



Cascade Caver

Newsletter of the Cascade Grotto of the National Speleological Society

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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 \$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 Michael McCormack (425) 377-1978
Vice Chairman Robert Mitchell (360) 802-5131
Sec/Treasurer Aaron Stavens (253) 946-3431

OTHER POSITIONS

Trip Coordinator Eve Proper (206) 937-5295
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) 937-5295
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

March 21	Grotto Meeting. 7 p.m. Shoreline Community Center
April 13	Ape Cave clean up. Contact Eve Proper (206) 937-5295
April 18	Grotto Meeting. 7 p.m. Shoreline Community Center
April 27-28	Succor Creek Rappelling Trip, ID
May 16	Grotto Meeting. 7 p.m. Shoreline Community Center
May 23	31 st Annual BC Speleofest.
May 24-26	Trout Lake Caving
June 20	Grotto Meeting. 7 p.m. Shoreline Community Center
August 4-8	NSS Convention, Porterville, CA.

COVER: Michael McCormack took this photo of Erin Robert rappelling in a cave in Idaho.

January 17, 2003 Cascade Grotto Meeting Minutes

By Aaron Stavens, Secretary-Treasurer

Attendance: Michael and Nicki McCormack, Erin Robert, Hester Mallonée, Stuart Monson, Robert Mitchell, Eve Proper, Mark and Andrea Gunther, Aaron Stavens.

Committee Reports:

Cave Register Committee – Aaron Stavens reported that at last year's Trout Lake trip the committee tried installing a sign at New Cave. The attempt was unsuccessful. The epoxy used takes too long to set. We need to try something else.

Conservation Committee – Although Tish Korbly is the committee chairperson of record, Eve reported that she is also performing some conservation activities.

Old Business:

No old business was discussed.

New Business:

1. Stuart Monson publicly thanked the grotto newsletter editors. He considers the December newsletter the best newsletter he has seen in a while.
2. Robert Mitchell volunteered to be the program director for the coming year. He would appreciate any suggestions.
3. Michael McCormack mentioned that Chris Wittenbrink is currently storing the grotto squeezebox for the grotto.
4. Since Jon McGinnis has vacated the position, Michael McCormack is looking for a new Vertical and Safety chair. Dave McElmurry was suggested. Michael will follow up.

February 21, 2003 Cascade Grotto Meeting Minutes

By Aaron Stavens, Secretary-Treasurer

Attendance: Aaron Stavens, Steve Sprague, Robert Mitchell, Mark Sherman, Stuart Monson, Jay Murro, Van Bergen, Mark and Andrea Gunther, Dan Kraus, Mike Oxman, Ben Thompson, Jon Crouch, Michael and Nikki McCormack

Old Business:

No old business was discussed.

New Business:

1. Mark needs articles and photos for the next issue of the *Cascade Caver*. Please contact him if you have anything to contribute.
2. The grotto voted to contribute \$100 to the NSS' acquisition of Great Expectations cave in Wyoming.
3. Craters of the Moon National Monument has expanded. The NPS is asking for input on the proposed management plan. The Gem State Grotto likes option A or C best. Jennifer Dorman, of the Gem State Grotto, asks that we, as individuals, write the NPS with our input. Individual letters generally have more impact than a single letter from the group.
4. Washington has several lava tubes where the known length has been extended. Several of those caves belong on the Longest Caves list. The Willamette Valley Grotto is asking the Cascade Grotto if we have any objections. The general feeling at the meeting seemed to be that the Longest Caves list does not contain specific location information therefore, putting the caves on the list should not threaten the caves.
5. Mark mentioned there are several caves or cave leads worth checking out in the Ragged Ridge area of Eastern Wash. Sounds like another grotto trip!
6. Van thinks it might be a good idea for the Cascade Grotto to invest in a grotto banner

as well as some kind of large sun/rain shade. No vote was taken. Van simply wants to start us thinking about the possibility.

7. Van solicited more input on the location of this year's Regional. The general feeling seemed to be that Tahsis is the favored location. Van will also look into the possibility of combining the Canadian's Speleofest with the Regional.
8. Kurt Black is willing to do a presentation on bats for the grotto. Robert Mitchell will follow up to determine a date.

Presentations: Michael McCormack gave a digital slide show of a recent trip to a newly discovered cave in Central Idaho.

A group of arborists came to find out more about cavers and to introduce themselves to us. I didn't know tree climbing is a sport.

March 21, 2003 Cascade Grotto Meeting Minutes

By Aaron Stavens, Secretary-Treasurer

Attendance: Hester Mallonée, Erin Robert, Mark & Andrea Gunther, Jim Harp, Dough Knapp, Nikki & Michael McCormack, Eve Proper, Bill Petty, Jackie Ramsey, Steve Sprague, Mike Fraley, Diane (Jim's friend), Robert Mitchell, Mark Sherman, Jon Crouch, Dick & Rose Garnick

Old Business:

1. Aaron Stavens reported that he mailed the Great Expectations donation to the NSS on Monday.

New Business:

1. Jim Harp suggested a Memorial Day weekend trip to Trout Lake. Eve Proper will follow up.
2. Michael is considering a caving trip to Belize. Contact him if you are interested.
3. The grotto voted to give Robert Mitchell \$30 as seed money to obtain A/V material from the NSS for meeting presentations.

Presentations: We viewed the video *Otter Hole* about a large, dolomite cave in England

Newton Cave – August 24, 2002

By Mike Fraley

Five cavers descended into the depths of Newton Cave Aug. 24 on Cave Ridge. These cavers allowed this reporter along to provide an unprecedented first-hand glimpse into the mysterious and dangerous world they call home.

I arrived early on the scene at the parking lot where these would-be barbarians had chosen to assemble. A blurry-eyed, shifty looking character known locally as the notorious Dave Hopf cordially greeted me. After the normal pleasantries, he made offerings of ritual coffee and various other food items, all of which I refused. As the minutes trudged on, various vehicles came and went from the parking lot, and I sensed that sinister eyes were watching my every move. Sure enough, the evil Aaron Stavens emerged from a low, black sports car, brandishing a pair of sunglasses and motioned towards me in what these people call "a greeting." Soon after, Aaron's tough-looking bodyguard, Lloyd Stevens, made his appearance from the shadows near our vehicles.

As we began to prepare for the day's activities, the final participants arrived on the scene. Investigations now show them to be the infamous Danny Miller, and his partner in crime, Cele Wolman. When I asked why they were going to be entering this cave today, they blankly stared at me and replied in near unison, "Because it isn't there...."

Brandishing wicked looking bamboo "walking sticks", the group began the torturous and murderous climb up the mountain toward the cave. These cavers were nothing short of wild, raging animals, sprinting up the hillside at break neck speed leaving dust devils in their

wakes. This reporter did his best to keep up, but the experience was one of mostly taking in the scenery from across the valley as I stopped to gulp more oxygen. After what seemed like ages, the group reassembled at our destination, Newton Cave.

One by one, the cavers disappeared into the cave's entrance like children bursting onto a playground during a school recess. Laughter and excitement echoed as these once docile individuals began a metamorphosis into something much more frightening and terrible, a cave explorer.

The Descent

Newton Cave is punctuated by numerous painful squeezes, down climbs and narrow passages. These characteristics became apparent very quickly once we began our journey. The cavers began to briefly disappear into small openings and cracks along the path, only to emerge once again saying "it doesn't go." We followed a path that seemed well traveled, ever descending further and further underground. Finally, we reached the first major obstacle, the first rope drop. Evil Aaron Stavens set about rigging a rope while the rest of us patiently waited. The notorious Dave Hopf volunteered to be the first to descend the rope so he could photograph the carnage as the rest of us stammered down the rope after him. Once Dave was safely down, I volunteered to be the next victim. The rappel was quite manageable, putting me on the floor of the pit with Dave exclaiming "perfect landing!" After the rest of the party made it to the bottom, several members began some sort of ritual they called a "picnic." They sacrificed several small beasties, which they called "MRE's." After this nearly half-hour long ordeal, we continued deeper into the cave. As the passages quickly began to narrow, members of the party suddenly became content with their experience as we lost 2 members during a series of very nasty, vertical but climbable pits and crawlways. The group soon reached a point near the second

rope drop and quickly became disoriented as to where the proper passage was. During this confusion and fearing for his partner in crime, Danny Miller made his way back toward Cele Wolman near the bottom of the first rope drop.

Evil Aaron, the notorious Dave and myself climbed down and around the wall of a pit and located the second rope drop in the cave, a 15-foot pit. The pit was rigged with a dynamic rope, undoubtedly left there by some of the rock climbers that legends say enter the cave. Just for fun, Aaron re-did the rigging and descended the pit, only to climb right back up again when Dave indicated he had left his vertical gear at the bottom of the first rope drop. Fearing for the safety of our fallen comrades, our fearless leader and guide, Aaron, stated that we should head back for the entrance of the cave. Dave quickly scrambled back up the crawlways and disappeared, at which point Aaron Stavens and myself began to slowly lose our minds. While we were screaming, "I want my mommy!" and "You're never going to see your mommy again!" Aaron began to play with the words emanating from our mouths and created the new catch phrase of the day, this "sucks buckets!" Yes Aaron, it really did suck buckets.

The Ascent

After expending the majority of the energy we had left, Aaron and I arrived at the bottom of the first rope drop only to find most of the original six at the top or making their way out of the cave. After some extreme agony and equipment problems, we both made it to the top and de-rigged the rope. On an empty, growling stomach, I expended what remained of my energy crawling back to the entrance. As I made the final climb to get out of the cave, I was greeted by strange booming sounds emanating from outside the cave as someone said there was some severe lightning to the north. Aaron and I exited the cave to a

chorus of thunder and lightning; the gods must have been pleased with us.

The Descent, part two

Splitting into three groups of two, the party broke up and left the mountain via three different routes. We all arrived back at our vehicles at almost the same time, however. As quickly as they had appeared that morning, these cavers vanished into the evening light. I still can't say what drives these people to do the things they do, but I gained a tremendous respect for their dashing good looks and, heroic disposition and their superhuman strength.

This is Mike Fraley, reporting for the Cascade Caver, signing off.

This has been a wacky fictional portrayal of a real life event, any and all similarities with real life names or people are PURELY coincidental. All rights reserved.

Winter Cave Ridge Trip Report

February 15, 2003

by Danny Miller

We'd been wanting to do a winter Cave Ridge trip for a while, to play in the few caves that are open in winter, and just for some good exercise, but somehow we always seem to pick dates with horrible weather, high avalanche danger or both. This trip was actually a rescheduled trip that was originally cancelled due to both problems. And true to form, we picked as our make-up date the only day in several weeks that wasn't sunny and warm. We got snowed on during much of the trip up, but the snow was safe and it was better than being rained on. And seeing how badly the ski area needs the snow, I couldn't begrudge it.

Our official statement about the hike is "It was grueling work, but at least it was long." This is

never an easy hike, and it's always slower and more difficult in the winter. We didn't make very good time (more than 4 hours up) and then we spent more than another 4 hours caving, and about 3 hours coming down. Now if you're good at math you'll note that we were traveling for about 12 hours and there are nowhere near 12 hours of daylight in February, but we'll get to that later. At least we seem to pick a different way up the mountain each time we go, so I've had different scenery for each of the last 4 trips I've made.

Aaron Stavens, Michael McCormack and I went on the trip. At first I was voted the craziest person in the group, because on top of carrying all my gear and the 120' rope, I carried skis on my back to ski back down on (I claim that it's always better to ski down). But after reaching the top hungry, tired, and cold, it became a three way tie for craziness, as none of us had the sense to consider going back down, but instead we started a 4 ½ hour caving expedition into Danger Cave, which I had never been in before.

It took about an hour to gear up for some reason... Aaron was pretty sure that he was going to be the last person ready, but I managed to take that honor by leaving all the tying of my webbing for my ascending system for right there in the blizzard with cold numb fingers instead of in my warm house earlier that day.

The first challenge was getting into the cave. The entrance stays blown open, but it is a vertical snow shaft usually 10'-15' deep or more. This year, both entrances were open, and the pit was only 6' deep because of the low snow cover, so we were able to hack a little spiral-staircase-kind-of-thing into the snow pit with my skis (see, I knew what I was doing when I brought them along). So we didn't need a rope to get to the entrance, which was nice. Then the cave is a short crawl to the 40' drop. Michael had been down this far before but only Aaron had been down the drop

before. The floor of the cave is all breakdown up to the drop, so you kind of have to tie off to a rock balanced on the edge of the cliff that you're rappelling down and hope you don't pull it down on top of you as you descend. (Well, it's not quite that bad, but it certainly makes an interesting tie off). We chocked into the wall for a backup, and ran the rope over a sling in the ceiling to get the rope away from the sharp edges of the lip (since we'd forgotten our rope condoms).

We were all having a great time because the weather in the cave was *much* nicer than the weather outside, and we had warmed up and were feeling much more comfortable. But all of a sudden Aaron looked a little worried as he started the drop... was something wrong? Was the tie off not safe? "Oh, nothing" he said. "Just the usual feeling that I'm going to die that I always get when starting to rappel." So down we all went. I believe that by the time the second person got to the bottom of the rope, Aaron was already at the very bottom of the cave (enthusiasm breeds speed).

The cave is wonderful. Its called Danger Cave because all the breakdown makes you think the ceiling could fall on you at any time. But if you don't like crawling through tight passages all day, this cave is for you. It's a big slot through the mountain about 15' wide, and almost 300' long, sloping downwards. Only that one spot near the top needs a rope, the rest of the cave can be easily free climbed or walked through. The ceilings are often 30' high throughout the cave and there are some small ribbons, tiny formations and flowstone, but it's not really a decorated cave.

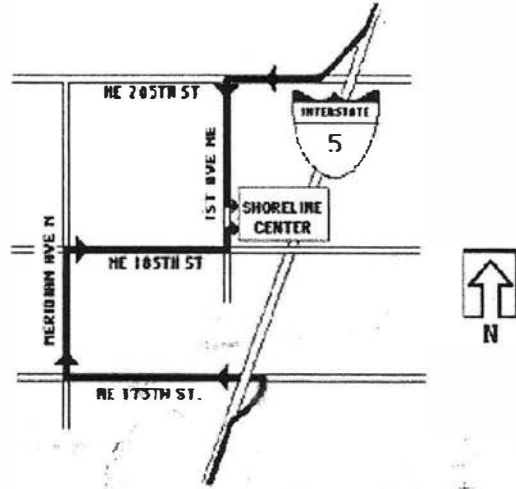
Our original plan called for several more hours of exploring some leads for new passages and surveying the cave with tape and compass, but apparently there was a limit to our craziness. We had to admit that unless we wanted to spend the night up there, we had better think about heading down.

It was 5:30 by the time we got out of the cave, and the sun was already setting. I skied down first, thinking I could be down in a quick 45 minutes, and Michael and Aaron followed my tracks. Well, the snow was more horrible than you can possibly imagine, and it took about 90 minutes and 4000 calories to ski down. I actually gave up close to the bottom and walked the rest of the way, and now I'm starting to revisit my theory that "it's always better to ski down". I can only imagine what Aaron and Michael must have thought following my whacky tracks that cut back and forth seemingly at random and across gullies and waterfalls. My excuse is that I was just too tired to turn, so I'd be happy to pretty much plow through anything.

Somehow what was 3 miles up turned into what felt like 12 miles down. Those who walked spent about 3 hours getting down, so most of our trip was lit by headlamp. That's the great thing about caving... you know you're always going to have some spare lights with you if it gets dark.

That night, after 12 hours of continuous exercise I was swearing I was never going to do that again, but by the next day I felt great and, as usual, I've forgotten all the painful moments and am already looking forward to the next trip... I noticed Hell Hole has blown open... anybody up for it?

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
5623 294th Ave NE
Carnation, WA 98014

