



Cascade Caver

Newsletter of the Cascade Grotto of the National Speleological Society

October 2002, Volume 41 No. 10



Cascade Caver

ISSN 0008-7211

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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 \$15.00 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 \$15.00 per year. Subscription via email is \$11.00 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*.

GROTTO OFFICERS

Chairman	Van Bergen	(360) 779-7837
Vice Chairman	Jim Harp	(425) 745-1010
Sec/Treasurer	Aaron Stavens	(253) 946-3431

OTHER POSITIONS

Trip Coordinator	Eve Proper	(206) 988-6237
Librarian	Stuart Monsoon	(425) 271-2258
Regional Rep.	Van Bergen	(360) 779-7837
Editors	*Mark Sherman	(206) 365-5386
	Email:	
	mark.sherman@flukenetworks.com	
	Eve Proper	(206) 988-6237
	Email: proper@drizzle.com	
	* Editor for the current issue.	

MEETINGS

Regular grotto meetings are held monthly at 7:00 pm 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 back cover for directions.

UPCOMING EVENTS

November 15	Grotto Meeting. 7 p.m. Shoreline Community Center
December 7	Grotto Christmas Party Lake Stickney Community Center
December 20	Grotto Meeting. 7 p.m. Shoreline Community Center
January 17	Grotto Meeting. 7 p.m. Shoreline Community Center
January 25	First Aid training – Contact the Red Cross at (206) 726-3534 and sign up for class #30767.
February 21	Grotto Meeting 7 p.m. Shoreline Community Center
August 4-8	NSS Convention, Porterville, California

COVER: This month's cover photo is from Danny Miller. The photo is of Emily Sharp (not yet a member) and Cele Wolman who is playing the part of Nancy Drew.

Grotto Christmas Party – December 7th

By Van Bergen

It's Party Time! Saturday, December 7, at Lake Stickney Community Club, 1428 S. Lake Stickney, Lynnwood. Bring the whole family. Non-family guests, too. Check the Files section of the CascadeGrotto yahoo group home page for a map to Jim Harp's house; the Community Club is on the left before you get to Jim's. Look for a low building that's obviously not a house, with cars in the parking lot.

Party starts at 6 PM, dinner at 7. Jim will cook us up a fine ham; we supply the rest of the dishes. Julie McGinnis is coordinating the food, so please contact Julie at julieannmc@attbi.com or 206-246-7388. Find out from Julie what's in demand, and let her know what you're going to bring. Please call or e-mail her directly; don't post on the group.

BYOB too.

Please contact Julie ASAP and let her know if you're coming, and how many guests you're bringing, so we know how big a ham to get.

Please also bring any unwanted items to donate to the Chinese Auction (you write down your bid for the displayed items). We will also have a raffle with prizes. Bring cash! Buy tickets! Proceeds to benefit the grotto.

We'll also have the squeezebox for the entertainment of kids and skinny people.

Election for 2003 Grotto Officers

This year we have 3 excellent people running for the grotto officer positions. Please fill out the ballot and send it to the Grotto PO box before Jan 1, 2003 or better yet, bring it to the Christmas Party (see above) and give it to Aaron Stavens. The three candidates are: Chairman- Michael McCormack;

Vice Chairman - Robert Mitchell;
Secretary-Treasurer: Aaron Stavens

You may also write in a candidate for any of the positions but remember that it is a requirement for all officers to be NSS members.

Letter from the Chairman

By Van Bergen

Greetings again Cascade Cavers - for the last time by me in this forum. I'll still help out with grotto activities and go caving as much as possible, and maybe even continue to write trip reports. I had a lot of fun this year; it's been a real pleasure to serve. Thanks to everyone for your support and help.

It seems like everyone has been taking a well-deserved rest for the past month or so. Dave McElmurry organized a practice session with raising and lowering systems for rescue in early November; it was fun and we learned a lot. A couple of members seem to have been sneaking off to Idaho or somewhere. But that's about it, and that's par for the course for this time of year.

I hope we have a couple of trips this winter. I'll lead a cross-country ski trip as soon as the snow is good enough to pick a location. And we'll do another Trout Lake winter ice cave trip. Please get in touch with Eve and let her know where you'd like to take some fellow grotto members this winter. Remember, there's no such thing as bad weather – just bad clothing!

To be honest, I'm really looking forward to snow and skiing right now. But I'm also looking forward to getting back underground, maybe a little bit this winter and hopefully a whole lot next year – and to sharing more of that good energy the grotto has been generating lately. See you at the party on December 7, and the meeting on December 20!

September 20th Grotto Meeting
By Aaron Stavens, Secretary-Treasurer

Attendance: Van Bergen, Eve Proper, Michael & Nikki McCormack, Erin Robert, Jon Crouch, Chris Wittenbrink, Steve Clark, Stu Adler, Evans Winner, Aaron Stavens

Old Business:

1. Due to the low turnout, Van postponed the NCA bylaw amendment's vote again.
2. The grotto's treasury has a fair amount of money in it. Van is soliciting suggestion on how some of that money might be put to good use rather than sitting in a bank account. Perhaps Mark Sherman's Washington State cave law efforts might need some funding? Perhaps the CRXP could use some funding?
3. Bill Halliday's visit was hopefully going to coincide with the grotto's 50th anniversary. That obviously is not going to happen. The grotto would still enjoy a visit from Dr. Halliday, but it will have to be when he can make it.
4. The grotto purchased a liability policy for the IMAX event. We were never billed. Van has contacted the insurance agent on multiple occasions, but a bill has never materialized. Van is not going to put any more effort tracking down the bill.

New Business:

1. The grotto voted to renew its membership in Bats Northwest.
2. Erin Robert is the New Member Committee Chair.
3. The grotto discussed future trip possibilities.
4. Aaron Stavens came across an interesting pamphlet. Washington State has a recreational use law that protects landowners from liability when someone is using their property for recreational purposes. The landowner is *not* obligated to make the property safe. To be protected from liability the landowner must not charge for use of the property.

October 18th Grotto Meeting
By Aaron Stavens, Secretary-Treasurer

Attendance: Van Bergen, Michael & Nicki McCormack, Eve Proper, Lloyd Stevens, Mark Sherman, Trapper Robbins, Paul Lindgren, Mike Fraley, Doug Knapp, Larry Backstrom, Debbi Lermond, Jon Crouch, Robert Mitchell, Seth Brothers, Aaron Stavens

Old Business:

1. A motion was made and seconded to pass the NCA bylaw changes as proposed at the 2002 Regional. The motion passed unanimously.
2. Mark Sherman is going to pursue a cave protection law for Washington State. He needs help. Next summer he will start inventorying caves. Contact him if you are interested in helping out with the project.
3. Van has been working on the grotto handbook. He has removed all of the time sensitive information such as the grotto membership list. That way it will not need to be updated as frequently. He has also removed the grotto's library catalog from the handbook. He wants the library information to be available through other means. He's having a few people review the updated handbook. If there are no objections Van will make the new handbook available electronically.

New Business:

1. Eve had a lot of email bounce when she sent out the last issue of the *Cascade Caver*. It was mostly from Hotmail accounts. This time she sent out hard copy to those email addresses that bounced. However, that creates a lot of extra work for the editors. She wants to know what to do in the future. Michael McCormack said Hotmail had a problem. He will check into it further.
2. Jon McGinnis has stepped down as the Vertical and Safety Committee Chair. Van is looking for someone to fill that role. Contact him if you are interested.

Special Presentation:

Debbie Lermond and Larry Backstrom have a video of Ape Cave in the works. They gave a preview at the meeting. They also discussed some of equipment they use to capture the in-cave video footage. Thank you Debbie and Larry!

Van Bergen and I started having a discussion about trying to get a Washington State law enacted to protect caves on State lands. While beginning the research for this, I came across this article that was posted on the NSS Conservation Committee website at http://www.caves.org/committee/conservation/www/a_law/legal_protection.htm

Since we are going to be in need of help to accomplish this task, I thought it would be worthwhile to print the article as an introduction to this topic. I have reprinted it here with the permission of the author, Thomas Lera. – Mark Sherman.

LEGAL PROTECTION FOR CAVES AND KARST

By Thomas Lera

Caves need protection. Destruction of caves on Federal Lands, and the desire to prevent further damage, resulted in the passage of the Federal Cave Resources Protection Act of 1989. This statute protects caves in National Parks, National Forests, BLM land, and other lands administered by the Departments of Agriculture and Interior. As of 2001, twenty-six states have also enacted cave protection laws. In addition, endangered species protection extends also to caves in which rare and threatened species live.

Sadly, more protection for both cave and karst resources is needed. Most protection does not extend to the karst areas above caves, but as the study of karst groundwater proves, what goes into the ground above caves will end up in the water supply at the bottom, contaminating the cave, and resources tapped by human communities as well.

In an ideal world, people would care for natural resources, using them with care, not wasting or wantonly destroying them. Damage done to a cave heals slowly, if ever, over eons rather than years. For this reason, caves and the natural contents within caves are non-renewable resources.

Unfortunately, continued destruction of caves and cave resources means that conservation must be a matter of law as well as of good intention and stewardship.

Although some cave visitors may not see the harm of taking cave formations as a souvenir of their "adventure," or in leaving a spray-painted signature as a record of their visit, or in dumping unwanted trash in a cave, such actions will significantly alter the cave as well as the caving experience for those who come after. Formations that have been painted, broken, or, in some cases, merely handled, cease to grow in our lifetimes or even in our children's children's lifetimes. Garbage may include batteries, petroleum products, other chemical wastes, human and animal wastes, animal carcasses, and metals, all of which can contaminate water supplies.

Because caves are unique environments offering opportunities for research, education, recreation, and in many cases human sustenance, it is important for visitors to hold a "leave no trace" ethic and to cave softly. Because cave and karst systems are waterways and reservoirs for a resource that our communities depend on, it is important not only for cavers but for all people to support efforts and legislation which protect our karst and cave resources for ourselves and for future generations.

Legal Protection for Caves and Karst, text by Thomas Lera. Pages and their contents © Copyright 2001 by the Conservation Division of the National Speleological Society, except where otherwise noted.

Not Another Dynamited Trip Report

The Cast:

The Trip Leader – The swashbuckling Xandon Frogget

Number Two – Erin Robert, keen to learn to rig

The Strong Silent Type – Rich Watson

The Guy Trying the New System – Lloyd “Chestroller” Stevens

The Narrator – Eve Proper

The Report:

Intrepid Frogget, Rigger Robert, Silent Rich and I met at Frogget’s place on Saturday, Oct. 12. We loaded our gear up. Then we went to the gas station. Then we went back to Frogget’s apartment. Then we drove. Then we pulled over several times to fix recalcitrant electronic equipment. Then we had dinner in Randall.

Finally, we got to the Trout Lake general store. After watching a little Mutual of Omaha’s Wild Kingdom, we went to sleep. Frogget was quarantined downstairs because he snores.

The next morning we had breakfast. Chestroller showed up. Oh yeah, then we went caving before going home. It was dark and there were drops and stuff. We ate afterwards, substituting burgers for the usual pizza. That was a mistake we won’t make again (see Wacky Highjink below).

The Touching Emotional Moment:

We saw a shooting star on the way down.

The Wacky Highjink:

After a post-caving burger feed at the Trout Lake restaurant, Chestroller patiently awaits his paid-for huckleberry pie from the waitress, who possesses the gift of being rude. Or is it sarcastic? Well, if people can’t tell, you should knock it off. After reminding her several times, he gives up and asks for his money back. She won’t give him a refund – or

his pie. There goes her tip. But now we can never eat in Trout Lake again.

The Pithy Remark:

Match the witty remark with the speaker.

“If we’re not in the cave by noon, I’m not going in at all.”

“You should have trained the cat to do something useful, like get you a beer.”

“Get me a beer? That’s what the girlfriend was for.”

“Anyone thirsty? Because I need to use this bottle for something else.”

Closing Statement:

The weather was beautiful, it was a great day of caving, and I sure hope we can do it again.

Alpine Caving Techniques by Georges Marbach and Bernard Tourte

Book review by Van Bergen

This is the best caving “how-to” book I’ve read. David McClurg’s Adventure of Caving is still my favorite introductory book, but Alpine Caving Techniques does a masterful job of covering the more advanced territory. Now a classic in Europe, the first edition of this book was published in 1973. It was updated in 1981 and in 1999. The authors of the 1999 edition are instructors for the French Caving School (they really do have such a thing in France!).

This 2002 English translation is by Melanie Alspaugh, a Texas caver now working for Speleo Projects in Switzerland. She successfully translates French caving terms of art into their familiar American equivalent. And if there is no American equivalent - for example, for the pontonierre, a caving-specific type of waders - she provides a thorough explanation in a footnote.

There are nice black & white photos of caving scenes scattered throughout the book for window dressing. The gear and techniques themselves are illustrated by line drawings;

there are a lot of them, and they are uniformly excellent. For example, the steps in passing a rebelay are illustrated as if you were viewing the process from inside the rock, facing the caver. The text itself is also excellent; it is precise and thorough but still entertaining. A droll sense of humor surfaces from time to time.

The book covers equipment choice and maintenance, including cave clothing, helmets, and lighting, and it's obvious from this first part that the book is not going to apply to all types of caving found in the U.S. The clothing coverage is all coated nylon, rubber boots, rubber gloves, etc. – clothing for cold, wet caves. Although the clothing section won't be too useful to a TAG caver, it's just about right for Northwest alpine cavers.

Personal vertical gear is covered in even more detail, although it's limited to the Frog system, and they even recommend the Simple descender over the Stop. The section on ropes and rigging equipment is even longer; again, it's limited to Euro-style rigging gear. There's a section on transporting gear and supplies that's really heavy on the waterproof container theme. Next up is a short but excellent chapter on physical and mental aspects of caving, then the "Underground" chapter.

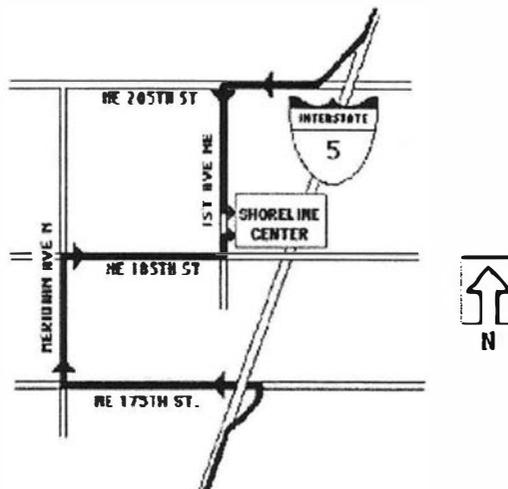
The longest part of the book, Underground includes moving through the cave (the short section on horizontal techniques is amusingly titled "Travelling Without Gear"), vertical techniques, rigging in great detail (including light rigging, considered only for experts), water problems, passage enlargement, exploration, an extensive self-rescue section (including five different Frog pickoff techniques, but only a brief mention of full callout assisted rescues), and "Observing and Documenting the Cave" (which includes a very brief overview of surveying, but assumes the reader will go elsewhere for actual surveying instructions). The book ends with a nice little chapter about cave conservation and the spirit of discovery.

The book's focus on the one correct way of doing almost everything might put off American cavers. I guess that's the way they do things in France, and I guess why that's why a Caving School must appear normal to the French. The authors do acknowledge equipment and techniques that are outside "the French way" – and the translator frequently adds additional discussion – but acknowledgement is about as far as they're willing to go. "Americans use racks [then two short paragraphs of description] – but we don't use them." "Americans have other climbing systems [then half a page of description and subtle criticism] but we use the Frog." But the authors frequently remind the reader that they're describing the standard French techniques of the moment, and that the reader should decide for himself how – or even whether - to apply what they describe.

There are many aspects of North American caving that are not covered, and there are some aspects of "the French way" that will meet with disagreement here (e.g. the exclusive use of 8mm self-drive bolts). But even if whole sections of the book are ignored or considered bad technique, the coverage of the applicable parts is well worth the \$35 and will far outweigh the parts that might make us wonder what's wrong with those French people. For Frog systems and alpine caving, it has no peer. Just for the quality of its illustrations throughout, it puts On Rope to shame.

I have at least half a dozen post-its sticking out of the book right now – ideas that I want to try, or gear changes to make, that will make my caving safer and more enjoyable. The funniest part is the cover photograph. It's Fantastic Pit in Georgia, a huge free drop that is the epitome of American Indestructible Rope Technique, the vertical opposite of "alpine" technique. No one in their right mind would even consider putting rebelay in Fantastic. Go figure...

The Cascade Grotto meets at 7:00pm 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 185th St. N (the next light). Turn left on 1st NE, which again is the next light. The Community Center is on the right. Don't get confused with the Senior Center, which is on the end of the building. Enter the building on the southwest corner and find the Hamlin Room.



Cascade Caver
P.O. Box 66623
Seattle, WA 98166



Danny Miller & Cele Wolman
5623 294th Ave. NE
Carnation, WA 98014

