekend of 1972 that Jim Peck of Salt Lake, Rust Patterson (of Patterson's Passage), a fourth caver, and I used the Groan Way a last time to arrive dry at the Lightning Complex and to push a few more leads. Jim and I then used a chimney bypass I had found to the Rotten 50 to pass it without rope or waterfall, and arrive dry at the bottom sump. Jim chose to close the day with a climb [Peck's Pick] up the remaining bottom lead-- this was a 15-foot vertical wall he lassoed with a length of webbing. We charged up 150 feet of new passage to a dead end.

Over two decades went by. Denny Andrew became a crop-dusting pilot; Stan Arlt married; Jim Peck died in a car accident.

Almost exactly 24 years since its discovery I finally returned to give it a proper survey. The Eastern Washington school club had passed into history but the Palouse Grotto now provided a focal point for local cavers.

Stuart Gilchrist, Tod Nybo and I had a cold snowy start in the February weather. By mid-afternoon we had surveyed only 90 tortuous feet to the saddle and rigged it for a descent into the Groan Way. Then Tod decided to test the depth, and acoustical properties of Puberty Pit with his Figure-8, perhaps forgetting in his enthusiasm that he had no way to retrieve it. After I made a quick run to the end of the passage to estimate the survey job remaining, we routed, mindful of the hour, our diminishing gear, and the forecast of a severe winter storm.

After leaving Stuart at his home in Colfax, I regretted not accepting his offer of a floor to nap on -- the blizzard was wild and bitterly cold. Twenty minutes from home, I entered a steepwalled road cut then heard a muffled "*whump*": I idly noted my canopy trying to pass me on the highway in the darkness. I stopped just after 2 AM, and found the canopy was still attached by one twisted bolt. Worse, it had punctured the left rear tire, and the flat had to be changed in what my thermometer read as 50 F, had the air been calm.

It was not calm and the wind chill was breathtaking, but after sorting it all out, I drove home for a nap. I then returned to retrieve the anchored wreck of a canopy at first light: my chief worry was that I could be charged for littering. But it was

already gone, although I could think of no use for it-- I wished the new owner well.

It was approaching a quarter century since it's discovery before an accurate survey of the Groan Way was finally completed. In September, 1995, Mark Crapelle, John Buchanan, and I rigged Puberty Pit, then chimney to the rigged pitch above at the Saddle. We descended into the Groan Way and continued with the surveys using feet-units to maintain consistency with the most recent survey of the cave.

As with virtually every other passage in Papoose, we headed down the strata dip. The original tube that the water had followed was recalled chiefly by ledges above some of the canyon incisions in the floor, but one relatively lengthy section remained a "doubletube". The upper tube was 2-3 feet in width, with a narrow canyon below. Until the end of this segment, the slope had been consistent, but immediately after there was a series of short drops, an abrupt left into a crawl, then rapid and increasingly greater climbs until the final plunge to the Millrace below.

The bolts were tested, and appeared solid-- we took the survey below to tie in, then exited up Puberty Pit with the gallon urine bottle that untidy cavers had left at the Rescue Cache.

With the recent (temporary?) end to the local drought in mind, we ended the trip with a quick visit to the Bluewater Pit and Atlantis-- the water level of Pearl Harbor had risen 15-20 feet, and two small trickles still fed it. It is likely to cut off further exploration in this area if the rise continues, as well as renew the old

waterfall at the start of the Bluewater Passage. We re-rigged the drop to forestall this possibility and protect the stalactites at its bottom, then exited by dusk.

As a route, the Groan Way may offer advantages in the future: should Atlantis refill and the Bluewater become active again, Puberty Pit will once again be an unpleasant drop. The Groan Way is also far less decorated than the passage below Puberty Pit, and a path less harsh on the cave for reaching the bottom.

Sumas Mountain Cave

By Mike Fraley

On the weekend of October 21, 1995, Larry McTigue and I went up to Sumas Mountain Cave to do some digging. Attempts to coax others to come along failed so we went alone.

The day was overcast and wet, which made for an interesting hike to the cave. It takes about an hour of steady climbing up an old, overgrown logging road to reach the cave.

We made several stops along the way, mostly to rest, but one was to check out another cave. Moonmilk Cricket Cave was dug into in this area a few years ago by Larry and Ron Craige. We stopped there to see the entrance since I had never been there before. The cave is easy to find, since the road passes within a few hundred feet of it. A 30 or 40 foot high pillar of limestone sits just off the road at this point, which contains the cave under its impressive hulk. The cave entrance is

a steep vertical drop of an unknown depth (unknown to me). There is a rope tied onto a log overhead to assist in descending. We did not enter the cave, since we had a hard day of digging ahead.

The entrance to Sumas Mountain Cave, at first glance, reminded me of the cave that trapped and killed Floyd Collins. It is a small, long outcropping of limestone which you have to crawl underneath to find the entrance. The actual entrance itself has a very curious keyhole shape to it. The cave has a very interesting set of mazelike passages. The total length of the known passages are about 250 feet according to Larry.

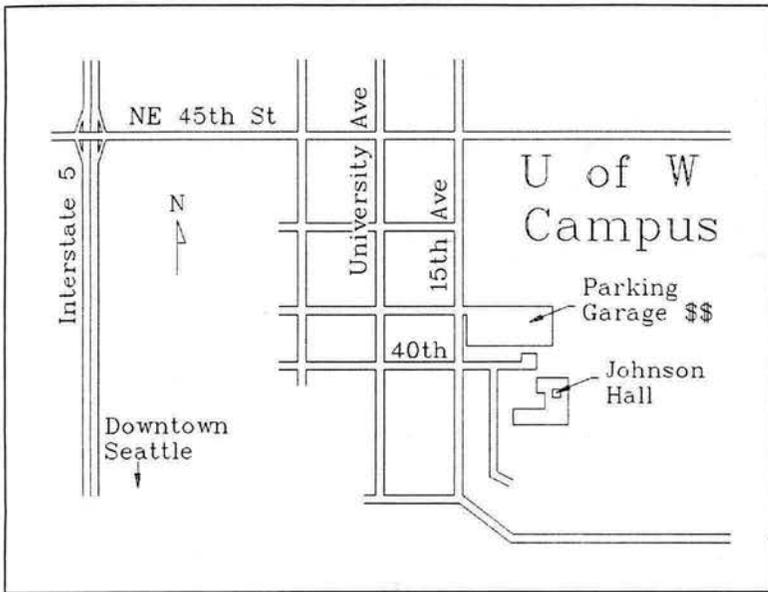
From time to time, probably during the winter and spring, the cave completely floods. This trip there was only one large pool of water, which required some interesting maneuvering to get around. I had little trouble bridging across it, but Larry, being shorter, had to do some very painful looking body jams against the walls and ceiling to get across. There are no formations in this cave, so there was no danger of breaking anything.

After I explored the cave thoroughly, I made my way across the pool to where Larry had begun digging. We started a 2 man operation where Larry would dig the dirt out and I would use a potato fork to pull the dirt out of the crawl way. It worked very well. The dirt was dry and loose, and proved to make the experience less painful. Larry was digging so much dirt out, that I could easily have completely filled the passage behind him, sealing him in forever. I didn't do it because he had the keys to the truck with him. Lucky for you Larry!!!

I don't know how many hours we worked, but when we were done, we had dug about 10 or so feet of new passage. From the looks of things, we dug into a 4 way intersection of passages, all still full of dirt though. We could feel a slight breeze flowing in the section where we were digging, which we figured was coming in from the surface. When I got into the section after we were done digging, the breeze seemed to be coming from a crack in the ceiling.

There is life abundant all throughout the cave. Slugs are prevalent in the entrance, which according to Larry, was also noted by Halliday when he was there some 30 to 40 years ago! I also observed some spiders near the entrance. I don't know their real name, but when I was little, which wasn't all that long ago, I called them "Daddy Long Legs." Mixed in with the spiders, were, to my surprise, mosquitoes. There were also some small flying insects which flew in front of my headlamp beam all throughout the cave. The most interesting find were some pinhead sized flies, which were completely white in color. They really stood out well against the brown dirt in the cave.

These caves aren't really worth a tourist trip to see, but the area does have potential for more caves. There are sinks in the area, and I found what could be a resurgence while I was there. The mountains on the other side of the valley contain a limestone quarry. People from this grotto should spend more time looking for caves, in this area and in others. The caves are there, we just need to go find them.



The Cascade Grotto meets at 7:00 pm on the third Friday of each month in room 006 in the basement of Johnson Hall on the University of Washington campus.

We look forward to seeing you at one of our meetings

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Paid to 99/99

