



Cascade Caver

Newsletter of the Cascade Grotto of the National Speleological Society

April 1999, Volume 38 No. 4



Cascade Caver

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

GROTTO MEMBERSHIP

Membership in the Cascade Grotto is \$15.00 per year. Subscription to the *Cascade Caver* is free to regular members. Membership for each additional family member is \$2.00 per year. Subscription to the *Cascade Caver* is \$15.00 per year. Subscription via email is \$11.00 per year.

GROTTO ADDRESS

Cascade Grotto; P.O. Box 345, Mountlake Terrace, WA 98043-0345. This post office box should be used for both the grotto and for the *Cascade Caver*.

GROTTO OFFICERS

Chairman	Steve Sprague	(360) 387-3162
Vice Chairman	Lane Holdcroft	(206) 783-6534
Sec/Treasurer	Katrina Ostby	(425) 823-5107

OTHER POSITIONS

Trip Coord.	Mile Fraley	(360) 424-7297	email: mfraley@valleyint.com
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Regional Rep.	Dave Hopf	(360) 766-6978	
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	* Steve Sprague	(360) 387-3162	email: ssprague@whidbey.net

* Editor of the current issue.

MEETINGS

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

UPCOMING EVENTS

Please notify Mike Fraley at (360) 424-7297 (email: mfraley@valleyint.com) of any upcoming trips.

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| Apr 16 | Grotto Meeting 7:00 p.m. |
| May 8 | Ice ax assault on Cave Ridge - Cascade cave. contact: Scott Davis 253-862-1035
scott.davis@weyerhaeuser.com |
| May 8-9 | Crack in the ground plus caves in the area. Group will meet at Jake's Truck Stop in Bend Oregon at 8am. contact: Jeff Sims at ???-549-1609 or Ric Carlson at ???- 389-5313
carlsorl@transport.com |
| May 14-16 | Cascade Grotto trip to McLaughlin Canyon and Albright Caves in Eastern Washington. Caving and ridge walking are planned. contact: Mark Sherman (206) 365-5386
mas@tc.fluke.com |
| May 21 | Grotto Meeting 7:00 p.m. |
| May 29-31 | NCRC will hold a rescue seminar at Peterson Prairie. Pre-registration is required and enrollment will be limited. contact: John or Michelle Panches 541-957-5461 - punches@wizzards.net
It will also feature a barbecue pork & chicken dinner as an NCA fund-raiser. contact: Jim Harp 425-745-1010
Jharpj@aol.com |
| June 4-6 | Saddle Butte lava tube system. Details to be announced later. contact: Jeff Sims ???-549-1609 or Ric Carlson ???- 389-5313
carlsorl@transport.com |

More trips on the next page!

COVER: Sam Lair on a recent cave trip taken by Lane Holdcroft.

MORE EVENTS

- Jun 12-13 Hike to Washington Monument to look for new caves. Dave Hopf would like to have 2 teams, one below to act as spotters and one above to rappel down the cliffs to look for entrances. May want to bring snowshoes just in case. Trip will go ahead if the roads are clear of snow. contact: Dave Hopf (360) 766-6978 ibis@cnw.com
- Jun 12-13 Hike to the Tubal Cain mine and also see a B17 crash site near Squim on the Peninsula. Mountain biking to hot springs planned. contact: Scott Davis (253) 862-1035 scott.davis@weyerhaeuser.com
- Jun 14-Jul 9 The Kosciusko Project in Alaska needs covers this year due to a shortage of international participants. Don't miss this opportunity to walk in the unexplored caves and karst of the Tongass. contact: Kris Esterson (850) 402-9775 kae7077@garnet.acns.fsu.edu, or see www.angelfire.com/de/kos99/tongass.html
- June 18 Grotto Meeting 7:00 p.m.
- Jul 3-10 1999 Cave Rescue Operations and Management Seminar to be held at the Tulelake Fairgrounds in Tulelake, California. Lava Beds National Monument is close by for caving opportunities. See <http://www.altadena.net/nrcr-west/nrcr1999/#seminar> for more information or snail-mail to: NCRS Seminar 1999
Marianne Ruso, Registrar
P.O. Box 230
New Castle, CA 95658-0230
- Jul 12-16 NSS convention at Twin Falls County Fairgrounds - Filler, Idaho. Contact David Kesner at (208) 939-0979 or email at drdave@micron.net

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

There will be a vote to change the bylaws at the May 21 meeting. Proposed changes to the dues, life memberships, and officers responsibilities are proposed to bring the grotto's bylaws into conformance with current practice.

ARTICLES

EXPLODING FLASHLIGHTS?

by Paul Ostby

Yes, it's true. Flashlights can and do explode. In 1992 a flashlight exploded and slightly injured a firefighter. The 1992 incident is the only reported work-related injury caused by an exploding flashlight, but there have been other reports of explosions of flashlights and other battery-powered equipment.

Don't believe it? Check out the following web page:
<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/fact0002.html>

This is a NIOSH document entitled "EXPLODING FLASHLIGHTS: ARE THEY A SERIOUS THREAT TO WORKER SAFETY?" The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) is part of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and is responsible for conducting research and making recommendations for the prevention of work-related illnesses and injuries. Their "Exploding Flashlights" document describes two incidents in which firefighters had flashlights explode.

I've never heard any reports of a caver's flashlight exploding. However there have been reports from cavers of cameras and flashguns exploding. See "Cave Camera Explodes!" in Caves & Caving issues 44 and 45, reprinted in Speleonics 14 (Feb 1990). See also "Atomic Strobes And Other Exploding Things" in Speleonics 15 (Oct 1990). See also "Photography With A Bang" in CREG 11 (March 1993).

Why would a flashlight explode? Well, batteries can release hydrogen gas. In many battery-powered devices this hydrogen simply seeps out and dissipates in the air. But if the battery compartment is tightly sealed then hydrogen can collect and concentrate. This hydrogen, in combination with the oxygen in the air, can form an explosive mixture. A small spark or excessive heat can make the hydrogen-oxygen mixture explode.

Rechargeable batteries often release hydrogen gas when they are charging. But this is seldom a problem because chargers do not use airtight seals. However most non-rechargeable batteries are either carbon-zinc or alkaline, and they can release hydrogen while they are used. If non-rechargeable batteries are used in a device with a tightly sealed battery compartment you can get hydrogen buildup potentially leading to an explosion.

There has been increased interest recently in waterproof equipment for caving. Princeton-Tec sells

some nice waterproof headlamps. Immersable flash cameras and underwater flashguns have also drawn the interest of some cavers. All of these use sealed battery compartments and extra care should be taken with them. Many of these devices use pressure relief valves or hydrogen absorbers to reduce the buildup of hydrogen. But these safety measures may not be sufficient if you do not use your batteries correctly.

What should you do to avoid problems? NIOSH recommends the following:

- * Read and follow manufacturers' recommendations for product use
- * DO NOT MIX batteries of different brands
- * DO NOT MIX old and new batteries
- * DO NOT MIX alkaline with nonalkaline batteries
- * DO NOT USE damaged batteries
- * Ensure that proper polarity is observed when installing batteries

Failure to meet any of the above guidelines can result in increased release of hydrogen. In fact one of the firefighters mentioned above mixed brands of batteries (and presumably some new and some old) in his flashlight; this is thought to have caused the explosion.

If you're like me you normally don't pay much attention to the manufacturers' recommendations regarding batteries. But if you use any devices with sealed battery compartments you should probably be careful to follow the NIOSH guidelines.

From the Library

Since no trip reports were submitted, the following may be of interest: Reprint from The Cascade Caver Volume II No. 9, September 1963

BARKLEY SOUND SPELEOLOGICAL EXPEDITION

Preliminary report By Bill Halliday

Dave Dunnet undoubtedly will be submitting a detailed report on the first speleological expedition up the west side of Vancouver Island, but for impatient, avid readers of the Caver, here are the highlights:

Camping near Port Alberni Thursday night (Friday morning, actually), August 22-23, Don Holliday, Maurice Magee, Luurt Nieuwenhuis and I met Dave, plus our guides, Messrs. Forrest and Wickheim and a reporter from the Victoria Daily Colonist. Next morning, a B. C. Air Lines float plane took us down the Alberni Canal and around Mt. Halliday (!) to Henderson Lake, where Mr. Forrest had discovered a cave many years ago. Camp was pitched in the rain forest at the edge of the lake (almost perfect for

swimming), and we took off for the cave, only about 1000 feet away. Two hours' hacking at six foot salal brought us to the neighborhood of the cave, but we never found it. Instead, we found three new caves, mostly courtesy of Maywell Wickheim, a real expert in the woods, who was running rings around the rest of us. First was SINKING CREEK CAVE, a 300 foot tunnel-like cave, predominantly due to flood waters penetrating a ridge with a somewhat sinuous and irregular course. A short distance upstream was another, smaller cave with various vadose channels, and some curious upper level tubes going in various directions. Some contained some small speleothems. About the time we should have been starting back, Maywell found BIG CEDAR CAVE - some 300 feet largely vadose stream passages, with a nice waterfall in a small domepit chamber near the far end and a short upper level with a few speleothems. This area abounds with jagged limestone outcrops, semi-buried in the dense underbrush and fallen trees. It is the first recognized major karst area in the Northwest rain forests.

Fortunately, we were blessed with magnificent weather all day, despite dire predictions based on the 350 inch annual rainfall. However, at 1 AM enough said.

Only a drizzle was left by morning, and our plane arrived on schedule, taking us a few miles farther west to Pipe Stem Inlet, Maywell's old logging area. Camp was pitched at the head of the inlet, and Maywell led us about 1/4 mile (an hour's struggle) to COLONIST CAVE, a beautiful 300-odd foot cave with a least six entrances and the most beautiful meandering stream slot I can recall. Upper level speleothems are also present. After dinner, Several of us went to 150 foot WICKHEIM CAMP CAVE, with a nice little waterfall at the lower entrance.

The rains came again, but we were all prepared or to wet to care.

Next Morning, Dave took the reporter through Wickheim Camp Cave, while the rest of us took the abandoned telephone trail and a creek to SKULL CREEK CAVE, discovered by Maywell in 1957. It, too, penetrates a ridge, but is far wider than Sinking Creek Cave. The entrance and exit are largely blocked by trees and rocks, but inside, the entrance room measured 110 feet wide. Flood debris is present throughout the cave. Halfway through the 300 foot cave is a pool (in total darkness, of course) containing many Rainbow Trout. Luurt became the first successful Northwest Speleo-Angler, catching three of them in about 15 minutes - for scientific purposes, of course. There is plenty of animal life in the cave, including worms, and the trout were not particularly

hungry. It was indeed an eerie spectacle watching the trout rise to strike in the beam of carbide lamps. Downstream from the pool, the cave has quite a number of low stream passages, not all of which were checked out.

In geomorphic terms, the Pipestem Inlet area is a continuation of the same karst area as at Henderson Lake. There are uncountable holes visible, and probably many more which have never been within the range of vision of any man, white or Indian. That rain forest must be felt to be appreciated.

This is a major karst area, but its full potential will not be known for a long time, if ever. All were agreed that Dave did a tremendous job on this, the first major expedition of the Vancouver Island Speleological Survey. We may even go back, if our bruises ever heal.

IN THE NEWS

Brute's force is waning Statue fuels dispute on image, tradition

By TOM PETERSON - Grants Pass Daily Courier
GRANTS PASS, Ore. - Standing guard at the entrance to this southern Oregon city is an 18 foot behemoth that some people would just as soon forget - the Caveman Statue.

While most agree he isn't pretty, he is part of a tradition that dates back to 1922, when local business owners formed the Oregon Cavemen club to promote the Oregon Caves National Monument and everything else the local area has to offer.

"A lot of us posed for it," said Hank Geiske, 64, one of the six remaining active members of the club.

The sculpture was done at the International Fiberglass Co. in Venice, Calif., in 1971 for around \$10,000.

Hauled from Los Angeles by truck, the statue received a lot of stares as Geiske and pals erected the hulking Neanderthal. He was dedicated by then Oregon Sen. Eugene "Debbs" Potts on Memorial Day weekend.

And there the brute stands to this day, like it or not.

He stands as a reminder to the Cavemen, billed as the "world's most unique booster club."

Renowned for their antics, members dressed in animal skins and carried clubs, making surprise appearances when officials came to Grants Pass.

Shirley Temple and presidential candidate Thomas Dewey were both ambushed by the Cavemen.

John F. Kennedy, his wife, Jacqueline, and brother Robert also have been greeted by the burly boosters.

As late as 1977, Ronald Reagan was made an honorary member of the Cavemen. In its heyday, the group marched in 100 parades a year throughout the West, promoting Grants Pass.

But as time has marched on, interest in the group has waned.

Furthermore, the statue seems to be trying to hide.

The Caveman used to greet all travelers as they entered the city from the north I-5 ramp. But now, five evergreens hide him from the front. In the summer, a handful of deciduous trees obscure him almost completely.

"There are some people who believe it gives us a Neanderthal image," said Dwight Ellis, executive director of the Grants Pass and Josephine County Chamber of Commerce. "They would rather hide it or move it to some other location."

Among the naysayers, Gary Dalrymple said it was time for the statue to go.

"It's an ugly Neanderthal," he said. "It's antique and too old, and it does not go with our downhome image. But you can't take it away from the old-timers. It's a touchy subject."

Among the people who like the big guy, Dewey Counts said the towering knuckle dragger is not getting his due.

"You can't really see him anymore," Counts said. "The trees should be cleared out so people can see it."

Some suggest moving the statue to Grants Pass High School, where Cavemen sports continue to rule the day. But school officials are cool to the idea.

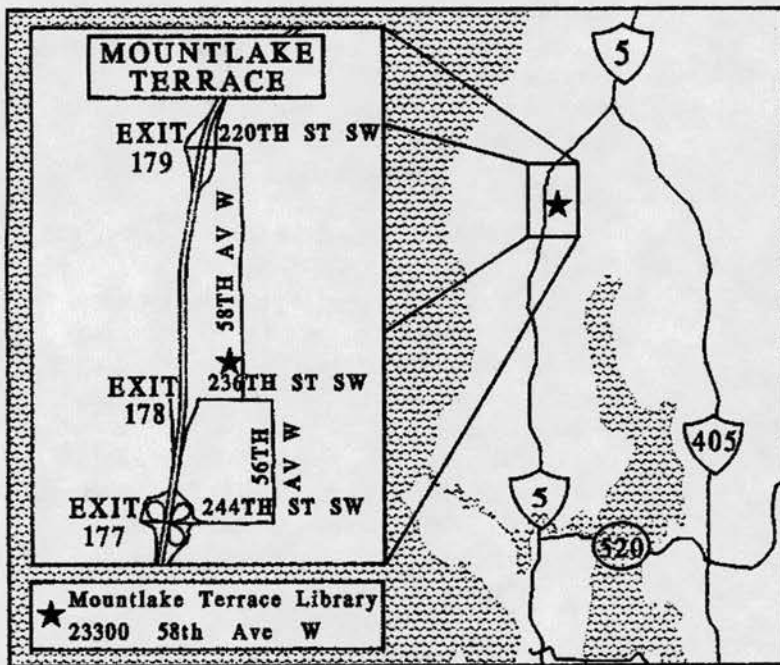
"It was not made for the high school campus to my knowledge," said Kerm Bennett, Grants Pass School District superintendent. "The new campus is not designed to accommodate a statue of that size."

Bernard Conrad, a local sculptor, said the city obviously has not come to grips with its conflicted relationship with the Caveman.

"I just think it is interesting that it is being relegated off to a little grove of trees," he said. "We're not throwing it away, and we're not keeping him - just throwing him in the closet, so to speak. That is what my mother did with a lot of things."



Hank Geiske, one of the few remaining Cavemen of Grants Pass, Ore., poses with the statue.



The Cascade Grotto meets at 7:00pm on the third Friday of each month at the Mountlake Terrace Public Library, 23300 58th Ave. W.

To get to the Library from the Eastside, take Bothell Way to Ballinger Way. Head North on Ballinger and take a right on 19th Ave. N.E. (this turns into 56th Ave. W. at the county line). Turn left on 236th then right on 58th Ave. W. Go North 3 blocks.

We look forward to seeing you at one of our meetings.

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