



Cascade Caver

Newsletter of the Cascade Grotto of the National Speleological Society

April 1996, Volume 35 No. 4

Announcements

Jim and Libby Nieland will join us for the April Grotto meeting. They will give a presentation on the American Cave Conservation Association. If you are interested in the ACCA, or cave conservation in general, you won't want to miss this meeting. - Friday April 19th.

The May Program will be a Surveying Workshop. Grotto members will break up into survey teams and survey the mysterious passages of Johnson Hall. We will assign one person who has experience in cave surveying to coach each team through the process. The emphasis will be on surveying not classroom theory! We will try to process the data and at least rough in cave passage from the survey notes over pizza. - Friday May 17th.

Puget Sound Grotto is sponsoring their second annual speleo camp at Trout Lake. It will be held over Memorial Day weekend, May 24-27th. See the back side of the Trip List insert for more details.

The 1996 Northwest Caving Association Regional will be held over Labor Day Holiday, August 31, September 1 and 2. The location is about 8 miles west of Ely, Nevada. See the Trip List insert for more details.

Ben Tompkins has received the 1995 Oregon Grotto Chairman's Award for "Outstanding Dedication to Cave Conservation" for his work nominating caves in Washington to the National Significant Cave List. Ben headed up a project with the Northwest Cave Research Institute for the Trout Lake Ranger district near Mt. Adams. The project's goal was to locate and then assess all the caves in that ranger district. The actual field work lasted 2 weeks during which approximately 70 caves were located and inventoried. After the field work was completed it took four people an additional 8 or 9 months to compile the data and report back to the Forest Service.

- Congratulations Ben and thanks for all your hard work. -

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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

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 Alpentel parking lot.	
	Contact Scott Davis (206) 862-1035.	

THE RESULTS OF A FEW WEEKS OF ELECTRONIC MAIL

By Mike Fraley

On the weekend of February 17-18, Steve Sprague, Larry McTigue, Jim ?, Tom Erb and myself went up to the Concrete area to visit some of the local caves. We planned to visit Ramsey, Elderberry and Jensen caves. Most of us had either never been to these caves, or as in my case, had never fully explored them. Mother nature, with no regard for our morale, prepared a cold, dark day of rain and sleet for us to hike through. Steve Sprague brought along his GPS unit, so the day would actually turn out some useable information, and turn a tourist trip into a meaningful excursion.

We visited Ramsey Cave first. While Steve and Larry were engulfed in their GPS readings, Tom, Jim and I went down to explore the cave. I briefly stopped at the register, just long enough to see that there was nothing in it but a few old pencils and a ball of paper mush. I spotted one small frog at this point; the only amphibian noticed throughout the cave. We made our way along the narrow passage and entered the Sand Room via a low crawlway which gave me some trouble, due to my coveralls getting repeatedly caught on the walls. There were numerous foot prints in the mud, indicating a high amount of traffic in the cave in recent years. A small stream emerged from the back of the room from beneath the mud fill and disappeared again under a rock overhang near the other end of the room.

After exiting the Sand Room, we proceeded toward the water fall in Miller's Mire. Just after exiting the Sand Room, I spotted a fossil in the limestone on the wall. It appeared to be some sort of tube worm, but any description beyond that is beyond me. When we reached Salamander Alley, we could hear the loud roar of the waterfall concealed around the corner. We were greeted by a crystal clear, 15 foot deep pool of water with a sizeable waterfall pouring in on one end. This was perhaps one of the most memorable sights I've seen in a cave. We hung around there for a while and then headed out.

Once on the surface and reunited with Larry and Steve, we proceeded toward the other caves in the area, after a brief stop at the impenetrable entrance of Cricket Cave. We proceeded up the hill and everyone just seemed to be following me. Ha ha ha, I led them

clear off target! However, while walking around not knowing where we were, we did run into some sink holes that I had never seen before. Larry didn't say anything about them, so I took that as meaning that these sinks had been seen before. After splitting up, we finally found our way to Elderberry. However, we decided to go over and see Jensen Cave first. We made our way there and found the steeply sloped sink that led into the cave. The size of this cave really took me by surprise. The only bad part about it, its lack of size was what was so surprising. A tiny entrance room leads to a low crawlway that I had trouble with at first. This crawlway led to a greater than 90 degree angle turn, that must have taken me 5 or 10 minutes to figure out how to get through. My legs were just too long, and I was facing the wrong way so I couldn't bend my knees around the corner. After some digging, I finally made it through. What awaited me, was an even smaller room with no other leads to push. Tom, Jim and I looked around some but there really wasn't anything to see. Before we headed out, I just happened to look up a small shaft presumably where there was once a waterfall, and there on the wall was some kind of writing. It was in black lettering and had some numbers and garbled letters. I assumed it was graffiti and didn't look at it very closely. When we squeezed back out, we told Larry and Steve before they went in. When they got in, they read the inscription. As it turned out, it read something to the effect of "NSS 51", meaning 1951, and then some numbers. Larry was pretty sure that one of the numbers was Bill Halliday's NSS number. Apparently when he was there back in 1951 surveying the cave, they burnt their NSS numbers into rock with their carbide lamps. The map they produced that day can now be found in Caves of Washington.

After returning to the surface, we made our way to the primary target. After eating lunch and soaking in some GPS signals, we descended into the large walking passage of Elderberry Cave. The tiny, some might say non-existent, sink hole entrance to the cave is deceptive. After half walking, half sliding down into the cave, you are greeted by a nice 15 foot high walking passage with a few formations hanging down from the ceiling. Moonmilk covers the walls in places, and after penetrating further into the cave you are greeted by sparkling white crystals lining the ceiling. The cave continues to become more beautiful the farther you go. After squeezing around two right angle turns in a row, you are greeted by the best formations in the cave. Spectacular Moonmilk deposits abound with stalactites and dripstone formations in the background. The cave ends for

humans shortly after this point, pinching off in a tight, watery crawlway. Sadly, someone who obviously holds absolutely no respect for the beauty of the cave has been entering the cave with a rock hammer and taking samples from the walls, leaving large scars where the rock has been sheared off. There has been a marked increase since a year ago when I visited this cave. This type of action by anyone just doesn't make sense.

The day turned out to be a great little trip. The whole idea for the trip was spawned via e-mail interactions between myself and a few others. E-mail has become a very valuable tool for the passage of information and the coordination of caving trips. I would encourage anyone who does not have an account to obtain one, and check around from time to time to see what is happening. This way, you can possibly get in on a trip to a cave or area you have never been before. The January 96 issue of the Cascade Caver contains a membership list with e-mail addresses of some of our members.

THE WAYSIDE MINE TRIP

By Larry McTigue

Participants: Daryl Jacobson, Jim Harp, Robbie (a young friend of Jim's), Bill Bennett, the three Steve's (Steve Sprague, Steve Hoefel and Steve Fogdall), Bruce Nagata, Wendel Pound, Jeff Wilson and Larry McTigue.

On Sunday, March 10, 1996, we met Daryl Jacobson at the town of Granite Falls to visit the Wayside Mine. It reportedly had a 169ft entrance shaft that he wanted us to rappell to see what we could find down there. He and Greg Cady, a former Cascade Grotto member have been mapping the mines in Western Washington for over 20 years now. When we arrived in Granite Falls, Daryl gave us all copies of the map of this old copper mine, that he had obtained from someone else. He had never been in the mine himself but, wanted us to investigate it, for him, to help compile information on it for historical purposes.

Rigging the pit took quite a while so Jim Harp left before anyone went down. Daryl Jacobson left after Jim Harp did but, stayed long enough to see Bill Bennett go down and come back up. He asked us to call him and let him know if we found anything else after he went home.

We all dropped the pit. It is a solid shaft all the way down. The only dangerous part is the loose debris at the top (logs, rocks, dirt, brush, etc.) None of us could tell exactly how deep it was but, we think it is less than the 169ft shown on the map. But, we could be wrong since no one had a tape measure or could guess how much rope was hanging in it.

We should go back sometime and tie a rock around the end of a cord and lower it down to measure it. It was a good, long rappell and most of us thought it was about 75ft-100ft deep. So much light comes in from the surface that its true depth may be quite deceiving just by guessing at it.

Debris from the surface and possible collapse of the walls at the base of the shaft may have sealed any continuation of the shaft below where we landed. But, interestingly, we found two tunnels (drifts) going off in opposite directions from the bottom of the entrance pit. One was dangerously clogged with collapse debris and the other was flooded and would require hip-waders to explore and would also be dangerous.

Since the map shows tunnels similar to these at the base of the entrance shaft, either the entrance pit isn't as deep as the map says or, these tunnels aren't shown on the map that Daryl gave us. Or, our guess at its true depth was way off.

When a heavy rock was dropped down the pit before anyone started rappelling, I made the comment that it sounded like it hit a wooden platform. (Sure enough...) Underneath the rock debris at the base of the drop was a huge wooden platform with electrical boxes, cables, compressed air pipes and fresh air ventilation duct pipe attached to it or scattered about below it.

There was a little bit of white mold growing on some of the wood. A few tiny dripstone formations less than an inch long were growing on a small part of the ceiling of the passage that leads to the flooded tunnel that heads north toward the Stillaguamish River. Part of the mine goes underneath the river and the deepest part of the mine is about 240ft below sea level. It was a multi-level mine but, appears too dangerous to explore now, due to collapse debris entering from the surface and within the mine itself.

The "collapsed" tunnel heads south from the side of the entrance shaft that is opposite to the "flooded" tunnel. Bruce Nagata crawled on his belly thru the debris and poked his head into it to take a look. He's

either crazy or suicidal. No one else wanted to check it out, due to the danger of possible further collapse. He didn't enter it but, backed out of the rock debris he had crawled thru to get a look at it.

Debris accidentally dislodged by some of us after reaching the surface near the top of the rope came hurtling down the pit from time to time. Steve Sprague knocked a large branch and some rocks down while Bruce and I were still in the bottom and it made the experience all the more exciting. Luckily no one got hurt. He gave us a quick warning, before it came shooting down.

Steve Hoefel had previously come down and gone back up with his carbide generator going but, luckily, he didn't encounter any explosive methane gas. The air was quite fresh at the bottom of the shaft. But, if some half-insane person decided to explore further, the danger of encountering pools of carbon dioxide could be greater and lead to possible asphyxiation and death for the unwary. I don't know what copper ore looks like so, I can't tell you if we saw any or not. No one reported finding any gold either.

When I climbed back up the pit, I couldn't get my ascenders past the log that the rope hung down over at the top of the drop. I was so exhausted, I didn't have the arm strength to get up and over it. Muscle cramps in my feet and legs were also a major factor. Bill Bennett and the rest of the guys had to rig a pulley to haul me out. They said they had so much fun doing it, they decided to ask Bruce if he wanted a free ride up, by pulley, from the bottom of the shaft. He agreed and was quickly hoisted up, using the leverage of the pulley system. He was the last one out.

During and after my ordeal, my mind was a bit fuzzy from the exertion and the pain of my muscle cramps. So, I didn't realize at the time why I had so much trouble ascending the drop. Later, when I got home and the fog cleared out of my brain, I remembered I had forgotten to put on my chest harness. All the time I was climbing up the pit, I was using all my arm strength to hold myself upright to avoid inverting on the rope.

I thought at the time (during my exertion when my thoughts were hazy) that my troubles were due to the new variation I was using on my Texas system. I thought my slings were too long. But, this was only because I didn't have them running thru my chest harness which was still in the bottom of my pack at the surface. My chest harness would have prevented me

from inverting and held me more upright on the rope which in turn would have vastly reduced my fatigue while ascending.

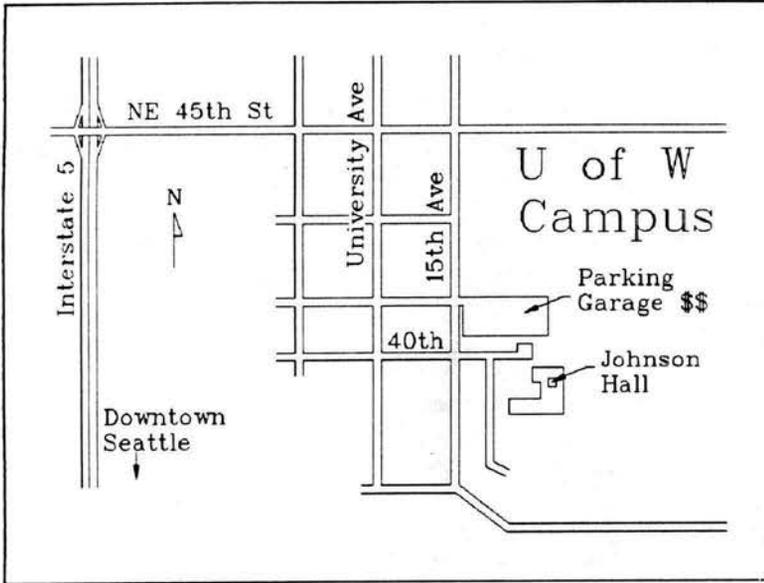
Usually I don't need my chest harness because the REI seat harness I have uses long belt loops that raise your center of gravity to chest level. But, on this trip, I had decided to use my rappell rack instead of my Figure 8. I couldn't use my rack with my REI seat harness because it would be difficult to get my ascenders above it, if I had to switch over from rappell to ascent if any trouble occurred while dropping the shaft.

So, I brought along my Black Diamond seat harness which has a lower point of attachment at the waist, making it ideal to use with a long rack. Thus, I would be able to reach up above the rack and attach my ascender in case of an emergency. My absent mindedness about my chest harness occurred when I had volunteered to hike back to the vehicles with Daryl, when he decided to leave.

Bill Bennett had left his truck in Granite Falls and ridden up in Daryl's truck to the mine. Some of Bill's equipment was still in Daryl's truck so, I said I would go with Daryl and transfer Bill's stuff to my truck. I figured if I hurried, I could still get back in time to do the long rappell into the mine shaft. When I got back, I quickly put on my cave suit, seat harness, rappell rack, ascenders, cave pack, hard hat and headlamp, etc.

There were still some of the group down in the mine but, they were getting ready to come back up. In my rush to get down the pit before everyone else came back up, I forgot to put on my chest harness. Later, at home, I found it at the bottom of my internal frame pack that was on the surface. It was buried beneath a bunch of other gear. Hopefully, I'll remember next time to attach it to my seat harness with a biner so, when I pull the seat harness out of my pack, the chest harness will come with it.

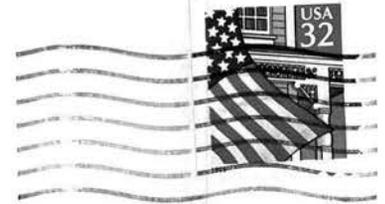
I also realize I need more training so that it becomes second nature to me to remember to put on my chest harness. Although, the lack of wearing my chest harness was a major factor in contributing to my fatigue, I also think my Texas system may not be efficient enough either. I'll give the Frog system a try and perhaps some variations of the other types to find a rig that works more to my physical advantage.



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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