

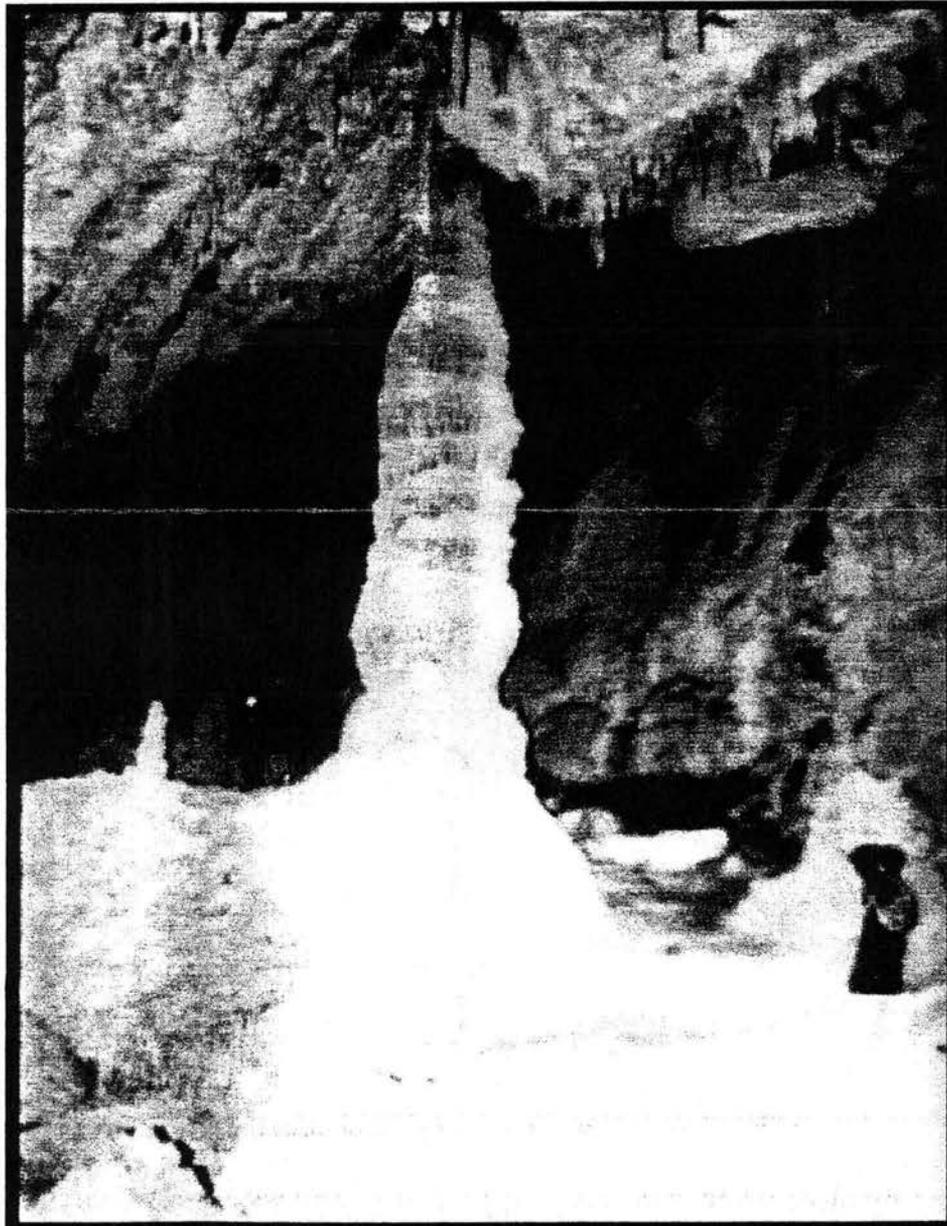


# *Cascade Caver*

Newsletter of the Cascade Grotto of the National Speleological Society

November/December 1996, Volume 35 No. 11&12

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# 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*.

## GROTTO OFFICERS

Chairman	Paul Ostby	(206) 823-5107
Vice Chairman	Tom Strong	(206) 938-3957
Sec/Treasurer	Bruce Nagata	(206) 706-0339

## OTHER POSITIONS

Trip Coord.	Jim Harp	(206) 745-1010
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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 119, in Johnson Hall. Please see the map on the back cover of this issue.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

(Help! Trips are needed. Contact Jim Harp. Thanks)

### 1996

Nov 23	Papoose Cave Project in Riggins ID Mike Compton NCACaver@aol.com
Dec 6	Cascade & Puget Sound Grottos annual Christmas party. Members of other grottos are invited. Jim Harp (206) 745-1010
Dec 14	Mt. Rainier Nat'l Park. Cross country ski over the Mt. Tahoma Trail System. Suitable for all skill levels. Jackie Harris (206) 539-4611

### 1997

May 23-25	NCA Conventrion hosted by the Gem State Grotto at the Lincoln County fairgrounds in Shoshone, Idaho. Jennifer Dorman (208)-331-0279
June 15	Big Four Ice Caves. Larry Mc Tigue (206) 850-8614
Aug 15-18	Eagle Cap Wilderness area. Searching for limestone in the Wallowa Mountains of Oregon for virgin caves. Jerry Thompson (360) 653-7390
October 6-11	1997 Karst and Cave Management Symposium Highlighting Forest Karst Ecosystems - Bellingham, WA Rob Stitt (206) 283-2283 Email: rstitt@halcyon.com

**COVER:** by Cyril Colbeck. Whipple cave, Nevada. The picture was sent to the *Cascade Caver* as a gif file via email. (hint, hint)

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

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### **REMINDER: THERE WILL NOT BE A REGULAR MEETING IN DECEMBER**

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### **NOMINATIONS FOR GROTTO OFFICERS**

A ballot is enclosed if you are a voting member. Please fill it out and mail it to the Grotto address, or bring it to the Christmas party. The following people were nominated at the November meeting:

CHAIR: Mark Sherman

VICE CHAIR: Mike Fraley

TREASURER:  
Christine Bennett  
Lane Holdcroft

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### **NOTICE OF DUES INCREASE**

A dues increase was approved at the November meeting. Cash flow has been negative due to the regular publication of the newsletter, so a dues increase was necessary to reach a break even level. As of January 1, 1997 dues for the Cascade Grotto will be \$15.00 for members and subscribers to the *Cascade Caver*. Dues for each additional household member will be \$2.00. You may still renew at the old rate until the end of the year.

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### **ARTWORK NEEDED!**

The editors of the *Cascade Caver* need caving related graphics for publication. Line art and photographs that are suitable for photocopying would be greatly appreciated.

### **CHRISTMAS PARTY**

Cascade Grotto and Puget Sound Grotto will hold our annual Christmas party on Friday, December 6th. Members of other Grottos are cordially invited to join us for good food, caving videos, and tall stories. Spouses and kids are invited too!

And, yes, Ben Tompkins has offered to bring the squeeze box.

The party will run 6-10:30 p.m. Dinner is at 7:00. Cascade Grotto is providing a ham; please bring a pot luck item and a few of your favorite slides.

The party is at Jim Harp's house (Lynnwood). See below for directions. Jim has offered accommodations to those from out of town: You supply the sleeping bag; Jim will supply the floor.

An easy cross country ski trip is happening the next day so bring some skis. Beginners are encouraged to participate. For non-skiers, we're planning a trip to one of the nearby indoor climbing walls.

Directions to Jim Harp's house: 1731 So. Lake Stickney Dr., Lynnwood.

Between Lynnwood and Everett on I-5 take the 128th St. exit then west on 128th past Albertson's on the left to first light past Albertson's go left on 8th Ave then right on 132nd then left on Lake Stickney Drive, house is about half a mile on the right.

Questions? Contact:  
Jim Harp (206) 745-1010  
or  
Paul Ostby (206) 823-5107

## WINDY CREEK CAVE TRIP

Sat. Sept. 14th, 1996

Larry McTigue

Jerry Thompson had this trip planned months in advance. He even camped out the night before the trip at Grandy Lake to get an early start in the morning. Lane Holdcroft had also driven up on Friday to spend the night there. As luck would have it, the rain came down in buckets all during the night. By morning, Jerry had his fill of the lousy weather and decided to bail out and head for home.

I asked Lane what he planned to do but, he was still undecided, most likely leaning toward drier, warmer surroundings back home, himself. Thinking his long drive up from Seattle would have been for naught, I encouraged him to follow us up. He excitedly agreed. But, then Jerry mentioned that Lane didn't have an access permit for his car from the logging company whose land we planned to enter through a locked gate.

I had also stupidly forgotten that since Jerry wasn't going, there would be no one to accompany Lane on the hike in to the cave. Both Mike Fraley and I had brought our mountain bikes and intended to use them to save time getting up and down the logging road past a second gate where motor vehicles weren't allowed. An elk preserve had been designated in that area.

So, after convincing him to go with us a few moments before, I found myself in the rather awkward position of now trying to convince him not to go. But, as events that day would later prove, he was lucky I talked him out of it.

Dave Hopf from the Fourth Corner Grotto up near Bellingham had also planned to come but,

he was nowhere to be seen. So, we bid farewell to Jerry and Lane and headed across the road to the gate. Once we got through and relocked it behind us, we drove on up the log road the several miles to the second gate.

When we had nearly reached it, we ran into Dave Hopf coming down the road in his vehicle. He had spent the night up at the second gate so, he would be sure and not miss us when we showed up the next morning to go to the cave. He had been expecting us to arrive much earlier and had assumed we weren't coming due to the bad weather. So, he was driving down to go home. He was quite relieved to see us and not have to waste the drive and trouble arranging the access permit.

He also had brought his mountain bike. The three of us had been here with our bikes back in July with Dave's two sons and their bikes. While Dave and his sons took Mike on a tour of the cave during our July trip, I headed to the back of the cave to pursue a lead I had always wanted to check out for the past 15 years. During all those years, I had never managed to get back there to check it out.

I found myself at the end of a tight, muddy crawlway that appeared to be a dead end on the map of the cave. My dream during all those intervening years was of finding that instead of dead-ending, it might actually be filled with dirt that could be dug out. As it turned out, it indeed did end in a sediment fill but, it had the consistency of sticky gumbo clay.

But, a few feet back from the end of the passage, I discovered a pool of water on the right side of the crawlway. I leaned down and looked along the top of the water toward the wall and much to my delight saw passageway continuing on through the wall into darkness beyond. But, the hole appeared to be only a few inches high with the water filling it almost completely.

I spent the next few hours channeling the water away from this sump and trying to dig it out and remove the mud in very tight and cramped quarters. After much effort, I managed to just barely squeeze through into large standup passage. What I found was nearly 200ft of high, narrow maze-type passage similar to the entrance area of the cave. It was quite a thrill, especially since I was all alone by myself in the far end of the cave where no one had been before.

This area has still not been surveyed yet and at the end of the maze, I found another sump that appears to be diggable and may lead to even more cave with a little effort on our part. Upon returning to the first sump, I found the water had nearly filled it again to the ceiling. I barely got out in time before being trapped.

But, on this September. trip to the cave, that Jerry had planned, I intended to continue a dig I had started several years before up in Hole-in-the-Sky Cave, while Mike and Dave did another tour of Windy Creek. It was a good thing no one else showed up because it turned into a pretty wet trip.

We all brought rain gear but, we were a sorry looking sight when we got back to our vehicles later that night. It rained most of the day. While they were in Windy Creek Cave, Dave had the false impression that it wasn't raining outside, while they were gone. But, I told them that there was a virtual cloudburst outside and I could hear it coming down, while digging up in the other cave.

I spent several hours digging in the thick goeey gumbo clay that I've come to both love and hate in Hole-in-the-Sky-Cave. Some progress was made but, not as much as I had hoped for. This old fossil resurgence still goes and certainly has good potential for popping into big going passage.

It was getting toward early evening when Mike and Dave returned and the sun was beginning to go down. But, I came out of the cave so covered in mud that I insisted on washing off my cavesuit and gear in the resurgence stream prior to departure. It would reduce considerably the amount of weight I would have to carry back to our vehicles. I also wanted to take a break to get a bite to eat as I was starving by now from several hours of physical exertion.

By the time I got all my vertical gear, rope, caving suit and other gear repacked and put my raingear back on, the sky was growing darker and I sensed we wouldn't make it back to the vehicles before the sun went down. We hurriedly started hiking out of the woods with the rain continuing to beat down on us. We reached our bikes at the end of the log road just before it got completely dark.

But, even before we got to the top of the pass we had to cross at 4,000ft., it got pitch dark. My Nite-lite headlamp managed to fail on me at this most inconvenient time. The bulb broke off at the base and I could not remove it from the socket to replace it with a fresh bulb. My other lamps were down in the bottom of my pack so, I opted to ride between Mike and Dave and be guided by their headlamps back down to the vehicles.

It was a cold, miserable trip back down and the brakes on my bike were not working well. Several times I very nearly took a bad spill coming down the steeper sections of gravel road with the rain fogging my glasses and the inadequate lighting. I could only progress at a reduced speed to avoid going too fast and losing control. Eventually, Mike yelled that he could see the locked gate down the road ahead of us and we were soon relieved to be finally back at our vehicles.

But, our bad luck hadn't ended yet. We had hoped to change into dry clothes once we got

back to the cars. But, no sooner had we arrived than the sky literally opened up on us and a heavy cloudburst came pouring down on top of us. We abandoned any attempt at putting on dry gear and jumped in our vehicles to get out of the onslaught of water being dumped on us.

Mike and I turned the heater way up in my truck in an attempt to warm up and dry out a bit. We headed on down the mountain to the lower gate several miles away. After passing through the gate and relocking it, we bid farewell to Dave and headed on home after what turned out to be quite an epic trip in miserable, lousy weather. Jerry and Lane were the lucky ones. They didn't come. We were beginning to wish we hadn't either.

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## RAMBLES IN THE WALLOWAS

Jerry Thompson

Earlier this summer, when I was visiting with Jim and Libby Nieland, they gave me some information and people to contact about exploration of limestone areas in the Eagle Cap Wilderness. I was able to get in touch with several people about this area over the summer. I was also able to take three quick trips to the Wallowas over the last several weeks. Here are a few of the things I found by telephoning, emailing, internetting, and rambling.

My first trip to the area in July took me to Hawkins Pass to view the upper Imnaha drainage. The 7.5' quadrangles covering that area (Aneroid Mountain and Cornucopia) show many springs on the slopes of Cusick and Marble Mountains. I was there a bit early and snow covered most of the area of interest. I moved my camp to Ice Lake hoping to get a look at that area. I hiked up The Matterhorn for the third time in my life. Each time I've been to this place I have been impressed by the

amount of limestone (or marble) exposed in the upper basins. Coming off Matterhorn a very bad thing happened to me. The friend I was hiking with had a serious attack of homesickness and we had to leave. I had some thoughts about this situation that I'd better keep to myself. At any rate, we broke camp, hiked back to the car and drove home.

The Nielands had told me that, some time ago, Charlie and Jo Larson had reported finding pits on the ridge between Matterhorn and Sacajawea. I hadn't contacted the Larsons before I found myself headed up to Ice Lake again on August 22nd. On the 23rd, I got on the ridge and scrambled all the way over to Sacajawea over some very nice limestone without seeing any significant karst features. I retraced my route on the ridge up and over an intermediate summit (Peak 9775) and I was getting a bit discouraged, I thought I'd follow the ridge all the way over to Matterhorn and at least bag a couple of peaks on this trip. Several hundred feet north of the lowest point on the ridge between Peak 9775 and Matterhorn I found a single "pit". It was a jim-dandy. It was a sink about thirty or thirty-five feet in diameter that funneled down to an oval black hole six feet wide and twelve feet long about twenty feet down. The walls of the sink were clean and I had to get out of it a ways to find a rock to toss into the black hole. Rocks tossed into the hole sounded like they landed on sand not too far down. I scrambled as far down into the sink as I dared and saw what appeared to be snow on the floor below.

I returned to my Ice Lake camp and met a fellow from New Jersey that had been a wilderness ranger in the Eagle Cap thirteen years ago. He mentioned hearing rumors of a "lost mine" in the area where I had found the sink. The next day, I hiked out and drove home and called Jim Harp and got Larson's phone number. The day after that, I called Larson's. Charlie told me that their trip in the Wallowas had been to some upper cirques on the north

and west sides of Cusick Mountain. They had found several short solution holes in fissures in the walls of the cirques but nothing went anywhere. Charlie told me that the "lost mine" rumor had to do with a fiction book that was something like "Wallowa Mystery Cave". He told me that Steve Knutson was the person that had found the "pit" above Ice Lake.

Steve wasn't quite so easy to contact. But after a couple of calls to Oregon Caves, I got a call back from him. He told me that he and Eric Binker had found a "pit" in about the same area as the one I had found. His description of the opening didn't match well, but he said new, heavy snows blocked their entry. (I assume the snow may have distorted features of the sink as well.) Their exploration had been over twenty years ago. Steve also said that later another group of Oregon cavers had approached the same ridge from the Hurricane Creek valley but weren't able to get to the pit before they had to retreat. He said, that group may have included the Loomis brothers. Steve also told me about a book that described a similar entrance in about exactly the same place on the same ridge. He said the name of the book was "Secret of the Wallowa Cave". It was a fiction story about some children that fall into the pit and find some gold and eventually find their way out. Steve said there was a copy of the book in the Multnomah County Library and that he had read it.

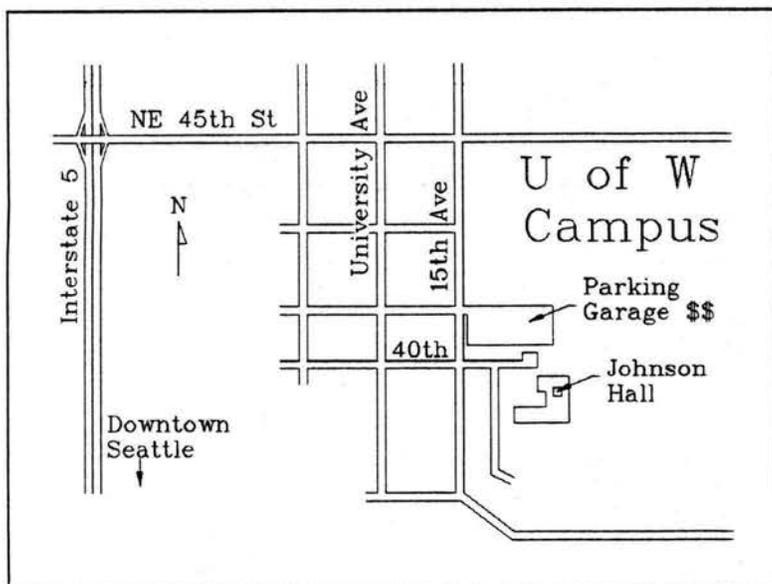
On the internet, I found that the main branch of that library has a book with that title. The author was T.S. Easton and it was published by the Metropolitan Press in Portland in 1934.

All this information charged me up enough to go back to the "pit" once more. On Friday, August thirtieth, I got up at two-thirty in the morning and drove to Wallowa Lake and packed back up to Ice Lake loaded down with my overnight gear, some climbing toys, a six pound climbing rope and a five pound trenching tool. Saturday, I rappelled into the "pit". My

120', nine mm climbing rope was anchored a number of feet from the sink and the ends of the doubled rope barely touched the floor. I probably rappelled thirty-five or forty feet. The shaft belled out into a chamber that I measured as seventy-four feet long and twenty-one feet wide. The sandy floor had no footprints in it and I found no gold but I did find a "C" sized Eveready flashlight at the base of the entrance shaft. There was a cone of snow near the center of the chamber directly below the entrance shaft. It was teardrop-shaped, five or six feet high, fifteen feet long and seven feet wide. The northern half of the chamber had a fairly level sandy floor. The southern end had a shallow depression, a mostly sandy floor with some small to medium breakdown blocks at its far end. There appeared to be a loft area adjacent to and just north of the entrance shaft. (There isn't much rock left above that entrance to find passage in and getting into it will be difficult.)

A recent email exchange with Scott Linn revealed that "Wallowa Cave" had been entered a while ago by Jerry Zimmer. I called Jerry the other night and found that he had indeed, entered the pit about five years ago and again about two years ago. On both visits, he found the chamber at the bottom of the entrance shaft contained enough snow (and ice) to discourage any digging. (I think much more of the floor was exposed at the time of my visit.) Jerry was under the impression that other Oregon cavers had visited this area fairly recently.

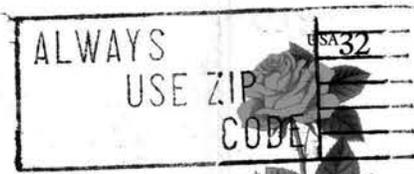
What I found was probably much more than I expected and far less than I had been hoping to find. There is a lot of limestone in those mountains. Anyone that might be interested in that beautiful part of the world may want to contact me. My email address is thomsog@whidbey.net. I'll probably get back over there another time (maybe late next summer.)



The Cascade Grotto meets at 7:00 pm on the third Friday of each month in room 119 in Johnson Hall on the University of Washington campus.

We look forward to seeing you at one of our meetings

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