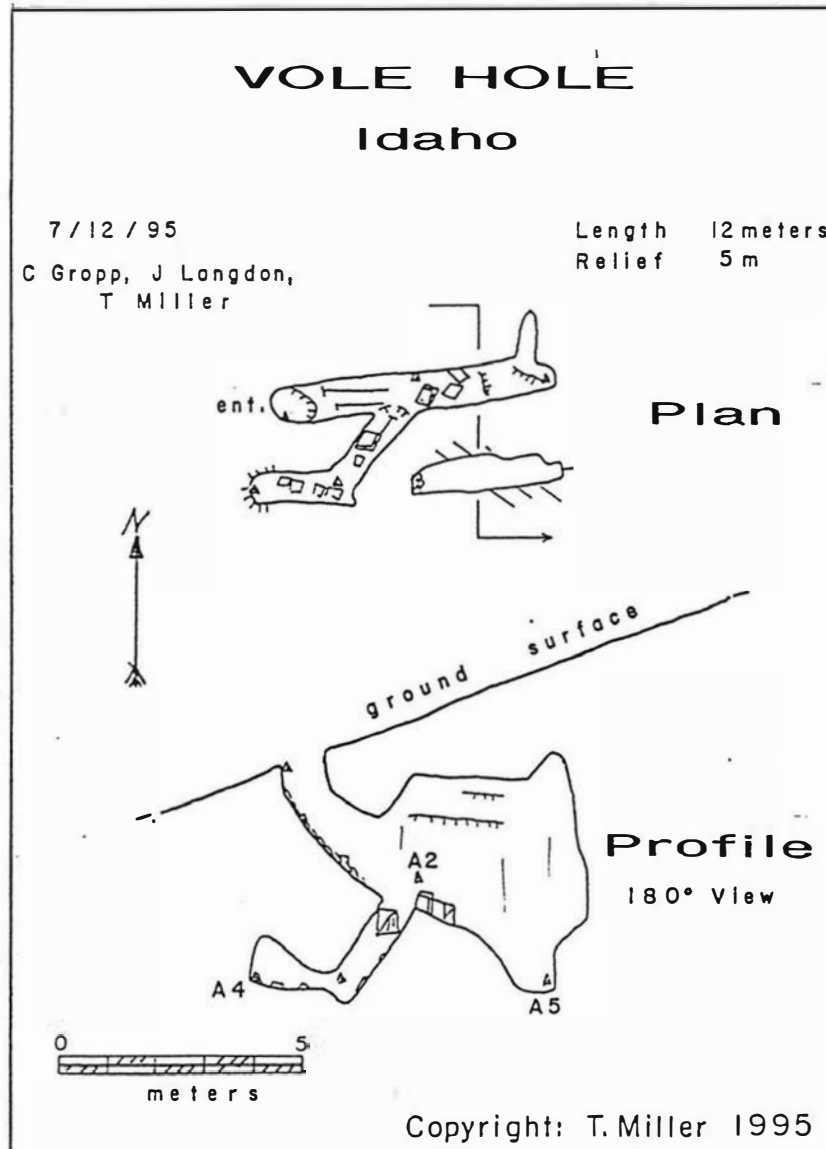




# Cascade Caver

Newsletter of the Cascade Grotto of the National Speleological Society

March 1996. Volume 35 No. 3



Reminder: NSS BOG Meeting - March 16 9:00am  
West Seattle Senior Center

# Cascade Caver

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All material to be published, subscription requests, renewals, address changes, and exchange publications should be sent to the Grotto address.

## 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

Cascade Grotto; P.O. Box 75663; Seattle, WA 98125-0663. This post office box should be used for both the grotto and for the *Cascade Caver*.

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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

March 12	Vertical Practice	6-9pm
	Contact Scott Davis (206) 862-1035	
March 15	NSS BOG Reception	7:00
	Tom Strong's house	
March 16	NSS BOG Meeting	9:00 am
	West Seattle Senior Center	
	4217 SW Oregon St. Seattle	
	Contact Mark Sherman for details	
	(206) 524-8780	
March 17	Mt. St. Helens	contact Michael
	Compton (206) 535-5144	
March 23	Mt. St. Helens	contact Bruce Nagata
	(206) 706-0339	
March 26	Vertical Practice	6-9pm
	at Scott Davis house. Contact Scott at	
	(206) 862-1035.	
April 13	Vertical Practice	
	The Big Red Barn in Enumclaw	
	Contact Scott Davis (206) 862-1035	
April 19	Grotto Meeting	7:00
May 17	Grotto Meeting	7:00
May 26-28	Memorial Day Weekend SpeleoCamp	
	Trout Lake county campground.	
	Contact M. Compton (206) 535-5144	
June 8-9	Cave Ridge	9:00am
	Meet at the Alpental parking lot.	
	Contact Scott Davis (206) 862-1035.	

## COVER

This months cover is a map of Vole Hole by Tom Miller.

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## The Great Vole Hole On Pole

by Tom Miller

The conversation I heard in my flight helmet was unwanted but quite audible: the helicopter pilot was lamenting to the front seat flight coordinator that he wished he had reset our positioning system before takeoff. As we sped along at 200 kilometers per hour, however, he noted our luck in having a day to visually navigate the 50 miles of mountains to Red Ives Ranger Station.

Coeur d'Alene was a little further behind before he swore, then cursed his absent assistant for not filling the fuel tanks. The deputy flight coordinator beside me shifted in his seat, perhaps, uneasily. A few more moments passed, as the pilot calculated silently and trees and mountain slopes whirred past below, then he announced in a cheery voice that we probably had enough fuel to reach the station. Stoically, I simply watched the beautiful ranks of peaks stretching east to the Montana border.

At ~1030, the fuel tanker was waiting in the meadow beside the St. Joe River, along with Jim Langdon, the Idaho Panhandle National Forest official and caver who had organized the day's affair. With him was Cindy Gropp of the Palouse Grotto, the third member of our party that was to explore and map a cave on nearby National Forest lands.

The cave had been reported over a year before by a Forest Service trail crew who had reflexedly and proudly buried it instantly for safety reasons: knowledge of the federal cave protection law had not yet made its way to that remote corner of the state. After another year the crew was persuaded to relocate and reopen it, and Jim was able to coordinate a

helicopter lift to Pole Mountain for himself and two cave experts. The Palouse Grotto chairperson was to supply underground expertise and I, interpretation of the speleological genesis.

Although the helicopter was a four-seater, Forest Service regulations apparently required a pilot and safety officer on all flights, leaving room for only two passengers at a time. Cindy and I landed on the ridge crest first, then hiked the half mile to the cave before Jim arrived. The first thing I noticed at the site was an expensive hand radio that someone on the trail crew had forgotten in the rain a few weeks before.

The cave entrance was hidden under a large slab, some of the schist that was the local bedrock. We pulled it aside, exposing a half-meter diameter hole heading steeply down. We kitted up, though considering the rock type, I wasn't overly expectant.

It was, in fact, an actual cave. At the bottom of the drop was a narrow chamber about three and a half meters long and as high. A quick sweep of the fissure with a light revealed little of interest except a well-preserved vole, whose heart had obviously stopped with the excitement of discovering a huge barrow. Or perhaps it had starved like Indian Joe, trapped by the well-meaning efforts of the trail crew... The cave doubled back beneath itself into a smaller, lower chamber of unstable rock, into this I sent Cindy with the end of the tape measure. This was the lower end of the cave; the main fissure had one unenterable side crevice.

This Vole Hole was chiefly of interest because of the rock it wasn't in neither basalt or limestone, but in non-carbonate metamorphics: I scouted the surfaces finding

only micaschist with quartz intrusions. Only 50 meters away was a very steep slope, paralleling the trend of the cave and dropping to the valley of Collins Creek below. The length of the ceiling of the main cavity contained a large vertical joint; a group of smaller joints, possibly foliation planes, intersected the walls at a steep angle. Most likely, the cave simply formed by gravity sliding of the bedrock toward the valley, opening up a fissure along a pre-existing joint, an origin similar to McLoughlin Canyon Caves in Washington.

The cave was a quick survey, less than 12 meters in length. With pulaskis and shovel we spent a couple hour realigning the trail to a less visible route by the cave, then hiked to our pickup point for the helicopter. By 5:30 PM I was back in Coeur d'Alene.

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### **Ape and Lake Cave Trip Report**

by Lane Holdcroft

On Dec. 2, 1995, a group of us went on a surveying trip to Ape and Lake Caves. We had discussed the possibility of such a trip at the pizza feed after the last grotto meeting and it suddenly came together in the last few days via E-mail. The participants were Mike Fraley, Lane Holdcroft, Larry McTigue, Bruce Nagata, Katrina and Paul Ostby, Jenny and Steve Sprague, Don Robertson, Robert Craig, and Olivier Daniel (Don's brother-in-law visiting from France).

The Ape Cave parking lot was closed for the season so we hiked about 10 minutes down the road. We actually entered Ape Cave about noon.

Paul brought his home built cave radios with a new more sensitive receiver that he had completed much earlier that morning. We also

brought a couple of 2 meter (146 MHz) handheld ham radios to try communicating between the cave and the surface.

Half of the group followed above with the cave radio receiver and amazingly we were also able to keep in touch using the ham radios even at the end of the cave! That was beneficial because we had lost contact between the cave radios. The ham radios were very non-directional and worked many hundreds of feet away. We will have to pursue these experiments further. Using the cave radio, we found that the southern end of Ape Cave is located near the Lake Cave parking lot.

Next, we all went to Lake Cave. On preparing to enter, we met four high school girls who had hoped to explore the cave with a single flashlight! Fortunately they did not end up wandering too far from the opening.

There had been lots of rain and flooding in Western Washington the previous several weeks although fortunately it did not rain very much on the day of our trip. However, there was plenty of water dripping from the ceiling in both caves. I had not been to either cave for many years, so I don't know if that is normal.

In Lake Cave there was lots of water flowing from the elevated side stream near the end of the cave. Several people crawled quite a ways back up the stream.

We left Lake Cave about 5pm and we had a very enjoyable dinner in Cougar.

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### **Chilliwack Valley, B.C., Canada**

By Dick Garnick

There are those times when one comes in contact with a government office or

bureaucrat. Fortunately they are not all like the Internal Revenue Service or some elected representatives of the people. Some government offices, bureaucrats and government employees do work for the good of the service they are trusted with. The B.C. Forest service office in Chilliwack B.C. and the cavers of the Chilliwack Valley are developing one of those good relationships.

Several years ago, my son Mark, my girl friend Sally and I were on our way to check out some limestone in the Chilliwack Valley B.C. We were walking up a road that I had been up probably 30 times before. At a small gully that crossed the road there was a new wash out. I noticed a 10 foot deep section of road had washed out but could not see where the road fill had disappeared to. The road had collapsed into a hole about 10 by 20 feet. I dropped grapefruit-sized rocks that echoed as they searched out the bottom of the deep hole.

The next weekend Mark, Rob and Mike Lewis, Larry McTigue and I returned to find out the extent of our find. After rigging the pit with a one hundred foot rope, I rappelled to the bottom of a room near 60 feet high, 15 feet wide and extending 30 feet under the road. There is an upper passage near the beginning of the rappel that goes up under the road (with the ceiling to road surface being about 3 to 8 feet thick). We continued down another 20 vertical feet to another 25 foot blind pit. This is where most of the road fill found a temporary place to stop.

The summer of 1993 there was a sudden gating of the road into the area. This could only lead to one thing, logging and heavy equipment. I contacted Phil Whitfield in Kamloops B.C., who works for the B.C. government parks. I explained the potential danger of heavy equipment driving over the

cave. Phil contacted a friend of his at the Chilliwack Ministry of Forest Office.

I eventually came into contact with Ruben Medeiros, acting recreation officer for the Chilliwack forest area. I explained the potential danger of heavy equipment driving over the cave and the possibility of the loss of the equipment and even worse, a life. Ruben sent some maps of the area with roads and areas to be logged. Fortunately the area of logging would not need the use of the road. I was given the name of the logging company, contacted them, and they gave me a key to the road. They stated they would like to see the cave some day also.

This contact with the Ministry of Forest Office in Chilliwack has helped the cavers of the valley. Because of early contacts providing information of potential danger, we have developed a very good working relation up to this time.

Unlike on Vancouver Island, the Chilliwack Valley has a different type of logging operation and fewer and smaller caves. Because of the supposed lack of caves in the area there were no forest office policies, knowledge, or actions dealing with caves or caving in the area.

Ruben, the Recreation officer, is now in the process of learning how to deal with the karst, caves and cavers. We have the opportunity to help guide and shape the knowledge and management of the karst and caves of the Chilliwack.

A new working relationship is being pushed forward by the new discovery of the Iron Curtain Cave by Rob Wall. This cave is a unique cave for the area in size and formations. The cave is in the process of being

gated so as to protect it and the cavers who enter.

There is the potential of rock falls, high water and the damage to the formations that has presented the need for one of those disgusting but necessary gates. Materials are being provided by the BC Forest Office and the labor will be provided by the cavers.

Because of the working relationship between the Chilliwack Ministry of Forest Office and the cavers of the area, this will be one cave that will be protected and managed by a plan. Some government offices and officials do work for good. Thanks Ruben!

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## Hell's Canyon

by Scott Davis

Thanksgiving weekend was rapidly approaching and the thought of sitting in front of the television for 4 days was repulsive to a few cavers. Scott Davis, Robby Morris, and Robert Mitchell decided to head out to the Flatiron in Hell s Canyon Idaho for the long weekend. After a flurry of internet mail messages back and forth, the guidance of Dave Kesner and Jim Hathorn from the Gem State Grotto was secured.

The three cavers from Puget Sound Grotto arrived at the campsite Thursday night after pigging out at a Thanksgiving dinner buffet at a hotel along the way. The little campground was empty of customers and the choice spot along the Snake River was established as the basecamp. Early the next morning Dave and Jim arrived, ready to cave.

### Ashmead's Cave

The group headed out for the largest known cave in the area, Ashmead's. It was named after a caver that was instrumental in its early

exploration and was later killed in a car accident. There was no trail to the cave. The troupe just started hiking up the steep mountainside. The hike was even more steep than the infamous trail up to Cave Ridge. Thankfully, it wasn't even a third as long. A couple of points along the way required some rock climbing skills. At points where a simple mistake would mean plunging into the valley below, Dave and Jim set up protection for the group.

To get around a corner on a ledge, some webbing was attached to some previously set pitons with carabiners. Everyone felt a lot safer doing this maneuver while clipped in. Just before the cave entrance, was a tricky slab of rock with hundreds of feet of exposure. Jim volunteered to lead climb this slab and setup a safety line for the rest of us. This made what would have been a terrifying climb, an easy snap.

The cavers switched to underground gear and headed into the cave. Since this cave was a little difficult to get to, it was relatively well preserved compared to some of the others in the area. It still had a healthy supply of cave formations to awe at, along with some exciting sport crawling in an area called The Groan Way. Not far into the cave we came upon some sleeping bats that may have already been in winter hibernation. So as to not disturb them we promptly turned around.

A few side passages were then explored on the way out. Scott crawled up one of these holes until it got too small to pass through with the others worming along at his heels. Near the end of the passage the cavers actually passed through a complex of spider webs that then covered the lead crawler's helmet. Then Scott spotted the source of the webs about 3 inches from his nose. A big hairy brown spider was staring him down, soon followed by shouts of

, REVERSE, REVERSE, everyone back out, NOW! Outside of the cave, everyone brushed off the webs and willies and exited the cave area.

#### Round House Cave

Since the cavers were already in the area, they traversed over to Round House cave. The best part was getting there. It required scrambling up and over the limestone cliffs of the flatiron area. As they got near the cave, the weather started looking dark and they were already a bit tired for the day so the group headed back to camp. The cavers new to the area were happy to locate two of the better caves in the area for the first time.

That night, the boys from Puget Sound got out cans of beans to warm up, but Dave and Jim had other plans. The camper wanabees drooled as the Gems cooked up a gourmet meal. Then good food was quickly exchanged for good beer. All were happy.

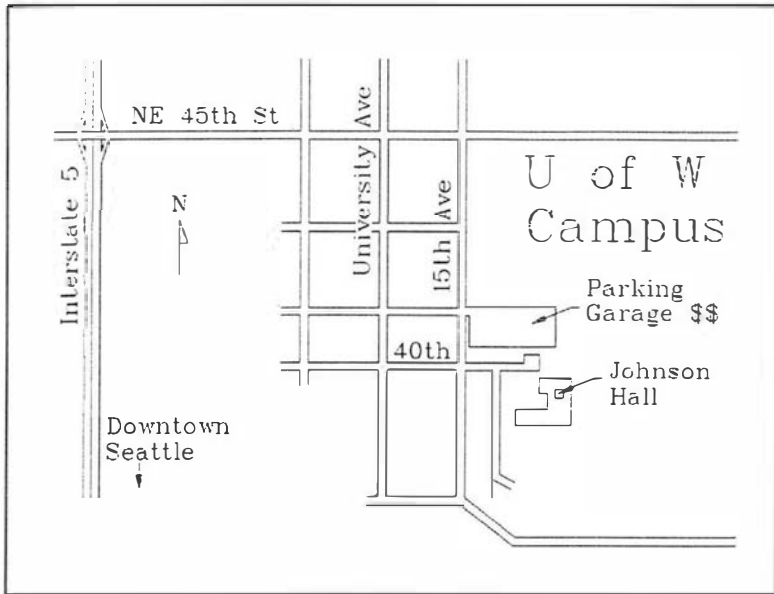
Next it was time to create the ultimate camp fire. There was plenty of wood to gather along the shore but that wasn't quite good enough. These cavers found a huge cut tree stump that they dragged over to the fire pit. It was found to be hollow in the middle and was promptly filled with paper, twigs, sticks, and lighter fluid. It was just like stuffing the turkey for Thanksgiving dinner. One more major addition came from a large dead tree branch from the walnut tree that was towering over the campsite. It took a bit of free climbing and tugging and pulling to coax it down into the fire. This monstrosity burned for many hours with little encouragement. This provided the perfect setting for a volley of really bad jokes being tossed around the camp fire.

#### Exploring

The next morning the cavers scanned the flatiron range with binoculars for an interesting area to explore. A gaping hole was spotted high in the cliffs that no one could recall being explored before. To add to the intrigue, two tall stalagmites could be seen just inside the entrance. Jim got out his extensive collection of rockpro and the group started to trudge up the slopes. Scott spotted an alternate route and proceeded to free climb it. The race was on. Scott's approach got him to the cave area before the others that were on rope, but he was actually above the cave entrance and couldn't find a good way down. After back tracking some and sliding down some precarious wet limestone, Scott was at the entrance.

The entrance was a nice walk-in 12 foot tall room. The two stalagmites turned out to be two tall dead weeds, bummer. Scott did a quick exploration of the entrance area but found all the leads to pinch off quite tight. In one crawlway the noise of busy pack rats could be heard just out of sight where it was too tight for human passage. After this trip the rain started to set in again.

The guides from Gem State Grotto headed back home. The others made one last hike up Allison Creek to the nearby Red Fish Cave. This was just to see the new bat gate that was now locked for the winter. It was impressive, 4 angle iron with nice big slots for the bats to fly through. This was the only cave that was marked on the topo maps of the area. Therefore, it had received significant damage before the gate was installed. The troupe then headed on down the road for home but all started making plans to return again some day.



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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