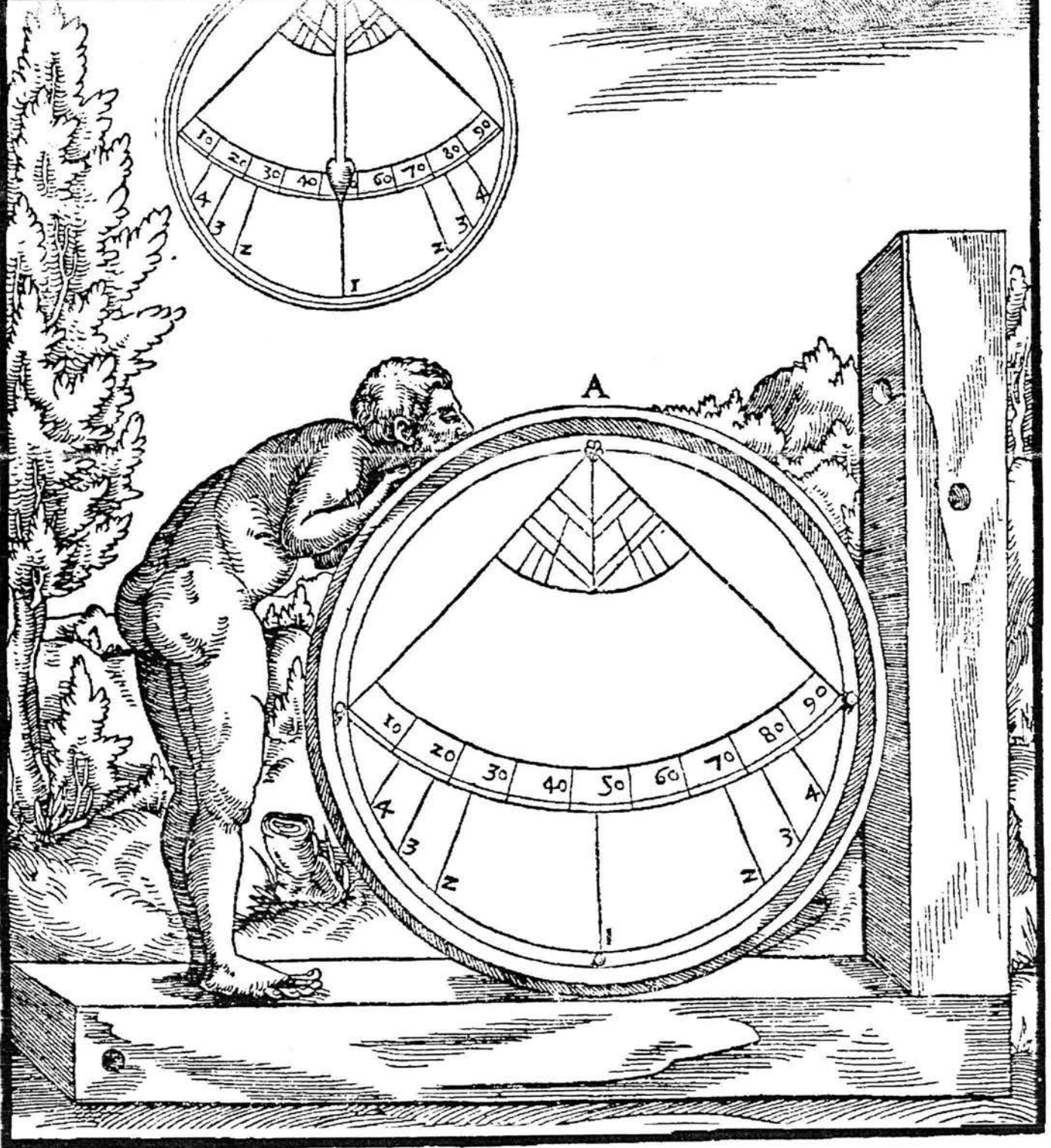
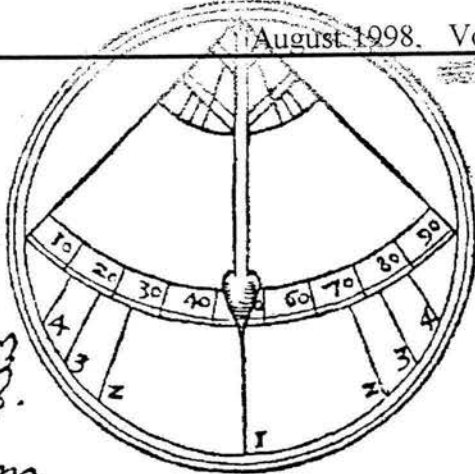




# Cascade Caver

Newsletter of the Cascade Grotto of the National Speleological Society

August 1998. Volume 37 No. 8



# Cascade Caver

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All material to be published, subscription requests, renewals, address changes, and exchange publications should be sent to the Grotto address.

## GROTTO MEMBERSHIP

Membership in the Cascade Grotto is \$15.00 per year. Subscription to the *Cascade Caver* is free to regular members. Membership for each additional family member is \$2.00 per year. Subscription to the *Cascade Caver* is \$15.00 per year.

## GROTTO ADDRESS

Cascade Grotto; P.O. Box 75663; Seattle, WA 98125-0663. This post office box should be used for both the grotto and for the *Cascade Caver*.

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\* Editor of the current issue.

## 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

Please notify Jim Harp at (425) 745-1010 of any upcoming trips.

Aug 21	Grotto Meeting 7:00 p.m. at <b>Tiger Mountain Talus Caves</b> see enclosed map
Aug 22,23	Cave Ridge, leaving the Alpentel parking lot at 8am on Saturday. Some will be camping overnight on the ridge. Scott Davis 253-862-1035 sdavis@wdni.com
Aug 22-30	Vancouver Island caving. Bob Roel (509)476-3229
Sept 4-7	Papoose Cave, Labor Day There will be four zone 2 trips and 6 zone 1 trips scheduled per demand over the Labor Day weekend to Papoose Cave. Jim Harp at (425) 745-1010
Sept 18	Grotto Meeting 7:00 p.m.
Sept 19	Windy Creek Cave. Date subject to change depending on weather and access. Jerry Thompson (360) 653-7390
Oct 9-11	Western Regional at Camp Marston hosted by the San Diego Grotto. Carl Diaz SDG 619-5613815

**COVER:** A Cascade Grotto member doing a surface survey using the most modern instruments available. (Actually, it is an edited version of a woodcut from *De Re Metallica*, an extensive treatise on mining, first published in 1556 by Georgius Agricola.)

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## TRIP REPORTS

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### NEELY CREEK

By Mike Fraley

On the weekend of July 4th, Larry McTigue and I made a day trip to Denny Mountain to hike around the Neely Creek limestone deposit. There are 3 small limestone caves located there which I had never seen, and from what Larry told me and the description of the limestone deposit in Danner's book, there could be more waiting for the hardy hiker to discover.

We arrived at the parking lot just off I-5 to discover that I had left my trailhead parking permit at home. We set off on our hike, nevertheless, hoping that my truck wouldn't be spotted. It never was, and even if it had been, the \$3 isn't much. We set off along a well traveled trail which heads up Denny Creek to some falls, the name of which escapes me. Not long after leaving the parking lot, we waited until no one was around and headed off trail and hiked parallel to I-5. After a short hike, we started the hike up the hill. This was my first serious trip of the summer, and I knew going in that I was out of shape. Even with that knowledge, this hike was so steep and when added to the fact that I was trying to keep up with Larry, I nearly lost my breakfast from over exertion. We found a small stream which Larry told me was a resurgence, so we followed it up the hill to the base of the limestone deposit. The water was low coming out of the resurgence, but even with that, there didn't look to be much hope for digging into anything here. There appeared to be 2 openings about 15 feet apart, only one of which had flowing water.

After a brief stop here, we continued up the hill through nasty devil's club and driving rain (it rained the entire day non stop by the way) toward an old limestone quarry higher on the hill. There was a large limestone talus slope below the old quarry which made the hiking much easier. If you didn't know that there was a limestone quarry there long before, you probably wouldn't guess it from the way it looks now. The quarry wasn't much more than a 20 foot diameter indentation into the cliff face. There did happen to be something of interest here. At the base of the indentation was a small hole leading about 12 feet down into the limestone, big enough to crawl into. At the back of the crawlway was a small crack in the limestone, through which a large volume of water flowed. The water cascaded down the back wall and into the gravel on the ground. It seemed pretty obvious to me that this was the same water which flowed out the resurgence further back down the mountain. Outside and to the left of this hole, was a very tight snaking hole leading back into the limestone. A slight

hint of cold air flowed out, but no human could make that squeeze.

From there, we started up the hill again to try to locate Neely Creek Cave, which was supposed to be not far up the hill. He had a good description of where it should be, the only problem was that every 20 feet up the hill was another location which fit that description. We search around quit a bit, and split up to search more area, but never found it. There are 2 other, smaller caves up there somewhere too, but we couldn't locate them either. The day was mostly, therefore, a good hike and not much else. We did find what looked like a contact zone farther up the hill, and Larry climbed down into a hole which didn't produce much. The limestone in the deposit very pure. In some places, it is white in color. Danner says this limestone is 95% calcite. I don't think it's quite that high overall, but in places it obviously was.

It was a good day overall. I got some blisters from hiking in the rain all day, but it got me in shape for the Cave Ridge trip scheduled for the next weekend.

### Cave Ridge (Cascade Cave)

By Dave McElmurry  
7-12-98

Present on the trip were: Larry McTigue, Steve Sprague, Mike Fraley, Lane Holdcroft and Dave McElmurry.

After filling up at Denny's in Renton, the group got an "early" start arriving at the trailhead around 10:00 AM. The hike up to Cave Ridge, as it was explained to me, consisted of three parts: the brushy third, the rocky third, the cliffy third, and the hilltop third. As we began the first third, we could only see a little above us as the clouds and fog blanketed the slopes. Rain was in the prediction for at least the morning, but it appeared that we might, with a little luck, avoid any significant downpour.

It was a fair workout getting up all four of these thirds, but not extreme. A couple of hours later we were at the top. After having lunch and taking some GPS readings at a cave entrance nearby, we entered Cascade Cave (about 2:00 PM).

The primary goal of the trip was to resurvey the entrance, including the chimney just inside. It was decided that due to the difficulties of the confined space and vertical passage, a team of three should survey while the other two could check out the cave. Larry, Steve, and Mike became the Survey Team, while Lane and I (Dave) began exploring. We left the survey team at the entrance and dropped into the cave.

## Trout Lake Region

By Dave McElmurry  
July 18 & 19, 1998

After climbing down the entrance chimney, we proceeded through a crawlway over breakdown to a large (about 20 ft x 25 ft x 40+ ft high) room. The ceiling was dripping here and there were several interesting leads to poke our heads into. The largest one looked like walking passage but was fairly high up towards the ceiling so we did not go there. Next we took a passage which, after a short distance, led to another large drippy room. We did not estimate dimensions here, but it was roughly similar in size to the first room. A little more poking into nooks and crannies and we were off through another lead. This one led to the third (drippy) room, smaller than the other two but still good size. One of these latter two rooms also had a large lead towards the ceiling. Following a more down-to-earth lead out of this room, we proceeded across a short, exposed traverse and downclimb, rigging a handline at the crux. The passage became very large at this point, and we proceeded along it for a few feet, continually dropping deeper below the entrance. Soon, the passage changed directions, turning left and back upon itself (only now lower). A few more feet of this and another short down climb, and the main passage again turned upon itself, this time to the right (and still dropping). At this point we decided it better to turn back. We arrived at the bottom of the entrance chimney about 3 hours after we had entered. The survey team had just finished.

My impression of the cave was that there is a fair amount to explore (there appear to be substantial portions which we never looked at.) It is not a particularly cold cave (a rough temperature reading at the bottom of the entrance chimney was about 50 degrees, while further into the cave we registered about 45 degrees); nor is it particularly technical, though I'm sure there are enough "problems" to keep it interesting if you're looking for them. There are essentially no speleothems, but there are a few sections of banded/carved marble which are very pretty.

We hiked out via a steeper route than what we came in on, stopping once for another GPS reading at a cave entrance. Fortunately, we pretty much avoided the rain, and the clouds had lifted enough by the time we left to allow views across the valley at the adjacent peaks and snowfields. There were plenty of wildflowers blooming which added to the enjoyment of hike out.

All in all it was a good trip: Good caving and good company.

Saturday at about 2:00 PM, a group of cavers met at the Trout Lake CG. Included in the group were: Dave McElmurry, Jon McGinnis, Julie McGinnis, and their son Cameron McGinnis. The plan was for a weekend of caving.

About mid afternoon, after setting up camp, Jon and I (Dave) headed for Deadhorse Cave. We did a through trip from the Rat Hole to a lower entrance. The lower entrance was passable, though 2 weeks before I understand it to have been sumped. Deadhorse is a pretty cool cave (compared to my previous lava tube experience). We explored a little on the way through the cave, spending about 3 hours total underground. We then headed back to camp for dinner.

After a nights rest we all headed out to try and find a cave or two that had been rumored to be in the area. Not finding the caves we originally hoped for, we settled for the caves we found. We entered a short cave with a survey tag of #44. Nearby, another even shorter tube seemed to head down the flow towards #44. A berry picker in the area said that this particular area had lots of caves. hmm...

Next we went to Dynamited Cave. This is a really cool (awesome) lava tube. We entered and climbed down the first drop. We then rigged the first 40 ft pit and descended to the next level of passage. I made a quick trip to the top of the second pit (the exposed traverse) just to see what I could see. After ascending the pit, we headed towards what is known as the "Sand Castle" room. We had to turn back shortly, so we weren't sure if we had reached the "room" or not, but if we had, then the sand castles appear to be only about 6 inches high or less. Whether this is because they have been damaged, eroded, or because we were not quite far enough into the cave I cannot say for sure. Hopefully we just needed to go a little farther.

Lastly, we went to a cave with a survey tag of #56. We believe it might be Pickering (?) Cave. This was a very pretty lava tube, with some fairly complex passages. Unfortunately, some areas have been significantly damaged, probably by visitors who were not careful enough while crawling around. Some of the more delicate areas are now marked with survey tape. This is still a very enjoyable cave. We spent about 2 hours exploring it.

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## IN THE NEWS

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Everett Herald August 3, 1998

### ACCIDENT AT ICE CAVES TAKES HIKER'S LIFE

Snow bridge at popular destination collapses,  
killing Bothell woman, 27

By DALE STEINKE  
Herald Writer

VERLOT - She came to the Big Four Ice Caves looking for serenity.

Instead the day turned to tragedy when a portion of the ice caves collapsed at about 1 p.m. Sunday, killing 27-year-old Catherine Stockton Shields of Bothell.

Shields had taken her husband and his parents, who were visiting from out of town, to the popular hiking destination east of Granite Falls. The yawning mouth of the main cave and the cool breeze streaming from it apparently beckoned them.

Despite posted warnings about the danger of collapse and avalanches at the caves, they passed under a snowy arch on their way toward the dim entrance. The icy bridge collapsed, burying Shields and trapping her father-in-law waist-deep in debris.

Shields suffered broken bones, massive internal injuries and a skull fracture, said Jan Jorgensen, Snohomish County Sheriff's spokeswoman. The Snohomish County Medical Examiner will conduct an autopsy today.

The father-in-law was airlifted to Providence General Medical Center in Everett, where he was treated and released, the Associated Press reported. His name was not released.

Rick Lamore, a forest service law enforcement officer, said the bridge that collapsed was about 2 to 4 feet thick and 6 to 8 feet wide.

"It was quite a substantial snow bridge," he said.

All that remained of it after the accident was a jumble of freshly broken ice at the cave entrance.

The family rolled blocks of ice off Shields and pulled her a short distance away.

Dr. Lee Leichtling of Everett happened upon the scene minutes after the accident to find the woman's husband administering CPR. Leichtling, a physician, took over and worked on her until nearly 2 p.m., when paramedics arrived by helicopter.

"There was no chance of survivability," Leichtling said, describing a litany of injuries. "She was dead before she hit the ground. It was a tragic, tragic situation."

"This was apparently one of her favorite places in the area," Leichtling said. "She often went there for serenity."

Shields' husband told Leichtling that five minutes before she died, she said she wished she "could be here forever."

The caves, hollowed out by warm winds and snowmelt dripping down the sheer north face of 6,315 foot Big Four Mountain, are among the most popular destinations in the Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest.

It's also a dangerous place. U.S. Forest Service spokesman Ron DeHart said. The service is constantly trying to educate visitors of the dangers of the trail off the Mountain Loop Highway.

"We've had some near-misses and some close calls up there," DeHart said. "It's pretty difficult to get people to abide by the warnings."

The caves are reached by a well-worn, mile-long gravel path broken up by short series of log steps. It climbs a modest 200 feet through second-growth forest and is popular with families.

"This is just a highway in the summer with people going in there," avid hiker Jeff Giesick of Lynnwood said, pointing to the nearby trailhead.

Warnings or no, the ice is like a magnet, especially on warm days. A field of loose rock from previous avalanches leads up to a steep slope of dirty snow and ice leaning against an even steeper rock wall. Everywhere is the thin roar of a ribbon of water cascading down from snowpacks near the peak. A refreshingly chill breeze blows off the ice.

Bob Bonner, with Snohomish County Search and Rescue, said he's been up to the caves quite a few times in his 32 years on the job. "We usually make it up here once or twice a year," he said. "People twist ankles or get ice dropped on them."

A sign near the caves reminds hikers that two boys survived being caught in a June 1996 collapse. In October 1995, the ceiling in a section of the ice caves fell on top of Giovanna Benfro, then 28. She survived with cuts to her head. A couple of years before that, two men exploring the caves were trapped when the entrance collapsed. They managed to dig themselves out with their pocket knives.

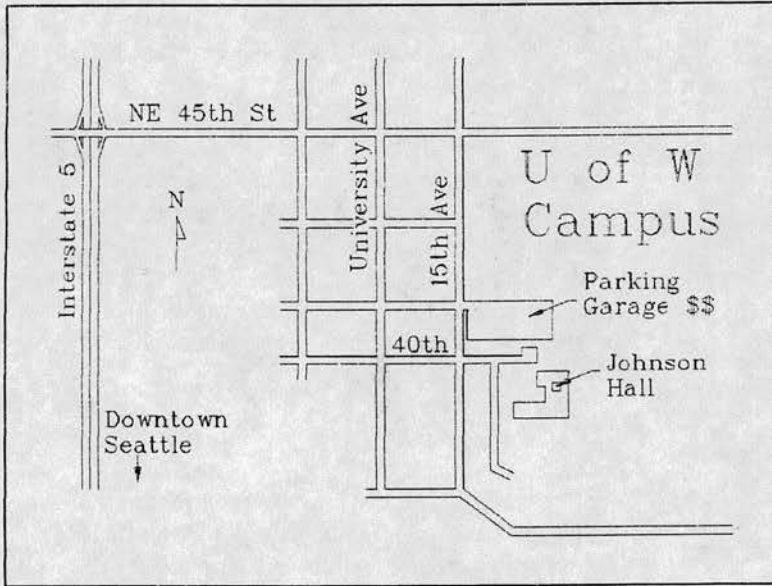
The warnings suggest people observe the caves from a distance, because the caves can collapse and avalanches can plunge off the mountain.

Leichtling said he's seen the warning signs, but has clambered through the caves on previous visits.

"I've never seen anybody pay attention to them," Leichtling said of the admonitions. "It's like saying 'don't touch the cookie jar.'"

Wondering at the logic of it all, he said had he not stopped at the store to pick up some Pringles for the kids squirming in the back seat, it might have been his family there at the wrong time.

Asked if he'll go inside the caves the next time he visits, he replied, "I guess never again."



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

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