



Cascade Caver

Newsletter of the Cascade Grotto of the National Speleological Society

October 2003, Volume 42 No. 10



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 66623, Seattle, WA 98166. This post office box should be used for both the grotto and for the *Cascade Caver*.

GROTTO OFFICERS

Chairman Michael McCormack (425) 377-1978
Vice Chairman Robert Mitchell (360) 802-5131
Sec/Treasurer Aaron Stavens (253) 946-3431

OTHER POSITIONS

Trip Coordinator Chauncey Parker (206) 937-5295
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Safety Dave McElmurry (253) 813-8740
Editor Mark Sherman (206) 365-5386
Email: mark.sherman@flukenetworks.com

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.

UPCOMING EVENTS

November 1-2 Gem State Grotto Halloween Party
Contact Jennifer Dorman at idahocaver@gemstategrotto.org
November 21 Grotto Meeting. 7 p.m.
Shoreline Community Center
December Christmas Party, Date and location TBD
December 31 Ballots for Grotto Election Due
January 16 Grotto Meeting. 7 p.m.
Shoreline Community Center
February 20 Grotto Meeting. 7 p.m.
Shoreline Community Center
July 12-16 NSS Convention, Marquette, MI.

COVER: Mark Sherman is climbing out of a cave in Eastern Nevada. The photo is by Ben Tompkins. (Editor's note: After all these years of being editor, I figured it was about time to finally put my picture on the cover.)

Grotto Finances as of Sept. 30, 2003

By Aaron Stavens, Secretary-Treasurer

Balance Sheet

ASSETS

Current Assets

Checking/Savings

Checking	1367.08
Saving	1049.96
Total Checking/Savings	2417.04

Other Current Assets

Petty Cash	23.00
Total Other Current Assets	23.00

Total Current Assets 2440.04

TOTAL ASSETS 2440.04

Profit and Loss

July through September 2003

Ordinary Income/Expense

Income

Membership Dues	44.00
Total Income	44.00

Expense

Printing and Reproduction	88.28
Rent	
Grotto Web Site	4.00
Meeting Room	84.00
Total Rent	88.00

Total Expense 176.28

Net Ordinary Income -132.28

Other Income/Expense

Other Income

Interest Income	0.26
Total Other Income	0.26

Net Other Income 0.26

Net Income -132.02

Cascade Grotto Meeting Minutes

October 17, 2003

By Aaron Stavens, Secretary-Treasurer

Attendance:

Aaron Stavens, Jim Harp, Nikki & Michael McCormack, Doug Knapp, John & Pamela Benson, Bill Petty, Van Bergen, Hester Mallonée, Wendel Pound, Steve Hofel, Julie & Cameron McGinnis, Marla Pelowski, Chauncey Parker, David Decker, Loren Pane, Tim Cox, Ron Miller, Emily Ingrahm, Paul Lindgren, plus 2 women and 1 man who's names I did not catch.

Old Business:

Hester would like to get a sense of how serious people are about travelling to Oregon Caves to do restoration/ volunteer work. For those people interested, is mid-week or a weekend better? Weekends seemed to be more popular among those at the meeting.

Mark is always in need of material for the *Cascade Caver*, however Michael is told some people have submitted material recently and he extends his thanks to those who have.

New Business:

Michael McCormack, on Larry McTigue's behalf, reported that Larry McTigue would like the ropes, visible from the surface, in the entrance to Newton removed. Michael commented that he, Michael, believes the ropes like that exposed to the elements represent a safety hazard. [Note from Aaron Stavens: It was not expressed at the meeting, but I believe Larry McTigue's primary concern is that the ropes make the entrance to the cave more obvious and therefore more likely noticed.] Michael asked if anyone had any objections. No objections were raised.

Michael would like to make a change to the bylaws to bring them in line with how dues are currently collected in the grotto. Per the

grotto's bylaws Michael will be sending out written notice of the proposed wording changes and the date of the vote.

Michael would like to change the grotto's operating policy to eliminate sections the grotto no longer operates/maintains (e.g. equipment rentals) and add language for new positions the grotto does in fact need. Michael will be sending out notice of the intended language changes.

Michael represented that Dave Hopf would like to see the position of web master be an elected position as opposed to an appointed position. Several members asked for more information. Michael did not feel he has enough information to make Dave's full argument. A few members suggested Dave attend a future meeting so they can understand his reasons.

Dick Garnick was not able to attend, but Michael passed around Dick's information on the grotto's proposed NSS Convention bid for 2006 or 2007. Western Washington University, in Bellingham, is interested in hosting a convention. There is concern there will not be enough camping space available. Dick will be leading a tour of the facilities followed by caving on Saturday, October. Van would like to attend the tour but cannot make it on Saturday. He is going to talk to Dick about switching to Sunday.

Paul Lindgren has located a lens of marble that is several times the size of the Cave Ridge marble lens and has several promising characteristics for cave formation. He would like to check it out some time if anyone is interested.

Special Presentation:

John Benson provided video footage of a winter trip to Horsethief cave. The pretties were impressive and the antics of the cavers were quite entertaining.

Election for 2004 Grotto Officers

We will be having nominations at the November Grotto meeting. If you are interested in running for any of the positions please come to the meeting on November 21st, or notify Michael McCormack at (425) 377-1978 of your interest. The positions are: Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and Secretary/Treasurer.

Northwest Caving Assoc. Regional

Tahsis, Vancouver Island 8/30 – 9/1/03
by Van Bergen

At last year's NCA Regional in Idaho, Phil Whitfield and some other Canadians volunteered to host this year's regional on Vancouver Island. Everyone thought it was a great idea. Over the winter and spring the location was debated and most favored Tahsis. Although it was a long drive, it had the most and biggest caves. At least a dozen Cascade Grotto members said they'd be there. So where'd y'all go?

Actually, there were more Washingtonians there than I expected. When Eileen and I left Poulsbo, we expected to see Larry McTigue and a bunch of Canadians. But Gunthers and Garnicks showed up too, so there were 7 from Washington, Sam and Dixie from Idaho (well, OK, Dixie's from Washington now too), and 13 Canadians. The little Leiner River campground, set in the rainforest next to the river a couple miles this side of Tahsis, had seven sites. Six were full of cavers.

We left Thursday and took the car ferry from Port Angeles to Victoria, where we stayed with Graham and Linda Heslop. They couldn't make it to the regional because they had just returned from a vacation trip and Graham had to return to work. But they were great hosts and we stayed up late telling stories on the back porch. We got our usual late start on Friday and headed up-island, gawking at the increasingly spectacular

scenery. We expected the big trees, but were not prepared for the big mountains.

The last 40 miles is on gravel, and the road ends at Tahsis. It's a pretty little town at the end of a long fjord on the west coast. The lumber mill has shut down, so you can get a house there cheap now. Tempting. Let's see – few people, big trees, big mountains, and big caves. Lots of them. Most of the Canadians had just come from their annual Speleofest. This year they spent a week on White Ridges near Gold River, where they were choppered in and out. They found many new caves. And they were ready for more caving!

On Saturday we split up into two groups. One group went to support Pat Shaw on a sump dive. Our group hiked up to Weymer Ridge just outside Tahsis. Our guide was Martin Davis, who lives in Tahsis and who was instrumental in getting Weymer designated as a park. It's riddled with caves, and is in the process of getting connected into a potentially huge system. The Canadians said it would be an easy hike, but they lied. Larry insisted that when Martin said it was only 500 vertical feet, he meant 500 vertical meters. It wasn't Cave Ridge, but it wasn't easy. Someone suggested to Martin that he spend less time caving and more time on trail maintenance.

The first cave we visited was Fallen Giant, so named because the entrance is under the fallen trunk of a huge tree. It was a short cave with huge rooms and passages. After the short climb-down just inside the entrance room, one of the Canadians talked me into checking out a side passage. It split up into multiple leads, one of which took us back to the top of the climb-down. We bailed to catch up with the rest of the group, where we were informed that one of those leads we didn't take was the connection to the rest of the main system. At one point in the cave, there was a rope-and-plastic-rung ladder nicknamed a "Dale Ladder" after its builder, Dale Chase, who

was on the dive support team. Apparently Dale makes these ladders on a regular basis and puts them in caves.

The Fallen Giant through-trip put us in position to easily reach Headwall Cave. Unfortunately, I was afflicted with an urge, due either to the Canadian "potted meat" I had for lunch, or the hundreds of berries I had grazed on the way up the trail. I had to find a secluded spot, then was a little reluctant to get too far into a cave in case of a recurrence, so I didn't even try to catch up. I followed the trail to the entrance, then poked into it just far enough to meet Dick and Rose coming out. The rest of the gang had followed Martin to another exit, which turned out to be quite tight and wet; some of them came back muttering about how they're not following Martin again.

Eileen had spent the day relaxing in camp and watching wildlife. We all enjoyed the usual Saturday night campfire stories, although a burn ban meant our campfire was a propane lantern. One of the "Canadians" turned out to be Monty Paulsen, from California, co-writer of "Beyond the Deep" with Bill Stone and Barbara Am Ende. I knew he was an excellent writer, but I didn't know he's also of the funniest people in the world – around a campfire, at least. Between Monty, and Pat & Dale with their suction-climbing suggestions, we were in stitches all evening. Pat had made it through a sump (I think it was in Coral Cave) and found big going passage on the other side, but he didn't push it very far because he was alone. Now he has to go back. There are just so many things up there for so many people to have to go back to....

Despite the levity, we were concerned that our Idaho friends hadn't made it. They still weren't there on Sunday morning and we assumed they weren't coming. Martin joined the sump-dive team while the rest of us headed up to Thanksgiving Cave. There's a really cool caver cabin up a jeep road, with the

main entrance to the cave right down the road. Eileen hadn't been caving since her accident last year, but Phil assured us that the main entrance of Thanksgiving was easy. We should have realized that Canadians seem to think everything is easy. Most of the Canadians, along with the Gunthers, did a through-trip from a different entrance. The Garnicks, Larry, Eileen and I, and more Canadians went in the main entrance. After the first few encounters with scary exposure, not knowing how long it was going to be like that, Eileen decided she'd had enough, so I accompanied her back out. It was nice to see her in a cave again.

We went back to the cabin to visit with Christy, a new caver from way up in the Great White North; she had stayed behind because of some severe bruises she suffered in a fall in Headwall the day before. It wasn't long before the rest of our group returned, and then the other party returned, and we all bounced back down the road. Back at camp, we found Sam & Dixie. They finally made it, two days late, after multiple border-crossing snafus. Phil rewarded Sam & Dixie's persistence by taking them on a trip to Coral on Sunday night. The rest of us enjoyed another evening of stories and laughter around the lantern. On Monday, most of the group headed home. Those sticking around headed back up to Weymer. We said goodbye and went to the town dump to look for bears; didn't see any there, but saw one along the road on the way out. We took the east coast road back to Victoria, stopping at several beautiful beaches along the way. All that scenery-gazing prevented us from getting back to Heslops on Monday night, so we stayed in a motel and then stopped by to visit with Linda on our way to the ferry Tuesday morning. We arrived at the dock at 10:40 and found ourselves on standby for the 3:00 ferry! Fortunately, Victoria is a great place to spend a few hours wandering around while waiting for a ferry.

Linda is now painting a lot of beach scenes, and she is almost done with an incredible

picture of the beach at Tofino. We need to go there, and also to Zeballos, north of Tahsis, from where the Canadians found more caves and could see Tahsis but not reach it by road. And also to the North End, where they tell us there are more big caves. And of course to Tahsis. It's paradise there. Well, except for the mosquitoes. But they were worth it!

OFFICIAL BUSINESS NOTE: There were not enough grotto reps at the Regional to make a quorum for a meeting, so I have no meeting report. As NCA Secretary, at Chairman Jennifer Dorman's direction, I will send all NCA reps a request that they approve the continuation of the current officers' terms for another year. We will also start discussing locations for next year's Regional. I suppose it should be in a more central location, to attract more attendees. But Vancouver Island still beckons, powerfully....

Danger! Don't Feed the Micro-Rack

By Scott McCrea, NSS 40839
Asheville, NC, USA

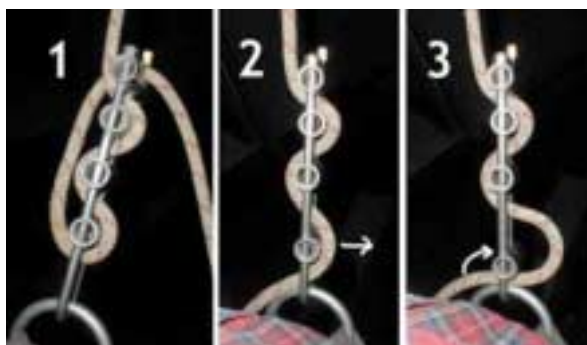
I love my micro-rack. It's great for most drops and works great with a frog system. However, there is a potential hazard with them. It is possible to accidentally drop to two bars.

This happens when there is too much friction and a rappeller resorts to feeding rope causing the bottom bar to pop off. It is possible to pop bars off of any rack while feeding, but since a micro-rack only has four bars, the margin for error is slight.

The micro-rack is unique among racks in that very little variation in friction is available. Bars cannot be added or dropped like on a regular rack. There is only a small amount of space to spread the bars (there are long micro-racks available which increase the spreading space, but the feeding issue is still there). So, often the only option is to feed rope.

Imagine a caver rigs his trusty but stiff and dirty rope to a tree about 20 feet from the lip.

The approach to the lip is sloped but not steep. The rappeller rigs his micro-rack a safe distance from the lip, but as he begins to back down towards the edge there is too much friction. He struggles to inch down the rope. Even without the hyper-bar and the bars spread, it's tough going. Feeding some rope into the rack speeds things up. At the lip, he turns around to look down the pit and plan his next move. Still feeding rope, he removes his hand from the rack, maybe to adjust a pad, swat a bee or to help balance. A loop of rope gets fed into the rack and all of a sudden, he's on two bars and going a lot faster.



1. Micro-Rack rigged with all bars including the hyper-bar.
2. Hyper-bar disengaged, rope being fed creating a loop.
3. The rope outside the rack will push up and in on the bar and pop it off.
4. Bar swings open.
5. Rope slips out of the rack.
6. Rack is now rigged with only two bars.

So, how can this be prevented? Simple, pay attention. Ok, that's a little obvious. The best

way to prevent this is to follow a simple but often broken rule that applies to any and all unlocked racks—ALWAYS keep a hand, finger, thumb, or something on the last engaged bar. A bar that you are holding will not come off.

Please note, there is nothing wrong with these racks. While the rack pictured here is a BMS Micro-Rack, this can happen with any four bar, U-shaped rack. They all work just fine, as long as they are used correctly. I am definitely not giving up my micro-rack and neither should you. Just be aware of the hazards, be prepared, practice, simplify and think.

NSS Convention

Porterville, CA

8/1-8/03

by Van Bergen

It's just about impossible to have a bad time at Convention, and this one was no exception despite having a couple of strikes against it: 1) hot, 2) no caves nearby. Fortunately, Porterville was having a cold wave that week; it was only in the 90's instead of the 100's. And who needs caves when you have convention sessions all day and a thousand cavers to socialize with all night?

Hester and I got a late start on Thursday and camped that night just outside Oregon Caves National Monument. On Friday morning we toured the cave; that was my first visit, and I'm impressed. Beautiful. Since we were already off I-5, we drove down 101 through Northern California. Friday night we stayed with a friend of mine in Rohnert Park, CA, an hour north of San Francisco. My friend is a ranger at Point Reyes National Seashore, so I spent a few hours Saturday morning watching her work. We dropped Hester off at a remote beach to paint, and now she has a pretty California beach scene in her portfolio.

Tearing ourselves away from the Pacific, we headed inland late Saturday, into the traffic and smog and heat. It took a lot longer to get to Porterville than I expected, so by the time we arrived Saturday night, most of the “Northwest Territory” compound was asleep. No matter, they had fine accommodations. Actually, the campground was a community college athletic field – flat, treeless, dusty, and all-around ugly. But Gem State Grotto had set up their three big white canopies in a U shape. A couple of smaller Cascade Grotto shelters (courtesy of the McCormacks, I think) out front helped create the illusion of an Arthurian castle. Well, at least in comparison with the rest of the campground. All we needed was a couple of pennants flying from the tops of the canopies.

Dave Kesner had his kitchen set up under one canopy, and cooked us fabulous breakfasts every day and dinners most evenings. We not only looked good, we ate good too. Most of the usual Gem State suspects were in attendance. There should have been more of Cascade Grotto there; you don’t know what you missed!

On Sunday I hitched a sightseeing ride up into Sequoia and King’s Canyon National Parks with a fellow Terminal Syphon. We gawked at the giant trees in the Giant Forest, and even drove his rental car through one. The vistas could have been spectacular, but the Central Valley smog is so bad you can’t see much of anything. Can’t see the mountains from the valley, either. Too bad. Seems like everyone else who went to the parks saw a bear. We didn’t, but we did see a guy who was the spitting image of John Muir.

I signed up for a cave trip on Wednesday. The rest of the Terminal Syphons straggled in Sunday night and Monday, and decided to rehearse on Wednesday, so Eve took my spot. It was the “wild” tour of Crystal Sequoia Caverns, and I hear it was real pretty. The other cave trips offered all involved very long drives followed by very long and very hot

hikes. Mike and Nikki went to Lilburn and were gone two whole days (I hear that was real pretty too). So this turned out to be the first NSS Convention at which I didn’t go caving. The closest I came was a sandblasting demo, at which we learned sandblasting techniques and then went out to a local hillside and sandblasted graffiti off the rocks in the hot hot sun. That would be a great way to get the paint off the lava tubes. The sandblaster guy is willing to bring his truck-mounted gear just about anywhere that needs it; all we need to supply is people to do the blasting (four per blasting station) and enough extra air hose to get from the end of his 400’ piece to the end of the cave. ☺

I made it to several other interesting sessions, including the Future Convention Planning session. I thought Dick Garnick would make it to that one too, but I was alone. The rest of the attendees were people who were already scheduled to do the Michigan Convention next year, those who were being recruited to do one in 2005 (called a “bailout” because no grotto made a bid for it), and those who **didn’t** want one (Arizona). They asked me what I was doing there and I said I was just curious because we were tentatively thinking about hosting a Convention someday. They all thought it would be just dandy to have one up here; by the end of the day, there were rumors circulating that we had put in a bid. I didn’t say that. Honest! I only said we were thinking about it! One thing they stressed was the importance of having good facilities. Since Dick had already volunteered to work on that angle (and yeah, Dick, I told those people you were already on it!), we may be welcoming a thousand or so of our best friends in a few years. Everyone at the session seemed to think that Bellingham would be a fantastic place. And everyone promised to help us out....

The Terminal Syphons had to rehearse more than usual this year, because our founder and lead singer didn’t make it. Fortunately, we had a guest vocalist from England, and he fit right in. We all agreed to rehearse less next year so

we don't miss as many sessions. We love playing at Conventions because our fellow cavers are so forgiving of our screw-ups, and they appear to be having a great time. The abundant alcoholic beverages contribute to the ambiance.

One night I took a midnight-to-four Security shift. All I had to do was patrol the campground; I figured I'd wander from party to party and socialize, just like other Conventions. Maybe it was the fear of the early-morning heat, but everyone was in bed! The only excitement was a brush fire across the road from the campground. On several subsequent evenings, the Northwest Territories compound was the place to hang out. Too bad those hard-core Gem Staters like to get up so early! After being up most of the night, Kesner's 7:30 AM triangle-ringing was hard to take. I'd get up and eat breakfast and go back to sleep until the fierce heat finally drove me out of the tent around 10:30.

All good things come to end too soon, and the week seemed really short. I left Hester at the campground so she could do a post-convention cave trip, and then meet the rest of her family on their vacation excursion. I just headed home. Sounded like a really long hot hike to that cave; ask Hester about it. I went to Crater Lake instead. Start making your Convention plans for next year. There are no caves at all on the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, so there will be plenty of time for sessions and socializing. I hear there's good sea kayaking on Lake Superior, too. See you there!

Nevada Trip

October 8 – October 19, 2003

by Mark Sherman

The plan was to start off bright and early Wednesday morning on our trip to Nevada. Unfortunately, things rarely follow the plan.

Driving home from work Tuesday night, the wheel bearing on my Subaru started making noises so it was into the repair shop with the car. After a power outage at the shop delayed things another 4 hours, it wasn't until around 3:00 in the afternoon that I got my car back. Finally Dave Hopf, Steve Sprague, Ben Tompkins and myself got out of town, headed for the Great Basin area, around Ely Nevada.

We made it to Goshute Cave late on Thursday. With some difficulty we found level spots to pitch the tents and Friday morning we headed up the hill to the cave. Goshute is always a nice way to start getting acclimated to the high Nevada desert. The climb up is quite steep but only about a quarter of a mile in length. The cave itself is warm and dry and has lots of very nice formations. Unfortunately, it has seen some vandalism over the years and so a lot of the pretty white walls are covered in handprints and graffiti.

We spent about 4 hours in the cave and then drove on to Ely to visit with a couple of friends, Matt and Loretta and then we headed off to camp at Hot Creek which is in the Whipple Cave area.



Steve Sprague taking pictures in Whipple Cave. Photo by Dave Hopf.

It turns out that it was the beginning of

hunting season and besides our little group, there were at least 200 people in their big RV's, with their generators running most of the night, who also decided to camp at the same place. At 5:00, everyone started up their big diesel rigs and headed out to the various lakes in the area, which were only about a ½ mile away. Promptly at first light, the four of us thought we had been transported to downtown Baghdad as everyone opened fire at once. I can't imagine any self-respecting duck sticking around that area very long. Like-wise we got out of there as fast as we could.

After hitting a couple of small caves that day, we came back to Hot Creek to have a beer and soak for a while. We then drove off to Whipple Cave to get away from our 200 friends and to spend the night with some peace and quiet. It seemed like the entire trip we ended up trying to find our campsite in the dark and this was no exception.

Whipple is another very nice cave with some of the largest formations in the area. I was the first one down the 60-foot entrance drop. Once I got off the rope I turned around notice a small, foot-long rattlesnake coiled up about 4 feet from the rope. I didn't see him when I had looked down and I guess I made him mad by almost landing on him. After the others got down, Dave caught the snake and put him in a bag so we could take him out of the cave after we were done caving.

The back half of the cave has some spectacular formations and Dave took well over a hundred pictures in this cave.

After spending the day in Whipple we drove out to North Snake Range to hit some of the caves in that area. We started off with the commercial tour of Lehman Cave. I think that was my fourth trip into Lehman and this time we had a fairly small group and so we could take our time, not feel rushed and really enjoy the cave. If you are ever in the area, Lehman is well worth the ticket price – just make sure

you get on the 90-minute tour as they save the best for last and the shorter tours miss out on some very nice formations.



Dave Hopf trying to escape out of Old Man's Cave.
Photo by Mark Sherman.

One of the caves that I had never been able to visit before was Old Man's Cave. It is closed as a maternity colony for Townsend Big-eared bats from April 1st until September 15th, so I've never been down there when it was open. Our friend Loretta works for the US Forest Service and is in charge of the cave permits for that area so we were able to get the key to the cave before we left Seattle.

Old Man's Cave is very interesting. The cave is quite large for that area (about 3000' of passage). It reminded me a lot of being in the loft areas of Jewel Cave, with the smooth domed passages. There was also a lot of "evidence" of human visitation over the years. There are a couple of wooden ladders, of an unknown vintage, that were left in cave and provide access to some lower sections. There was lots of graffiti on some of the remaining formations. Most of the formations in the cave had been harvested long ago and so the story goes, were sold at the visitor center at Lehman Caves up until the 1950's.

One set of formations that had been spared are some rare, coral pipes, which are located on a large stalagmite right near the entrance. They are not the prettiest formation in the world, so

their plain looks probably saved them from destruction. Ex-grotto member Tom Strong is listed in the book *Cave Minerals of the World* as having helped identify these unique formations. They are quite small, a couple of centimeters in height and look like miniature sand castles. In fact they form a lot like sand castles in that water drops carve away the soft material (mud or clay, for example) but at the same time, the water deposits calcite over the area so the formations become calcified.

We got out of the cave right at sunset and again stumbled around trying to find a place to camp.

The last cave that we visited was Beware Cave. It was a great way to finish off our caving.

Beware Cave is only about 60 feet long but to get to it you have to wade across a little warm springs pool, duck under the waterfall and then swim through the ferns. You swim through a passage about 12-18" wide with about the same amount of air space. After about 30 feet, it opens into a small room with little waterfalls and water dripping everywhere. The entire cave is coated in popcorn and is actually in pretty good shape. Dave braved the trip through with his camera in a ziplock bag and managed to get a few pictures before the camera lens fogged up.

I think that is the only cave that I have been in where I came out cleaner than I went in. It was great! If it was a couple of degrees warmer it would have been perfect, but oh well, sometimes you just have to rough it.



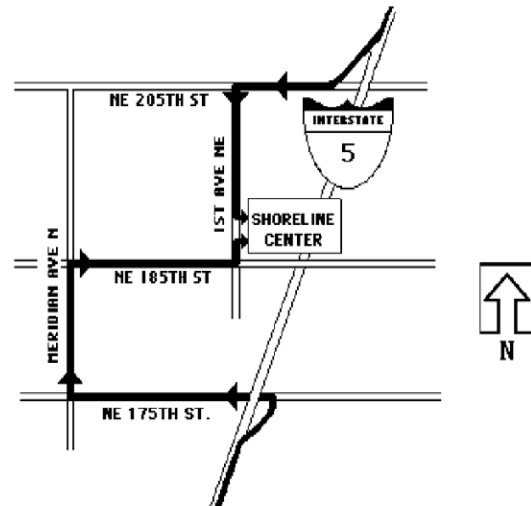
Ben Tompkins "caving" in Beware Cave.
Photo by Dave Hopf.

On the way back home we stopped at the Bruneau Dunes State Park in Idaho. It is about 20 or so miles south of Mountain Home. We wanted to get away from the freeway noise and it was a very nice place to camp. Besides the showers, which were definitely needed, the best part of the campground is that they have an observatory located there. On Friday and Saturday nights, when it is clear, they open up to the public.

The night we were there wasn't super clear but we were able to look through their 25" telescope and see the Ring Nebula and a couple of other interesting things. They also had about 3 other smaller telescopes, located outside, that were available to move around and look at whatever you wanted. They also show an IMAX movie on the cosmos, which was ok.

It was a great trip. We ended up seeing about 10 different caves, got a chance to do a fair amount of hiking and we saw lots of very pretty country. I can't wait to go back again.

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



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