



# *Cascade Caver*

Newsletter of the Cascade Grotto of the National Speleological Society

March 1997, Volume 36 No. 3

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# Cascade Caver

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## 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.

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## MEETINGS

Regular grotto meetings are held monthly at 7:00pm on the third Friday of each month at the University of Washington, Room 119, in Johnson Hall. Please see the map on the back cover of this issue.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

March 21 Grotto Meeting, 7:00 p.m.  
March 22 Vertical practice, Big Red Barn.\*  
April 6 Vertical practice, Big Red Barn.\*  
April 18 Grotto Meeting, 7:00 p.m.  
April 19 Lighting system workshop\*  
April 26 Tubal-Cain Mine trip.\*  
April 27 Trout Lake, Dynamited Cave.\*  
May 16 Grotto Meeting, 7:00 p.m.

\* See the trip list & event calendar on page 21 of this issue.

## COVER

Usually when we see color on the wall of a lava tube, it's spray paint. But not always. This month's cover shows Bruce Nagata examining a colorful wall in Bessie Cave, Oregon. Photo by Paul Ostby.

**Do you have access to the Worldwide Web? Check out the local grotto web pages!**

Cascade Grotto <http://www.wingedseed.com/samara/cascade>  
Willamette Valley Grotto <http://odin.cc.pdx.edu/~psu15286/wvg.html>  
4th Corner Grotto <http://www.telcomplus.com/~recreag2/4thcorner>

Maintained by Rob Stitt  
Maintained by Brett Cook  
Maintained by Ron Craig and Ben Barrett

## IN SEARCH OF!

By Bob Roel

Participants: Larry McTigue, Mike Fraley, Bob Roel

I felt like an insignificant speck as I stood there alone on a rock strewn slope, gawking at the immense size of this opening which thrust itself deep into the bowels of the earth. The ceiling above me soared as high as an eight story building above the rushing, boulder choked stream below. I picked my way down the slope, crossed the stream, and continued up the opposite side toward some passages that appeared to lead farther on into the cave. On the other side of those passages lay a big black void. As I ventured forth into this dark wilderness, I came to find myself standing on a ledge. Somewhere, out in the blackness below me, there was a canyon with a river roaring through it. My hand held, 6 volt, krypton light, sent a puny, anemic beam, stabbing out into the black, but it did little to enlighten me as to what was out there. Standing in this black emptiness, I began to contemplate the scene and the situation before me. I immediately became overwhelmed. Whether it was awe or inspiration, or more likely, plain old fear, I don't know. I knew one thing though. Even though I had dreamed about this place for a long time, this was no dream or figment of my imagination. It was very real. Coming to my senses, I retreated back to the sunlight, at least until I could persuade some reinforcements to accompany me back to this place.

It had started back in June of 96, when after a year of research and curiosity, I had made my first trip to investigate the caves on Vancouver Island. Fired by reports and rumors of big, black, empty voids, with roaring rivers rumbling through them, I had decided that I needed to see for myself and ascertain whether or not there was any validity to these stories. I have to admit I was somewhat skeptical, but I was nonetheless still hopeful that there might be a grain of truth about this so called "Caver's Valhalla". A land where, on any day of the week, an explorer could stumble onto (or into) unknown, dark territory, never before gazed upon by the eyes of civilized people. A place where one's footprints were likely to be the first ever planted there by a human being. As I was to find out on that initial trip, the stories I'd heard were not only true, they were beyond even the wildest of imaginations and exaggerations.

I had hoped that my first trip would satisfy my curiosity, and then I could get this caving bug out of my system and go back to living a normal lifestyle. Instead, my remedy backfired and had the exact opposite effect of what I had intended. As it turned out, it only exacerbated and inflamed my affliction and I was soon turned into a raving, demented, caving junkie, who would degenerate into withdrawal symptoms only moments after emerging

back into the sunlight from a caving excursion. It got to the point where all I could do was eat, sleep, talk and think about caves, caves, more caves, and nothing but caves!

My wife, Vera, seeing the pain I was in from this incurable disease, decided that the only way to alleviate my suffering was to go ahead and feed my habit. Thus, we planned another trip to "the Island". This time we planned to spend two weeks, camping at Anutz lake and exploring the surrounding area's caves. As on our previous trip, we would hook up with local caver Mike Henwood, but this time we were also in contact with local cavers Bill Nasby and Peter Curtis, both members of the Vancouver Island Cave Exploration Group (VICEG). From their location in Port McNeill, both Bill and Peter have done extensive explorations of the Island's caves and are frequent contributors to articles in the B.C. Caver newsletter. They graciously agreed to accept my presence on a cave project that they were going to soon be working on.

On Thursday, August 29th, with the wife, kids, and camping outfit in tow, we pulled out of Oroville, Washington at 1 AM in the morning and headed west toward Vancouver. With little traffic to deal with, we made the Horseshoe Bay Ferry at 6:45 AM. We pulled into the Anutz campsite at 2 PM and I quickly got the tent trailer set up. A good thing because, the heavy rain that Vancouver Island is famous for, soon started falling. I then went to seek out Mike Henwood at his nearby "Caver's Camp" where he runs his tour business from. After renewing our greetings, Mike filled me in on the latest scoop. He told me about some of the things that had been happening with his business, and he showed me an article in "Beautiful British Columbia" magazine that had been written about him and the area's caves. We didn't make any caving plans then, since I had committed to caving that weekend with Bill and Pete, although Mike said he would join us if he got the chance.

On Saturday afternoon, Bill Nasby arrived at Mike's camp looking for me. He explained that he and Pete were exploring a new area in the mountains to the east of Nimpkish lake. They had obtained some inventory reports from one of the forest companies and decided the area needed some investigation. Pete had gone on up to the area, while Bill came to get me. With Bill leading the way in his pickup, I followed behind, accompanied by my wife. The kids rode in the back of my pickup.

After finding Pete's pickup parked near a stream in the woods, we got out and put on our caving suits and gear. My two oldest kids, Veronica and Bobby, as well as Bill's two dogs accompanied us on our hike through the woods. Vera, and our youngest one decided to stay with the vehicles. About a half hour later, after walking up the stream bed and through some of the woods, we found

Pete. He explained that while waiting for us, he had found some cave entrances and had partially explored inside. When we got to where they were, we found that there was no indication that anyone had ever been there before. The first entrance we dropped into was a small affair and went down a few feet. At the bottom was a stream of rushing water, which was flowing through some narrow, standup passage. We decided to push upstream, through the passage, and see what we could find. Bill and Pete would survey as we went along. With the kids pushing ahead of us, we were ankle deep in running water as we made our way through clean, twisting, turning, marble lined passage way, that was glistening white in the light of our headlamps.

As we made our way up and over a water falls, we came to another opening above us in the system. Though it would have been easy to climb out there, we decided to continue on and see what further developed. With the contagious enthusiasm that was afflicting all of us, Bill decided to forego the tedious work of surveying and instead concentrate on exploring this new find. We pushed onward until we came to a squeeze. Pete explained that he had already been to this part from the other side and said that a little further on was another opening. The kids and I squeezed through and continued up. We came to the opening that Pete had described, but it looked a little tough for the kids. We looked past that under a low lying ceiling, and up ahead spotted another shaft of light. We made for that one and found that this exit was makeable for the kids. Even though the stream passage coming into this spot beckoned our curiosity, it was getting late so we decided to exit and return the next day. On our way out, we came to a sink in the ground that was probably about twenty feet in diameter, and about fifteen feet deep. Flowing through the bottom of this thing was a rushing stream. The sink was taped off with flagging tape, and a tag on one of the trees indicated that this feature had been found in September of 95 and named "Trickle Trunk Cave". I thought it would be interesting to explore that someday, since the passages, both into and out looked passable.

On our return back to camp that night, we reported back to Mike. Even though Mike's a veteran caver, with many spectacular discoveries under his belt, he got excited by our report and agreed to accompany us back to the area the next day.

The next morning, we were all up bright and early, as blue sky promised us some good, dry weather for a change. Bill and Pete had gone home to Port McNeill the night before, but had agreed to meet us up there at around 10 AM on Sunday morning. After arriving at our parking area, Bill and Pete were nowhere to be seen, so Mike and I put on our caving suits, and with the family in tow, we made our way into the woods. We came across "Trickle Trunk Cave" again, and a short ways

later we found the sinks where the caves were located. While standing over them, Mike heard voices down below in the found and saw a light shine up through a crack. Pete and Bill were already down there surveying. They had parked in another area and walked in by another route. Mike decided to look around a bit first, while Veronica and I decided to pick up from where we had left off the afternoon before.

After descending the short shaft that we had come up from the previous day, we made a turn and started up stream through narrow, stream filled passage that resembled much of what we had seen the day before. A short ways later, I looked upward and realized that a large chamber was actually above us. The narrow passage we were following was actually a crack in the bottom of a much larger chamber. We climbed up into this larger chamber and found leads and passageways going off in every direction. Some were walking passages, some were stooping passages, and some required a bit of crawling. Some led to small openings and cracks in the surface. Everywhere the walls glistened with white marble. There were formations hanging from the ceilings, though these were features of marble sculpted from running water, rather than true stalactites. A little further upstream, Veronica and I emerged into a chamber that was lined with black and white marble. The stream was entering this chamber as a waterfall at the far end. We could see some daylight above and beyond, but it was too small to get through. We returned to the larger chambers then crawled through an opening to the outside and into the forest. I didn't have any idea where I was, but Mike was standing out there and he pointed to where my wife was sitting behind a ridge a short distance away.

While Bill and Pete continued to survey the cave, Mike, Veronica and I decided to follow the stream through the canyon and see if we could locate some more caves. We located the spot where the stream was flowing into the chamber with the black and white marble. A little ways further, we found where the stream was coming out of the ground. On the other side of the ridge at this spot we found a sink hole with what appeared to be this same stream running through it. Climbing down into it, we looked upstream into another cave opening. The passage was about eight feet wide with a lake of still water extending back as far as we could see. The ceiling of the passage appeared to be about four feet above the water. Quite a ways back, we could see the light of another shaft showing onto the water's surface. We climbed out and determined to find that shaft. Since the woods were thick, it took a while to locate it. Veronica and I eventually came upon it and I climbed down to have a look. I dropped some large rocks into the water and determined that it would be at least head deep if someone were standing in it. Mike in the meantime had continued over the nearby ridges and found some more sinks with

small openings in this same stream system. We decided to return to our base of operations at the other cave to find Bill and Pete and report what we had found. We took some video and pictures and decided to call it a day.

On Tuesday morning, we all went into town to take care of business. I accompanied Mike to the Forest Service office where he had some business to take care of. A short time after we got back to camp that afternoon, Larry McTigue and Mike Fraley showed up. They had accepted my invitation to come caving, and had made the long drive that morning. After they got settled into a campsite, I filled them in on what I knew about the local caving scene. A short while later Mike Henwood showed up and we all discussed the complexities of cave exploration in this area. Mainly, that there's so much, where do we start? Mike Fraley said he'd like to see some large passages, and do some big drops where he didn't have to be pushing away from the rock face all the time. Since I'd been there on my previous trip, and was eager to return, I suggested we try Minigill cave, up in the Benson Valley to the west.

The next morning dawned cloudy, but it stayed dry. After passing through Port McNeill and obtaining some forest company maps, we headed on up toward our intended target that day. On arriving there, I showed Mike and Larry the cave entrance shaft, which is located just a few feet off the road in a brushy thicket. The opening, which is about 30' long and maybe 10' wide, looked just as impressive as I had remembered it. Looking down, one can see into a chasm which has been measured at 135'. Not the deepest perhaps, but nonetheless, we still held a healthy respect for it. We performed that honored ritual of tossing rocks down and listening for the eventual, delayed crash. As Larry and Mike went to get their gear, I continued peering downward. While doing this, I heard a large crash way back in the bowels of the cave, like a boulder or rock had crashed into the water. There was nobody else out there except us, so I realized that this was a living, ever changing, and probably dangerous place.

After rigging up, I made the first descent down into the depths. I touched down next to the passing river and unhooked myself off the rope. I then took out my video camera and shot some footage of Mike and Larry as they descended. We decided to head up stream and search for a chamber that has some nice decorations and a bed of cave pearls. After skirting an underground lake and passing through some large chambers, we found the chamber we were looking for. The formations were just as pretty looking as I had remembered them. Larry found the bed of pearls. We explored some of the other passages and saw some sumped out passages that continued on. After about an hour, we returned back toward where we had entered. We then bypassed that spot and continued downstream. As we continued, the

sound of roaring water began to get louder until we arrived at where the river plunged over in a waterfall and continued down into the depths of the cave. When we returned to the rope, Larry made the first ascent, and then I went up, with the intention of filming Mike's ascent from up top. The journey up took about 10 minutes. When Mike got back up, he told me he'd experienced the same phenomenon that I'd witnessed before our entry into the cave. He related how, as he was waiting by himself there in the depths, he heard a large crash that came from somewhere way in the back of the cave. We didn't even try to speculate on what it might be.

After our exit from Minigill, we had a couple more projects in the area that I wanted to investigate. They included a trip to nearby Papua cave and a search for Haphazard cave, which is suppose to connect to Minigill. The black, arching entrance to Papua could be seen from the road, up on a hillside, about a couple hundred yards south of where Minigill is located. Though the distance from the road is maybe only a couple hundred yards, the way up is blocked by heavy brush and young, new growth timber. It made the going a little rough. This time, in addition to Larry and Mike, I was accompanied by my daughters, Veronica and Judy. On the way up, Mike stumbled into what looked like a hidden opening. Our excitement abated when, on close examination, we found that the opening was just a shallow overhang. On reaching Papua, our excitement also died. Though the entrance was somewhat neat to look at, and the entrance zone is wide and goes back about 50 yards, the cave pinches off shortly after that. I guess we just got spoiled with the other caves we've seen.

On our return to the trucks, we drove up a nearby spur road and parked at the end. Mike Henwood had given us directions on where to look for Haphazard cave. We spread out and went in different directions. A short time later, Bobby and I came across it, hidden under some low hanging trees. The entrance appeared to be about 8 feet high and maybe just as wide. We hadn't brought any lights with us, but we threw some rocks in. They bounced off somewhere in the blackness. I yelled to Mike and Larry and they were soon standing there at the entrance with us. Since it was getting late, and we had other things we wanted to see that day, we satisfied ourselves with locating the entrance, and perhaps exploring it at a future date.

With maybe less than two hours of daylight left, we headed up to the "Vanishing River", a spot where a stream cascades down into a 60 foot deep chasm and continues on underground, through miles of uncharted passage. Though the cave looks inviting, Mike Henwood warned that the Vanishing River is probably one of the most dangerous deathtraps on the island, with it's propensity for flash floods. In 1978, a French expedition

nearly lost their lives here. In an attempt to map the passages, they were caught in a flash flood and barely got out ahead of it. They lost all their equipment and the survey charts they had made. We marveled at the spectacle for a while then, we continued back down the Benson Valley in search of a feature called the "Devil's Bath".

We eventually came across the Devil's Bath near the mainline road which led out of the area. The feature looked like a miniature crater lake with sheer walls dropping 100 feet into the water. Attempts to find the bottom have ended in futility, as experienced divers have returned to the surface with fantastic stories of being forced downward into a sucking vortex. Since it was almost dark, we headed home, passing through Port McNeill and stopping for a pizza.

The next morning we had a big breakfast of scrambled eggs, potatoes, bacon, toast, and juice. The weather looked threatening, but it still hadn't rained yet. We visited with Mike Henwood for a while. In the afternoon we decided to pursue one of my objectives that I'd wanted to accomplish on this trip, to find the "Black Hole". On our previous trip to the island, we'd made it to the small entrance of this cave. But, I was anxious to see the famous large entrance, which has been described as big enough for a helicopter to fly into it. Larry and my son Bobby would come with me. Mike Fraley decided he wanted to explore some of the area by canoe, so he stayed behind this time.

We got delayed by logging trucks a few times, and turned around a time or two on the confusing roads, but we eventually made the 19 mile drive up to the end of the logging road that gets you up into the Artlish/Black Hole area. Then it's a 20 minute hike through the forest to the first cave which is the Artlish exit cave. This cave itself is a very impressive feature, with a large opening and a large, high ceiling chamber inside. In the back is a lake, with a waterfall dumping into it. Sometimes, there's a river pouring out this cave, but today it was dry. When we got to the lake, Larry found a debris clogged side passage and went into his badger impersonation. He attempted to get around the lake to the passage beyond by digging out a debris choked side passageway. After about an hour, he broke through, but found that the opening dropped off straight into the water filled lake chamber that he was trying to bypass.

We left the Artlish cave and continued my quest to locate the "Black Hole". Unfortunately, with all the delays in getting there that day, we had neglected to keep track of the time. By now, it was getting late. With about 1 1/2 hours of sunlight left I still desired to continue the search. Not wanting to spend a wet, dark night out in the wilderness, I sensed my companion's desire to turn back. Wanting to avoid a mutiny, I did what Columbus tried in

a similar situation. I promised him we would continue on for only a little while, maybe a half hour, and if we didn't find it before then, we would return back. We headed up a trail that led up above the Artlish. We continued on into the bush, and crossed a ridge. Soon we heard a rushing river below us, and the trail seemed to be headed in that direction. We followed it downhill and eventually came to where a large stream was dumping into a large cave entrance.

In a state of jubilation and euphoria I declared that we had finally found the long, lost "Black Hole"! Larry wasn't so sure. He surmised that we had probably stumbled onto the Artlish entrance cave. His observation would later be proven correct, after we had a chance to talk to Mike Henwood and describe what we had found. Just like Columbus who thought he had found Asia, I was wrong in thinking we had found the "Black Hole". In the meantime, I took a photo of this feature and we hastened back toward the truck, trying to beat the oncoming darkness.

After getting back to camp that night, Vera heated up some water, and we took some baths. Larry and Mike had decided that they were going to have to head home the next day. Early the next morning, it started raining. Mike Henwood came over and asked if we wanted to take a ride and go see some of the Noomas Valley caves, which include famous caves like Arch, Glory Ole, and Treasure caves. He also said, he's got some projects he wants to accomplish in Arch cave, and he'd be willing to lead an expedition from the Cascade Grotto there. Arch is a very technical cave with some deep drops in it. It's also very famous and well known, being listed in the Atlas of Great Caves of the World. Larry and Mike declined the invitation that day and headed back for Washington.

Since it was raining that day, Vera and I decided to take that day and go visit Port Hardy. As we were leaving, we spotted a blue car on the dirt road near camp. It turned out to be my brother Larry from California. I had sent him a map and told him where we would be camping, but I had never heard a reply from him. It was kind of a surprise to run into him out there in the middle of the Canadian bush. After parking his car at the camp, we continued onto Port Hardy. While there, I picked up a pair of cork boots at a second hand store for \$1.50. Mike Henwood says these boots, with the spikes on the soles, are the best thing for walking around in wet, slippery, log covered, rain forest.

The next day was Saturday and it continued to rain. Larry's not much into caving but he does like fishing and camping, so we decided to go try for trout at the Huson caves and the Nimpkish river. The kids caught a mess of rainbows at the Huson caves, where the river runs

through the cave. After that, we tried the Nimpkish, and they caught some more rainbows and cutthroats.

On Sunday morning the rain stopped, even though it remained cloudy. I decided this was a day to continue my quest to find the mysterious "Black Hole". With some directions and descriptions from Mike Henwood, we set off. On arriving at the end of the logging road where we park, we got out and set off through the rain forest. Our first landmark, was the Artlish exit cave which Larry McTigue and I had explored three days before. On that day, the cave mouth had been dry. Today, with a couple days of rain later, there was a river gushing out of it. I shot some video and we continued our search for the "Black Hole". After climbing the ridge behind the Artlish cave, and noting the landmarks that Mike Henwood had described, we finally found another trail that led in what we believed to be the right direction toward our objective. Since it had been quite a climb up from the Artlish, Vera and Judy decided to wait at a spot on top of the ridge while the rest of us descended down a steep, jungle like trail. From the look of the terrain and the descriptions we'd heard, it was obvious that we were finally about to accomplish one of the goals I'd been wanting to achieve for a long time. With the kids moving out ahead (again), we came around a bend and there it was! Like the gaping maw of a giant whale trying to consume us, the Black Hole's immense entry zone left us dumbstruck.

Since I had left my camera and cave gear at the top of the ridge with Vera, I decided to return up there and retrieve it. Judy decided to return with me back down into the canyon. Twenty minutes after I had left them, I encountered Larry and the other kids coming back up the trail. When I asked them what was wrong, they told me they'd gotten cold from the cool air blowing out of the cave entrance. They agreed to return with me so I could take some video of it. After taking the video, I solicited volunteers to accompany me into the cave, but everyone declined. I decided to do at least a superficial search of the entrance zone and maybe the first passage beyond. At this point is where the scenario I described at the beginning of this story took place. After we left the Artlish area, we stopped at Wolf lake and caught some Dolly Varden trout on the way home.

The next four days dawned bright, clear, and warm. On Monday and Tuesday I helped Mike take his camp down for the winter. In the evenings, Larry and the kids fished Anutz Lake from my canoe. Bobby caught a nice sea-run cutthroat for dinner on Monday. On Tuesday, Larry headed back to California.

On Wednesday, with his camp taken down, Mike was now free to go caving. We headed up to the West Tashis Valley, with a visit to the Salamander cave entrance. The Salamander cave is the upper most entrance to a

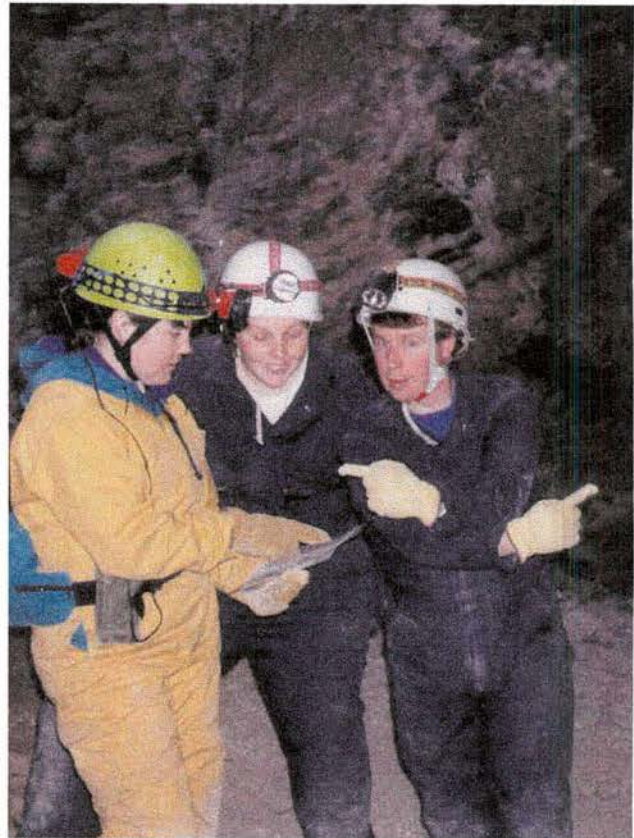
series of connected passages and entrances which is known as the "Hollow" cave system. This system stretches for miles and is largely unexplored. This entrance is a particularly pretty one, being about 6 feet high and maybe fifteen feet wide, with a rushing stream pouring into it. But there's one huge problem, as Mike showed me. Due to the logging activity, there's a large tree stump which was dumped there by the logging company, and is blocking the entrance to the cave. Mike has rigged some chains, rope, and block and tackle to the stump. So far, he's managed to keep it from sliding completely into the entrance, where it would be irretrievable. One of his project's that he's worked on is cutting the stump up, piece by piece, and removing a little of it at a time. I offered to help him do this, but we were prevented on this trip from doing it because of high water. On looking into the cave, you can see a short distance to where the water plunges over a water falls and continues on to the walking passages in the rest of the system.

We next visited "Garden" cave, which is another entrance to this same system. Mike took me in and we passed through some stand up, phreatic tube passageway, until we came to a 60 foot drop. Down in the drop you could hear a river running. Mike said it led to the rest of Hollow cave system. We next visited some more entrances to this system, but they all appeared to be clogged with silt and debris. Mike said this situation occurs because of the logging, which has taken the trees away, which absorb the water and prevent flash foods.

We then went up and took a look at the Paradise Lost and Paradise Found system. I'd visited these entrances on my previous trip with Mike. This time we climbed a short way past the waterfalls which shoots out of a wall in Paradise Lost. Mike said he had almost been killed here the year before when he got caught in a flash flood. Accompanied by Bobby and Judy, we now turned our attention to Paradise Found. Though the entry way appeared clogged by logs, Mike found the small horizontal opening and passed through it. Immediately through the crack, the floor drops about eight feet down and turns into a fair sized chamber. Continuing on, we passed through some chambers and phreatic passage ways. In one chamber, we threw some rocks down a slanting corridor and could hear them bouncing off the walls and splashing into water. Bobby and Judy waited here while Mike and I free climbed down this pitch about ten feet. At the bottom was the pool of water where our rocks had landed. On the other side of this was a sixty foot pitch, which led to a river canyon and walking passage. Another system that's in need of further exploration. After leaving the cave, Mike decided to drive into Port McNeill. We took the other route home, through the Atluck valley, which is the way we had come.

On Thursday, the bright sunny weather still held, so we decided to make a canoe trip up to Nimpkish lake. We found lots of caves in the limestone bluffs on the lake shore, but none seemed to go very far. We hiked inland a short ways and found and recorded a couple small caves. The area looked promising, but the results were inconclusive. We decided that the area's going to need some further exploration, but it was just too much to do on this trip.

With that, our caving adventure came to an end. Friday dawned dark and rainy. We determined to pack as much as we could that day and head for home early the next morning. We said our goodbyes to Mike and Linda and by 6 AM on Saturday, September 14, we were rolling toward the Ferry at Nanaimo. It had been a memorable trip and we had achieved some of our goals that we had wanted to accomplish. The only problem was, that for every goal we accomplished, it seems that 3 or 4 more popped up, prompting us to continue. That, along with my soon appearing withdrawal symptoms made us decide that there is no cure for this addiction. Just temporary relief. So, you know what that means.....



Katrina Ostby, Christine Bennett, and Bill Bennett demonstrate their wayfinding skills in Whipple Cave, NV. Photo by Paul Ostby.

Fellow Cavers,

I just received the following message from Eric Larson of the Fish and Wildlife Service. It seems that all the work we put in at the Christmas Tree Gating Project was worthwhile. This project could not have happened without the labor provided by the caving community. Thanks to all the cavers that participated in this important conservation project.  
Cave Softly,

Michael Compton  
NSS#33221RL  
Chairman,  
Northwest Caving Association

From Eric Larson:

I wanted to forward this exciting information to all of you. The gating project was finished in October at Christmas Tree Cave, site of Washington's largest breeding and hibernating aggregations of Townsend's big-eared bats.

David Anderson, Area Wildlife Biologist in Region 5, has reported that on February 25th, 1997, a survey of Christmas Tree Cave yielded 129 hibernating Townsend's big-eared bats. This is significant for two reasons. First, this number represents one of the largest wintering aggregations for this species recorded for Washington and secondly, this demonstrates the acceptance by these bats of the gates that were recently installed.

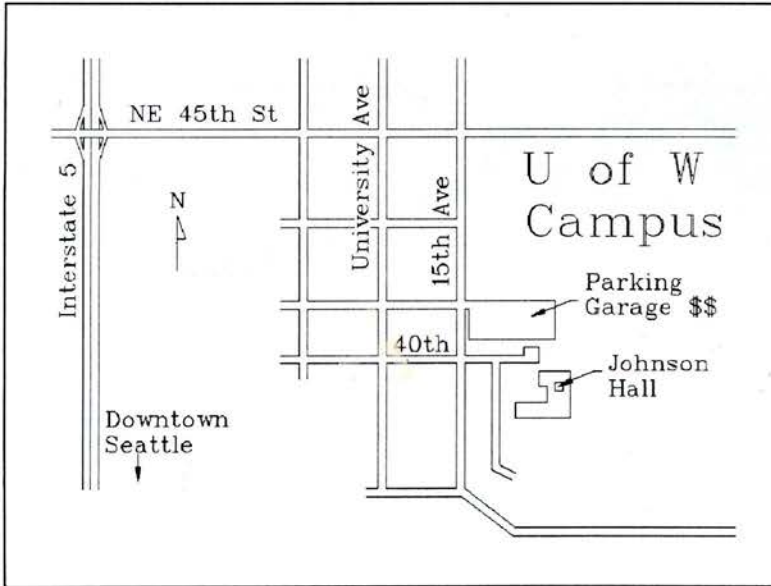
Since gating caves and bunkers for bats is relatively new for Washington, these results bode well for the species and are encouraging in light of the other three gating projects under way for this species in Washington. I will forward information on use of this and the Clallum Co. bunker site by nursing mom bats when exit surveys are conducted this summer. Up next for gating projects: Boulder Cave in the Naches Ranger District and Powerline Cave near Mt. St. Helens, both of which harbor, or have harbored very significant colonies in the past, and which are exposed to regular and elevated levels of disturbance.



## TRIP CALENDAR 1997

March 22 <sup>nd</sup>	Big Red Barn Vertical Practice in Enumclaw. Time to refine your vertical system and skills.	Scott Davis PSG (206) 862-1035
March 31 <sup>st</sup> April 6 <sup>th</sup>	Fang Cave. 10 k of technical limestone cave about 9 hours North of Bellingham.	Ben Barrett 4CG (360) 715-9468
April 19 <sup>th</sup>	Lighting System Workshop. Wendel's house in Edgewood at 11am Tuneup that old lighting system or create a new one. Both electric or stinky systems welcome.	Wendel Pound PSG (206) 863-1649
April 26 <sup>th</sup>	Tubal-Cain Mine and B17 crash site. Olympic Mountains near Sequim	Scott Davis PSG (206) 862-1035
April 27 <sup>th</sup>	Trout Lake. Explore the newly discovered lower passage in Dynamited cave.	Edd Keudell WVG (503) 233-4696
May 23 <sup>rd</sup> - 25 <sup>th</sup>	NCA Conventrion. Hosted by the Gem State Grotto at the Lincoln county fairgrounds in Shoshone, Idaho. There are rumors of a 3D slide show and an invitational cave slide show. Prices are tentative and subject to change. Registration: \$3.00 single \$5.00 family. Dinner: \$7.00. T-shirt: \$10.00. Guidebook: \$5.00	Jennifer Dorman GSG (208)-331-0279
May 31 <sup>st</sup>	Outdoor Vertical Practice. Near Wilkeson	Steve Hoefel PSG (206) 952-5225
June 8 <sup>th</sup>	Big Four Ice Caves. About one mile up an easy trail crossing the Stillaguamish river makes this hike to the Ice caves both scenic and Interesting.	Larry Mc Tigue CG (206) 850-8614
June 13 <sup>th</sup> - 22 <sup>nd</sup>	Big Horn and Horsethief Caves. Big Horn Mountains near Lovell, Wyoming. Space limited, must pre-register.	Wendel Pound PSG (206) 863-1649
June 28 <sup>th</sup>	Cave Ridge a non-vertical trip. Snoqualmie, WA.	Scott Davis PSG (206) 862-1035
July 4 <sup>th</sup> - 7 <sup>th</sup>	Caving in the Marble Mountains. Contact Edd for details.	Edd Keudell WVG (503) 233-4696
July 12 <sup>th</sup>	Mountain bike 2-1/2 miles through the Snoqualmie Pass train tunnel.	Scott Davis PSG (206) 862-1035
July 26 <sup>th</sup> - 27 <sup>th</sup>	Ape Cave cleanup project and other caves by Mt. St. Hellens	Wendel Pound PSG (206) 863-1649
August 3 <sup>rd</sup> - 8 <sup>th</sup>	Eagle Cap Wilderness area. Searching limestone in the Wallowa Mountains of Oregon for virgin caves. An 11mi hike in pristine wilderness.	Jerry Thompson CG (360) 653-7390 Brett Cook WVG (503) 671-5607
August 23 <sup>rd</sup> -24 <sup>th</sup>	Cave Ridge. Bottom Newton Cave.	Wendel Pound PSG (206) 863-1649
August 29 <sup>th</sup> to September 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Labor day trip to the Marble Mountains. Contact Edd for details.	Edd Keudell WVG (503) 233-4696
August 29 <sup>th</sup> to September 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Labor day trip to the Chillawack. Contact Dick for details.	Dick Garnick CG (360) 671-1066
September 6 <sup>th</sup> - 7 <sup>th</sup>	Trout Lake. In Search of 3 Sinks.	Wendel Pound PSG (206) 863-1649
September 13 <sup>th</sup>	Windy Creek Cave. Date subject to change, call Jerry early.	Jerry Thompson CG (360) 653-7390

NSS members and members of recognized caving clubs are welcome to participate. Others may participate by invitation only.  
Questions? Contact Jim Harp CG (206) 745-1010.



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

We look forward to seeing you at one of our meetings

Cascade Caver  
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