Cascade Caver

Newsletter of the Cascade Grotto of the National Speleological Society

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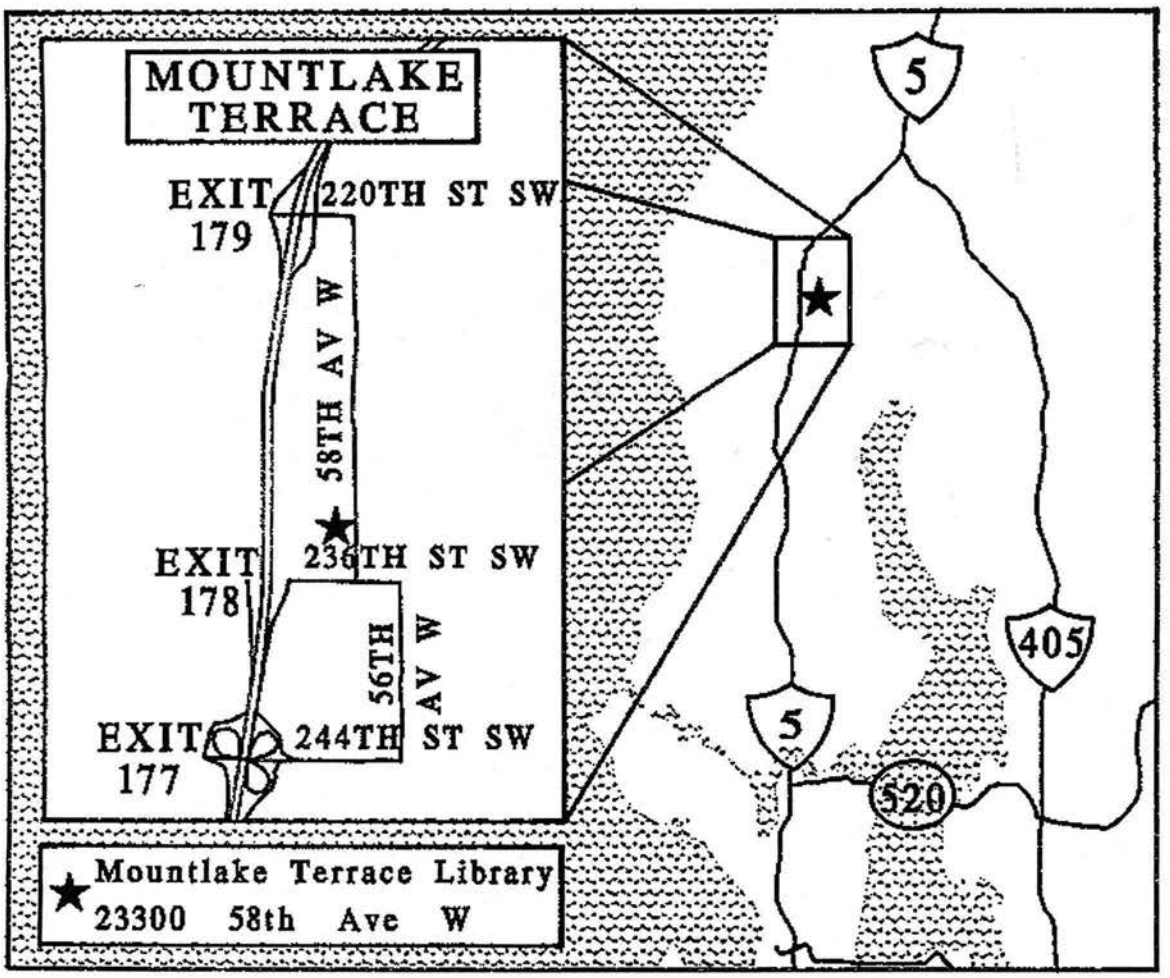
New Grotto Meeting Location Starting This Month



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
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MEETINGS
Regular grotto meetings are held monthly at 7:00 p.m. on the third Friday of each month at the Mountlake Terrace Public Library, 23300 58th Ave W. Please see the map on the cover of this issue.

To get to the Library from the North, take I-5 south to the Mountlake Terrace exit (exit 179). Turn left onto 220th and then take a right onto 58th Ave W. Head south for 13 blocks to the Library.

From the South, take I-5 north to exit 178 (Mountlake Terrace). Turn right on 236th and then take a left on 58thAve W. Go north 3 blocks.

From the Eastside, take Bothell Way to Ballinger Way. Head north on Ballinger and take a right on 19thAve NE (this turns into 56th Ave W at the county line. Turn left on 236th then a right on 58th Ave W. Go north 3 blocks.

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

Oct. 16	Grotto Meeting 7:00 p.m.
Nov. 20	Grotto Meeting 7:00 p.m.
Dec. ??	Grotto Christmas Party. Date and location still to be determined.
July 12-16	NSS Convention at Twin Falls County Fairgrounds, Filer Idaho. Contact David Kesner at (208) 939-0979 or email at drdave@micron.net

New Meeting Location

Since most of our members are located to the north and east of Seattle, we started looking for a new location to make it easier for members to get to the meetings. Starting this month, the Cascade Grotto will be meeting each month at the Mountlake Terrace Library, located at 23300 58th Ave W. This location has excellent freeway access, a comfortable meeting room and lots of free parking. There is also a pizza joint about 4 blocks south, where we can finish our meetings.

We will still be meeting on the 3rd Friday of each month at 7:00.

At this month's meeting, Roger Cole, of the Oregon Grotto, will be up here visiting from the Portland area and he has offered to show slides of Mammoth Cave.

Mount Rainier Steam Caves

By Jerry Thompson

Seven mountaineering cavers spent a fortnight in Mount Rainier National Park in an attempt to study and explore the steam caves in the summit crater at over fourteen thousand feet above sea level. Four participants reached the crater rim in extremely hostile weather and spent eight hours on Rainier's summit searching for and exploring the steam caves. Three of the participants entered and made limited observations in the caves for five hours

The goals of the project were to move equipment and personnel to the steam caves. Participants were then to survey cave passages, collect and identify physical attributes and changes in nevÈ, collect, preserve and identify limited biological samples.

The plan was to describe the current morphology and physical environment of the caves; to monitor cave passage dynamics; to describe cave biota; and to collect and identify biological specimens.

Bill Klimack was project director, Chuck Green acted as project administrative officer. Mary Klimack served as project database manager. Other participants included Jane Meushaw, Myrna Diaz, Mundo, Mark Legault, and Jerry Thompson.

Four cavers reached the summit crater in close to whiteout conditions with a high temperature of about thirteen degrees Fahrenheit and winds in the neighborhood of fifty-to-sixty miles per hour. For the first time in the five-year life of the project, the caves were entered. Objective hazards were carefully evaluated. Photographs were taken of the interior of the caves. Sample scallops in the nevÈ were measured in two locations. Moss samples found near fumaroles at the entrance, were collected.

The project enjoyed limited success. For the first time in its five-year existence, this ambitious project got a group of participants into the caves. Though the data collection time was reduced from five days to about five hours, at least some observations and measurements were made. Biological samples were taken for study and identification. Perhaps the most important outcome was that the project participants gained invaluable experience operating safely in extremely hostile and dangerous conditions.

Commitment of personnel to the project varied and was possibly the most important factor limiting the success of the project this season. Physical conditioning of participants was a minor factor impacting the success of the project. Extreme weather conditions affected the progress of the project. Varying surveying and mountaineering skills among the project members were critical limiting factors.

Additional qualified personnel will be needed to supply, support, and implement future

project activity in the steam caves. The participants feel that there is enough work to keep two survey teams busy for over a week. A committed group of eight to twelve strong climbers will be needed to ferry equipment and supplies to and from the survey teams. These climbers need to prepare to do their work in extremely hostile weather conditions. They will have to work before, during, and after the times that the survey teams are doing their work. Secure and safe camps need to be established at Camp Muir (10,000'), Ingraham Flats (11,000'), the top of Disappointment Cleaver (12,200',) and the summit crater (14,400'.)

Previously, this has been a project of the National Speleological Society (NSS) and agreements with the National Park Service have required that all participants be NSS members. Perhaps organizations such as The Mountaineers should be made partners in the project, at least to the extent that their members could be allowed to participate by moving supplies and equipment to and from the crater.

Vancouver Island Again

By Bob Roel

On Friday, August 29 last year, I made another trip up to the northern end of Vancouver Island. On this excursion my main plans were to recover my canoe, which I had left with local caver Mike Henwood. I had left the canoe with him back in July when we had been there caving. On that July trip, I had been accompanied by my family, as well as cavers Tom Kline, Dave Ek, and Scott Davis. This time, I was just planning to spend the Labor Day weekend there, and then return home. Of course I brought my caving gear, but I really didn't have any plans or caving objectives to achieve on this trip. We were just going to camp out, and whatever opportunities came up would suffice.

After arriving at our campsite near Nimpkish Lake that afternoon, I went to visit Mike and Linda Henwood at their nearby "cavers camp". As I've mentioned in other reports before, Mike has a tour business, and most of his business is orientated toward taking his clients to visit the local caves. He was making a trip to Minigill cave the next day and he invited me to come along.

When I arrived at Mike's camp the next morning, I met local caver Pete Curtis there. I had caved with Pete and his partner Bill Nasby on previous occasions. Pete told me he was going to spend that day looking for an old, railroad locomotive that was supposedly abandoned in the woods nearby. He then invited me to accompany him and Bill the next day up to the Story Creek area, west of Nimpkish Lake, to search for some caves. I agreed to meet him and Bill up there the next day. Today was going to be devoted to exploring Minigill cave.

Besides Mike and myself, our party that day included Tony, one of Mike's helpers. When we arrived at the 135'entrance shaft (you can drive almost right to it), it looked just as impressive as I remembered it from previous trips there. We dropped down in and landed on the gravel bar next to the underground river that was flowing through there. We went down stream a short ways toward where the river crashed over a waterfall, but the water was higher than usual, and we weren't able to get to close to the waterfall. Tony and Mike have been beyond the waterfall and they say it's not too difficult to negotiate when the water is lower.

We turned around and went upstream. As we passed through a large corridor, Mike pointed to an intersecting passageway that was high up on our left side of this passage we were in. He told me that was where the nearby Deer Cave entrance passage met this main system. We continued on and explored more large chambers and passageways. We came to the chamber that had many formations and some dripstone. We also saw the cave pearl bed, which I had photographed before. After

wandering around for over an hour, we retreated to the entrance zone and climbed out.

The next day, I packed the wife and kids into the pickup and drove up to the Story Creek, area which is about an hours drive from where we were camping. I found Pete's pickup parked on the side of the road along with a note giving me directions to where they were suppose to be. Pete's note indicated he and Bill would be in the area to the east of the road, so in order to find my way through and back from the thick forest that covered the area, I took my compass and followed a line eastward. While I was gone, my wife and kids would pick berries and mushrooms.

As I walked up and down through the forest and the gullies I noticed the landscape or the forest growth seemed to change. In some areas the ground bushes were thicker. I later learned from Pete, that the line between these different areas is referred to as the "contact" and that the areas where there is less growth indicates areas of kharst. Pete had mentioned about looking for the "contact" in his note.

After about an hour and a half I was getting tired and frustrated at not finding Pete and Bill. In these thick woods, I knew it might be somewhat of a long shot anyway. The local cavers have a way of communicating with each other in the thick forest, which actually is just a loud yell. I had practiced this technique when I had caved with Mike and Linda on previous occasions, and now I was trying it out again. After having hiked and yelled for about an hour, I was ready to turn around and go home, when I finally heard (or thought I heard) a single, distant faint reply. It was hard to ascertain which direction it came from, and I didn't get another response right away, but I moved in the direction I thought it might be. Finally I started getting more responses to my yells, and after a while I was able to hone in and make my way to where I found Bill and Pete exploring a pit.

They told me they and another local caver, Dale Chase, had explored this area back in May and found several promising pits. At that time it was hard to tell if there were any caves in them because they were filled with snow. One pit had looked especially promising, so they named it "Oh Baby", which were Dale's first words when he saw it.

We found a couple of pits that looked interesting, and might have produced a cave entrance had we been willing to dig a bit, but neither of them was the "Oh Baby" pit we were looking for. After a bit more searching the area, we finally came on the pit, which Bill recognized as the "Oh Baby" pit. Sure enough, there was a nice, large cave entrance down at the bottom. Although the sides were steep, it did not require any rope work to gain entry, but we did have to clear away a bit of old, rotting tree debris which was somewhat blocking the entrance. Once inside, we found ourselves walking, climbing, and circulating around through passages and large chambers. I got separated from my companions, but I continued to explore. I remember going up one passage, topping out, then sliding down into a large chamber which had some light shining on it's floor from an entrance. I thought I had just gone around in circles and was at the original entrance, but when I climbed up and out of the entrance and the pit, I found that I had discovered an entirely different entrance. Not knowing where I was in the woods, I picked and headed in the direction I thought the other entrance might be. About fifty yards away I found the original entrance pit, as well as Bill and Pete getting their survey gear ready. I told them what I had found, and we agreed to survey our way through the cave in the direction of the new pit. We surveyed for about an hour, but since it was getting late, we decided to leave and come back and finish the job the next day.

The next morning, my 10 year-old son Bobby Jr. and I met Pete and Bill on the logging road

& West. Each CD has about 64 (8 x 8) 1:24000 (7.5') maps and some other sizes (such 1:100,000 and 1:250,000 maps). For some more densely populated areas such as the Seattle area, the region is split into a north and south half on separate CD's.

The neat thing about these maps is that you can zoom in on the part you want and just print that. The other neat thing is that most of them have georeferencing data so that you can read the actual lat/lon under the cursor arrow. You can also read these maps into a program called "Ozi Explorer" and it will plot your position if you have a GPS and a data cable connected to your computer. They have a free one hour demo. They also have a non-time limited demo but it does not read this type of map. The program only costs $50 to register so it is reasonably priced.

The CD's cost $32 - $42 per 1 degree section. They are not copyrighted since the data was collected at taxpayer expense so you can legally copy them. It takes about 30 CD's to cover all of Washington state.

You can check out some of the CD's from the UW and Seattle Public libraries as well as a couple of other libraries. Long term UW plans to get all of Washington state.

Because of their large size about 1MB to 25MB per file, they are rather hard to transfer if you don't store them on CD. You could copy just the maps you are interested in to your hard drive or transfer them using a tape drive for example.

There is a group buy of CD's for Washington, Oregon, and Idaho at the web address: http://members.tripod.com/~Swiftcurrent/pnw_drg.html He is a volunteer who tries to make available DRG CD's in his spare time. He is charging ~$5 per CD plus you need to supply master CD's.

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