



Cascade Caver

Newsletter of the Cascade Grotto of the National Speleological Society

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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. 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*.

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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.

COVER: Steve Sprague holds on for dear life, shortly before crossing the tyrolean at a vertical practice near his tree farm.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Please notify Mike Fraley at (425) 227-4793 of any upcoming trips.

April 7th: Yard Sale / Vertical Practice
Jon McGinnis's House Seattle, Washington
Contact: Jon McGinnis 206-246-7388
mcginnis@quidnunc.net

April 18th: Puget Sound Grotto Meeting
Wendel Pound's House 6:30 pm Puyallup, WA
Contact: Wendel Pound 253-863-1649
WendelPound@earthlink.net

April 18th-29th: Nevada Caving Trip Lots of wild caving. Contact: Mark Sherman 206-365-5386
emsherman@kendra.com

April 20th: Cascade Grotto Regular Meeting
Mount Lake Terrace Library 7:00 pm

May 5th: Vertical gear tune up and maintenance.
Steve Hoefel's House Federal Way Washington
Contact: Steve Hoefel freespacer@wa.freei.net
or Wendel Pound 253-863-1649
WendelPound@earthlink.net

May 16th: Puget Sound Grotto Meeting
Wendel Pound's House 6:30 pm Puyallup, WA
Contact: Wendel Pound 253-863-1649
WendelPound@earthlink.net

May 18th: Cascade Grotto Regular Meeting
Mount Lake Terrace Library 7:00 pm

Even More Upcoming Events

May 19th: Best Vertical Practice By A Dam Site
Contact: Steve Sprague 360-387-3162
sprague@whidbey.net

May 26th-28th: Memorial Day Trout Lake Caving Trip
Contact: Wendel Pound 253-863-1649
WendelPound@earthlink.net

June 15th: Cascade Grotto Regular Meeting
Introduction to GPS by Steve Sprague
Mount Lake Terrace Library 7:00 pm
Contact: Steve Sprague 360-387-3162
sprague@whidbey.net

June 20th: Puget Sound Grotto Meeting
Wendel Pound's House 6:30 pm Puyallup, WA
Contact: Wendel Pound 253-863-1649
WendelPound@earthlink.net

July 18th: Puget Sound Grotto Meeting
Wendel Pound's House 6:30 pm Puyallup, WA
Contact: Wendel Pound 253-863-1649
WendelPound@earthlink.net

July 14th: Cave Ridge Trip. Day trip or overnight for those interested Contact: Scott Davis 253-862-1035
scotthenrydavis@yahoo.com or Julie McGinnis 206-246-7388 mcginnis@quidnunc.net

July 20th: Cascade Grotto Regular Meeting
Mount Lake Terrace Library 7:00 pm

July 23rd-27th: NSS Convention Mount Vernon, Kentucky. For contact and registration information, please visit their Web site: <http://www.nss2001.com/>

August 15th: Puget Sound Grotto Meeting
Wendel Pound's House 6:30 pm Puyallup, WA
Contact: Wendel Pound 253-863-1649
WendelPound@earthlink.net

August 17th: Cascade Grotto Regular Meeting
Mount Lake Terrace Library 7:00 pm

August 18th: Cave ridge trip. Day trip or overnight for those interested Contact: Scott Davis 253-862-1035
scotthenrydavis@yahoo.com or Julie McGinnis 206-246-7388 mcginnis@quidnunc.net

September 1st-3rd: RMR / NCA Regional
Hosted by the Rocky Mountain Region Vernal, Utah
Contact: Larry McTigue 253-850-8614 bc674@scn.org

Cascade Grotto Steps Into The Future

Jon T. McGinnis

The Grotto would like to offer their sincere thanks to Dave Hopf for his donation of a New Computer. We are now the proud owners of a very happy 350 Meg Htz / 1.2 Gig computer system. Dave had most of the parts left over from upgrades he had done in the past. He assembled the components, loaded the operating system and basic software. It is really cute to walk into the room and see scrolling across the screen " Where Would You Like To Go Caving Today."

The new computer is currently in the possession of Aaron Stavens our Secretary / Treasurer. Aaron has been diligently entering the Grotto's financial records. Aaron and I bought a used copy of QuickBooks 2.0 for \$15.00. To our surprise when Aaron went to register the software with Intuit they upgraded us to the newest version for free (what a deal). We will also be storing all of the electronic forms and files for future Grotto officers. Hopefully, this will make all of the hard work that members are doing now useable for future members and officers. This should also allow for more internal organization progress with future officers not having to start over duplicating work that has already been done before and lost. This is a great step toward the future of the grotto. Anyone possessing electronic data concerning caving or the Grotto please send it to Aaron or myself.

I think that the biggest advantage of this new system will be the ability to keep all of the Grotto's financial records on one continuous database. Instead of the future Sec/Treas having to start all over from scratch, you'll just pull up the program with all of the current record and continue on. Once again thank you Dave from all of us.

Cascade Grotto Regular Meeting Minutes

March 16, 2001

By Aaron Stavens, Secretary-Treasurer

Attendance:

Jon McGinnis, Julie McGinnis, Cameron McGinnis, Deanna McGinnis, Aaron Stavens, Steve Sprague, Mark Sherman, James Casad, Laura Dong Bellosprito, Tish Korbly, Jim Harp, Larry Christian (new member), Van Bergen, Stuart Monson, Chris Wittenbrink, Dana Poss

Special Presentation:

Kathleen Bander, the founder of Bats Northwest, gave an informative and interesting presentation on bats around the world as well as local bats. We took a short break when the baseball league meeting next door invited us over for cake. The presentation lasted the entire meeting with Q&A at the end.

Pizza at Theo's rather than Bucca di Beppo as planned.

Cascade Grotto Profit and Loss Statement

(Required by the Bylaws)

January through March 2001

Aaron Stavens

Ordinary Income/Expense Income		
Contributions Income		
Unrestricted	\$243.00	
Total Contributions		\$243.00
Membership Dues	\$133.00	
Total Income		\$376.00
Expenses		
Miscellaneous		
Grotto Holiday	\$54.61	
Total Miscellaneous		\$54.61
Rent		
Meeting Room	\$78.00	
Total Rent		\$78.00
Travel & Entertainment		
Travel	\$98.00	
Total Travel		\$98.00
Total Expenses		\$230.61
Net Ordinary Income	\$145.39	
Other Income		
Interest Income	\$3.11	
Total Interest		\$3.11
Net Income		\$148.50

Red Barn Vertical Practice

Sat. March 3rd, 2001

Larry McTigue

Well, all I can say is Wendel Pound and Scott Davis put on another fine vertical practice at the Red Barn this year. As advertised, they had a long rope (300ft) running thru a pulley attached to the ceiling of the old hayloft. Another rope was rigged as a tyrolean across the loft from one wall to the other on the opposite side. From there, it continued on along the far wall in various deviations and rebelayes to the other end of what is now a basketball court that the loft was turned into in later years.

Two more ropes were rigged up by the owls' nest in the ceiling at the far end of the court above the basketball hoop. When I arrived, Aaron Stavens was working on those ropes teaching vertical technique to some new people whose names I can't remember. Later, he demonstrated what's called a "pick-off", where one caver rescues another who is stuck or unconscious on the rope.

There was so much vertical gear and piles of rope scattered around on the floor that it looked like an REI store or speleo vender convention. They had a table set up with food and drinks for everyone. But, the greatest surprise this year was a huge multi-burner propane heater to warm up the cold room. We've endured many years of unheated discomfort standing around waiting for our turn on rope. Not this year!!! Thanks a million, guys.

I finally tried out a new climbing system that actually worked better than my frog system. While Scott belayed me, I began to climb. In short order, I was able to climb nearly the entire 300ft of rope running thru the pulley. By the time I was done, I didn't need the heater anymore. I got warmed up real good. It was a great workout.

Meanwhile, Steve Hoefel struggled thru the obstacle course set up along the tyrolean, re-belays and deviations across the gym and along the wall. Van Bergen decided to try it next. Then, Xandon Frogget took up the challenge. All three exerted themselves mightily and with great effort, made it to the finish line totally exhausted by their effort. Congratulations to all of them. Good job!!

In addition to the aforementioned people, Xandon's mom also came to observe. Faye Heslop from Victoria, B.C. showed up. She wasn't there when I first arrived, as Wendel had to rush her to the dentist for emergency treatment for pain from a recent root canal she had done.

Others in attendance included Jon, Julie and Cameron McGinnis, Chris Wittenbrink as well as some attractive young women, whose names I can't recall now, who are new to caving. One of them works at REI. If you're thinking about getting some deals on equipment thru her, forget it. Aaron and I already tried. Aaron had some fun using her as the pick-off victim though. We should have had a video camera. It was rather provocative to watch. Both were wearing spandex and Aaron really had her trussed up for quite awhile. So long in fact that I nearly left to go home before he got her down off the rope. There were quite a few cat calls and raised eye brows while everyone watched. She played a great victim. Totally helpless. poor thing. :)

I'm sure there were other people who came out also. I just can't recall who else came this year. But, we all had a good time as usual. Digital cameras were available and Wendel took quite a number of pictures of every one while on rope and just standing around.

The only sour note other than Faye's root canal pain was my old truck blowing a head gasket on the way home. But, that's another story.

Vertical Practice and the Tyrolean

by Van Bergen

Technology is grand. My first Cascade Grotto cave trip came as a result of some e-mail correspondence; now my first Cascade Grotto vertical practice started with an eGroup posting. Steve Sprague posted the invitation two weeks in advance of the October 21 event, and it sounded irresistible: an old dam site, three stations, a Tyrolean.... a Tyrolean?? "zip across the stream?" How could I pass that up? I'd heard about Tyroleans but had never met anyone who actually did one, much less knew how to rig one. Besides, because of my recent move, I hadn't been on rope since June. That's too long; I would have been there even without the lure of a Tyrolean. I first learned vertical on an old reservoir wall in Cincinnati, so it sounded like a great place. Yes, I definitely needed some practice, but I was even more interested in zipping across that stream. I'd never met Steve, so I sent him a note saying that I was a new guy and that I'd be there.

Towards the end of the busy week preceding the event, I realized that I wouldn't be able to make it to the grotto meeting on Friday and still be up at Steve's place outside of Arlington by 9 AM Saturday. I felt bad about not making the meeting, since I'm still trying to meet people and maybe go caving again soon, but I spent Friday night rounding up my vertical gear and checking it out. I actually made it to the Jim Creek Tree Farm gate shortly after 9, just as Steve drove up from the other side, so we introduced ourselves. No one else had arrived yet. We checked out the site and Steve put a pulley up in a tree for climbing practice. Pretty soon the rest showed up: Jon McGinnis, Aaron Stavens, and Mike Fraley. That was it – five people – I thought there would be more.

At least there were enough of us to rig. After a brief discussion of the merits of practicing a variety of useful vertical skills vs. the fun of zipping across the stream, we started to rig the Tyrolean. Steve tossed a small line across the gorge to haul the rope across to the lower side. His long rope was already in the tree for climbing practice, but I had brought my almost new 250-footer so we used that. Steve and Aaron and Mike crossed the bridge to haul the main rope across the stream, while Jon and I climbed a tree on the high side to rig the attachment and tensioning points. Steve and Jon had done this before, so I just followed Jon's instructions and helped him wrap the webbing around the tree. We were trying to attach it higher up on the high side of the gorge than the last time, and lower on the low side.

Steve came back across the bridge, stopped at his truck, and brought a come-along to the high-side rig point. After some adjustments to the webbing to get just the right angle, or as right as we could get it using the eyeball method, Steve used the come-along to tension the rope. On the low side, the rope was wrapped around a huge tree. On the high side, it was attached to the main

anchor webbing and to the come-along with prusik knots. The come-along was a back up to the main anchor.

Once it was ready, the Tyrolean was obviously of the "tilted" variety. Even with the expected amount of sag, it looked like it would be a pretty fast ride. I'd seen pictures of people crossing between rig points of equal height, and having to use ascending gear or be hauled up from the dip in the middle. This one was all downhill from where we stood. I figured the rigging was good because these guys had done it before and they were all still alive. Besides, it looked good. Back in Kentucky, even to just drop a pit, we'd back up the rigging with a pre-tensioned line to another tree. But we didn't have trees this big in Kentucky.

The thing I wasn't too sure about was how fast we'd go – or how to slow down, for that matter. Since I was the only Tyrolean-virgin in the bunch, I graciously volunteered to let everyone else go first, so I could see how they avoided smacking into that big tree. As it turned out, there was just enough sag in the rope that you could keep from denting the tree by just squeezing the rope a little, right before you hit. The ride was fast enough to take you all the way across, but not so fast you couldn't stop. Actually, the first couple of guys across – I think it was Steve and Jon – did have a slight encounter with a smaller tree. It was right next to the rope on the other side, about 20 feet from the end of the ride. Steve did us all a favor by cutting it down.

We spent most of the rest of the day trying out different pulleys to see which was the fastest. The big CMI ball-bearing pulley was by far the fastest ride. It's a real rush hanging from a pulley and stepping off the edge of the gorge and flying down the downhill stretch of rope. The last 30 feet or so was uphill, from the low sag point of the rope to the rig tree, but we were still moving fast enough that we had to brake by grabbing the rope. If we braked too soon, we'd stop short of the tree and have to haul ourselves up the last few feet to where we could stand and remove the pulley. I kept telling myself that I'd wait until the last second and brake just enough to gently bump the tree. But when you're hurtling toward a tree, it's tough to keep your hands off the rope; Kind of like playing chicken. The first ¾ of the ride were filled with whoops of delight as we flew across the stream, and the last ¼ was filled with screams of terror as we realized how fast that tree was coming up at our faces. Steve was shooting video of us as we almost hit the tree, and I'm almost afraid to see it.

It looked like about 80 feet across the stream, and maybe 30 or 40 feet above it. When I got home and measured the rope, it was 99 feet from the little rub point where it brushed the rock on the high side to the red mark from the bark of the tree on the low side. The reason the rope brushed the rock right at the edge of the gorge was that Jon decided it would be more fun to bounce a little. It did produce a faster ride, but when we realized the rope

was hitting the rock we started being a more gentle on takeoff. A couple of the guys - Steve and Jon, and maybe Aaron - decided to drag themselves back across the rope at least once. That was probably good practice for something, but I found it faster to walk across the bridge to get in line for the next zip.

Finally someone suggested that we might want to actually practice some vertical skills. That was true; I had just changed the orientation of the bars on my rack, and I wanted to try it out. Aaron wanted to try changing over and using a Stop descender. So we got serious for a while. It had been a pretty nice day, with just the occasional light drizzle, but it did rain in earnest for a while. We realized it was getting late, and wet, and I had promised my wife I'd meet her at the book fair in Seattle before it closed at 5. We reluctantly de-rigged the Tyrolean and the climbing pulley and packed up. It was a great day; those of you who missed it missed a really good time. All those little things I wanted to practice on rope, that ultralight climbing system I'm experimenting with, they will have to wait for next time. Actually, I think I'll practice them by myself in the tree in my yard, since the Tyrolean is just too much fun. For next time, I think the grotto should invest in one of those big Petzl rescue swivels, so we can hang from it and spin our way across. I've even heard that someone used a bungee cord with one of those swivels to automate the spin. It could be the caver version of the Tilt-a-Whirl!

Lake Cave

11/25/00

by Van Bergen

Steve Sprague, Tish Korbly, Van/Eileen/Teela Bergen

At the November Grotto meeting, I asked if anyone was planning a cave trip. Actually, being new and ignorant, I asked if anyone went caving at all at this time of year. That's not something we worried about back in the Midwest where it hardly ever snows and all the caves are at low elevations. Steve suggested Lake Cave; the parking area was likely to be free of snow, and it was close enough for a day trip. He volunteered to lead a trip the following Saturday, and suggested bringing extra trash bags for a cleanup. A few people responded to the E-group post announcing the "grotto" trip, but in the end it was just Steve, Tish, and the Bergen family.

Since we were starting from opposite sides of Puget Sound, we decided to meet at the cave at 10:30 am. It was already sounding like countless trips we used to take from Ohio to Kentucky: up early on Saturday, drive 3 hours, go caving, drive home. No camping gear, no campfire food preparation and cleanup, no shivering inside the 3-season sleeping bag, no hassles. And in a lava tube, we wouldn't even have a pile of muddy gear to hose off on Sunday. Or so we thought....

We called Steve on the cell phone just before the turnoff at Woodland and found he was about 20 minutes ahead of us. When we turned onto the road to Ape Cave, I thought the steering felt funny but I chalked it up to a change in the road surface. But when we pulled into the parking lot and got out of the car, we found a flat right front tire. I guess that slow leak turned into a fast leak in the last mile or so. It was sunny and dry, and Eileen offered to help change the tire right then, but I didn't want to hold up the party and I was itching to get underground. She said I'd be sorry when I had to change the tire myself in the rain later.

Steve and Tish soon came back from checking out the surface tree casts, and we geared up. There were no other cars in sight. It was a short walk on an easy path to the entrance - now that was a real treat compared to the Kentucky briar patches and poison ivy. We checked out the right hand or uptube lead but it soon pinched out. When we finally got into the downtube entrance we weren't sure which way to go. I was just wandering around letting my eyes adjust when I saw a ladder. Not accustomed to fixed ladders in caves, I thought I must be in the wrong place and yelled back, "Hey, there's a ladder over here." Steve yelled back that that was a good thing, and pretty soon we were all looking at the ladder.

Normally I'd be as leery of rusty steel ladders as I would be of rotten old fixed ropes, but this one looked pretty solid. It's a chain ladder bolted to the rock, with tubular steps. It's also bolted to a big rock at the bottom to keep it stable, although larger cavers (such as myself) tend to make the bottom rock move around some. It was truly deluxe, and a lot easier than rigging a rope to get down that nuisance drop. Once down in the tube, we were amazed at how big it was. It just kept going, looking huge, with mostly easy walking. It was a little like the New York subway tunnels sometimes, only with sparkly droplets and shiny cave slime on the otherwise pitch black walls. There were some neat railroad tracks in places, and lava layers from multiple flows.

Steve kept poking into holes in the sides looking for the side passage with the tree casts. We also collected all the trash we could find and left it in obvious places for pickup on our return. At one point we were trying to figure out what the red stuff was in the tiny little holes in the wall; then we realized that it was red spray paint that a cleanup crew hadn't been able to scrub off because it was in those tiny little holes. At another point there was an upper level accessible only by a fixed rope. It was a knotted braided rope, probably Goldline, that dangled to about face height. We couldn't see where it was attached; obviously we didn't risk it.

There were some breakdown climbs to break up the subway stroll, but it the easy walking still predominated. Finally we found a really promising hole in the left wall. Teela climbed in while everyone else assembled, and by the time the rest of us were all there she was out of earshot. We waited a while for her to come back, then

realized she'd been gone a pretty long time. We started in, figuring that it must go. Pretty soon we ran into Teela heading back to look for us. Steve said this was the passage with the tree casts, but she hadn't seen them because she had been looking down while crawling. We all started back down the crawlway, this time looking up from time to time. After just a few feet we found the first cast. It looked like a tree from the inside out. The surface even looked like bark, but on closer inspection it turned out to be surface cracks in the lava. Steve pointed out that we were crawling in the space where the lava met the soil, and that much of the soil had been burned red by the heat. The trees had been burned away, leaving their impressions. In some of them, you could sit or stand up and be inside the ancient tree. We also found some horizontal log casts, including one that was part of the crawlway. Some of them were amazingly long.

We crawled to where the passage headed off in three or four directions. Teela went one way and I went another, while the rest of the party relaxed and discussed tree harvesting. The leads were all belly crawls, and each one branched. There was lots of air blowing in my face. In Kentucky, that would mean big passage on the other side of the crawl. Here, I hoped it meant another entrance. By now I was in a dug trench, but it was still a belly crawl. The mud was browner and softer, too; so much for the clean coveralls. I finally got to a spot where I had to exhale deeply to get through, and there were lots of little lavacicles stabbing me in the back. I decided not to risk getting stuck there, since no one was behind me. After backing up a little, I found myself in a blind side passage; that was a stroke of luck, as it was an opportunity to turn around and crawl out head first.

Teela came back about the same time I did and reported a similar experience. We were both brown all over, too. Steve said the air was probably just coming through little cracks in the lava, but we'll never know – unless we go back and push some more, or someone who has been there gives us the scoop (pun intended). We were all pretty damp from the constant ceiling drip, so we said goodbye to the casts and headed back out to the main passage. Steve said there was a lake at the end, but when we got there it was just sand. The lake was down, but the passage ended in a sand plug. Some intrepid soul could dig there and maybe find more tube on the other side, but not today. We had no shovel, trash to retrieve, and I had a tire to change. On the way back out, I realized that I had passed a pile of broken Coleman lantern globe I had left in an "obvious" place. I went back to look for it, telling the others to go ahead; I'd just catch up later.

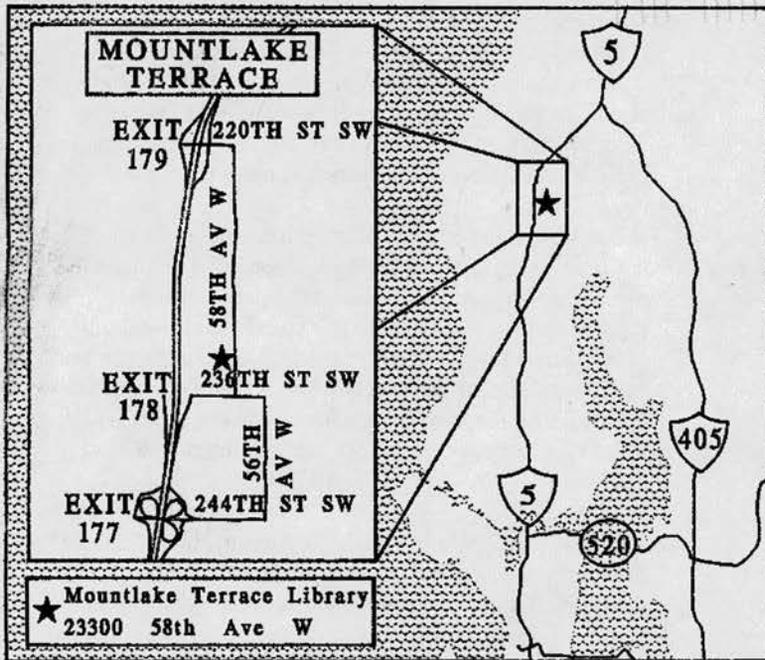
I found the glass and started back out, and within a couple of minutes I heard voices and saw lights. I thought, "Aww, I told them not to wait for me." But it

was a party of spelunkers, carrying – you guessed it – Coleman lanterns! I told them to be careful and showed them my handful of broken globe glass. They had a couple of flashlights and no spray cans, so I guess they were OK. Given the easy access, I was actually surprised there weren't more spelunkers and more trash.

When we got out it was raining hard, and by the time we got back to the parking lot it was sleeting. I changed the tire in the sleet while the rest of the party changed clothes and cooked lunch in the shelter of the outhouse porch. Since I was already all wet, changing the tire was no big deal. But it was already late afternoon – almost dark – so we blew off the proposed visit to Ape Cave in favor of a hasty retreat before the sleet made the road any worse.

The little fake spare tire said "Maximum speed 50 mph." Steve followed us to Cougar to make sure it was going to work OK. I contemplated trying to get the flat fixed there so I could drive home at normal speed, but decided against it because all four tires were due for replacement anyway. Plus, I didn't want to unload all the caving gear, which was piled on top of the flat. We compromised at 55 mph and made believe we were back in the 1970's. Lots of Winnebagos and VW buses passed us on the highway, even going uphill, but we had a bunch of new CDs to listen to so it was an OK trip.

Our condo complex has a "car washing area" with a hose. Since I never wash cars, I have no problem using it to hose off muddy cave gear. Everything was all clean and ready for the next trip by Sunday evening. Thanks to Steve for showing us the cave, and to Steve and Tish for the excellent company. We'll go back there anytime. Maybe even this winter. Eileen just got a new Petzl helmet, so Teela inherits her old one and retires the construction hardhat. We have new tires. And chains. And of course we have the skis....

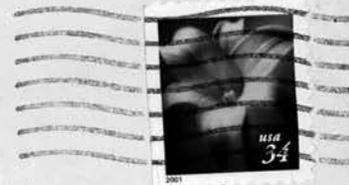


The Cascade Grotto meets at 7:00pm on the third Friday of each month at the Mountlake Terrace Public Library, 23300 58th Ave. W.

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. NE (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.

Cascade Caver
 P.O. Box 66623
 Seattle, WA 98166



Windy City Grotto
 c/o Ralph Earlandson
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 Oak Park, IL 60304-1529