



# Cascade Caver

The Newsletter of the Cascade Grotto of the National Speleological Society



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# Cascade Caver

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## GROTTO MEMBERSHIP

Membership in the Cascade Grotto is \$15 per year. Subscription to the *Cascade Caver* is free to regular members. Membership for each additional family member is \$2 per year. Subscription to the *Cascade Caver* is \$15 per year. Subscription via email is \$11 per year.

## GROTTO ADDRESS

Cascade Grotto; P.O. Box 66623, Seattle, WA 98166. 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 p.m. on the third Friday of each month at the Shoreline Community Center in the Hamlin Room. The Community Center is at 18560 1st Ave. NE in Shoreline. Please see the map on the back cover of this issue.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Please notify Eve Proper of any upcoming trips. Contact Jennifer Dorman at idahocaver@gemstategrotto.com for any Gem State Grotto trips. Contact Claude Koch at claudekoch@uswest.net for any Willamette Valley Grotto trips.

October 12-13      Dynamited Cave - Xandon Frogget

October 18              Grotto meeting

October 15              Grotto meeting

As you can see, we could use more trips! Don't let a little autumnal cold stop you from heading underground. Remember, it's always the same temperature down there.

The editor would like to sincerely apologize for the tardiness of this issue. Management is taking steps to ensure it won't happen again.

## COVER

Rescuers await the sked at the entrance to Dynamited. See Van and Eileen's account of the incident in this issue. Photo by Xandon Frogget.

# Pay your dues now or be hunted down and billed

By Aaron Stavens

It's Membership Renewal Time!

If your name is on the following list, that means your membership in the Cascade Grotto is up for renewal at then end of September. Dues are \$11 if you receive the email Cascade Caver or \$15 if you receive the paper Cascade Caver. Household member memberships are \$2.

Van, Eileen, and Teela Bergen  
Jacqueline Bills  
Bob Brown  
Wayne Cebell  
Rod Crawford  
Bruce Frank  
Jim Harp  
Richard James  
Dave Klinger  
Tish Korbly  
Paul Lindgren  
Jeff McClelland  
Dave McElmurry  
Jon, Julie, & Cameron McGinnis  
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Stuart and Glennis Monson  
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Mark Sherman  
Leonard Slack  
Steve Sprague  
Aaron and Kaylee Stavens  
Rob Stitt  
Jerry Thompson  
Richard Watson  
Chris Wittenbrink  
Dr. Daniel Zak

Please send payment to:

Cascade Grotto  
c/o Aaron Stavens  
4401 S 301st Dr  
Auburn, WA 98001

Please do you hard working Secretary-Treasurer a favor and send your payment in as soon as possible. ❖

## Visiting Cave Ridge's Hell Hole Cave

By Mike Fraley

I can still hear them... As I sit here at my keyboard, safe and sound in my apartment, I can still hear the incessant, never ending buzzing. The bug bites I obtained today on Cave Ridge haven't yet swollen up and begun to itch, but it's only a matter of time. To those who have been there, you know how incredibly aggressive the bugs can become. They just love to hang around the cave entrances where tired cavers emerge from the depths, no longer able to fend off the bug storms with their flailing arms and legs. This is pretty much how I feel the entire day whenever I go to Cave Ridge.

The weekend spawned after a long series of frantic emails initiated by myself upon discovering that I had not planned any caving on this particular weekend. Citing the need to get in shape for some exploration in Newton Cave the following weekend, Dave Hopf and I decided to hike up to Cave Ridge on Aug. 18 and drop down into Hell Hole Cave. The weekend before our trip, some cavers had noted a fairly new looking rope that had been fixed outside the Newton entrance and left in place. This sparked fears that someone may have gone into Newton, and not come back out again, so I volunteered Dave and myself to go in and check out the

upper areas of the cave to see if anyone had indeed not made it back out.

I suppose one could describe the hike up to Cave Ridge in excruciating detail, if, of course, it were anything other than excruciating. As it is, I usually spend most of the hike staring at the ground trying not to pass out from the exertion. It's amazing how many details I notice on the hike out when I can actually look around. Luckily Dave brought along some long bamboo poles he had cut from his yard and dried which we used as walking sticks, and they proved very valuable, especially when one of us got out of line. We decided to take the hanging valley approach, one that I had never done before, which would eventually put us right at Newton Cave if we took all the right paths. I won't say how long we took to get there, but suffice to say we arrived at Newton and spotted the new green rope. Slightly further into the entrance were two older ropes, affixed to a log jammed into the ceiling.

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# Eileen's fall and rescue in Dynamited Cave

By Van and Eileen Bergen

## Eileen says:

The day before had been a good day. The weather was perfect; the hike to the caves was pleasant and non-strenuous. The caves were small but fun; and I had found a nice, albeit temporary, walking stick. I like using walking sticks because, ever since I was little, I often "twist" my ankle if the terrain is not as smooth as new asphalt. I even twist my ankles on seams in rugs. Even with all the falls, I never seem to break anything, except that time I broke my ribs, but that is another story. I am pretty flexible and somewhat "double jointed." So, I find with a walking stick, I walk faster because it helps me keep my balance.

And this was going to be a good day. I slept well, didn't have to rush, and we were going into a large cave, one that you can walk and climb in. I forgot how much breakdown there was in the first part of Dynamited. I wished I had brought my walking stick. I really wanted and needed three points of contact over that kind of breakdown; rocks which are too small for two feet to be convenient stepping-stones, too large and too many to step over. I almost went back three or four times. Not because I didn't want to be there but because I didn't want to hold anyone up. And I was NOT about to hurry willy-nilly over that breakdown because I know my ankles and I really really didn't feel like twisting one and breaking my leg.

Van assured me I was not holding anyone up. I want to be the kind of caver that people like to cave with. You know, just one of the guys, moseying in a cave, looking at stuff. I like caving mainly because I like being in a cave. It is another world; it is cool and dark and smells like Mother Earth herself! Merlyn did some his best magic and teaching in a cave. Caves cure hangovers and allergies and even colds ... at least while you are in one and want to be in one. I try not to whine and I am really not afraid but I do not take risks if I think something is beyond my physical OR psychological capabilities. Because one thing I NEVER WANTED to do to my fellow caving buddies was to be rescued. Rescuing some one, in a cave, has got to be one pain in the ass and I really try to avoid being a pain in the ass... of course unless I really need to! And that is why I am sometimes slow.

So I catch up, and most people have negotiated the ladder. Someone told me, I think it was Dick, that I didn't need to wrap my legs around the ladder because there was a person holding the ladder. Cool. Van asked me if I wanted to go first, I said sure. I was fine with the ladder, I was fine with everything actually. I wasn't scared nor did I believe what I was about to do, go down the ladder, was risky or scary. But

I wasn't going to rush, so I didn't. I got down to the bottom and someone said I was almost down. I had my three points of contact. I put my left foot down on something that disappeared when the ladder began to swing and became unstable. At that point I had NO POINTS of contact. I fell, which turned into a tumble and I began to think "this is not good...where's the part that I just stop?" I remember hitting the top of my head real hard, snapping my neck back and somehow landing in the prone position on a big rock. That was the first pain I felt was when I stopped on that pointy rock. "Whew!!! That was a strange little trip." I thought to myself, "How come I am not hurt? Maybe I am? At least I think I should be."

Lying prone on that rock was not very comfortable, so I got up and decided to check my extremities. Everything seemed to be OK. "What the f— just happened? I didn't see that coming!" I found the nearest sitting place and plopped down in a daze. People started asking me how I was. "I think I hurt my neck...and my back." All I wanted to do was to get a neck brace to stabilize my neck and get out of the cave and get an X-ray. I worked as an X-ray technician for years and knew it was possible to break one's neck, and as long as it is not displaced there will be no paralysis. I also knew that it was important to make sure the alleged fracture did not get displaced.

Unfortunately, the rock I sat down on faced away from the drop and ladder that I just came from. Here is where things start becoming a bit fuzzy and I will only mention the things I am sure about. I am sure there will be omissions. I remember Robert Mitchell holding my neck. His hands were warm, firm, gentle and very soothing. I trusted him implicitly and was grateful for his kindness and calmness. I was thinking if I just could get a neck brace I can walk out of here with a little help from people telling me where to put my feet. My intuition told me I was fine as I always am. Aches and pains, a little fall. Dents and bruises. All par for the course. I'll get over it. But oh, how embarrassing! Now my pain in the neck was becoming a pain in the neck for others

Van said he had something to put around my neck. What a great helmet. Good thing I had it on properly. How does one manage to whack the top of ones head with such force with the ground beneath one? Well, we will get the brace then leave. Tish lent me articles of clothing to keep me warm. Robert kept my neck and head steady. All sorts of things and commotion were going on behind me. I wanted to watch. Robert was adamant about me holding still. I was trying to make jokes about forgetting my Ritalin this morning when people told me to stop squirming. A rock in my behind was

boring another asshole for me. Dick gave me his knee pads to keep my butt warm, and someone put something between me and that persistent butt-hole-boring rock. No one would give me a cigarette.

It was becoming apparent that I was not going to be allowed to walk out of my own volition. I became worried that somehow we would get into trouble, perhaps have the cave become off-limits if the “authorities” heard about someone needing to be rescued. All of a sudden I was a five year old child, afraid that no one would want to play with me any more because of the hassle I was causing. I almost started to cry... but I became an adult again and just let the drama play out. I was concerned that my helpers were too near the edge of the next drop-off. I didn’t want anyone to get hurt. My watchers and attendees were getting cold. Once in a while Robert would get a reprieve from holding my neck by having someone else do it for a while. I saw no point in the continuation of holding me still after the makeshift brace was on but I decided to trust Robert’s judgment and the pretty EMT, Bethany.

Everyone was so nice. Jon McGinnis gave me a cigarette before I was strapped into the sked. I saw nothing of what was going on behind me, but the sound of “confusion” had a rhythm of co-operation and competency that one recognizes from years of working in trauma centers. The whole operation was played out almost flawlessly. And I want to thank everyone for being the best rescue team ever. I do hope no one is pissed that I could have walked out after all, ‘cause the CT scan said that my neck was not broken. I do have many bruises that are now in the yellow and green stage, and a concussion which has left me dazed and confused - but no one has noticed. :-)

**Van says:**

We’d had a great day checking out some small caves with Claude & Doug & Gary from WVG on Friday. There were a couple of trips on Saturday, and we decided to go on the “easy” trip to Dynamited because Eileen hadn’t seen the Sand Castles. We had been in Dynamited with Dave Hopf and Trapper a couple of years ago, but Eileen didn’t do the climb-down at the 15’ drop because she was on pain medication at the time from some other injury or something. Aaron’s Attic push trip and Jon’s bottoming trip were both out because Eileen doesn’t do vertical. We figured we’d do the climb-down; I’d done it before, and Eileen has done similar climbs in other caves, and it’s not too bad if someone spots your feet.

Dick Garnick was originally going to lead the Sand Castle trip, but so many people wanted to go that he didn’t want to do it as one big group. I said I wanted to go on down the main passage and do the second drop just to take pictures

looking back up, and Dick suggested splitting into two parties once we got down the 15-footer. One group would go directly to the Sand Castles, the other to the second drop, and then we’d switch places. We didn’t get into details of who was going where, saving that until we were all down the first drop. Dick had a cable ladder and he rigged it in camp so that people could practice on it. Eileen had never been on a ladder before but she tried it out. She had some trouble with the wraparound technique but she made it up and down a few rungs. She didn’t like it much, so we figured we’d stick to the original plan and do the climb-down.

We were among the last of the group to enter the cave, and Eileen was moving really slowly over the breakdown. She didn’t want to take any chances falling down, but she was so worried about holding up the group that she finally decided to go back out. By that time we were almost at the drop so I asked her to stay put while I went ahead and checked the rest of the group’s progress. When I got to the drop, there were still a couple of people waiting to climb down. I said that Eileen wanted to go back out because she didn’t want to hold up the group. Someone said it wasn’t a problem, it was a big group moving slowly, and she should come on along. I shouted that report back up the passage, and she came on along.

When she got to the top of the drop, we both looked at the ladder and it looked really easy - sort of like the chain ladder in Lake Cave, except it wasn’t attached at the bottom and there wasn’t a flat floor at the bottom (both aspects came back to bite her pretty quick!). Since everyone else was doing the ladder, we figured why not, let’s do it. No one was approaching the ladder and Eileen decided to go next because she was probably the slowest member of the party. I took her picture as she started down; nothing seemed rushed or scary or stressed. I asked the other people milling around at the top if anyone else wanted to go next, since they were there before I was, and someone said they’d go. I started walking back from the lip to make room when I heard Eileen fall. She yelled – it was kind of an “oh” – and then I heard thumping – and then I heard several people gasp. I looked down but I couldn’t see her; she had tumbled down the slope under the lip. I yelled, “Are you OK?” and someone else yelled “No!”

Then Eileen yelled, “I’m OK,” (or something like that) and that she heard a snap when her head hit the rock and she wasn’t sure if it was her neck or the bungee cord popping off the back of her helmet. It was a relief that she was conscious and not screaming in pain. On the other hand, I knew she could tolerate a lot of pain. I also knew that there were several level-headed, experienced people already down with

*continued on next page*

## Rescue in Dynamited: Continued from page 61

her so I didn't start down the ladder. Instead, I asked how she was doing and where and how she was hurt. Someone answered that she was sitting up and talking and that they were assessing her. They said she had done a twisting Jim ideas and want to rig their own. Steve suggested rigging it anyway; we could always strip it out if the rangers had other ideas. Then he left for the entrance and the ranger station. I tossed down the SAM splint and the duct tape.

That's when I finally climbed down to see how Eileen was doing. But before I headed down, Bob Brown asked if I'd brought in warm stuff, since it might be a while before she got out. First I mentally kicked myself, then I told Bob I had two sleeping bags and a fleece blanket in the back of my van. He volunteered to go get them. I told him where my keys were hidden, he headed out, and I headed down. At least she had some foam pads and kneepads to sit on in the meantime.

Eileen was about 20 horizontal feet and 10 vertical feet down the lower passage, sitting on a breakdown rock, wrapped in the space blanket and cracking jokes. Someone else was headed out and asked if anything needed to be taken out. Eileen answered, "Me!" Robert Mitchell was sitting behind her, holding her head and neck steady. He had already applied the SAM splint as a makeshift neck brace. That's when I found out that he was trained as a First Responder. What luck! Eileen marveled at what a wonderful job he was doing holding her head steady in his warm hands. He said he had palpated her neck and that she was hurting in a potentially bad place. I spelled him for a while. Then Bethany showed up, and that's when I found out that she was an EMT. More luck! Bethany checked her out again, and then took over with the neck stabilization because I wanted to start rigging the haul. In the meantime, runners had summoned the attic team and also retrieved the aluminum extension ladder from Stuart's truck. Talk about luck - a horde of cavers, medically-trained people, tons of extra rope, and a freakin' ladder! The real ladder replaced the cable ladder so that further travel would be much safer. Bob brought down the sleeping bags and we wrapped the big one around Eileen. It was just in time; she was starting to get a little chilly. I had just taken a picture of her wrapped in the space blanket, and it was my last shot. When I climbed back up, she asked where I was going and Robert said, "To get more film." That went over big....

Back at the top, I noticed that Jon had already rigged a couple of safety lines. I proceeded to rig two separate anchors with webbing - one for the haul and one for a belay. While I had both arms wrapped around the rocks, Jon fed me cookies. Yum! Several people who were starting to get cold

headed out so they'd be fresh for the stretcher carry. Jon asked Tish to be the entrance control person, and she kept track of everyone entering and leaving the cave so we wouldn't lose anybody. I started thinking about a stretcher carry over all that breakdown. It was gonna be ugly. Runners had gone out to round up more people from the campground and the other cave trips.

Much sooner than expected - about an hour and a half into the incident, Sean the Trout Lake EMT showed up with his own helmet and light - and a sked stretcher and a KED spine splint. Wow, that was fast. He didn't try to take over, either. He looked at the haul rig, Jon said it was good, I said it was good, Sean said OK, what do you guys want me to do? So much for my concern that non-cave-trained agency people would try to run the show. Sean went down the ladder with the rescue gear, and I finished up the rigging. Another Trout Lake EMT also arrived, but said he couldn't stay long because he had driven the second of two ambulances and they might need it for other emergencies. I thanked him for coming all the way into the cave, and said we had plenty of help, but he volunteered to stick around long enough to be on the haul team.

Earlier, I had passed down my seat harness and asked people to put it on Eileen before they packaged her in the stretcher. I asked about it and they said she was already wrapped up. I was a little concerned that she wouldn't be tied in to the belay, so I went back down to see how she was packaged. She was wrapped up pretty well in the sked and it was a short haul in a vertical orientation, so I figured it would be OK to just have the sked belayed. I said I need a couple more people for the haul team and a couple of strong edge attendants to help the sked over the edge. Jon called for Aaron to come up, and he took the other side himself. Both clipped in to the safety lines that Jon had already rigged. I needed a belayer and Ken Stickney climbed up to take that position. It was a little awkward; the belay line was close to the wall and he had to flatten himself sideways. The haul line was close on the other side of the belay. Steve Sprague fell in to the haul team along with the EMT; I don't remember who the third hauler was (Will the mystery haul guy please stand up?).

The EMTs and other helpful rescuers carried the SKED to the bottom of the drop and attached the haul line and the belay line. They lined her up so that we could haul right up the ladder. That would make getting over the lip easier. I set the traveling pulley and called "Haul Slow" and the team pulled. It only took two resets and she was up. Jon and Aaron pulled the SKED over the lip and we were done. It was almost too easy.

Jon took over from there. That's when I found out that he (and Julie and a few others) had done a mock rescue practice from that very spot. More luck! Jon knew exactly how to direct the litter team. With plenty of people available, they passed the litter instead of trying to carry it over the breakdown. I packed up the haul system and all the rest of my stuff, on the theory that I didn't want others to carry out my junk after they had to carry out my wife. By the time I caught up with the litter team, they were on the final slope up to the entrance. I couldn't believe how fast they got there. Jon said he needed some muscle for the entrance hole, and he called for Aaron and Xandon. Eileen was passed out the hole with little difficulty; later I learned that people at the entrance had also rigged a haul rope. The Trout Lake ambulance crew was right there to take her to Skyline Hospital in White Salmon. The extraction took about four hours.

Meanwhile, Erin and Ruth and Julie and Judy were cleaning out the rigging and other gear from the cave. Erin brought out Eileen's helmet. Petzl Ecrin Roc – great helmet, it took a full head plant and just bounced. It'll be retired now. As I pulled out of the parking area to follow the ambulance, Katie Coughlin handed me Eileen's hair barrette through the window. Tish rounded up the last few bits of our stuff, and left it at my camp for later. It includes a pair of red knee pads and a bag of carbide repair parts – owners, please claim them.

The ER doc and nurses at Skyline Hospital in White Salmon were wonderful. So were the ambulance guys. It turns out that the driver lives in Trout Lake and goes spelunking with his sons. He said he never wore a helmet before, but he might start now. The other guy, Mark, is a rescue diver with a lot of great stories. He kept Eileen entertained on the ride. When the X-rays showed a suspicious shadow on Eileen's C6 vertebra, the doc sent her across the river to Hood River for a CAT scan. It was negative. Whew. Back at White Salmon, the doc was concerned that Eileen's blood pressure kept rising, and that the mechanism of injury indicated that she should have been hurt worse than she apparently was. They decided to keep her overnight for observation. She was sleepy from pain medication and told me to go on back to camp to let everyone know she was OK. I did. A bunch of the rescuers didn't get beat up enough earlier, so they had gone to Deadhorse for the evening. Robert and I and my bottle of tequila waited around the campfire for their return. The doc had told me that Eileen wouldn't be released until noon, so I stopped by Cheese Cave with Eve and Robert and Richard Watson and Mindy on Sunday morning. We had a fun trip, and I got to the hospital at 11:45. Eileen was ready to get back home, so we got some coffee and hit the road. It was a very interesting weekend.

I didn't see Eileen fall and I'm really glad I didn't. From others' descriptions, it must have looked awful. We're still not sure exactly what happened, so we're really interested in hearing from people who saw the fall. Eileen says the last rung of the ladder just swung away from her as she was stepping off, turning her upside down. We still can't figure out how she ended up down the passage under the lip, instead of straight backwards. We hope the rescue was a good learning experience for everyone involved, and that maybe it was even better than the trips they all had planned. The level of competence and cooperation was superb. But it was sheer luck that it happened with so many real cavers and so much gear right there. Think about what it would be like to get injured there when you're one of a party of four or five.... Cave Safely.

#### **Postscript:**

When Eileen still had a lot of back pain two weeks after the fall, she visited her regular doctor. She didn't break her neck, but she did break her back. That's not quite as bad as it sounds; she has compression fractures in 2 vertebrae. They are just below the lowest one included in the original X-rays and CAT scan. They're not dangerous, but they'll take a long time to heal, so she has to take it easy for a couple of months. ❖

## Website reviews lights

By Mark Sherman

For those of you looking to buy a new light, take a look at [ledmuseum.home.att.net](http://ledmuseum.home.att.net). This is a great site that tests and rates LED lamps and flashlights. The guy rating them, Craig Johnson, lives in Seattle. He puts an incredible amount of time and effort into this site and provides a lot of good practical information.

There are photos of each light, comparison photos of the beams and graphs of the intensities. He lists each manufacturer's web address and where you can buy them and then gives an overall rating. He covers everything from durability, the ease of replacing the bulbs, types of batteries that are used and how to install them. He tests how long the batteries last and how the lights perform under water. Just about everything. He does the submersion test in his fish tank. Some of his comments about the various pros and cons of the different lights are pretty funny. Although he doesn't cover a lot of headlamps, he does cover a few, including the Petzel Tika, which appears to be one of his favorites and which he uses on his wheelchair. ❖

# Notes from the chair: The state of the Grotto

By Van Bergen

Greetings, Cascade Cavers. It's really been an interesting year so far. We've had:

- Energetic new members
- Enthusiastic committee chairs
- A new place to meet
- Experienced members willing to lead trips, which meant:
- Lots of trips (thanks, Dana and Eve), which meant lots of trip reports, leading to:
- Regular publication of the Caver again (thanks, Eve and Mark)
- Caving in Idaho (lava tubes at Regional, and the amazing Papoose) and British Columbia
- A genuine project, CRXP (thanks Aaron), leading to:
- Lots of trips to Cave Ridge
- An invitation to cave in England
- T-shirts (thanks Jon, Jim, and Aaron)
- A reprint of Caves of Washington (thanks, Aaron)
- An anniversary party (thanks Glennis and Stuart) complete with successful rescue (thanks everyone)
- Two rescue classes, with the second one leading to:
- A breakthrough relationship with Seattle Mountain Rescue (thanks, Jon)
- The beginning of work on a state cave protection law, which will be a long haul but worth it; it'll also become a great incentive for all of us to get out and find, explore, map, and inventory more caves (thanks, Mark)

With snow just around the corner, we'll probably be doing less caving for the next few months. Maybe a couple of vertical practices, some cross-country skiing and snowshoeing, maybe even another ski/snowshoe trip to a cave. Erin had a really good idea: have a "techniques" session at the end of every meeting – knot tying and other vertical techniques; patient packaging and other rescue techniques. I'd like to start doing this at the next meeting; it's fun and it will help us all be safer and more confident.

Next year should be at least as fun and rewarding as this year. Personally, I'd like to see more dig trips and surveying and exploration, in addition to the tourist trips, but the main thing is to be underground as much as possible. More trips to Canada would be nice. Giving back to the caves by cleaning up and protecting them is also high on my list. More rescue classes and practice too – woo hoo! The NSS Convention is within driving distance next year, and it would be great if Cascade Grotto could show up in force.

I'm really looking forward to next year – but not as Chair. I'm playing in a band now, and I'm spread too thin to do an adequate job as a grotto officer, so start thinking about your choice for Chair in 2003. It's a fun and rewarding job; if you'd like to try it, make sure you let that be known so that someone can nominate you. It would be great if more than one person stepped up (for Chair or any other office) so that we could have a contested election for a change. Wow – dirty tricks, mudslinging (am I talking about an election or a cave trip?). Nominations will be taken at the November meeting, so you have time to ponder and discuss. ❖

## Knot talented

By Eve Proper

There's a reason I'm not a mechanic. On those tests where they show you a folded piece of paper and you have to figure out what it would look like unfolded, my results always showed me to be just barely missing utter idiocy. So when it comes time to learn knots, my first instinct is to run and hide.

Although learning from someone else is best, that's not always possible. After a while, they just shake their head and say, "What, you don't get it yet?" There are a lot of books out there that show you knots, but I find a lot of their diagrams to be unhelpful – particularly the ones in "On Rope." A knot of many steps is shown in two illustrations. (Other cavers report the same illustrations are quite clear to them. If you're really good at this sort of thing, you can probably stop reading now and go back to your macramé project.)

When in need of knowledge – and too broke to buy a book – I hit the web. There are sites out there with fishing knots, sailing knots, camping knots, bondage knots, exploding knots and Incan knots. There's even a page on a knot-tying parrot ([www.quakerparrots.com/kaylee/string\\_art.htm](http://www.quakerparrots.com/kaylee/string_art.htm)).

Some pages have pictures and others are animated. Unfortunately, the animations tend to be of very poor quality. My favorite has to be [www.une.edu.au/~unemc/bunny.htm](http://www.une.edu.au/~unemc/bunny.htm). The only way I can tie a bowline is to remember the bunny-around-the-tree story, and this animation thoughtfully includes the bunny, the tree and the hole. Actually, the rest of the animations on that site are excellent, if more prosaic. I just wish I could slow them down enough for my brain to catch up with them.

*continued on next page*



## Visiting Hell Hole: Continued from page 59

The Newton entrance is a good test of would-be explorers, providing a good challenging climb. I wasn't very comfortable with it myself until I was down and could see it from below, at which point it was pretty trivial. The new green rope hung there, with a knot and a carabiner at its end. With Dave leading, we descended down into the cave looking for anything out of the ordinary. We stumbled around and eventually managed to find the first big drop, a roughly 40-foot pit if I remember correctly. We also found a carabiner near the drop, presumably dropped by some previous cavers. Seeing nothing out of the ordinary, we made our way back up and out of the cave without incident. The only conclusion is that the new green rope in the entrance was placed there by someone as a sacrificial hand line and nothing more.

Eventually, we moved on to Hell Hole Cave, the original destination for the day's excursion. Being the fat disgusting slob that we are, we completely ignored the small triangular shaped hole out the bottom of a sinkhole constituting the cave's main entrance, instead opting for the back entrance. Ironically, I had not been in Hell Hole previous to this day either and really didn't know what to expect. I had a preconceived idea that this 'back door' to the cave was somehow easier to get through than the main entrance. After getting ready, Dave jumps down a hole in the ground and disappears off to one side, saying he did the squeeze into the cave. I sent down some bags and then proceed to climb down to see what I was in for. Surely this was a joke? I was looking at a nasty, mostly horizontal, rectangular shaped hole that looked, for all intents and purposes, about 5 inches smaller than the radius of my body. I could see Dave's face on the other side, so I know he had to have gone through it, but I couldn't see how. After removing some articles of clothing and equipment, I tried to fit through on my right side. I could get all the way to my rear end at which point I'd become stuck. Dave suggested I try on my stomach, which was even worse. I gave it a last-ditch effort on my left side and made it in.

## Knotty problems, continued from previous page

However, I finally found a winner. The Knot Knowledge site, [www.iland.net/~jbritton/index.html](http://www.iland.net/~jbritton/index.html), breaks knots down into the ridiculous number of steps I need. It includes practically every knot you could want, except for the water knot. (And even I can easily do one of those. If you could safely rig with nothing but water knots, I'm sure I would have learned rigging long before now.) Because it's not animated, you can pause as long as you want to at each step.

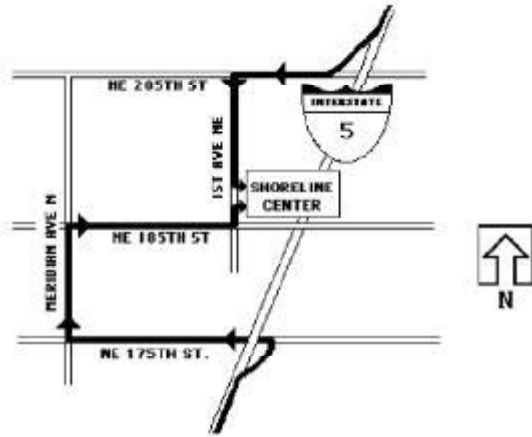
We descended the roughly 50-foot pit just inside after rigging a rope. I wouldn't call Hell Hole a big cave, but it has some very interesting areas. The cave struck me as a series of parallel rooms and passages through a massive body of impurity in the surrounding limestone. Evidence of fresh rock fall could be found here and there, including one massive truck sized block of limestone that looked to have fallen off the wall and leaving it's mark on the surrounding cave. Dave gave me the grand tour, showing me all the major features. After seeing Hell Hole up close, I'm somewhat less certain it will ever connect with Cascade Cave. There was however a sumped passage though that looked remarkably similar to a sumped passage in the very bottom of Cascade Cave that I rappelled down through some breakdown to during a survey trip years ago. Maybe one day we'll get our acts together and figure it out.

After ascending up the rope, I was faced with the one last dreaded task, getting back out the way I had come in. Dave said something to the effect of, "Just go do it, it will be five minutes of pain but you'll get through." That was a pretty good estimation. I tried a couple different ways to tackle the constriction, settling on the one arm out, one arm back technique. After about five minutes of being physically stuck at my shoulders in this hole with no leverage and nothing to pull or push on, I figured out I could loop my arm over some rocks and pull myself up off the ground just enough to allow my shoulder to get past a rock that was preventing me from pushing forward, and I just popped out (relatively). I can think of very few spots in any cave that are more annoying than that one.

We made a brief tour of some other cave entrances on the hike out. The poles Dave had brought really came into their own on the way down, providing some much needed stabilization. Two cans of cold beer met us at the parking lot as we sat on my truck's tailgate and stared up at the mountain we had spend the day on. With only one order of business left, we made our way back to Bellevue. All hail ceremonial caving pizza! ❖

The best part is, no one needs to know how many hours you've spent learning to tie a Figure 8. Let's see, that's loop, and back, and around ... oops, loop, and back, and through ... wrong way ... loop, and back, and through ... ❖

# Meetings and Directions



The Cascade Grotto meets at 7 p.m. on the third Friday of each month at the Shoreline Community Center. The Community Center is located at 18560 1st Ave. NE in Shoreline. To get to the Community Center from Seattle, take Exit 176 on Interstate 5 (175th St. N) and turn left at the light at the bottom of the off ramp. At the next traffic light (Meridian Ave. N) turn right. Turn right at 18th St. N (the next light). Turn left of 1st NE, which again is the next light. Don't get confused with the Senior cCenter, which is on the end of the building. Enter the building on the southwest corner and find the Hamlin Room.

Please join us at our next meeting!

Cascade Caver  
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