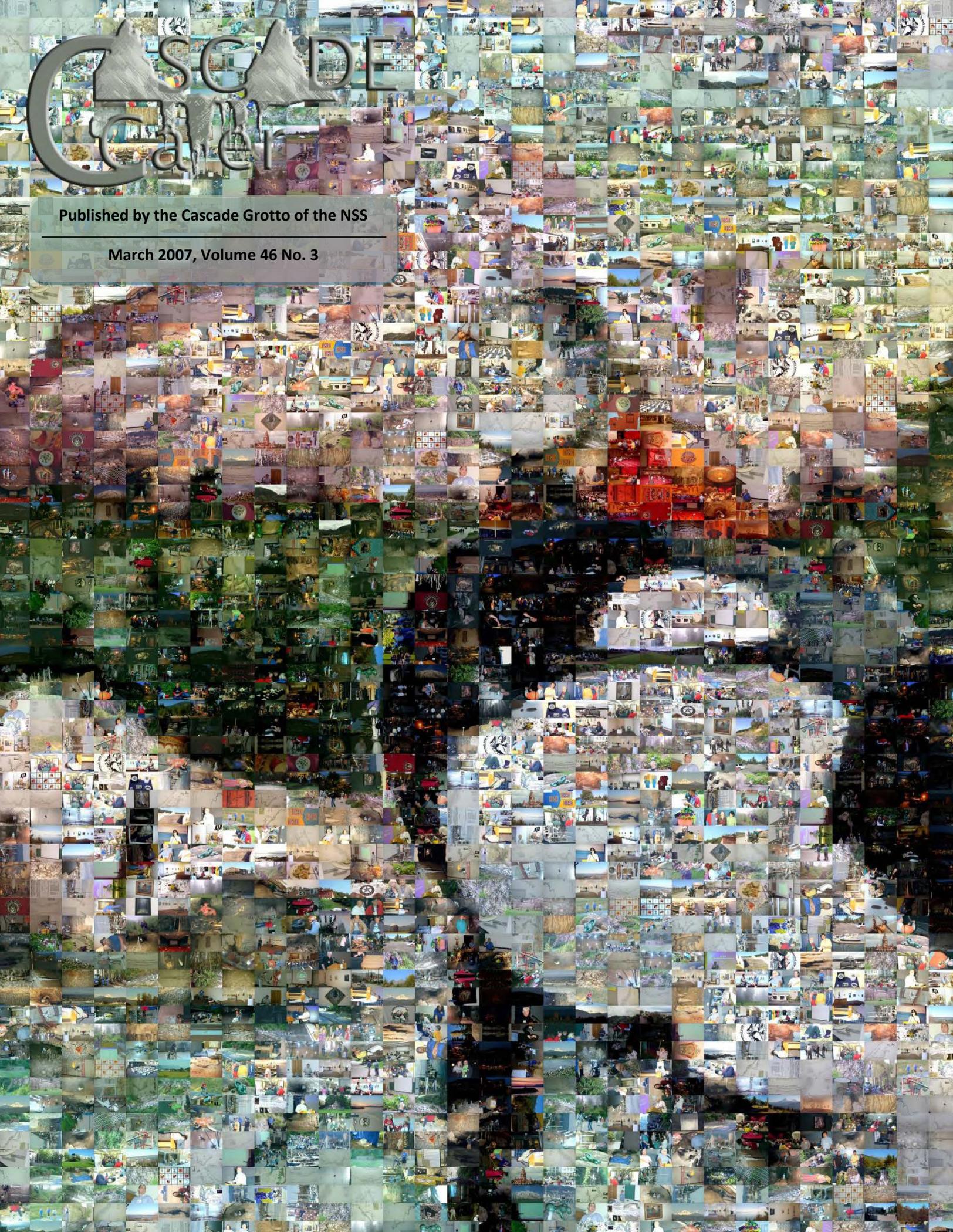


CASCADE Grotto

Published by the Cascade Grotto of the NSS

March 2007, Volume 46 No. 3



Cascade Caver

ISSN 0008-7211

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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. Members can save \$4.00 per year by subscribing to the e-mail version of the caver

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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

3/17/7 WVG vertical practice in Troutdale Oregon.
Contact Vertical Bob.

5/21/7-5/22/7 Lava Beds for Western and NCA combined regionals.

Around August 15, 2007: Trip to Laguer Gieser Montanta Contact Ron Zuber.

Cave Ridge Survey Camps, Contact Michael McCormack:

5/6/07, 5/27/07 Cave Ridge Gear Carry up, backup

6/16/07-6/17/07, 7/14/07-7/15/07,

8/18/07-8/19/07 Danger Cave, etc.

9/15/07-9/16/07 Lookout, etc.

10/13/07-10/14/07, 11/03/07-11/04/07 Cascade

COVER

The cover is a photo montage created by Michael McCormack from photographs provided by Dan Crape, Jansen Cardy, Russ Kennedy, Beth Rand, Kim Luper, Matthew Farnell and Michael and Nikki McCormack, based on the logo created by Linda Heslop.

NSS 2006 Convention Issue Editorial

March 7, 2007

By Michael McCormack, Editor

NSS 2006 Convention Chairman

When organizing an event like the NSS convention, so many people are involved and participating it's impossible to thank all of them. However without volunteers, there is no way to pull off the event. To all of the volunteers at the convention, I offer my heartfelt thanks (and condolences).

Unfortunately in this convention, as in any big endeavor things get missed or forgotten in the rush to get to the finish line. In our case, we simply didn't get to finish the history of the Cascade Grotto detailing out the latest years. Following this short editorial is that article.

As we all know, this Grotto and the NSS are run and managed by volunteers. The efforts of the membership make or break the group. If you have a problem or a desire you should get on it and make it happen.

Recently Tom Evans, one of our newest members, has taken it upon himself to become the official vertical chairman of the Cascade Grotto. In this position he is looking to provide guidance and share vertical knowledge within the grotto. As part of his duties, he has agreed to write a mostly-monthly column for the Cascade Caver "Not Just Knots" which will begin next month. Thank you Tom for volunteering!

The History of the Cascade Grotto 2000-Present

March 7, 2007

By Michael McCormack, Editor

NSS 2006 Convention Chairman

The history of any grotto is an ever evolving subject. Those who were members in the past and helped

shape the opinions and actions of the grotto, often move on to different grottos and different projects or simply withdraw from the community altogether.

The Cascade Grotto has recently undergone such a transformation. Most of the active members are new to the grotto within the last decade. Because of this, many new members have stepped up and are interacting with the caving community and the community at large. Though many older members have moved or simply stopped caving, the grotto still has long time members who are still caving and active, providing their wisdom and support to our new leadership.

Working with the government agencies and private landowners has been an overwhelming priority for the Cascade Grotto in the last couple of years. Out here in the west the government owns most of our caves, and having a good relationship with those stewards is critical to our continued caving activities. After her appointment in 2002, Hester Mallonee has been working to improve those relationships. She has managed several conservation activities including many cleaning trips to the Oregon Caves National Monument. She always has a good in-cave plan; and has managed the trips so that everyone shows up on time and follows the plan. By working hard in-cave, collecting good information to help strategize for next time and track progress over years, and having enjoyable fellowship so everyone wants to come back next time, the grotto has increased its effectiveness in dealing with these cave managers.

Recently the Cascade Grotto has been active with Washington State Parks planners at Deception Pass for the creation and installation of a gate at Deception Pass cave(which is actually a quarry mine). After a recent fatality near the mine, the state's plan was to dynamite the opening. However after members of the Cascade Grotto contacted the state agency and explained that the cave was being used

as a hibernacula for the Townsend Big Eared Bat, the agency began developing a plan for installing a bat gate.

Much of the grotto's efforts have been exerted towards inclusion and expanding the grotto. After a couple of slow years in 2000, the grotto was again seriously active. Though much of the activity is recreational or conservational in nature, there is still a great deal of exploratory work going on. The Cascade Grotto and its members have been active in Southern British Columbia exploration, and Trout Lake cave exploration and mapping. Aaron Stavens has begun a reinvigoration of local cave exploration with the Cave Ridge Exploration project focusing on the privately owned resources of Cave Ridge in King County. Recently the newest members of the Cascade Grotto have been active in exploring the caves of the Alpine wildernesses of Montana.

The Cascade Grotto has been included twice in community outreach programs at Seattle's Pacific Science Center where information and outreach about caves, and caving techniques was both displayed and discussed. These outreaches help to educate the interested population about the Cascade Grotto and the NSS.

In the last few years, the Cascade Grotto has been an integral part of planning and hosting the NSS 2006 Convention in Bellingham, Washington. Though the convention has a staff from many different local and regional grottos, the majority of volunteer staff work and even some initial financial support came from the Cascade Grotto.

The Cascade Grotto is proud of its past. At 55 years old, it's one of the oldest grottos in the country. We have had an active past and members past and present have been active in wildly successful national and international exploratory expeditions and projects. But the Cascade Grotto is prouder of its future. By working with the individuals and agencies that own and are stewards of our cave resources, the Cascade Grotto continues to make investments into the future of caving for current and future members of the grotto and the Society. By reaching out to the community and agencies that we live amongst, the cavers of the Cascade Grotto have established relationships and partnerships that will allow us to remain engaged in the preservation and exploration of the caves of the Northwest and the world.

The grotto runs fundraisers, selling useful and interesting products to our members. Show your support for your grotto and the continuing exploration and conservation efforts by purchasing a Lexan Cascade Caver bottle or a Cascade Grotto Patch.



NSS 2006 Convention Report

November 1, 2006

By Michael McCormack, Editor
NSS 2006 Convention Chairman

The following article is a reprint of the convention report as printed in the November 2006 NSS News. —ed.

The first week of August, the staff and volunteers of the 2006 convention had the pleasure to welcome 769 people to our home in Western Washington. Though we are far removed from most caver's normal stomping grounds, these brave souls made the trek and reaped the rewards of a convention in the great Northwest.

At first, I couldn't figure out what to write for a convention overview article. After a week of working 18-20 hour days to ensure that the convention ran smoothly, I had realized that the rest of the staff and I simply didn't get to go to convention!

We had been working on the convention for nearly three years, with regular planning meetings and tons of pre-work that goes into creating a convention to remember. Our website contains hundreds of pages and tens of thousands of words, all managed, edited and posted by Nikki McCormack as fast as the content was received. Budgets and money management had to be put in place, and Marla Pelowski did a fantastic job of keeping us all on track. We wrote a program guide and a guidebook, prepped the facilities, signed the contracts and selected the services. The staff had been living and breathing this convention for a very long time.

The actual convention started for the staff the week before. Most of us drove up to Bellingham with so many things piled into our cars, trucks and vans that we were lucky not to be pulled over for illegally high loads. The Saturday convention was supposed to

open got off to a rough start, the tables were late, and the porta-potties were late. How the heck were we supposed to put on a convention without porta-potties! Despite all of the early morning angst, perhaps magnified by the effects of the beer "sampling" the evening before, registration was setup in an hour by Jennifer Babione, our registration chair, and the campground opened up early, thanks to the tireless work of Dave Decker (logistics) and Matt Bowers (security). When people started showing up, either from the airport or the pre-trips at the Mt. Adams or Mt. St. Helens caving areas, registration was ready and waiting. The process continued smoothly throughout the entire week.



A dancing cave pearl. Photo by David Locklear

After that, the running began. The Whale of a Convention had a small core staff, in the

neighborhood of 15 people who were engaged in convention activities all week. The staff was bolstered by a small group of volunteers gathered up by our intrepid volunteer coordinator, Sam Killian. These numbers lead to an attendee to staff ratio of about 60/1, a daunting prospect for any convention.

It was our goal as a convention staff to have a program and salons to remember. The people who came for the sessions were certainly not disappointed. A Beautiful setting, good facilities, and a good program schedule made this their convention (thanks Dick Garnick and Hester Mallonee). If you came for caving, Aaron Stavens was standing there, waiting to sign you up every day of convention, after months of preplanning trips.

One salon venue that stood out was the art gallery, probably one of the best venues the NSS is likely to ever have for the Fine Arts and Print Salons. I'm glad I had enough spare time to visit it, and many of the staff even bought our first pieces of speleo-art from the collection.

Though much of the staff didn't get to see any of the actual sessions, there were many different highlights throughout the week.

18

- Number of kegs that we went through at the NSS Convention

On Monday night, we had two great parties. At 4 pm, the Fine art salon opened with a wine and cheese social, and at 6, "The Walrus", a local Bellingham band playing standards that all were familiar with, kicked off the howdy party. We were fortunate to have a remarkable venue for a live band. People who wanted the music loud and those who simply wanted to converse with friends were all satisfied as

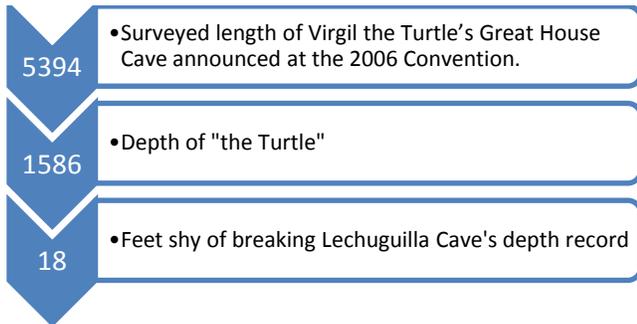
they meandered around the beautiful Haskel Plaza. Just to make sure that the event suffered the usual weather problems, we forgot to have the sprinklers turned off in the plaza. Though this briefly livened up the party, people quickly responded and covered the sprinklers with their convention mugs (thanks Robert Mitchell for saving the soundboard!) and we refused to let it dampen our spirits.

Tuesday was highlighted by the US exploration section where some of us were fortunate to be present for the announcement of the second deepest cave in the continental United States (watch the pages of the News for more detailed information!).



*Adrian Duncan preparing for the Dangerous Dick concert.
Photo By Russell Kennedy.*

The day was capped off by one of the rare live appearances of Dangerous Dick and the Duckbusters, who put on a free concert to support the fundraising efforts of the Canadian Cave Conservancy. Though it had finally decided to rain in Washington, it was still a fun and memorable event.



Wednesday proved that anytime a convention is in town, we are likely to set a rainfall record. However, by evening, the skies had cleared and Van Bergen, our multi-talented Chair of Vice, took to the stage with the rest of the Terminal Siphons for the third and final night of live music and free beer.

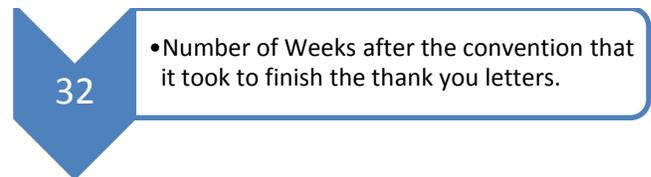
On Thursday, after another full day of exciting program events, we took to the streets and visited the Mt. Baker Theater for the slide salon. The salon entries were better than ever and the show moved right along, never getting boring. This second year of digital slides was well run and crystal clear.

Friday was headlined by a new program session for the NSS Convention, Caves of our National Parks and Public Lands. The attendance in the room varied from fifty-four to ninety-five. Despite the fact that this was a new session, Hester Mallonee was able to arrange fifteen speakers on public cave topics, of whom two were NSS cavers, two were non-government scientists, and eleven were cave managers at different levels, deliberately chosen to range from young field scientists to mid-career and senior cave managers.

This session in turn flowed into the closing Banquet where the speaker was Ronal Kerbo, Chief Cave

Specialist for the National Park Service. Ron spoke movingly and with sometimes hysterical humor about his career in the Park Service and his love for the caves. Great photos, most of them by Ron, and clips of his short, effective cave poetry illustrated the talk as well.

There was so much more to convention in the Northwest, and most attendees took time to explore the area, hike in the hills, beach comb at the bay, or explore one of the three National Parks within daytrip distance.



This convention was both challenging and rewarding to put together, but without the hard work of each and every staff member and volunteer, it simply would not have happened. I realize now, after putting this report together, that I did get to attend our convention. I got to see my friends and family work together to put on a remarkable event that will be remembered for years to come.

The experience was incredible, and I recommend that everyone in the society become a volunteer and experience the pride you get when you help the society, the caves and your fellow cavers.

Vice Chairman's Report
August 20, 2006
By Van Bergen, NSS 2006 Convention Chair of Vice

Bellingham Convention Vice (and other stuff) Report

I drove to Bellingham with so much stuff in my car that some of it fell out when I opened the front passenger side door. I had my own band gear, plus gear for the rest of the Terminal Syphons and for Dangerous Dick and the Duckbusters. The Canadians might have been turned back at the border if they had instruments in their cars - stupid

issing match between the two countries' border guards, with musicians on both sides as victims. Loading up, missing the ferry, getting there, and unloading the band gear into the Registration building took up pretty much all day Friday. The rest of the staff that arrived Friday was similarly exhausted by dinnertime, so we went out to dinner and started drinking and continued drinking late into the evening. University housing people even came and told us to keep the noise down. Off to a great start!

Despite the late night party, we all got up bleary-eyed Saturday morning and starting working our butts off. Tables were delivered an hour late. Jennifer had about two hours to get Registration set up, and she actually did it in one hour. Supposed old hands had told us we needed at least two days to set up Registration. Dave and his crew set up the campground, porta-potties (also delivered late), security fencing, etc.

Everything opened on time at noon on Saturday. Obviously, the Friday pre-Convention drunken party should be a mandatory staff activity at future Conventions, since opening for business was so smooth for us.

Once we were open for business, everything became a blur. Vendors complaining the heat was on in their building, us calling multiple university people to finally get it

shut off. Our university contact telling us we couldn't drive on the pedestrian areas to load/unload band equipment, beer, tables, etc - and us just doing it anyway, or calling the campus police to unlock gates for us, and the campus police unlocking them quickly and politely. Our university contact telling us to use a U-haul truck to drive band equipment onto the pedestrian areas instead of private

cars for safety reasons (as the truck driver, I can guarantee that was a bad call!) – and her assistant and the campus cops telling us they wished we were using cars instead, because the truck would mess up the brick pavement. Lots of driving. Driving Norma Dee Peacock, our intrepid daily newsletter editor, to the printer. Driving to pick up the rental truck, PA system, band gear; driving to take it all back; driving to pick up another PA system for the banquet, driving it back. I slept in my clothes most nights, and even in my shoes some nights. That's just some of the stuff I saw; I'm sure other staff members have their own blurry lists of fires they put out.

As Chair of Vice, I have to report that except for the staff, there was very little vice at this Convention. Only one naked guy that I know of. Very little hard liquor in evidence. Plenty of consumption of the excellent beer at

the parties on campus – but that was legal, so it wasn't vice. We had the quietest, most non-partying campground I've ever seen at a Convention. That's partly because the campground was small, partly because the real parties were on campus, and partly because campers were being threatened with eviction for having visible



*Adrian Duncan and our conventions official "Duck Head" Emily Davis.
Photo By Michael McCormack.*

beer cases and empties lying around. I really thought that having the dorms and the campground within easy walking distance would make for good parties at both locations, undampened by fears of a DUI on the way "home". It didn't happen. People in the campground hardly saw people from the dorms at night, and vice versa (pun intended). In fact, the parties in the dorms were

louder than those at the campground, to the extent that some people asked to be moved to different rooms to get away from the Ohio cavers who had requested the "Van Bergen floor". It wasn't my fault; I got back to my room so late every night that even the loud Ohioans were passed out. The Convention staff out-partied the most notorious NSS partiers, and had to be scolded *again* on the last Friday night by university housing people. I wasn't even part of that final vice; I was in the campground talking quietly with people I won't see for another year now. I did manage to drag "naked back-bend guy" Eric over to the dorm to meet the staff, and he was the most subdued person there. This staff rocked!

1 • Number of documented cases of public nudity. (Thanks Eric!)

That's the extent of the vice report. The rest of this article is mostly hearsay about stuff I wasn't directly involved in, but I was listening a lot.

We had a really small staff, but I thought plenty of volunteers would pitch in to help out when they arrived. That's what usually happens, but it didn't happen this year. Despite the fact that Sam Killian worked his butt off putting out signup sheets and trying to recruit volunteers, we had the worst volunteer sign-up rate I've seen in 8 Conventions. Relatively low attendance was part of the reason. I thought we'd have at least 900 people, but we only got about 750. Gas prices and our remote location were undoubtedly major factors, but I think the campground also kept some people away – people who just have to have a hot tub and sauna, have to be able to drive to their tents, have to be able to have a fire and wild drunken parties late into the night. Believe it or not, those people are a big part of the usual volunteer pool. But even people who usually volunteer a lot didn't do so this year. I think they were too busy enjoying the weather and the scenery.

This was really an "academic" Convention: university campus and lots of dorm rooms, but with a small campground that had more restrictions than Convention

campers are used to. A high percentage of the people who came were older, serious, scientific people. They all seemed to really enjoy this Convention. But the people who didn't have papers to present, who come to Conventions to camp out and party, should have come too. Some of the people I thought would be bitching nonstop about the campground actually enjoyed it. It was quiet and cool and dry and mostly bug-free, all of which are really rare for Convention camping. The only problem at the campground was that the campers didn't get the message that they needed to cover up their beer cases and empties too, not just what they were drinking at the moment. That improved after we told them they'd almost been kicked out of the campground. As expected, people complained about having to walk from the parking lot to the dorms and sessions, but they got used to it as the week went on. In the end, things that may have kept some people away were no big deal to the people who actually came.

Perhaps some people didn't come because they didn't think we'd have good caving. They missed out too, because a lot of people really enjoyed their pre-convention lava-tubing trips in the St. Helens and Trout Lake areas. They were raving about them at Convention, and I think we had much higher than normal pre-Convention trip participation. Thanks to our Oregon friends for setting those up. Thanks to Aaron too for putting together a full trip schedule. From what I heard, the trips during Convention went really well too.

\$3.15 • Price of a gallon of Gas in Bellingham during the convention. (Diesel was \$3.44 the highest ever recorded price per gallon).

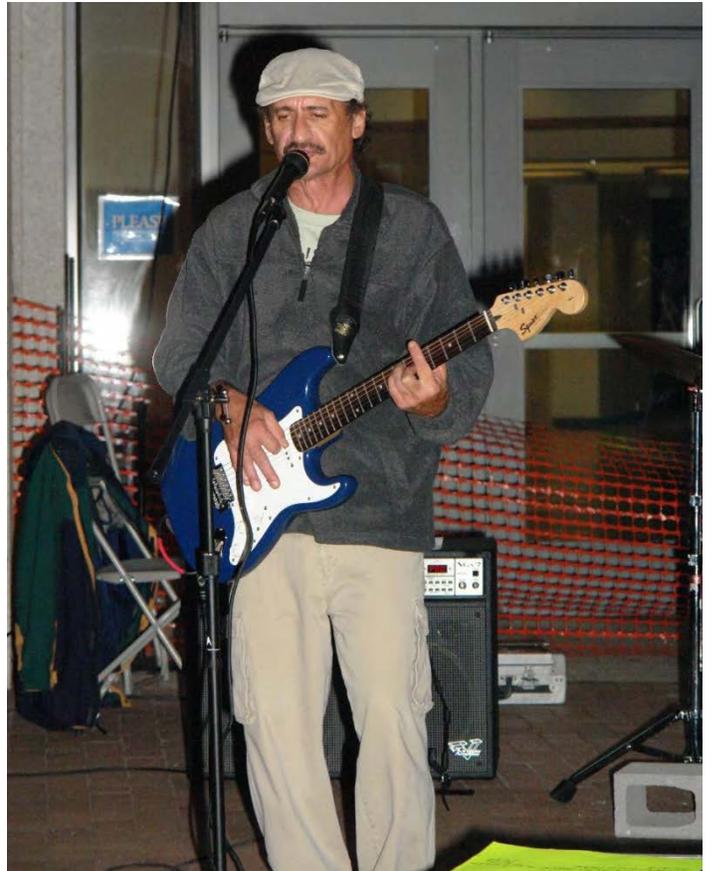
The people who came for the sessions were certainly not disappointed; this was *their* Convention. Beautiful setting, good facilities, good program schedule (thanks Dick and Hester). Attendees had no idea how much hassle it was for us to put that all together. It was obvious to the vendors because we didn't get all the vendor rooms we needed. The vendors complained about the lack of space, but by the end of the week they were happy – even the ones who complained the loudest. That was pretty much

par for the course for all the complainers. The Convention Debrief session on Friday didn't draw any complainers, and that's really unusual for that session.

One session venue that stood out was the art gallery, probably the best venue the NSS is likely to ever have for the Fine Arts and Print Salons. I'm glad I had enough spare time to visit it, and I even bought my first piece of speleo-art. I didn't get to see any of the actual sessions, but a couple of other highlights for me were the banquet and the Thursday slide salon. The salon entries were better than ever and the show moved right along and never got boring. Ron Kerbo's speech at the banquet was brilliant, and the banquet program moved right along too. I usually fall asleep at both of these events, but not this year!

Speaking of the banquet, in addition to the outstanding food, the sit-down service was a real treat for those of us used to standing in long lines to get our food. The Howdy Party food was also much better than usual for Convention. Speaking of the Howdy Party, all the parties were outstanding. We had a beautiful outdoor setting with perfect acoustics. The sound system, rented unseen from an unknown vendor, turned out to be excellent. When our volunteer professional sound engineer couldn't make it, Dan Crape stepped up and did a professional-quality job setting up and running the system. I heard several people say we had the best sound they'd ever heard at Convention. The Walrus, a Bellingham band, was tight and danceable at the Howdy Party, despite the fact that the sprinklers came on unexpectedly and almost fried their sound board (special thanks to Robert Mitchell's quick thinking in covering the sprinkler heads with beer mugs!). Dangerous Dick and the Duckbusters put on a fine show Tuesday night, despite having to play under picnic shelters to ward off the rain. That wasn't supposed to happen in August. Of course Dangerous Dick had already won the Cave Ballad Salon again this year. The Terminal Syphons sounded pretty sloppy to me on Wednesday, but people seemed to like us best of all. They chanted "10 more songs! 10 more songs!" when we were done. The party crowd cuts us a lot of slack because we're cavers. Plus, the more I drank, the better we sounded, and I guess that applied to the audience as well.

Speaking of drinking, the beer was great. Convention staff had a tasting tour earlier this year. Thanks to Dave for



The Terminal Syphons performed Wednesday night to the delight of all in attendance.

Photo By Russell Kennedy

lining up the breweries, and to Hester for being designated driver while the rest of the staff was free to inebriate ourselves. Boundary Bay Brewery's excellent beers won high praise from everyone I talked to. Even from people who normally only drink Bud and Miller; just give them some really good beer and they will come around. So in addition to the sessions and salons and banquet, we also had some of the best parties ever. Other things I heard compliments about were the field trips, even the box lunches on the field trips, which were also from Boundary Bay, and described by several people as the "best ever"; the map library; and of course the general scenery, which was clearly the best ever for an NSS Convention.

In spite of all those best-overs, the NSS lost money on this Convention. Not a problem; "small" Conventions like ours frequently lose money, and the "big" Conventions in other years make up for it by making a *lot* of money. The goal of Conventions is not to make money, it's to show everyone

a good time, and we sure did that. To be honest, I was always leery of using WWU for sessions and the high school for camping. A university in session and a high school would obviously have more rules and restrictions than most Convention staffs have to deal with. But now I'm really glad we did it, and that the rest of the staff didn't listen to me when I bitched about the venues. This was a very different Convention in a lot of ways, and I think the core NSS Convention-goers really appreciated the differences. They're not likely to see one like this for a long time, if ever. I think Bellingham will stand out in NSS Convention lore as a special treat for most of the people who came.

Next year's Convention in Indiana will have a high school all to themselves for sessions, and a nearby campground that allows fires, parking, hot tub etc. It'll be a traditional "big" Convention, probably twice as big as ours. They'll have lots of limestone caves nearby. They'll have a big staff and make money and everyone will have a great time. They'll also have rain, heat, bugs, no cheap dorm rooms, and very few motel rooms. I'll be there. I'm camping. I'm psyched – caves, beer, and rock & roll!

One of the side effects of our Convention is that several staff members, who have been to few or no other Conventions, have already made plans to go to Indiana. An NSS Convention is still the best way I know to spend a week, even if you're working on it instead of just enjoying it. And now more people from our end of the country know that.

One of the best things about our Convention was the incredible job everyone did. We were each a committee of one, with too few committees. The amount of work that Michael did – work which would normally be assigned to a chair or committee member that *we didn't have* – was mind-boggling. My own plan to do little before Convention pretty much worked out; I only had to sample beer, act goofy in the video, do some posts on the message board, and make some phone calls to find rental tables and print shops when others were too busy. Note that "Vice Chair" is a euphemism for "gofer". My official Chair of Vice duties consisted of rounding up band equipment, which I do all the time anyway. I didn't even have to get the beer, Dave took care of that. My plan did include having to work hard during Convention week

itself, and that part also worked out – I'm still sore a week later! The rest of the staff busted their butts all week too, and my hat's off to everyone who worked so hard for so long. Most of us are done, but Michael and Marla still have work to do, so be nice to them.

This Cave is Your Cave, This Cave is My Cave

August 15, 2006

By Hester Mallonée, Program Chair

We all own the caves on our public lands. This year at Convention we got to hear all about it from the people who run those caves. I chaired this session, which was new this year. When I first started planning it, I worried that not very many cavers would show up, or not enough cave managers would want to talk. Wrong! The attendance in the room varied from fifty-four to ninety-five. I was able to arrange fifteen speakers on public cave topics, of whom two were NSS cavers, two were non-government scientists, and eleven, count 'em, eleven were cave managers at different levels, deliberately chosen to range from young field scientists to mid-career and senior cave managers. Three of their cave resources are within a day's drive of most of us; three more, perhaps within three days' drive; the rest made a large swath across the West, with one talk also addressing Mammoth Cave. And we now have invitations from several!

15

• Number of Speakers in the public caves track of the convention program.

Dale Pate, Supervisory Physical Scientist (Head Cave Guy) at Carlsbad Caverns discussed the real-life task of getting salaries for four people, plus the cave conservation and management needs for that entire huge park, out of two hundred thousand dollars per

year. The parks even have to compete with each other within the NPS system, for the money they need to do their jobs. I had specifically requested this topic and Dale did a good job of showing how they optimistically tackle this rather chilling reality.

Shane Fryer, Physical Scientist at Lava Beds National Monument, urged us to come on down to visit. Seems Lava Beds has a brand new resource center with nice beds and kitchen, and a real need for cavers to come down to do everything from surveying and mapping new cave to resurveying and mapping old cave to conservation and restoration to just plain fun. Yours truly has been invited to organize a conservation/restoration event at a time that works for me/us. Look for details in the next few months.

Kyle Voyles, Chief Physical Scientist at Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument, and also Arizona Cave Coordinator for the Bureau of Land Management, revealed that this huge monument of his, that most people have somehow never heard of, is filled with caves. Some are easy of access but many are hung excitingly halfway up cliffs, and they are full of everything from geological resources to archaeological artifacts. And again, cavers are needed to help investigate it.

81

- Number of unique program items .

Gretchen Baker, Ecologist at Great Basin National Park, where Lehman Caves are, talked about _their_ new caves, and _their_ new species, and _their_ need for caver volunteers. Are we getting a recurrent picture here? Gretchen also discussed new LED lights they are installing that will help keep down algae. Seems among other things that regardless of spectrum, just using any kind of LED causes enough

of a heat reduction to reduce the green gunk substantially. Lehman has beautiful shield formations and Gretchen brought some terrific photos of them.

Ben Tobin, Physical Scientist at Sequoia and King's Canyon National Parks, talked about many new invertebrates discovered there. He had creepy, very beautiful photos of translucent insects and millipedes, and spiders so new that they are not only a new species, they are a new genus. Some are beings so delicate that they would look small on the end of a tine of a fork; but one was a four-inch-across dark-toned spider. Now would you have thought that here in the modern USA in a public park in the year 2006 there would be a huge obvious spider that we did not even know about until last year? Makes you wonder what else is out there -- and in there -- waiting to be found by field scientists and classified by taxonomists. One comment made repeatedly in the talks was that taxonomists -- old fashioned researchers who painstakingly analyze and classify life forms by their resemblance or lack of resemblance to known life forms -- are desperately needed, and are in short supply. The old ones are dying or retiring, many young scientists think that taxonomy is ancient history now that we can analyze DNA, and so there are not enough people around who can look at the underside of a cave spider and yell, "Hey, this one's new!"

Rod Horrocks, Chief of Resource Management (Head Cave Guy) at Wind Cave National Park, said that for the first time they have a single consolidated modern map system for entire cave. Wind Cave has moved up to fourth longest cave in the world and is very far from being fully explored yet. Geologic mapping has shown that Wind Cave is part of a long curve of caves on the edge of a particular rock conjunction, leading to Jewel Cave about fifty miles around the rim. It is not absolutely impossible that they are actually connected as parts of a truly enormous cave system. And yes, they need cavers too!

Mike Wiles, Chief of Resource Management (Head Cave Guy) at Jewel Cave, talked about what you do when you manage a huge cave underneath a small park. You do land swaps with the Forest Service to get the land that is most likely to overlie your cave, and you create resource planning zones out into more of the surrounding land to give you a basis for discussion with the owners of that land as well. You work with communities to get them behind the idea of forgoing activities that could be detrimental to the cave. Lots of science, lots of diplomacy. Mike also stated that Jewel Cave is now believed to be very, very much larger than its already huge extent. Exploration continues. It would be fascinating to look into the future and see what we will learn about this cave area in the next fifty years.

John Roth, Chief of Resource Management at Oregon Caves National Monument, covered two bases in one integrated talk. He analyzed some cultural and historical reasons why cave parks have traditionally had trouble getting adequate funding, and also briefed us on a number of ongoing science projects that Oregon Caves has in hand despite funding difficulties.

Paul Burger, Hydrologist and Geologist at Carlsbad Caverns National Park, gave a terrific talk that I informally called How We Keep from Losing Our Minds: Maintaining Institutional Memory, but which actually dealt with Multidisciplinary Research and Information Management in the Public Cave Resource Environment or something pretty close to that. His point was that after long struggle, they now have built a system to keep track of their cave science information, that is simple to use, lets them cut through layers of information in a straightforward way, does not require complicated programs to run, allows Paul to effectively fill requests from scientists and park managers but also can be used by anybody in the office without having to depend on Paul himself, and can be used as a

model for cave information storage and retrieval by other organizations.

David Draheim, who is simultaneously Biologist and Outdoor Recreation Planner at the Lakeview District of the Oregon Bureau of Land Management near Bend, talked about their huge new caver resource still being surveyed and mapped, notably through the efforts of Ken Siegrist, and also the efforts of cavers who attended last fall's National Public Lands Day event down there. As a small organization with a small budget, Dave, who is really the only cave manager there, has to decide which resources are suitable for the public and which are not, how to classify and protect the caves, and how to use creative mechanisms and partnerships to get the job done -- and you guessed it, they need caver volunteers as part of that.

Hazel Medville of Colorado, who is the NSS's government liaison among other roles, discussed a current joint caver-BLM research project, analyzing whether oil and gas drilling near some extensive (one mile plus) debris/soil caves in Colorado is causing them to slump. Preliminary word seems to be, yup. This issue with oil and gas drilling is, by the way, a huge and looming one to the north of Carlsbad, and a lot of Southwestern cave-bearing lands are threatened by it to some degree.

Rick Fowler of the WATERS research laboratory at Western Kentucky University talked about DNA research at Oregon Caves National Monument and at Mammoth Cave. I have to admit that this was the most difficult topic for me since my own science education has mostly been macro and Rick's topics were assuredly micro. Nonetheless I learned some things. Bacterial DNA can reveal whether an area of a cave is contaminated by non-native biota and to what extent and from what source. And this laboratory can adjust its testing to fit the particular goals of a particular park. Cave biology people and cave managers in the room undoubtedly learned a

good deal more than I, and that was part of my goal for this session: to include high-level scientists who



*Ronal Kerbo Chief Cave Specialist at NPS presents the keynote.
Photo By Russell Kennedy.*

could share observations with the agency people who can most benefit from the talks.

Tom Strong, Ph.D., assessed vertebrates, everything from lizards to cougars, in a number of caves within Carlsbad Caverns National Park, and also within caves on adjacent BLM land. He used modern scientific field observation, caver reports, and also historical documents and correspondence to see what animals have been visiting the caves. His conclusions were that 1) that more animals show up in NPS caves than in BLM caves, 2) the animals don't necessarily like the NPS better than the BLM but they do like the higher altitude and less open situation of NPS caves as shelter sites, and 3) more research needs to be done since some animals you'd expect to find in Carlsbad caves, like jackrabbits, have not shown up yet. (Now, most New Mexicans would not be surprised at this, since Senor Jack makes it his business not to show up where he is expected -- but we were talking about science, not folklore, so I didn't say anything...)

Yours truly, Conservation Chair of the Cascade Grotto, talked about building the cave volunteer relationship on public lands. The three components are: the trip leader, the park managers, and the cavers. The foundation is exchanging information and getting to know each other as people, so as to really communicate. Also very important are working out efficient access to housing and supplies and tools; the cave managers using caver volunteers for things that require or optimize caver skills; the trip leader delegating human-care tasks like food planning to others so that s/he can focus on the

conservation project; having a good in-cave plan; everyone showing up on time and following the plan; working hard in-cave; collecting good information to help strategize for next time and track progress over years; and having enjoyable fellowship so everyone wants to come back next time..

James Goodbar, Chief Cave Specialist for the Bureau of Land Management (Really Head Cave Guy) described the new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the NSS, the BLM and the Cave Research Foundation. The two caver organizations and the BLM have been working together on projects from surveying to restoration and public education for over forty years. There was a preexisting MOU that was sketchy and out-of-date and this new one supplants it with a lot more power and detail. It talks about how the three organizations can work together to manage and care for the caves, a task Jim says could not be done by the BLM alone. This large-scale MOU also provides a model that can be adapted for all kinds of local caver-BLM agreements.



***Jim Goodbar on the left represents the BLM while Pat Kambesis, for the CRF, and Bill Tozer, for the NSS, signs the Memorandum of Understanding.
Photo by Russell Kennedy***

And with that, the group moved out into the lobby and the formal signing of the MOU took place. The document had already been signed in Washington, D.D. for the BLM by Kathleen Clarke, its Director. Jim

Goodbar and Geoff Middaugh had arranged to get it to Washington State so the other two organizations could sign. Pat Kambesis signed for the CRF and Bill Tozer, NSS President, signed for the NSS. This was the kickoff for the lovely reception hosted by Doug and Hazel Medville. And that in turn flowed into the closing Banquet where the speaker was Ronal Kerbo, Chief Cave Specialist for the NPS (Really Head Cave Guy). Ron spoke movingly and also with sometimes hysterical humor about his career in the Park

Service and his love for the caves. The talk was illustrated by great photos, most of them by Ron, and clips of his short, effective cave

poetry as well. Everybody was sorry when he stepped offstage -- the best thing one can hope for from a keynote speaker.



The convention wasn't all sun and games. It really rained one or two days during the convention despite the fact that the average rainfall this week in August in the Bellingham area was 0 inches.

Just proves the old adage. If you have a drought, hold a convention.

Photo by Jansen Cardy

Learning to Sketch Caves

October 10, 2006

Text and Photos by Jansen Cardy

On Sunday August 6, I attended the Cave Sketching Workshop at the NSS Convention in Bellingham. Having faithfully (and sometimes accurately) read instruments on various survey trips, it was finally time to learn how to put pencil to waterproof paper for myself.

Most of my previous mapping trips have been led by one female sketcher or another (or as I prefer to call them, "Survey Mistress"). So it was appropriate for me that this class was taught by two of the very best - Carol Vesely and Pat Kambesis. Incidentally, I never registered for the class. While speaking with Carol the evening before, she suggested Steve Hobson and I turn up in the morning anyway – there might be some no-shows. Amazingly, in a prepaid class of 12 there were 11 no-shows! Their loss.

So the student body consisted of me, Steve from California, and our one registered attendee – Lucas Middleton. Lucas is a young caver from Carlsbad, New Mexico who really worked to get the most out of his first Convention. Our class started out with an overview on cave mapping in general, along with symbols, techniques, plotting, sketching to scale, and

so forth. Then we took a walk outside into the courtyard, where we started surveying point-to-point and sketching our imaginary cave.

Finally it was time to head to a real cave! After grabbing lunch at Subway, we hit the road for the 90 minute drive to Three Mile Creek Cave in Mount Baker Snoqualmie National Forest. The weather was

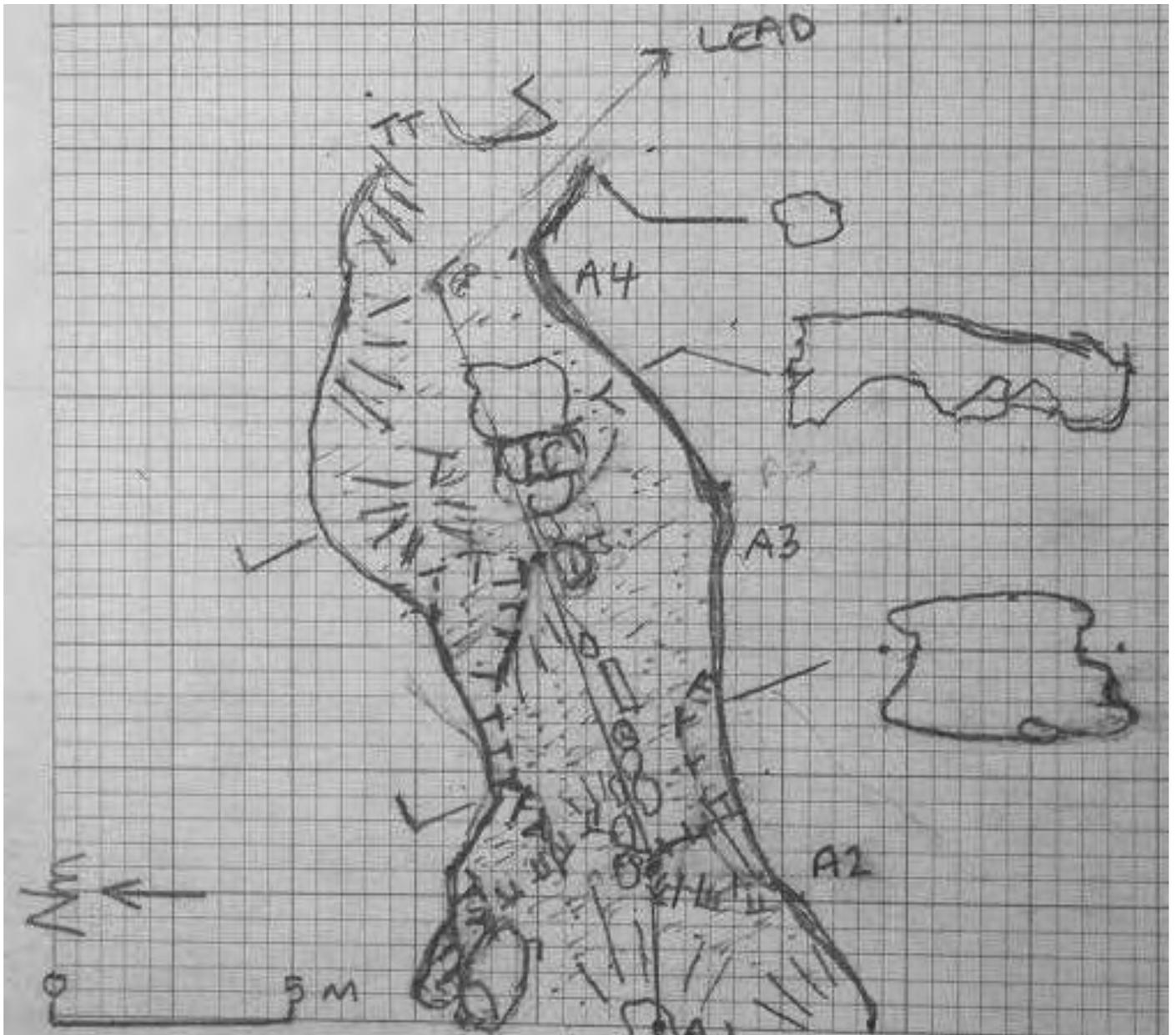
perfect as we negotiated the bumpy maze of forestry roads. We parked near a stand of trees with a majestic view of snow-capped Mount Baker, and made the not-so-grueling 5 minute hike all 200 feet to the cave.

Three Mile Creek is a horizontal limestone cave, with a nice size entrance room. It was perfect for learning how to sketch. We began by setting a station outside the entrance, before working our way inside. Carol and Pat read instruments

and tape for us, while providing constant coaching. The 3 of us busied ourselves scribbling and erasing in our new Rite-in-the-Rain notebooks. We started to define the walls, floor, drip-lines, ledges, ceiling height changes, and other details. Several days later I saw the 'official' map of this cave – just a pair of walls and very little detail!



*Lucas Middleton sketches Three Mile Creek Cave.
Photo by Jansen Cardy*



Our sketches slowly began to take shape. After a couple of hours, it was time to wrap things up. Class dismissed! Our future as cave sketchers was cemented with these parting words of wisdom – practice, practice, practice.

12

- The number of people pre-registered for the survey class

1

- The number of preregistrants that actually showed up!

Cave Ridge Convention Tours

August 23, 2006

By Danny Miller

I led 3 tours to Cave Ridge during the convention - on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Access to the caves is quite difficult, as many of you can attest, so I was careful to word my trip description to make sure everyone would realize what a 2100 vertical foot elevation gain in one mile would feel like. (I heard horror stories from other guides about what can happen if people show up unprepared). Everybody who showed up was in great shape and the hike up the "trail" usually took a little over 2 hours and the hike down usually took a little less, which I think is pretty good time for a group carrying gear. As a matter of fact, there were many attendees for whom this hike was a much easier hike than other places they had visited. And we all had quite a lot of fun!

We had people from New York, Atlanta, and as far away as Bellingham. (They found the location of this year's convention awfully convenient). These caves are a 2 ½ hour drive from the convention HQ in Bellingham, and other trips were similarly distant in different directions from Cave Ridge. Although there was some talk among the convention attendees of

wishing for more trips or that the caves in Washington were closer together, everyone had such a good time up here that it seemed to me that it was universally agreed that it was worth all the traveling.

We took the hanging valley way up and down the mountain, because it is the most scenic, and everybody agreed that the hike alone was worth the trip. If you've never gone up or down Cave Ridge via the Hanging Valley, I highly recommend it. The place is magical. From the moment you first glimpse it at the top of the steep waterfalls, to the last look back before reaching Newton at the top of the ridge,

there is something really special about this valley carved by glaciers during the last ice age.

Group size ranged from 3 to 5, which was perfect for the smaller caves we visited. Each visit started with a trip to 2 of

the small marble caves in the lower valley (Clark and Flute), which also broke the hike up nicely into 2 parts. Some of the participants had never seen a real marble cave before, and the colours and fluting are quite nice, so even though the caves are small (less than 50' long) they were well worth a visit.

Monday and Friday were vertical trips, where we visited HellHole, dropping through the back door. The entrance chamber of the Hell's Back Door is so



beautiful, with allophone deposits in many colours, you might almost think it's not worth making the drop into the big room. But down there await even more wonders... an entire wall of even rarer mustard coloured allophone, and phosphorescent white deposits that glow in the dark after you turn your light out. Is it calcite? Some sort of fungus? Hopefully a biologist and geologist can go down there soon and fight it out. And there's a whole ceiling of baby stalactites carved out of pure marble. And an even bigger treat awaits cavers brave enough to come in the early spring (July for this alpine area). The 60' high giant marble wall that you are rappelling past glistens with the most amazing bright baby blue colour when it's wet (when there's still water running into the cave). Climbing up the rope at the end of a long day always saps your energy. It was funny to observe all of our enthusiasm (especially mine) drop from "Let's explore the other 10 caves next!" to "Let's go home now!" at the other end of the rope.

Wednesday was a non-vertical trip to Cascade Cave. This is the largest non-vertical cave on the ridge, although the cave actually descends near-vertically. It's only considered a "horizontal cave" because the close tight walls keep you from falling down the drop (and make it relatively easy to chimney up). The most common advice you'll hear about this cave is "it's bigger than you think"... every time I go in I find new passages leading to even more big rooms. Since magnetite interfered with the compass during the old survey, the map we have doesn't resemble reality in a few key places, so even I had real sense of discovery and adventure in this cave along with the rest of the group.

These caves are much different from the lava tubes visited by folks near Mt. St. Helens or Mt. Adams, and quite different from the other limestone caves visited during the convention. As described above, there's not much in the way of typical formations,

but the amazing colours, the glow in the dark material, and the maze-like passages to explore certainly provided a unique caving experience even for those familiar with your typical wild limestone cave. That, coupled with the fantastic mountain views (not to mention the great opportunity for exercise) made it a trip to remember for all involved. A couple of people actually expressed interest in moving to the Northwest. High praise indeed for an area often described as "not having much in the way of *real* caves. Certainly nobody this week had that feeling!

Boat trip to Cypress Island during convention

August 16, 2006

by Roger Cole

Recently the grotto discovered a cave on Cypress Island, but unfortunately access details could not be worked out with DNR in time for convention. There is no ferry service to this island but Steve Sprague has a fast boat and generously offered to run a trip to the vicinity of the cave even if we could not go in. Four of us gathered at the campground at Sehome High School on Thursday morning of convention but there was a bad omen right from the start. It began to rain and hard. We proceeded nevertheless to the boat launch at Fairhaven right next to the Amtrak station and launched in the rain. Steve's boat is called a rigid inflatable boat. It has an aluminum hull with inflatable topsides and a 150 hp outboard. It goes 30 knots so we were practically the fastest thing on the water that day. It was a little choppy as we headed out across Bellingham Bay but the boat handled the swells nicely.

In under an hour we arrived at Pelican Beach, Cypress Island. The only people there were a couple of campers in tents. The plan was to anchor the boat offshore so that it could be pulled back in, and then hike up to Eagles Cliff and soak up the view while pointing out the location of the cave. Unfortunately, Steve could not get the anchor to hold the boat

offshore. The gravel on the bottom was just too loose. He attempted several times to reanchor but the anchor kept letting go. Finally after an hour we all decided to throw in the towel. We did not get to do the hike.

It was still early, however, and with Steve's fast boat, it was possible to run over to Friday Harbor and have lunch ashore and still get back to Bellingham in good time. By this time the sun had revealed itself. There were all kinds of boats cruising around in the lovely San Juan Islands. It was turning out to be a fun trip

20

• Miles (by boat) Friday Harbor is from Cypress Island.

anyway. We tied up at the busy marina in Friday Harbor and walked up to the Alehouse for lunch. We enjoyed some great caving talk. John Nestor and his daughter Kate are new to the area and told about caves of the east while Steve enlightened us on some of the caves of the Northwest. We returned to Fairhaven about 3 pm, thoroughly satisfied. Thanks to Captain Sprague for a most interesting day on the water.



Partiers at Haskell Plaza seemed to have a great time!

Photos by Jansen Cardy



Johannesburg Mountain Ice Cave

December 6, 2006

Doug Medville, Colorado Grotto

Johannesburg Mountain is an 8,220 foot high peak in the South Unit of North Cascades National Park in Skagit County Washington. During the 2006 NSS Convention in Bellingham, TAG cavers Marion Smith and Alan Cressler took a scenic drive up the Cascade River Road. Just before the road ended at the Cascade Pass trailhead, they saw what appeared to be an entrance south of the road and at the base of a steep ice/snow field. They hiked over to the entrance and followed a steeply ascending tunnel uphill for what they estimated to be about 1,000 feet. Since this cave wasn't mentioned in the Convention Guidebook and we wanted to do some caving after the Convention, a group of us drove up to the Park on the day after the Convention to see the cave for

ourselves and to enjoy the scenery.

Although they said that the walk to the entrance was near the road, it turned out to be more like 1/2-3/4 mile. Parking next to an earth berm, we climbed down a steep slope to a stream, followed the stream downstream in a narrow canyon, and then hopped over wet and slippery talus for a couple of thousand feet until we reached the entrance. Five of us went over to the cave: Carol Vesely and her son Brian from the SoCal Grotto, Steve Smith (formerly from North Carolina, now living in Hawaii), a guy with Steve whose name I don't remember, and me- Doug Medville from Virginia/Colorado.

When we reached the base of the snowfield (or glacier- don't know which), we found several entrances, including a crevice-like one on the side of the snow/ice that we didn't enter. The entrance that Marion and Alan had been in was pretty impressive:



*Manuel Beers, and Marion Smith assist in the survey of Johannesburg Ice Cave in the North Cascades National Park
Photo by Alan Cressler*

20 feet wide and 10 feet high with a substantial stream and cold breeze coming out of it. Although he flew in from Hawaii, Steve had brought a rubber suit with him to keep warm in alpine caves and was the only one of us who had protection from the constantly dripping water. The rest of us just put on our rain shells and headed in, hoping to not get too wet and miserable.

1

- Number of new caves discovered during convention.

The ice above us was pretty thick and after getting away from the entrance daylight, we were in total darkness. The cave's walls/ceiling consisted of scalloped ice and the floor was a high gradient rocky streambed with plenty of water flowing in it. Between getting splashed by the water in the cave stream and the constantly dripping ceiling, we were soon wet and cold. In a couple of places the passage split and then rejoined, giving us some loops.

After climbing steeply at a 20 degree angle for several hundred feet, we saw daylight way up the passage. As we approached the light we could see a lot of water falling in from above. When we reached it, we were impressed with the sight of two waterfalls cascading off of a high cliff on the south side of the mountain and falling into the cave. There was no way that we were able to get out of what was an overhanging waterfall pit and although the cave continued ahead, we decided to turn around.

I then had the bright idea that it would be a fun thing to survey our way back down to the lower entrance since that would prolong our exposure to the cold, wet, drafty conditions.

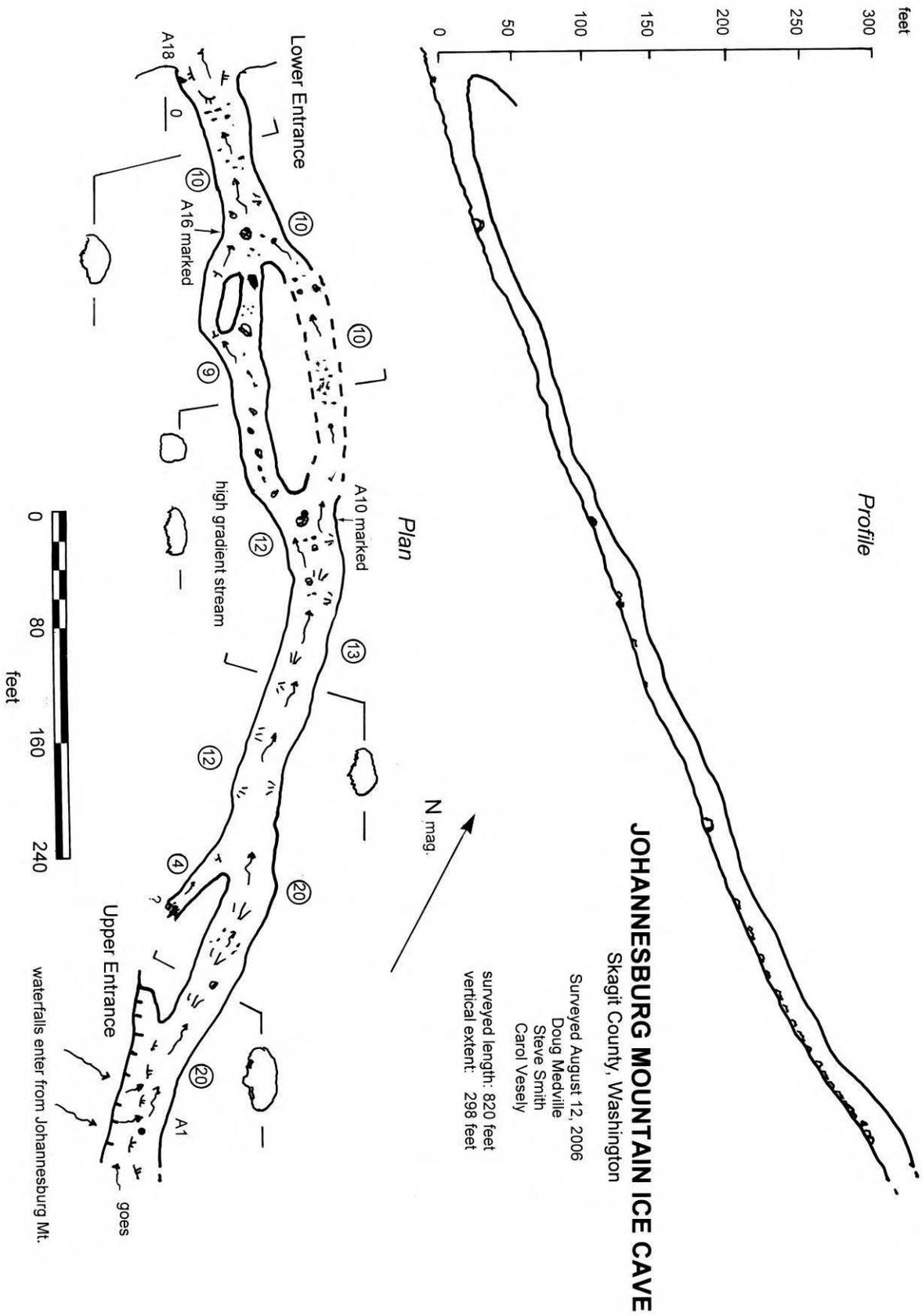
I figured that we'd get some pretty long shots using my Disto measuring device and that the survey

wouldn't take too long. Carol and Steve were up for it and so we began our survey. It turned out that the Disto didn't like the cave's humid and drippy environment and in order to avoid getting error messages, we had to keep the shot length down to 40-50 feet. Even so, we surveyed down the passage, shivering as we went.

We were quite happy to see the cave's lower entrance and get back out into the late afternoon sunshine and warm up. Although we talked about going back in to survey around the loops, we really didn't want to go back into the cold drippy dark so we didn't do it. We really should have been better prepared for the cave than we were but it was a fun Saturday afternoon trip anyway.

When I entered the data into Compass I was not surprised to see that over a survey distance of 820 feet between the entrances we had climbed nearly 300 vertical feet- a 39 percent gradient. No wonder we were breathing hard as we went up the passage. I followed up the trip with an e-mail message to Cressler, whose photo of the cave passage accompanies this article. He told me that he and Marion had gone beyond the waterfalls and that the cave climbed another 50-60 vertical feet to an upper entrance.

He also thought that one of the entrances that we did not go into- about 50 feet from the one that we had surveyed in- could lead to a separate cave that could go to waterfalls higher on the mountain. Certainly, there's more to do in this area: completing the cave survey, surveying upstream in the cave next to it, and entering vertical crack on the side of the glacier/snowfield to see where it'll take us. But will we ever return? It's a long way from Virginia or southern California or Hawaii to the Pacific Northwest and perhaps (hint, hint) local. Although the entrance can be seen from the road, I can provide any other information needed such as marked stations and leads.



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.



Cascade Caver
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