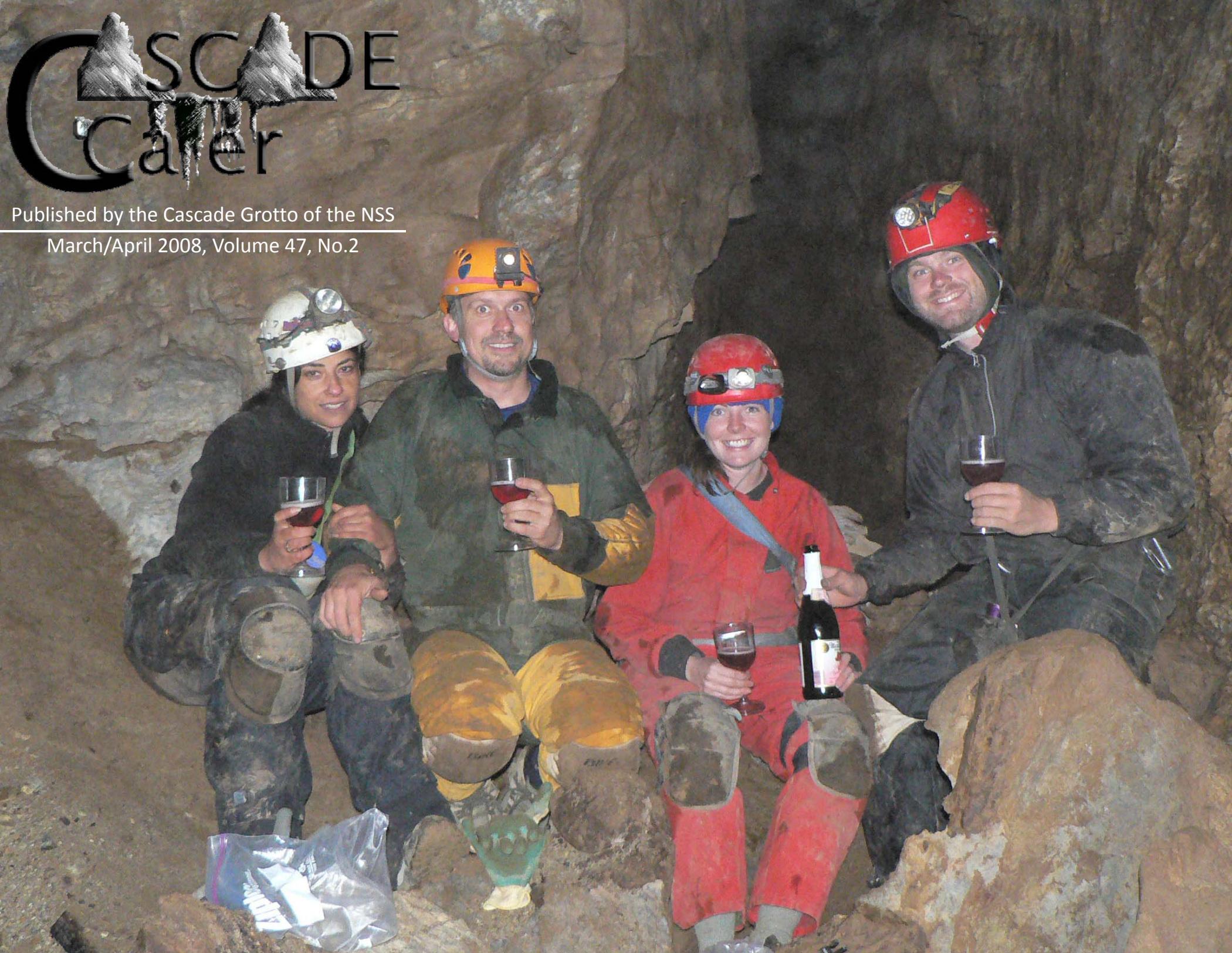


CASCADE Caver

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March/April 2008, Volume 47, No.2





Cascade Caver

CASCADE GROTTO

Volume 47, Issue Number 2
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March/April 2008

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GROTTO ADDRESS

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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.

COVER

This month's cover was shot by Dave McElmurry. From left to right: Wafa Daher, Dave McElmurry, Courtney Lyons and Thomas Evans enjoy a glass of Sparking Cider at the bottom of Cascade Cave.

Upcoming Events:

- CAVE RIDGE
JULY 25-27, 2008
CONTACT THOMAS EVANS
- PAPOOSE GATE WORK
AUGUST 8-9 CONTACT JENNIFER BABIONE
- NSS CONVENTION (WWW.NSS2008.COM)
AUGUST 11-15, 2008
- TROUT LAKE CAMPING AND CAVING
AUGUST 30, 2008
CONTACT KARI DOLLER

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Chairman's Corner

June 29, 2008

By Kari Doller

Cascade Grotto Chairman

Summer is here at last. That means that caving season is coming into full swing and already we have some fantastic trips planned. There are at least 2 trips to Cave Ridge with more in the talking phase. I am starting to plan at least one trip to 3-mile to resume our digging. The last few times that we have been up we came up with an ingenious haul system to cut our effort considerably, increase our productivity and had fun in the

process. There is a trip heading to Trout Lake the week before Labor Day and a separate continuation-ish trip over Labor Day weekend. We will be having a fundraiser Spaghetti dinner one of the nights during the weekend, so bring your appetites and a few dollars to contribute. I will send out more information as the trip gets closer.

We are still continuing to see new members join both our meetings and our trips and I am thrilled to see the addition of more friends to share our adventures. Nothing beats a trip like

a great trip with 20 of your closest friends. Whether it is caving, hiking, or driving for 15 hours through mountains and farm country and coming dangerously close to losing a tire...but I digress. Let's keep the new faces coming. Every time that I see new faces at our events I get a little giddy.

I hope to see everyone at some point this summer by the light of LED, incandescent, carbide or any other light that you happen to find safe and useful in a cave.

LET'S GO CAVING!!!

Bat Observation Project Roll-Out

March 25, 2008

By Ron Zuber



Chris Anderson presents to Cavers at the March Cascade Grotto meeting.

It started out innocently enough. I asked Russell Link for some information about Townsend's Big Eared bats. In our conversation he asked me a simple question; "where do Northwest Washington bats go in the winter?" My smart aleck answer was simple; "Most of them fly south for the winter. The rest mostly hibernate in caves, mines, buildings and trees." "Yes, but where exactly," he inquired. Russell is the District Biologist for District 12 (King Co.) of the Washing State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW).

As a caver, biologists were asking me which caves are used by which species for hibernation, maternity, and so on. I couldn't accurately say with my limited knowledge of Washington caves. But I know lots of cavers with lots more knowledge about caves in the state. Maybe, I thought, local cavers would be interested and willing to participate in an effort to

know more about regional bats. Cavers and managers might work together. Our collaboration could lead to sound bat conservation and management decisions and practices.

Washington regional biologists already know a lot about bats so we started to discuss the question more seriously. That was two years ago. Since then, as a result of meetings, field trips, consultations, and planning, we are able to role-out a draft of the WDFW Bat Observation Form.

The WDFW has approved budget and biologist time, along with support staff, to work more on bats and bat habitat in our region. Biologists in all the western Washington counties and in counties throughout the state are on board and have been directed to allocate time and expend effort on bats. This is great news for bats and people, since bats are an integral

(Continued from page 15)

part of our ecosystems. The Bat Project is a-go.

Christopher Anderson, WDFW Survey Biologist District 12, has embraced this bat project. At the March Grotto meeting Chris rolled-out a draft Bat Observation Form that we've been working on. He requested comments and direction from cavers. Since that project introduction, we have modified the form to make it more effective. We've added a general explanation of the project and included instructions for completing the form. We also added

statements regarding bat etiquette and personal behaviors in the presence of bats. Most importantly, we added a strong cautionary statement not to handle any bat for any reason.

At our Grotto meeting a caver requested printing the form on Rite In The Rain paper. We will print some that way. WDFW will provide forms on Rite-In-The-Rain paper at the April Grotto meeting. The Cascade Grotto will also receive the Bat Observation Form as a PDF file so we can print forms ourselves on paper of our choice.

When the project is up and running I

plan to share the form and project parameters with cavers from other regional Grottos who cave in Washington State. They too can submit observations. Of course a next step is to share the Washington bat project with cavers and wildlife folks in Oregon, California and British Columbia. Bats need friends wherever they are. Perhaps similar projects will be considered worthwhile in other areas.

I am happy about caver response to the project. I look forward to us all participating and contributing to the knowledge base and conservation of our furry, flying friends of the night.

BATLADY Among Us

March 25, 2008

Text and Photos By Ron Zuber



Barbara Ogaard shows a pair of Silver-haired bats.

When Barbara Ogaard drives up in her black SUV you know she's an interesting and special person. Her license plate reads BATLADY. There's also something about her cloths. Her jacket is embroidered with bats and her shirt is emblazoned with the images of her furry friends. Barbara is a longtime and active member of Bats Northwest, the go-to group for bat and bat con-

servation information.

Barbara loves bats and has been involved with them for a long time. She received her zoology degree from the University of Washington and has pursued her bat passion in projects and travels far and wide.

At our March Cascade Grotto meeting Barbara presented a most interesting, enthusiastic and informative program on bats. She shared bat facts and stories of folklore, science, conservation, humor and experience. Our group welcomed her ambassadors of the dark including Silver-haired bats *Lasiurus noctivagans* (Le Conte), California myotis *Myotis californicus*, and a Big Brown bat *Eptesicus fuscus*. The live bats patiently let us observe them up close and

they didn't mind having their pictures taken.

Bat biologist Greg Falxa also attended our meeting. Greg contributed bat facts, information, and more enthusiasm for the furry little critters.

Barbara Ogaard invites all interested cavers to get more involved with bats and bat conservation and join with her group Bats Northwest.



The Bat Lady—Barbara Ogaard

Bat Observation Form



Observer: _____ Organization: _____

Date of Observation: _____ Site name: _____ Nearest town or city: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____



LAT/LONG - NAD 83: Latitude _____ Longitude _____

UTM - NAD 83: Easting _____ Northing _____

Township _____ Range _____ Section _____ Quarter Section _____

NO BATS OBSERVED	BATS OBSERVED		TIME OF BAT OBSERVATION	BAT ACTIVITY NOTICED			
	Less than 10	Greater than 10		Flying	Roosting	Guano	Dead Bats

→→→ MARK EACH APPROPRIATE OBSERVATION BOX ABOVE WITH AN "X" IF APPLICABLE ←←←

-----Comments – Directions – Description of Site-----

TIPS TO MINIMIZE DISTURBANCE TO ROOSTING BATS

- **Thank you**, for adding to bat knowledge in Washington State! Please **respect our resting bats - keep noise to a minimum**. Quickly take observations from a distance. **Do not shine flashlights, headlamps, or any white light on bats**, use a red light screen or a single camera flash to get a brief look, if needed. Remember, hibernating bats can lose many days of stored fat when disturbed! **DISTURBANCE CAN BE FATAL TO BATS!!!**
- **DO NOT TOUCH BATS EVER!!!** Even if they appear sick or injured, let nature be. Although extremely rare, bats can carry rabies.
- **Keep yourself and bats safe by being QUIET, QUICK, and MINIMIZING YOUR PRESENCE.** Only stay at the roost long enough to obtain the basic observations requested on this form. Watching bats during the summer when they are actively flying and feeding around water sources, streetlights, etc. is the safest and best way to enjoy these creatures.

Return to: Lori Salzer WDFW, 600 Capitol Way North, Olympia, WA 98501-1091
E-mail: salzeljs@dfw.wa.gov

Ape Cave Trip Report

March 27 2007

By Hester Mallonee

Hester Mallonee, her daughter Hester Catherine Mallonee, and Tom "Paleo" Evans visited Ape Cave on 3/22/07 for several hours of good caving.

I had only been in the lower cave for a conservation trip a few years ago and neither of the others had been there at all. As such, we decided to tackle the Upper Cave first while we were fresh, since that section is described as "difficult," whereas the lower cave is described as "easy." A more accurate description would be: the Upper Cave is "pretty easy with some breakdown and one 8-foot lava falls that some will free climb and

some will need a boost or an etrier on" and the Lower Cave is "piece of cake."

The lava scenery was mostly large-scale stuff rather than the intimately scaled drip formations and such that are in, say, Deadhorse Cave. We saw huge vaulted ceilings sparkling with reflective microorganisms (isn't that a nice way to say cave slime?). We saw railroad tracks, some almost-scrolls, some lava tongues, some point bars (corner-shaped sidebars that the lava leaves when it does a bend in the passage), gas blowouts, re-melt ceiling shapes, and plenty of bright-red oxidized stuff, which was a little hard to explain that deep in the cave. Many unanswered ques-

tions.

Unfortunately, we also saw huge amounts of trash. We gathered and carried out a large bag of it -- bottles, plastic, bits of rotting this and that, and enough disgusting clots of gum to make me think that my father, who was fiercely against chewing gum because he said it was vulgar, was right after all!

There's a lot more trash in the cave. It all poses another unanswered question: why do people think this is okay?

Let's go en masse and clean this sucker. Bring the boom boxes, bring a lunch, and rock and roll until it's done.

Date Cave Trip Report November 30, 2007

November 30, 2007

By Thomas Evans

For those who have never been to Date Cave the name may seem strange. For readers of this periodical you know the history and how the name is apt given my usage of this charming hole in the ground. This cave is short, about 175 feet, and sits in the large crack on Rattlesnake Ledge off I-90 exit 32 near North Bend. It requires a two-mile hike with 1300-foot elevation gain on a trail that is used by a large number of hikers on a daily basis. The views from the ledge are spectacular, and November 30, 2007 was no different. Earlier that day I took three exams to be considered for forensic scientist positions in the Seattle office of the State Patrol Crime Laboratory. Clearly, I needed to burn off some steam, so I headed up to the trailhead and waited for other cavers to arrive.

Jacob Earl, his girlfriend, and I met in the parking lot and waited for others to show up. When enough time had elapsed, we divvied up some of the gear and headed up the trail. The day was cold, crisp, and beautiful, which made the hike up divine. Jacob and I talked ropes the entire time while his girlfriend ran ahead, probably to get away from the rope nerds. We made it up to the ledge in time to change into our cave gear while watching the sunset. I took my sweet time getting ready since I enjoy sunsets. The happy couple descended into the crack and proceeded to enjoy the bliss that is Date Cave. I gave them time to enjoy the place by themselves, but there was a rapid exit from the cave since the local Neotoma (packrat) was not to the liking of the fairer half of the couple.

Personally, I enjoy a thriving cave fauna, and relished the opportunity

to get back in to this short cave. Both Jacob and I crawled around a while, took pictures, and then headed up when we heard voices above us. Hester Mellonee and Marla Pelowski had arrived and were interrogating Jacobs's better half. Since she clearly wanted to head down the ridge, we cut the two loose and sent them on their way down the hill.

I began to harass Marla, as I always do, while Hester put up with our antics. Hester and Marla made a brief foray into the crack to see if it was possible to get down to the cave. Hester expressed some concern about climbing down the crack given the state of her leg (remember it broke on one of her previous cave trips). To remove all doubt she had me rig a rope so the crack could be descended with the aid of a friendly piece of ridged nylon. I used a 60 foot piece of 1 inch webbing

wrapped around a boulder four or five times then tied with a backed up water knot. Two carabineers were attached with gates opposite and opposed then a rope secured to it with a figure 8 knot backed up with a barrel knot. The lip was padded with one of my homemade vinyl rope pads, and down I went. The rope provided an excellent platform on which to take photographs of the many ice formations that decorated the entrance to the cave.

With the aid of the rope and Marla's vertical rig, Hester and Marla got down the crack to look at the entrance. They both decided they wouldn't try to get in. Marla was too concerned about her Gortex jacket. I don't think this was a valid excuse. Dave McElmurry showed up and quickly dove into the cave. We spent a good deal of time climbing around the cave, taking pictures of each other, the ice, and of Dave talking on his cell phone IN the cave. Yes, Date Cave has cell phone reception. It's both cool and repulsive all at the

same time.

We exited the cave in time to wish the two ladies a fond farewell as they headed down the hill. Since it was now a men's night out, the conversation quickly spiraled down hill to women, beer, and the metaphysics of combining the two. We cleaned up all our gear and spent some time sipping hot chocolate while enjoying the splendor of being outdoors on such a beautiful night. It was a relaxing and beautiful evening.

With spirits revived, we headed down the hill in the dark. For those who have not hiked this trail at night, it is charming to watch the lights below get gradually closer and closer. Over the past two years, I have become a big fan of night hiking, and this was delightful. Back at the cars, we parted ways and went home to our respective houses to contemplate yet another day of caving.

Those who know me well are aware

that I am truly a geek. I passionately love the world and everything on or in it. Caving is great since I get to see part of the world that few others get to see and I get to see it from such a different standpoint. However, in my years of caving I have found what I like most about caving is the people. There is a friendship between cavers that is more profound than is possible with people who do not regularly put their lives in another's hands. When I invite people to come out caving, rappelling, or just to get together, I hope to build lasting relationships with them that transcend the dark, wet, cold, muddy hole in which we will be climbing around. I hope more people will come out in the future to both enjoy the caving and the experience of being with other cavers. We really are a special breed, worth spending time with.

Epilog: I passed all three of my exams, achieving the highest scores of all those who took it in the state that day. Overall, I'd say it was a good day.

Vertical Practice December 14, 2007

By Thomas Evans

Like all vertebrates, we have to find ways to relieve stress. Some animals play, others hunt, I climb rope. Friday, December 14, 2007 was a normal holiday season day for most in the Seattle area, but for me it was a stressful day. In the morning, I interviewed for a long-term organic chemistry substitute-teaching job at Lakeside High School. Like most wealthy private schools, they put their potential employees through a rigorous application process including a guest lecture for a class. I had to come up with a lecture topic, prepare the lesson, and deliver it to a group of sixteen advanced organic chemistry students. The topic was ketoacidosis and how oxygen chem-

istry is involved in understanding the disease progression. Other than mistakes on two of the four reactions I outlined, the lecture went well, if one can call such a butchery of a lesson success. After a brief trip to Mark Sherman's house to pick up an old rope he gave me (thanks Mark!), I headed to Gasworks Park to burn off some stress.

The vertical practice was well attended by three grotto members, Van Bergen, Bill Mackay, and me. Festivities kicked off with the age-old problem of getting ropes up to the rafters. I rigged two ropes by tossing a big knot of rope up and over the main support rafters of the lower picnic structure. I secured one end of each rope to the support columns

with a figure 8 knot backed up with a barrel knot. Each rope was ascended and a secondary anchor of a sewn webbing runner was put over each beam. I transferred my weight to the runner leaving the standing line unweighted, and then placed rope pads under each rope. Both Van and I proceeded to climb, change over, and rappel each line until we had satisfied ourselves that we could indeed still change over. Now the question raised was what to try next.

I keep a list of strange things to practice on rope so I pulled out the list and proceeded to pick the most interesting item: ascending a tilted highline. The first item of business required I tie off one of the sanding lines at the bottom (a high strength

(Continued on page 20)

tie off as an anchor) to form a tilted highline. I then rigged a third rope as before, but with this line parallel to the highline and not anchored at the base. I demonstrated the procedure by both ascending and rappelling on the third rope and then Van tried it. The process is simple and outlined in a number of rope climbing guides. Clip a biner or pulley on the highline that is also attached to the free second rope. One merely clips a cow's tail on to the high line (for safety) and then ascends the second rope. The climber stays vertical the entire time, making climbing simple, fast, and efficient, while still traversing the horizontal component of the tilted highline. To descend, one rappels like normal on the free rope. With this skill adequately demonstrated and practiced, I moved on to another topic I desperately wished to try out, rappelling on knots.

Some time ago, I asked those in the grotto to help me with a problem I had been contemplating, how to rappel a taught rope. In some situations, this may be the fastest and best way to get down a rope to an

injured or stuck climber. My first attempt included a low elevation use of dog and tails. This knot failed spectacularly since it did not provide enough friction and was nearly impossible to control. While I never left the ground, I did not feel like this hitch would work in an emergency. I then used a machard tress. This knot was spectacular. It worked while I was on the ground, then I tried climbing and changing over to rappel using this knot. When I changed over, I included a prussic backup in case the machard failed. To my extreme joy, it worked well. I found it provided a safe and slow rappel, the prussic cord I used did not burn or melt as expected, and I was in control the entire time. The only drawback was the amount of force I needed to apply to the cord to start movement. If anything it was too slow, however I am willing to accept this drawback in an emergency. In future practices, I will be practicing the use of this hitch as well as one of its derivatives.

With practice over, we pulled the ropes using the reverse of the proce-

dures used to rig them. In all respects, it was a terrific vertical practice. Van was able to achieve his goals, I practiced some fun skills I had not tried recently, and Bill was able to get candid pictures of both of us on rope. It was a pleasant afternoon of ropes and wonderful caver companionship. I wish more people had come to the practice, however since it was short (we started at around 1:30 and ended around 5 due to lack of sunlight) having many people in attendance would have prevented me from getting on rope as often. The only drawback to the trip was that one of my runners was damaged when the rope was pulled. It has since been retired amidst a few tears, but many a good memory. I hope to see many of you in future vertical practices since they will only get better. Cave safely!

Epilog: The lecture must not have been as bad as I thought because I was offered the job. Next time I'll have to pick an even more subtle and esoteric topic to bore students with.

Vertical Practice February 2, 2008

By Thomas Evans

It isn't the length or the diameter of your rope that matters it's how you use it. At least this is what I would like to think. Certainly, a girthy rope allows for larger mistakes and a longer rope is useful for more tasks, but ingenuity and skill can make up for lack in diameter and length in some situations. This is what we focus on during vertical practices; how to better utilize our equipment and hone our skills. Saturday, February 2nd was no different. I arrived at Gasworks Park near 11 a.m. and proceeded to hunt for the most appropriate venue for our high angle fun. There are two picnic shelters, but the taller one is covered in the nitrogenous waste of many a pigeon. I chose to rig on the rafters of the shorter shelter.

I slung a rope over one of the main

rafters, anchored it on the ground, and then climbed the standing line. While hanging from the rope I rigged two webbing anchors (wrap two pull one). One I rigged with a pulley and the other I hung from as I pulled the rope back over the rafter and clipped the pulley onto the rope. I transferred my weight to the standing line and rappelled down. I then rigged a webbing anchor on the ground with a wrap three pull two and rigged a locked off rescue figure eight with the standing line of the rope. I released the other end and tied a knot in the end to prevent people from rappelling off the end. The rope was now rigged as a long climb and ready for action.

Dave McElmury showed up and suggested that we rig a zip line. In true caver fashion, I decided this was a brilliant idea. We surveyed the an-

chors longer than necessary, but did manage to get one rigged quickly. The lower anchor was rigged with a wrap three pull two anchor with a figure eight knot clipped in to a carabiner. The assembly was tensioned with a 9:1 jigger attached to the anchor and a prussic on the main line bypassing the figure eight knot. The other end was slung over a rafter and I climbed up and rigged an anchor. The rope was attached with a figure eight knot that was bypassed by a short and long prussic hitch. The result was that both ends were secured with soft interfaces that would allow give in case too much force was applied to the system. The standing line off the figure eight knot was the only means of getting down and up, other than riding the zip line. Dave tried it first and found that it worked marvelously. One carabiner provided enough friction for a

safe ride down the rope, though using gloved hands to slow down the decent was, at times, necessary. I took a few rides on the line, and encouraged others to do the same, but there were no other takers.

Hester Mallonee and Van Bergen showed up and we spent the afternoon on the ropes, riding the zip line, practicing pick offs, and belaying others on the long climb. Dave left early since he wanted to meet up with his lady friend. Clearly, his priorities were skewed. Van left after he was worn out and because he had to run some more errands before heading back to the peninsula.

There were the usual onlookers who stopped to watch, and the few who expressed interest in what we were doing. Interacting with people using the park is always fun since we get to see their wonder and awe at the strange activity we take for granted. I can still remember myself staring at someone climbing a rope, and wondering if I could ever learn to do the same. It's a delightful state to be in as a student, and I enjoy fostering their interest in the subject. Few ever come to a grotto meeting, but they are fun to interact with.

The day ended with Hester and I alone in the park practicing crossing rebelay near the ground. We rigged one rebelay and I walked through how to cross it, then she crossed it with me giving step-by-step instructions. She was tired so I had the pleasure of climbing the ropes, rigging pull down rappels, transferring my weight to the new anchor, and taking down all the other rigging. After rappelling to the ground, the ropes were pulled down, leaving nothing behind except small dustless swaths on the beams where the rope pads had been.

The day was a success. Pickoffs, climbing, rappelling, crossing rebelay, and tuning systems were all practiced with some success. It was fantastic to see a group from the grotto having fun hanging from ropes and practicing our skills.

Take care all, and safe caving!

Cascade Grotto Financials End Of Year 2007

Revenue	
Cascade Caver Bottles	\$8.00
Cascade Grotto Patches	60.00
Caves Of Washington	60.00
Donations	21.00
Investment Income	0.41
Memberships	
Regular E-mail	401.00
Household E-Mail	24.00
Regular U.S. Mail	220.50
Household U.S. Mail	23.00
Net Sales	\$817.91
Expenses	
Cascade Caver	
Copy Expense	\$92.57
Postage	107.96
Computer Hardware	100.18
Events	117.12
Library Purchases	76.08
Meeting Room	656.00
NSS 2006 Convention	200.00
Office Expense - Postage	39.00
P.O. Box	70.00
Total Expenses	\$1,458.91
Operating Loss	(\$641.00)
Other Income	
Unusual Income - NSS Stipend	\$3000.00
Total Other Income	\$3000 .00
Net Income	\$2359 .00
Assets	
Petty Cash	\$68.00
Checking	134.24
Savings	4116.13
Cascade Caver Bottles - 33	82.50
Cascade Caver T-Shirts - 6	60.00
Cascade Caver Patches - 88	132.00
Total Assets	\$4,592.87

Cumulative Meeting Minutes for 2007

January 19, 2007

By Marla A. Pelowski, Secretary-Treasurer

ATTENDANCE:

Kari Doller, Jeff Dwyer, Lane Holdcroft, Hester Mallonée, Michael McCormack, Nikki McCormack, Robert Mitchell, Marla A. Pelowski, Aaron Stavens, Ron Zuber, Guests Jon Tichner, and Matthew from Colorado

OLD BUSINESS:

Treasurer's Report: \$2,257.47 combined savings, checking, and petty cash as of 12/31/06.

Tacoma Mountaineers Presentation: Ron Zuber has Renato Dalle Mule's and Dan Crape's information. He's looking at April or May for a presentation. Matt Farnell may have more cave pictures in digital format – someone should check with him.

Previously, the grotto approved \$200 for Hester Mallonée for supplies for the Grotto cave banner to be used at the NSS 2006 Convention. Hester has unfortunately lost the receipts and Marla A. Pelowski as Secretary-Treasurer would prefer to have the grotto reapprove payment without receipts. Hester mentioned that she spent just over \$200.00 and would very much appreciate reimbursement. Hester Mallonée motions for reimbursement up to the original \$200, Robert Mitchell seconded. All in favor.

NEW BUSINESS:

The votes are in and new officers as of January 10, 2007, are as follows:

Kari Doller, Chairman
Robert Mitchell, Vice-Chairman
Marla A. Pelowski, Secretary-Treasurer

Congratulations to all!! For the record, 19 ballots were returned with 17 votes for Kari Doller, 15 votes for Robert Mitchell, and 17 votes for Marla A. Pelowski. Other votes were for write in candidates.

In 2005, the grotto approved on a yearly basis payment of regularly occurring budget expenses and Marla A. Pelowski moves to approve automatic payment of the following expenses up to the amounts indicated for 2007. Any expenses above and beyond the amounts indicated and expenses not listed below will be brought up for approval by the membership at a regularly occurring meeting:

cascade_grotto@caves.org email account	\$10.00
Shoreline meeting room at \$46/month for 11	\$506.00

PO Box Fee	\$62.00
Postage (other than for <i>Cascade Caver</i>)	\$39.00
<i>Cascade Caver</i> copying/printing/postage	<u>\$150.00</u>
Total	\$767.00

Tom Evans seconded. All in favor.

University of Scouting. Looking forward to 450 people in attendance. We have a 20x20 foot booth. Ron Zuber has been communicating with Boy Scouts and the NSS to find out where both organizations stand with each other. Bill Steele is an executive in the Boy Scouts of America. We will be handing out a contact list as opposed to a lot of paper that most will probably just toss. Ron is hoping to stress safe aspects of caving and a conservation message. The NSS and Boy Scouts have identical views on conservation. If a troop wants a presentation, Ron Zuber would like to keep it as a Q & A session, providing them with information ahead of time. At the University of Scouting, the organizers want us to do vertical demonstrations which we will be glad to accommodate. We should have about three tables. Ron will be bringing various books, limestone, carbide lamps, and gear.

Tom Evans will be working on a map database. Michael McCormack will assist.

TRIP REPORTS:

New Year's Day Hike up Mt. Si – caving get in shape trip. Aaron Stavens, Kari Doller, Hester Mallonée, Marla A. Pelowski, and Jon Tichner went. There was snow at the top. Overall a great day and great hike. As usual, our 9:00 start time turned into 10:15, which didn't dampen anyone's spirits.

Tom Evans went to Senger's Talus Cave twice and exit 32 crack system once. Senger's was very beautiful after a snow. This crack system he found is on Rattlesnake ledge – 2 mile hike in. 1200 elevation gain.

UPCOMING TRIPS:

Hester Mallonée's art is showing in Enumclaw. Though it's showing daily, she will be having an artist's reception on Friday the 26th, 7-9. She will post more information on the list serve.

2/3 Next Mt. Si Hike 9:00 at trailhead.

2/16-2/19 Oregon Caves Conservation Trip. Cleaning of the upper cave. Volunteers can stay in the chalet. Ruth Stickney will be food coordinator. Work Saturday and Sunday – Sunday night there's a party. \$35/person for the food.

3/17/7 WVG vertical practice in Troutdale Oregon. Contact Vertical Bob.

5/21/7-5/22/7 Week before Memorial Day holiday – Lava Beds for Western and NCA combined regionals.

PROGRAM:

The grotto received the Indiana Convention promotional DVD and it was played at the meeting.

March 16, 2007

By Marla A. Pelowski, Secretary-Treasurer

ATTENDANCE:

Yoav Bar-Ness, Kari Doller, Tom Evans, Paul Hill, Hester Mallonée, Robert Mitchell, Stuart Monson, Marla A. Pelowski, Beth Rand, Aaron Stavens, Drew Wade, Julian Wade, Ron Zuber, and Guests Kristen, Nate, Nicole, Nathan, John, Mike, Karen, Michael, Annie, Anna and her husband, Drew, and Julian

OLD BUSINESS:

Treasurer's Report: \$1,956.09 combined savings, checking, and petty cash as of 02/28/07.

The grotto has received the honorarium for hosting the NSS 2006 Convention, \$3,000. The convention final reports are in and the Convention lost approximately \$10,000 which was covered by the NSS.

Aaron Stavens and Kari Doller performed a Cave Ridge rescue cache test. They submersed a dry bag in water. It did began seeping after three days.

NEW BUSINESS:

Stuart Monson is suggesting we buy some books for the library and establish a check out/in policy. Perhaps a deposit should be required. We need to get a list of what Mark Sherman has for the library. We could set up a book buying budget. Another suggestion was that maybe current members donate or loan their books for checkout by other members. But, we do need a list of books we currently have. Stuart will take the lead on this.

Tom Evans is thinking about hosting a how to make vertical gear party – for instance, if you need a piece of webbing for a specific purpose, you could make it this way. . . Tom will let us know if and when he sets one up.

Yoav Bar-Ness would like bus access or carpool information listed on the web site.

Bob Straub of the Gem State grotto is looking into making a rescue cache in the R&R room in Papoose Cave. The Sand Room has been restocked but the R&R room cache has not been restocked or updated in a long time. They are looking for support from the Cascade Grotto since our

members often visit the cave. Aaron Stavens asked for more clarification as to what type of assistance they want and he will pass the information along.

TRIP REPORTS:

Tom Evans, Ron Zuber, and Paul DeBrunn (sp?) went to Senger's Talus Cave (Paul is a Washington state biologist who is a trained ornithologist interested in bats). They also went to Fidalgo Quarry Cave at Deception Pass.

Tom Evans, Michael McCormack, and Marla A. Pelowski surveyed Jackman Creek Cave.

Tom Evans, Michael McCormack, Nicole, and others surveyed the cave on Rattlesnake Ledge.

Yoav Bar-Ness went out to Chimum (sp?) Rock. There are some fissures there which were interesting. Many bolts in the rock and people do use it for rappelling.

Oregon Caves Conservation trip was another success. A lot of passage was cleaned this year. The white passage appears to be turning brown due to natural water/mud coming into the cave. A select group previewed the wild cave tour route and gave the park input on the route. An interesting note, did you know you can see the outline of your hand in the dark just due to glow in the dark stickers?

UPCOMING TRIPS:

3/17/7 WVG vertical practice in Troutdale Oregon. Contact Vertical Bob.

Middle of April Ron Zuber will have a trip going to Montana – not sure of dates yet.

4/20/7-4/22/7 VICEG cave trip.

4/27/7-4/29/7 Scouting Ape Cave trip.

5/6/7-5/7/7 Cave Ridge Gear carry.

5/18/7-5/20/7 Western and NCA combined Regionals at Lava Beds.

5/25/7-5/28/7 Blue Lake Rhino Cast Camping Trip – More details to come. Contact Marla A. Pelowski if interested.

6/16/7-6/17/7 Danger Cave (Cave Ridge) survey. Contact Michael McCormack.

7/14/7-7/15/7 Danger Cave (Cave Ridge) survey. Contact Michael McCormack.

7/23/7-7/27/7 2007 NSS Convention – Marengo, Indiana

PROGRAM: None.



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April 20, 2007

By Marla A. Pelowski, Secretary-Treasurer

ATTENDANCE:

Yoav Bar-Ness, Van Bergen, Dan Crape, Kari Doller, Jeff Dwyer, Tom Evans, Jim Harp, Paul Hill, Lane Holdcroft, Hester Mallonée, Kristin Marciochi, Nate Marciochi, Michael McCormack, Nikki McCormack, Glennis Monson, Stuart Monson, Marla A. Pelowski, Beth Rand, Mark Sherman, Steve Sprague, Aaron Stavens, Ron Zuber, and Guests: Tracy Adamson, Chris Henderson, Bill Petty, Diane Wolfe

OLD BUSINESS:

Treasurer's Report: \$4,814.30 combined savings, checking, and petty cash as of 03/31/2007.

Stuart Monson handed out a questionnaire regarding the grotto library to get a better idea of where to start or continue, in addition to what books might be wanted. Mark has a list of books he holds and he will get it to us.

The server has crashed and the web site is down until fixed.

There was some discussion as to what should be done with the NSS 2006 Convention honorarium of \$3,000 which was received. No real thoughts were put on the table as to spending or saving.

NEW BUSINESS:

Chris would like to get the community involved with bat counts and locating bat hibernacula.

TRIP REPORTS:

Hester Katherine Mallonée, Hester Mallonée, and Tom Evans went to Ape Cave – both upper and lower. They had fun on the lava falls and used an etrier. They also removed trash while they went through and collected a good sized bag. Unfortunately, the amount taken out was not even close to what still remained.

Tom Evans and his imaginary girlfriend later went to Ape Cave. They also went to Lake Cave.

Tom Evans ran a couple of vertical practices, but no one showed up but him (not even his imaginary friends). He likes the area better than the WVG vertical practice even though it's outside. It's three times as high and you don't have to drive three hours. You can also set up your own obstacle course. If you want to check it out, let him know. It's in Marymoor Park in Redmond.

Due to a wrist injury, Hester has been painting left-handed and showed some examples of her work.

Steve found a beautiful chunk of limestone with box work

in the Enterprise parking lot in Skagit Flats. Would love to know from where it came.

Ron Zuber went to southwestern Montana to interview Montana wilderness cavers.

UPCOMING TRIPS:

4/27/7-4/29/7 Scouting Ape Cave trip.

CANCELLED 5/6/7-5/7/7 Cave Ridge Gear carry.

5/6/7 9:00 Senger's Talus Trip. Contact Michael McCormack.

5/11/7-5/13/7 VICEG Cave Rescue Training

5/13/7-5/15/7 BCCR Horn Lake Caves Trips

5/18/7-5/20/7 Western and NCA combined Regionals at Lava Beds.

5/25/7-5/28/7 Blue Lake Rhino Cast Camping Trip – More details to come. Contact Marla A. Pelowski if interested.

5/29/7 The Mountaineers. Demonstration on caving and single rope techniques. Mindy Roberts is our contact. In Tacoma.

6/16/7-6/17/7 Danger Cave (Cave Ridge) survey. Contact Michael McCormack.

7/14/7-7/15/7 Danger Cave (Cave Ridge) survey. Contact Michael McCormack.

7/23/7-7/27/7 2007 NSS Convention – Marengo, Indiana

PROGRAM: None.

May 18, 2007

By Robert Mitchell, Vice-Chairman

ATTENDANCE:

Lane Holdcroft, Robert Mitchell, Hubert Shen and Guests: Fred Brannon, Thomas and Anastasia Samuelsen and their son Torleif

OLD BUSINESS:

Treasurer's Report: We got cash. How much....? No clue.

Quick read of last month's minutes.

Didn't cover any of the April old business, because those working with it weren't at the meeting. Will pass that along to the June meeting.

NEW BUSINESS: None to speak of.

TRIP REPORTS: None.

UPCOMING TRIPS:

Remembered that most of the Cave Ridge stuff was cancelled through June. Forgot to bring the second page Marla gave me with the upcoming trip list.

PROGRAM:

Hubert brought stuff to watch, but the DVD player we

thought might make it to the meeting didn't.

Meeting unofficially was adjourned as people started randomly trickling out of the room.

June 15, 2007

By Marla A. Pelowski, Secretary-Treasurer

ATTENDANCE:

Eileen Bergen, Teela Bergen, Van Bergen, Kari Doller, Tom Evans, Paul Hill, Lane Holdcroft, Michael McCormack, Nikki McCormack, Glennis Monson, Stuart Monson, Marla A. Pelowski, Hubert Shen, Aaron Stavens, Glennis Monson, Stuart Monson, and Guest: Fred Brannon

OLD BUSINESS:

Treasurer's Report: \$4,770.34 combined savings, checking, and petty cash as of May 31, 2007.

As we know, Bob Straub is organizing an emergency survival cache in Papoose as the old one has been determined inadequate. He will be putting together various five gallon buckets and is hoping that the grotto can put together two of the buckets. Aaron Stavens is personally putting together the first aid bucket. Aaron moves that the second bucket regarding shelter/heat/cooking/food be sponsored by the grotto. Michael McCormack motions that the Cascade Grotto sponsors both buckets with a donation date set of August 15, 2007. Anything not donated by that date is to then be purchased so the buckets can be completed by August 31, 2007. Aaron Stavens seconds. Majority in favor, none against.

Stuart Monson previously brought up the suggestion of purchasing books for the grotto library. He had a questionnaire filled out at a previous meeting regarding what type of books the grotto wants. The three most wanted would cost about \$93.50—with Cave Minerals of the World being the most wanted, in addition to Alpine Caving Techniques, and the Hidden World of Caves a children's book. Stuart motions the grotto buy the three books. Michael McCormack seconds. Majority in favor, none against. Marla A. Pelowski will purchase the books with grotto funds.

Michael McCormack proposes we use the Papoose cache lists for Newton for five gallon waterproof bags. He would like to see it funded and donated by the grotto in the same manner as the two Papoose caches mentioned above and to be completed by the same dates (donations and purchases). There was discussion to put the cache in the second sand room in Newton past the squeeze. Stuart Monson would also like to see car jacks and a comealong if possible. The Papoose lists make a great start for this project and will be followed, but by all

means they are not complete lists. So any suggestions as to additions are welcome. Aaron Stavens seconds. Majority in favor, none against.

We are still requesting ideas as to how to use the NSS 2006 Convention honorarium of \$3,000. Perhaps a party for the Convention volunteers. Remember, many of the volunteers are from other states. It is thought that the majority of the volunteers would most likely attend the yearly NCA meeting. Therefore, Van Bergen motions that a party for the NSS 2006 Convention volunteers be held at the 2008 NCA meeting at Craters of the Moon in Idaho. Michael McCormack seconds. Majority in favor, none against.

NEW BUSINESS:

Jon McGinnis through Van Bergen has mentioned that native tribes that have casinos in Washington are required to donate to local charities on a yearly basis. It is somehow a contractual thing between the State and the tribes. It was suggested that we should apply for \$5,000 grants from each of the tribes in the state. We could also indicate we would like funds for scientific study in caves. If we found any native artifacts, we would notify the tribes. This might make the request for donations more worthwhile for the tribes. Van looked into it a bit and found out it is legitimate as far as the tribes donating to charities. He does not know the process of how to apply for the funds. Perhaps we can look into this.

Michael McCormack indicated that the NSS also gives out research grants of up to \$1,500 for cave study.

Van Bergen spoke with Rick Gould regarding Rick giving a presentation on New Zealand caves. But Rick is in the process of moving to Gig Harbor, so we will need to give him a couple of months to get settled in.

There was an article in the NSS caving accidents issue of the *NSS News* on page 14 which mentioned Spokane Cave. We should find out where this cave is.

The bridge over the river on the trail to Big 4 Ice Caves has collapsed. There is no news if the park will be replacing the bridge. If so, it may be years down the line. Perhaps we could offer to run highline or volunteer assistance to help build the new bridge.

TRIP REPORTS:

Stuart Monson, Teela Bergen, and Van Bergen went to Catacombs Cave in Lava Beds National Park and were temporarily lost. There were some nice nasty crawls and all had fun.

Nikki McCormack, Kari Doller, and Marla Pelowski went on the Geology Tour at Lava Beds National Park during

Speleo-Ed. Claude Koch rode with them to the various caves and didn't show up after one of the in cave tours. They searched for him briefly then went to the next stop hoping he had gotten a ride from another group. He did not. His loss was reported to the trip leader. They were told to wait until the evening to see if he showed up at camp and a rescue search would be put together if he didn't. Luckily, he did show up late that night at camp. Please, remember to stick with the group and let someone know when you decide to wander off.

The Rhino Cast trip was a huge success and many attended. The Curator of the Burke Museum would like pictures from that trip of the cast. If you have any, please send them to Tom Evans.

UPCOMING TRIPS:

6/22/7-6/24/7 Danger Cave (Cave Ridge) survey. Contact Michael McCormack.

6/30/7 Papoose Trip for rescue cache. Contact Aaron Stavens.

7/13/7-7/15/7 Danger Cave (Cave Ridge) survey. Contact Michael McCormack.

7/23/7-7/27/7 2007 NSS Convention – Marengo, Indiana

8/4/7-8/5/7 Trout Lake trip. Contact Stuart Monson.

8/18/7-8/19/7 Danger Cave (Cave Ridge) survey.

9/15/7-9/16/7 Cave Ridge. Contact Michael McCormack.

August 17, 2007

By Marla A. Pelowski, Secretary-Treasurer

ATTENDANCE:

Dan Crape, Kari Doller, Robert Mitchell, Glennis Monson, Stuart Monson, Marla A. Pelowski, Mark Sherman, Aaron Stavens

OLD BUSINESS:

Treasurer's Report: \$4,607.48 combined savings, checking, and petty cash as of July 31, 2007.

Kari Doller moves we extend the deadline of purchasing the Newton cache items to June 1, 2008. Aaron Stavens seconds. Majority in favor, none opposed.

The books, Cave Minerals of the World, Alpine Caving Techniques, and the Hidden World of Caves were purchased for the grotto library and cost \$76.08.

NEW BUSINESS: None.

TRIP REPORTS:

Many attended the Trout Lake weekend. So many, there were three separate caving trips on Saturday, one to Dynamited, the other to Skin Mites and other caves, and one to several caves in the area including Cheese Cave. It

was a blast as usual. We even strung a rope in a tree to get a novice into vertical technique.

Convention was also a blast and attended by many. Other than the fantastic caves, parties, and sessions, the Convention site experienced straight line winds one evening which took out many tent shelters.

Michael McCormack, Nikki McCormack, Kari Doller, and Dave Decker went to Date Cave on Rattlesnake Ledge and had fun checking out the small yet interesting cave.

Aaron Stavens reported that at the end of June, one-half of the rescue cache was placed in Papoose Cave. Members of Idaho Search and Rescue were taken through the cave to give them a basic familiarity with the cave and the potential issues.

UPCOMING TRIPS:

8/18/7-8/19/7 Danger Cave (Cave Ridge) survey. Contact Michael McCormack.

9/1/7-9/2/7 Labor Day Weekend. Papoose Cave. Contact Jennifer Babione.

9/15/7-9/16/7 Cave Ridge. Contact Michael McCormack.

September 21, 2007

By Robert Mitchell, Vice-Chairman

ATTENDANCE:

Teela Bergen, Van Bergen, Kari Doller, Hester Mallonée, Michael McCormack, Nikki McCormack, Danny Miller, Robert Mitchell, Hubert Shen, Mark Sherman, and Aaron Stavens.

OLD BUSINESS: None.

NEW BUSINESS:

Van Bergen suggests the grotto contact the University of Washington to do rescue training in the steam tunnels.

TRIP REPORTS:

There was a Cave Ridge Trip. The rescue cache was inspected and appears OK. Did Hellhole that afternoon and experimented with formation reattachment. After dark, the group began their descent down the mountain. Right above the saddle around the sinkholes, Hester Mallonée fell and broke her lower fibula near the ankle, on a good section of the trail – perhaps there was a small hole but it is unknown as to exactly how the fall happened.

There was also a Twin Falls Trip and another Cave Ridge trip since the last meeting.

UPCOMING TRIPS:

9/29/7 Oregon Caves

October 19, 2007

By Marla A. Pelowski, Secretary-Treasurer

ATTENDANCE:

Van Bergen, Kari Doller, Tom Evans, Paul Hill, Matthew Holcombe, Hester Mallonée, Robert Mitchell, Glennis Monson, Stuart Monson, Marla A. Pelowski, Diane Pierce, Aaron Stavens, Ron Zuber; and Guests Gerry, MaryAnn, and Kayla.

OLD BUSINESS:

Treasurer's Report: \$4,437.06 combined savings, checking, and petty cash as of September 30, 2007.

The Shoreline Conference Center meeting room charge for our monthly meetings is going up to \$50 per month. Robert Mitchell moves the Grotto pays \$50 per month for the next year and approve the contract. Aaron Stavens seconds. Most in favor, none opposed.

NEW BUSINESS:

Ron Zuber indicated that Boy Scout University has invited the Grotto to once again participate and host a table/booth for educational purposes. The last time the grotto participated, we had six outside groups interested in caving and request information and trips from us, but only one was willing to do the work to learn about caving in advance – Venture Scouts – which group we introduced to caving at Ape Cave. This year, University of Scouting is set up for attendance by everyone in the scouts, not just the leaders. Consensus by the Grotto is to participate once again in early 2008.

Van Bergen passed around *On Earth* magazine by the Natural Resources Defense Council which had an article on caves and cave critters.

Tom Evans has been asked to assist with a tyrolean traverse for a high school program. He will be setting up the tyrolean and the teacher will be doing the training. This is open to grotto individuals who want to attend, though the grotto is not being asked to sponsor this event. Contact Tom for more information.

Marla A. Pelowski has asked for reimbursement for upgrading the grotto computer's RAM to approximately 1.5 MB. It cost \$100.18 for 1 MB of RAM. Tom Evans moved for approval and Robert Mitchell seconded. Most in favor, none opposed.

There's an effort to save Millerton Cave – best granite cave on the planet – from flooding due to an issue with a dam. The cave is not on federal land. If interested write to the BLM, Corp of Engineers, and others.

Hester Mallonée motioned that the grotto give \$50 to

Michael and Nikki McCormack for the roast beast for the holiday party. Tom Evans seconded. Most in favor, none opposed.

TRIP REPORTS:

Paul Hill and family saw a beautiful developed resurgence in France which at one time in history was used as the town laundry.

Hester Mallonée, while in northern Spain, went to see a collection of small caves occupied by pre-Neanderthal humans.

Robert Mitchell was in Missouri for a family reunion and ran into a caving buddy doing work for the City of St. Louis working in the storm drainage/sewer system. A lot of the natural underground of St. Louis doubles as storm drainage and sewer system. His friend rediscovered a manhole cover opening up into a small cave system.

Ron Zuber was caving in the Montana Bob Marshall Wilderness area and participated in a number of trips. This was the 3rd year there was an expedition to Virgil the Turtle. He also visited Goofer Geezer (sorry about the spelling) on an Explorer's Club flag expedition.

UPCOMING TRIPS:

Ape Cave clean up 1st weekend or 24th/25th or 30th. Hester Mallonée will finalize dates and announce on the list serve.

Senger's Talus Trip in January/February. Tom Evans will finalize dates and announce on the list serve.

Ron Zuber would like to plan a trip or trips to Vancouver Island this winter. Contact him if interested.

November 16, 2007

By Marla A. Pelowski, Secretary-Treasurer

ATTENDANCE:

Kari Doller, Jacob Earl, Tom Evans, Paul Hill, Lane Holdcroft, Marla A. Pelowski, Mark Sherman, Aaron Stavens, Ron Zuber, and Guests Leslie, Matt, and Jerome.

OLD BUSINESS:

Treasurer's Report: \$4,641.59 combined savings, checking, and petty cash as of October 31, 2007.

The University of Scouting educational booth will be held on January 19, 2008, at Arlington High School (same place as last year). The grotto will be allowed to set up on the 18th and given a 20x20 foot booth immediately when you walk in the door. We will be putting on a vertical demonstration, again.

NEW BUSINESS:

Ron Zuber mentions that if you haven't yet heard of

Write in the Rain paper, you should check it out. There is also now a computer pen which can be used to write on this paper and later upload the information to your PC.

It is that time of year for nominations for grotto officers. The following persons have been nominated:

Chairman: Ron Zuber nominated Kari Doller, Tom Evans seconded

Vice-Chairman: Kari Doller nominated Ron Zuber, Mark Sherman seconded. Mark Sherman nominated himself, Kari Doller seconded. Michael McCormack nominated himself, Tom Evans seconded.

Secretary-Treasurer: Marla A. Pelowski nominated Tom Evans, Aaron Stavens seconded.

Mark Sherman closed the nominations, Tom Evans seconded.

TRIP REPORTS:

Mark Sherman and a Boy Scout troop went to Senger's Talus. It was a typical NW nice and rainy day. Some of our guests took a recent trip to Colossal Cave and took the wild cave trip. This cave is near Tucson, Arizona. Jake Earl took Leslie to the talus caves on Tiger Mountain. It was Leslie's first cave.

UPCOMING TRIPS:

11/23-11/24 Ape Cave and Lake Cave. Contact Ron Zuber.
11/30 Date Cave. Contact Tom Evans.
12/14 Vertical Practice. Contact Tom Evans.
12/15 Holiday Party at the McCormacks'.
12/28-12/30 Senger's Talus. Contact Tom Evans.

Not Just Knots—A New Protocol for Changeovers on Rope

June 13, 2007

By Aaron Stavens

Disclaimer: This article is not intended as general instruction in SRT. Please seek qualified instruction before attempting any technique described here.

In April 2006 I attended the national NCRC Level III week-long training in Puerto Rico. There I was introduced to a slightly modified protocol for changing over from ascent to descent/rappel. After considering the technique and its intent, I want to share it with the larger group and encourage its adoption.

The basic idea is simple and is intended to increase the safety of the on-rope maneuver: demonstrate control of the rappel before removing your last ascender from the rope. In this way, should the climber not have the expected control of the rappel, there is \

a back-up in place to prevent an uncontrolled descent (i.e. a screamer).

Because I am most familiar with the Frog system, I'll use that as the basis for my example. The changeover on the Frog that I previously used proceeded as follows:

1. Hanging from the chest ascender (e.g. Croll) with the upper ascender (e.g. Ascension) still attached to the rope, take the rope below the chest ascender and thread it through the descender. Lock off the descender.
2. Stand up in the foot loop to unweight the chest as-

center, remove the chest ascender from rope, and sit back down. The climber's weight should now be on the descender.

3. *Remove the upper ascender from the rope.*
4. *Unlock the descender.*
5. Rappel.

The change in protocol is in steps 3 and 4 above. By simply reversing the order of those steps, one of the risk factors in changing over from ascent to descent is mitigated. The new order is as follows:

1. Hanging from the chest ascender (e.g. Croll) with the upper ascender (e.g. Ascension) still attached to the rope, take the rope below the chest ascender and thread it through the descender. Lock off the descender.
2. Stand up in the foot loop to unweight the chest ascender, remove the chest ascender from rope, and sit back down. The climber's weight should now be on the descender.
3. *Unlock the descender.*
4. *Remove the upper ascender from the rope.*
5. Rappel.

The risk this change mitigates is most obvious in situations where the climber lacks experience. The climber could be new or relatively new to SRT and consequently lack experience in everything. The rope could be wet or muddy. The rope could be a different diameter than what the climber is used to. The climber could be rappelling with a heavier load than normal such as extra gear or a rescue patient. All of these are things are reasonably nor-

mal and could happen to any one of us. That is why I am encouraging general adoption.

As with most things, there are trade-offs to consider. By leaving an ascender on the rope until the descender is unlocked, managing the removal of the final ascender is also left until that point. If the descender is left unlocked, the climber must

remove and stow the ascender using one hand. This is potentially more complicated though not necessarily unreasonable. Another option is to relock the descender, remove the final ascender, and finally unlock the descender. Either approach is acceptable as long as the climber is proficient in its use.

As with any new or different tech-

nique, you should practice it in a controlled environment and become proficient before using it in a real situation. Hanging in a waterfall with icy water running down your neck is usually not the time to think, "Hmm, I remember reading about something that might work better here. I think I'll give it a try!"

Safe caving!

Rattlesnake Ledge Trip Report

July 7, 2007

By Dave McElmurry

Six members of the Cascade Grotto (Tom Evans, Aaron Stavens, Dave McElmurry, Hubert Shen, Marla Pelowski, and Mark Davison) set out for Rattlesnake ledge on Sat July 7. We met at the rattlesnake lake parking area at 9:00 (9 'ish, ok more like 9:30. Caver time ya know :).

After repacking gear and ogling Aarons 600 foot spool of brand new shiny white rope, we headed up the trail with the best intentions.

We planned to hike up to the top, check out a short cave, and scope out the scene for a possible major rappel (& ascent) off the rattlesnake ledge cliff, about 400+ feet (in VERY round numbers).

We arrived up top between 11 & 12, relaxed for a few minutes, and head over to check out Date Cave.

Date Cave is a short cave within the summit rock. It appears to be the result of cracks and fissures deep underneath. The entrance is at the bottom of an obvious crack, about 15 feet deep. The obvious crack is commonly stepped over by hikers upon reaching the summit. After climbing down to the bottom of that crack, we negotiated the cave which surprised those of us who had not seen it before. The cave is about

175 feet long, and requires about three turns/squeezes to get through.

Back up top, we spent some time examining our rigging options, and finally settled on the idea of using some trees a few feet below (Southwest) of the summit. Aside from being a viable rigging option, the rigging was not in the immediate proximity of the summit crowd that seemed to be growing by the minute. We rigged an equalized anchor off two trees, using a "wrap three pull two" anchor (commonly used in rescue) combined with a tensionless tie off on a smaller tree farther back. Add some padding for the abrasive rock, and the system was ready to go.

Each rappeller was equipped with our personal vertical gear, plus rack for the long rappel, plus water and a two way radio for communication. Hubert and Marla stayed up top to provide support.

Dave was first over the lip (every else took one step back ;). Dave went down about 100+ feet, enjoying the multitude of untangling opportunities that a 600 foot rope flaked out onto a series of slabs provides. (Yes, the rope finally reached the bottom). At this point, the exposure became extreme, with a VERY vertical 300 (+?) feet of rappel, much of it free hanging and away from the

wall. There was a convenient ledge at that point that allowed the situation to have a final evaluation before committing fully.

Unfortunately it was evident that there was far too much loose rock for our intrepid group to follow through with the plan. The rappelling was relatively simple, as you can step carefully and place the rope as you go. However, while ascending it is more difficult to manage where the rope lies, and careful foot placement is more difficult too, as foot placement is largely determined by the placement of the footloops of the ascending system (not by where you choose to step as you walk over the rock).

Aaron and Tom also rappelled part-way down to check out the climb and get pictures, but in the end we all agreed that backing out was the right decision.

There may be opportunities for revisiting this rappel at some point in the future, but it will likely be done from the very top where there are fewer ledges (& less loose rock?), and probably on a weekday when the crowds are much less.

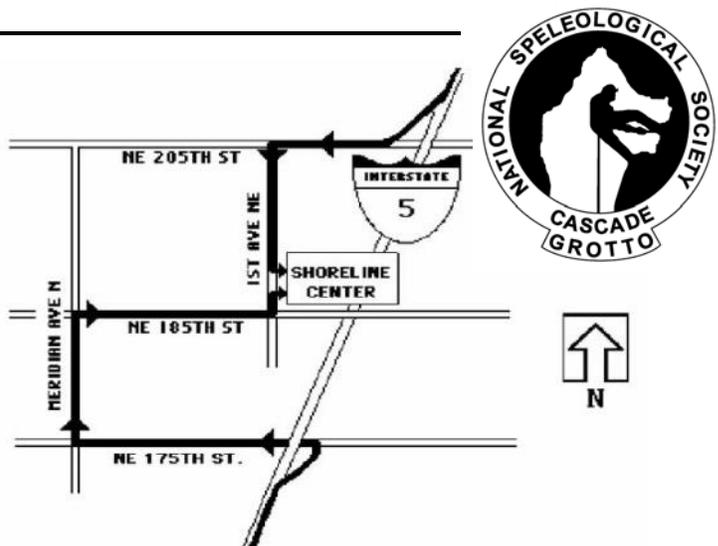
We finished the day out with food and drink at the North Bend Bar and Grill. We didn't get our long rappel in, but it felt like a successful day to us all.

The Cascade Grotto meets at 7:00pm on the third Friday of each month at the Shoreline Community Center, 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
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