



Through trip discovered to
Tijuana!

CASCADE Caver

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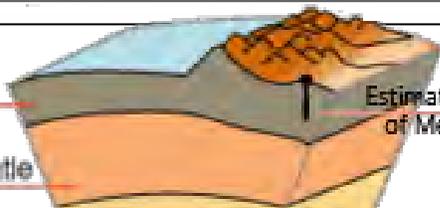
Mel's Hole

DISCOVERED!



Crust

Upper Mantle



Estimated Depth
of Mel's Hole

80,000 Feet DOWN!



**Rare *Invertebrate*
Hairless Mammal
REVEALED!**

Cascade 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

5/21/7-5/22/7 Lava Beds for Western and NCA combined regionals.
Around August 15, 2007: Trip to Lagufer Gieser Montanta Contact Ron Zuber.
Cave Ridge Survey Camps, Contact Michael McCormack:
~~5/6/07, 5/27/07 Cave Ridge Gear Carry up, backup Canceled~~
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 collage of web-found art and photographs by Michael McCormack and Dave Decker. The originals for the web art can be found here:

<http://www.seattlechatclub.org/MelsHole.html> and
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crust_%28geology%29.

Mel's hole is deep, bring a rope.

Mel's Hole Discovered!

April 1, 2006

by Michael McCormack

Mel's Hole was first reported by Mel Waters from Ellensburg, Washington on February 21, 1997 on Coast to Coast with Art Bell (a nationally syndicated radio program).

According to the local Mel's Hole experts; "Mel's Hole could very well be the world's deepest volcanic vent hole - a worm hole and as such not only the best indicator of volcanic activity in the Cascade range for the immediate safety of the Northwest and the Pacific Ring of Fire volcano range but of huge geological significance giving us the best access for instruments to study our earth's mantle."

Unfortunately, it seems likely that Mel's Hole will soon be the location for the most significant conservation project that the NSS has ever attempted. According to Mel Waters himself:

We've been here several years we just take all of our trash rubbish there - anything we have we have to get rid of we take it and just throw in the hole there, everyone's throwing their stuff in the hole. The people from around there throw all the stuff in the hole. I mean it's just been going on for a long time well, and I got

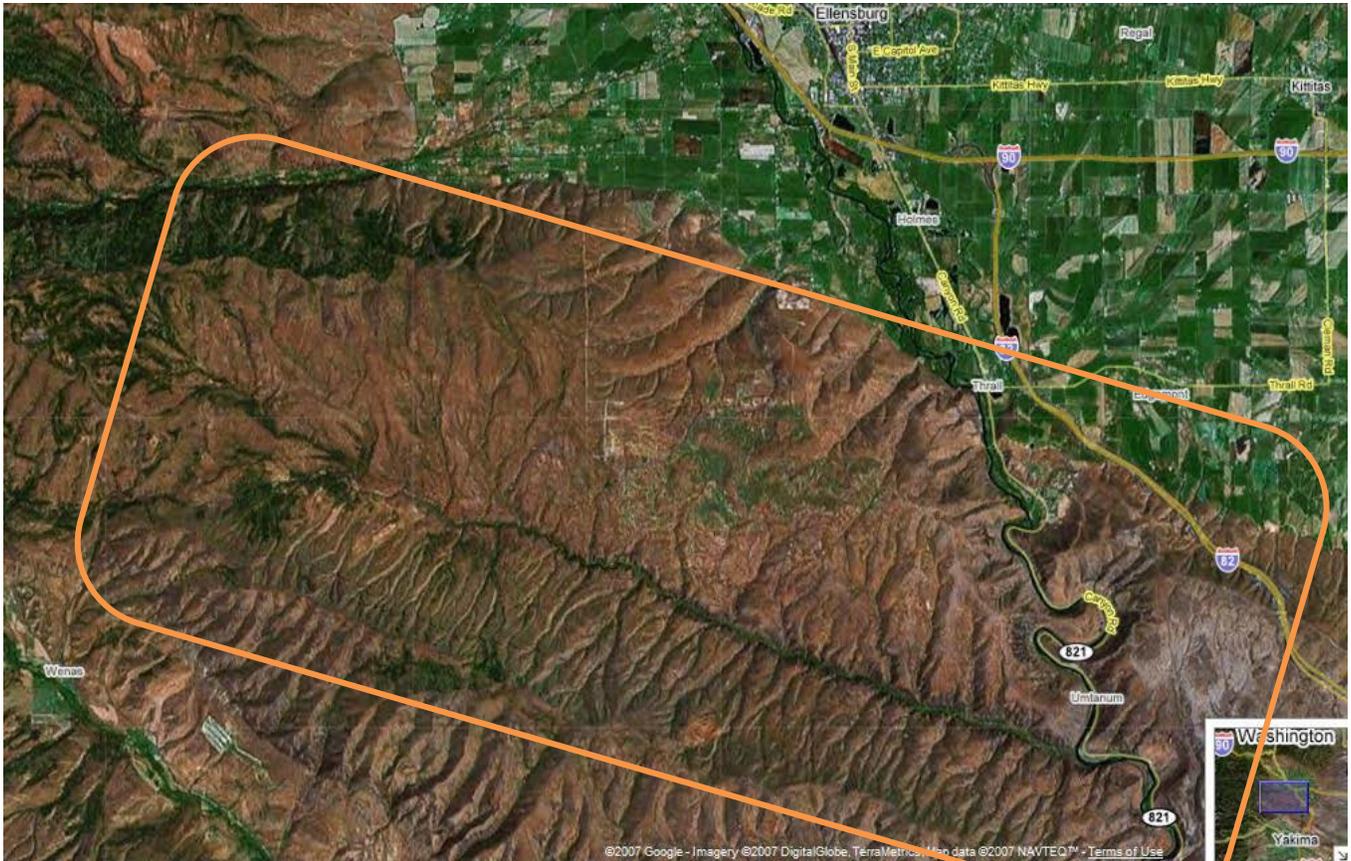
to thinking one day how come this hole is not filling up? It must be an awfully deep hole!"

They've been looking for a long time:



Nikki McCormack exits a small piping cave while searching for Mel's Hole – Photo by Michael McCormack

According to the Seattle Times: "The quest for Mel's Hole is in its sixth year." This was in 2002! At that time, "A recent appearance by Waters on Bell's Coast to Coast AM show (heard in Seattle on KOMO-



This Map of Kittitas county was originally believed to contain the location of Mel's Hole.

- Map Retrieved from Google Earth 4/3/2007

AM), convinced many it could be found. Bundled up for cold weather were, among other searchers, a physicist, a father and son from Seattle, three Los Angeles amateur filmmakers, a family from Enumclaw, members of a Vancouver, B.C.-based paranormal investigation team and a shaman."

And it's DEEP!

Mel estimated his hole to be at nearly 80,000 feet deep! By utilizing an ingenious method of fishing line and weights, apparently Mel managed to ascertain that pit was far and away the largest pit on the Earth!

But it doesn't stop there!

Mel's Hole is rumored to resuscitate deceased pets! According to Mel Waters in the original interview: "story is that he was a hunter and he was out there hunting and he saw the same dog, he had the same

collar, he had the same little metal thing on his collar there and he said it was the same dog and he says he knew he had threw the dog into the hole... now that's...

now that's my dog!"

And we've even been there (or at least nearby). Famed Mel's Hole hunter, only known to the public as "GrantBo", has repeatedly invited the Cascade Grotto out to assist in the exploration of interesting holes and canyons. Mel's Hole may or may not exist (we always have hope since you can't prove that it doesn't exist!), but the search for Mel's hole has been a source of new cave discoveries in a county that previous to this date had never been the site of documented caves.



Photo by Grant Goss

Make sure whenever you're visiting the Ellensburg Area that you take time out to search for Mel's Hole. You never know you might even find the country summer home of the Sasquatch!

If you would like to read the original transcript of the talk show, please follow this link:

http://www.seattlechatclub.org/Mel_Hole_Transcripts.html

For an archive of the Seattle times article:

<http://renew.com/general24/mels.htm>

For additional information on Mel's Hole see

<http://www.seattlechatclub.org/MelsHole.html> or

<http://www.melshole.com/cgi-bin/ikonboard/forums.cgi?forum=1>

Please do note the date of this article, if you haven't already...

The Search

April 3, 2007

By Michael McCormack, Editor

The search for Mel's hole is already the stuff of legends, it's hard to believe that the phenomena that is Mel's hole is only (Already?) a decade old.

Since the original appearance of Mel Waters on Art Bell's Coast to Coast radio show in February 1997

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just over ten years ago, interest in Mel's hole has surged and people have scoured the Manastash Ridge area near Ellensburg looking for the hole. "Experts" have arisen and even charged fees or donations to show the purported location of the hole with careful disclaimers that you shouldn't expect to find it on your first trip.

Grant Goss, an Ellensburg local, has been ridge walking the area since at least 2002 and in that time has discovered or been a party to the discovery of four caves and shelters that were not previously known to this grotto.

ExtremeZack's Cave

The first "ExtremeZack's Cave" or as we sometimes affectionately call it "Mini Mel's" was discovered in April 2005 by Zack George a student at CWU. Located around 15 miles west of Ellensburg.

April 17, 2005 Cascade Grotto Members Dave Decker, Hester Mallonée, Michael and Nikki McCormack and Aaron Stavens were joined by Grant Goss, Zack George and his girlfriend at the time (whose name is now lost to history), to explore the reaches of this new cave.

A little on the geology of Manastash Ridge. The ridge itself is geologically significant, there is a joining of fault lines along the top of the ridge that mark this as an active area. Primarily made up of Basalt, there is also sandstone in the geological mix. Per Washington standard, the geology is fairly mixed up thanks to the glacial period. There is no evidence of pahoehoe flows that would cause lava tubes, nor other normal cave geology in the area.

With no identifiable reason for a cave to exist, we went up to the cave area with hopes for a new lava tube discovery or a large fault cave, but regardless of its make up, we went with the understanding that what we had was, according to Aaron Stavens, "more significant than a gopher hole" .

We met at the Burger King in Ellensburg at 10 the morning of April 17th. Grant was waiting at the parking lot with his black truck, and we went through the pleasantries of new acquaintances.

We then drove up to the cave location in a caravan and walked the remaining 300 or so yards to the cave. We had a 20 foot aluminum ladder that Zack had brought along and my 200 foot rope (you never know...) What we found was something different than what we've seen before and somewhat unexpected. Mel's hole is after all supposed to be 9 feet in diameter.)

ExZ is a piping cave in a conglomerate topsoil. The nastiness of this cave really can't be expressed adequately. It's tight, dangerous and dusty, when it isn't tight dangerous and muddy. Most of the explorers were unwilling to subject themselves to the cave environment for long and those that were came out muddy and disturbed (at least as disturbed as when they went in.

Nikki was the first one in, and a good thing too. There was digging to be done, and it needed to be done in a tight and nasty crawl-way.

The cave starts with a straight shaft approximately 15 feet high through the topsoil of the Ellensburg area high desert. Then it quickly heads off for about 5 feet before jogging to the right in a 18"x12" high squeeze into a second small passage down sloping about 30 degrees for 10 feet. At the bottom of that second shaft was a rock blocking the next passage. Apparently there had been a flashlight dropped down there and "It slipped into room #2 and right into the lower shaft hole and was gone. We heard it bouncing for about 7 seconds. No light came out." Because of this it was decided that a rope should be taken into the cave, tied off to a tree at the surface.

Since the cave was essentially a dirt hole, digging was easy, if a little dangerous. Within a couple of



Michael and Nikki in the Canyon Passage

Photo by Aaron Stavens

minutes Nikki had the rock free at the bottom of the cave and opened up the biggest passage there. Sadly there was no booming passage. It was canyon shaped, about 10-15 feet high 1-1.5 feet wide and went down around 3 feet from the choke entrance. So much for the lost flashlight, it was lodged in a crack in the floor (that didn't go anywhere that we could find.)

Upon exiting the cave and declaring it "examined" I drew a quick sketch of the cave and gave it to the discoverer's. We did a quick tape measure from the top of the cave to the back of the canyon passage. The entire length was just over 50 feet. A few feet shy of the 80,000 of Mel's infamous hole.



Mary's Dream Cave Complex

As originally Described, "This is a huge complex that ran more than 1500' with many holes, shafts, hidden rooms, alternate descending shafts, tubes, chasms snow and ice. In the end we don't think that this is Mel's Hole because we weren't able to find a single straight vertical shaft: nor the garbage pile of things Mel talked about.

Mary's Dream Cave Complex is the entire fault region that up till now, though well known

to locals, was not named and therefore the name given by Grant Goss was honored. This long block fault is in Basalt on a ridge near Rimrock, Washington. At 9 am on July 30, a collection of cavers Mike Fraley, Michael and Nikki McCormack, Danny Miller, Marla Pelowski, Mark Sherman, Steve Sprague, and Aaron and Kaylee Stavens headed out towards Bear Mountain to explore and survey the caves.

There are several small caves along the fissure and one large one. Dream Cave, the largest has some serious ice formations, and it was very cold. Ice

bacon, and Ice stalagmites were everywhere in this Central Washington desert cave.

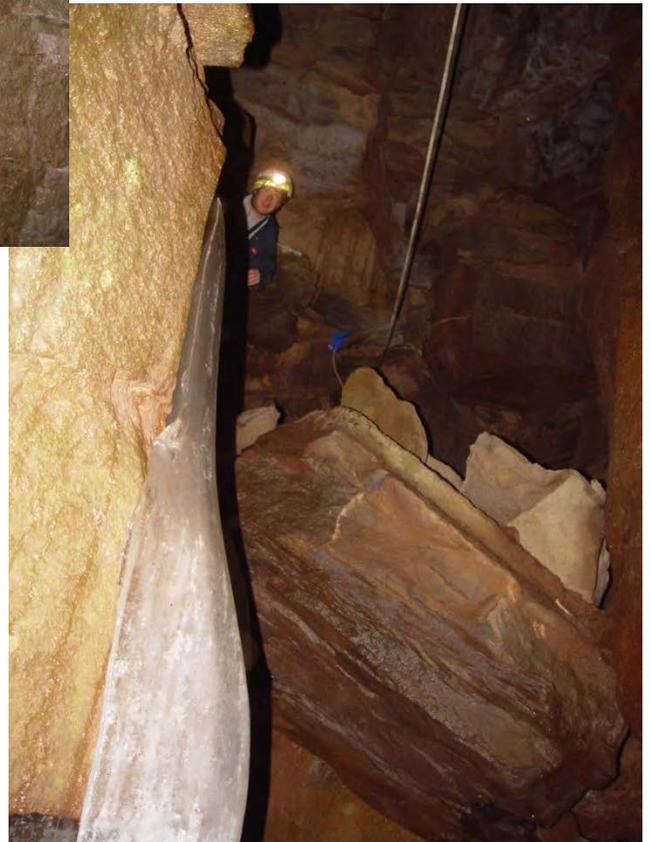
After dressing for a 30 degree cave in 90 degree weather, we took our sweating bodies into the cave.

Snow lined the floor of the fissure. Even though it wasn't necessary we rigged a rope and dropped 30 feet into the canyon passage. We then mapped up to the entrance at the top, and then back into the main cave. This main cave presented a little difficulty as there was a boulder precariously perched ready to smash any caver that attempted to wiggle past. So Danny Miller rigged the boulder and pulled it free, with surprisingly little damage to my rope. Shortly after the killer boulder, we discovered an actual drop in the cave (ok, most of us would call it a Nuisance,



One of the caves many entrances, note that the cave had many skylights in the upper portion.

Photo by Michael McCormack



Danny Miller prepares to pull free a dangerous obstruction.

Photo by Michael McCormack



and some of us would probably attempt a free-climb). This climb lead to a beautiful room with many delicate ice formations. Sadly we know they were delicate because they were phenomenally easy to break. Fortunately, they were Ice, so all is well this year.

Just outside of Selah is a well known, and one of the deepest cave shelters in the entire region. I took a trip today and took some pics to give the members (of the Mel's hole chat group -ed.) here an idea of what it looks like.

Also, I talked to an old timer today who visited the cave shelter back in the 1930's. He advised that at one time it went back another 45'. There was also a 2nd cave next to it but there have been cave-in's over the years; to what you see here.

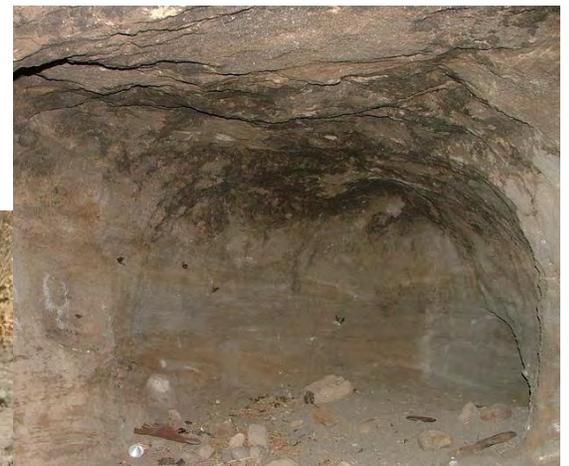


First turn, about 20' in.

The Search goes on...

February and October 2006
Text and Photos by Grant Goss

The following information and pictures were provided by Grant on the Mel's Hole discussion group, www.melshole.com, and he has given permission for us to reprint the text and photos. The text has been edited for this format. ed.



The back of the cave at about 40'. There is a small hole at the very bottom right.



The entrance is about 3.5 feet high



On the way out.

Good News! A 3rd Block Fault Cave Complex has been discovered!!

As I mentioned in a post a couple of days ago, I talked with a very old guy (late 80's) who told me about the Selah WA cave shelter, above. During our conversation about hunting (we happened to both be at the local range tuning in our rifles), I asked him if in his travels had he ever seen anything like Mel's Hole? He advised he was most familiar with hunting the Manastash Ridge area and he told me about a complex of caves that from his description sounded like a cross between ExZCC and MDCC. He advised he hasn't been to this site in at least 45 years but said he had a real good idea where it was.

I took down the directions as he described them. Knowing that memories fade over time, I showed him what I had taken down and he corrected a few turns, direction, landmarks and side roads he

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thought would lead me to the site. Amazingly, finding it was a breeze. Especially since the main reference point (see the 'lake' below), was exactly where he said it would be: He called it 'Bear Lake'. It isn't on any map and is more of a pond than anything else. It's obvious that the 'lake' has filled in quite a bit over the last 45 years.

From now on, I'll refer

to this find as: Bear Lake Chasm Complex or BLCC.

Most of the pictures are looking down into the chasm. A few are from one end or another. There were multiple chasm's, different lengths, widths and all were deep.

There were nice fall colors, and it was raining lightly while I was there. I was able drive right up to it and noticed some assorted trash off the track.

This site is at the 5300' mark, so in about a month or so it will be covered in snow. It was raining lightly while I was there.







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Not Just Knots: A Vertical Chair's Musings

April 3, 2007

By Tom Evans, Vertical Chair

SRT is both an art and a science, and it takes concerted effort to remain current with the research and techniques that are continually developed. It is often not possible to read everything one should stay current. Presented in this column will be my brief musings about techniques or new tools that people should be aware of. For some of you it will be review, for others it will be a quick refresher that can help you learn just another trick that can keep you safe while on rope. The intent is to share cool safety tidbits or ideas that have not been discussed much in an effort to disseminate information rapidly.

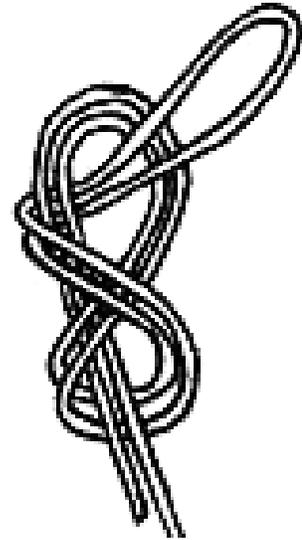


Standard Figure 8

This issue I would like to focus on a version of a knot unfamiliar to many. The Figure 8 knot (Figure 1) is a common, versatile knot used in all sorts of cave rigging and climbing systems. The loops in the knot are wide which reduces the fatigue and pinching a rope can experience when loaded. This is one of the strongest knots available.

However, by adding an additional half twist of the rope during tying you can create a Figure 9 knot (Figure 2). The Figure 9 knot is stronger than the Figure 8 by about 20% or so since the loops created in the tying are longer, and there is more friction in the knot when loaded. You can use this knot in all

the same ways as a Figure 8 for all the same purposes. It is, admittedly, slightly more difficult to tie and uses slightly more rope. However, if you are going to tie a Figure 8 it only takes a fraction of a second (and more rope) to tie, with a significant increase in the safety of the rope. Give it a try!



The Figure 9

Tres Hoyos III

January 3, 2002

By Dave Decker

One year later to the day and I was back at the lip of the middle pit of Tres Hoyos. It took me nearly ten hours to get there from Monterey and I was pretty tired, so that night was just a recon of the area. I thought I'd figured out a way to rig the pit so it's relatively safe but it will have to wait until morning. The trip out was pretty routine, not much traffic since it was a Thursday. (I didn't see another vehicle once I turned off 79!) The sunset was beautiful and the stars were starting to blink on one by one, and Saturn, low in the northeast, was the brightest object in the sky. I made my way back to the truck and set up camp; I'd been looking forward to that filet mignon that'd been marinating in lemon juice and garlic all day. The evening air was a bit chilly and I was sure it would get much colder throughout the evening. I hoped my 30-degree sleeping bag and some long johns would be enough to keep me warm -- otherwise I'd have to burn the truck!

After a fitful and somewhat cold night the rising sun dragged me out of bed for eggs and bacon on the old green Coleman stove. I arranged all my gear and packed it away, then grabbed my 200-foot Bluewater II and another 120-foot length of the same and headed up the escarpment. I followed the footprints left by my three previous trips up the mud slope and passed by many inviting cracks and crevices. One of these trips I'll take the time to check these out, they look inviting and could have some substantial passage in the mudstone beneath the shell stone. Moving on up the ridge I passed the first pit and made my way over to a small wash that empties into pit two (twopit?). After dropping all my gear I surveyed the area for my first tie-off point. The best thing I could find was a protruding piece of shell stone about a foot high and two feet in diameter with a small overhang on the backside. I hoped this was well cemented to its surrounding strata as I rigged the tie-off point. As a back up, I pounded three pitons into a crack another five feet behind my primary anchor and rigged a self-equalizing anchor from these. Now for the other side of the tyrollean. I walked the other end of the rope around the pit and across a knife-edge between pits two and three and around to the slope side of pit two where there were three massive breakdown blocks that I could use. I chose the most stable of the three, directly across from my first rig point and about ten feet from where the slope starts to increase dramatically into the pit. Here I used a friction wrap, some rope pads (that shell stone is sharp!!) and a small come along to tighten the rope. Using the free end of what remained from the 120 footer, I clipped in with a Jumar and slowly let myself down the pigtail to the edge of the pit. After cleaning loose rock and debris from the edge, I tied the 200 footer to the tyrollean that stretched above my head with a clove hitch backed up by several overhand knots. This would allow me to get on and off rope fairly easily at the lip

without having to climb over a sharp (in more ways than one) ledge on a rope that would be nearly impossible to get away from the edge rigged in a more conventional way. I climbed back up the pigtail and sat down at the top to survey my handiwork and double check all my knots. When I was satisfied, I made my way back down the slope, tossed the rope in (with obligatory figure eight loop at the end), clipped in and dropped the pit.

Pit two is a deep, narrow shaft about 20 feet in diameter. As I neared the bottom, I realized the rope was about three feet short, just enough for me to put my toes on the ground and get off rope. Before I let go, I untied the figure eight so I'd have a couple more feet to rig into on my way out. This was just enough, as I let the rope go it sprang up about four feet but I could still get to it easily from a boulder just to my right. Once I realized I'd still be able to get out, I surveyed my position. Behind me was another pit about 15 feet deep and down climbable. To my left, a ten-foot high (and just as wide) archway went off into darkness in the direction of the drainage pattern of the ridge. I decided to see how far it went, so off came the vertical gear and on went my light.

Once inside the passage the ceiling started to drop. As I went further in I could feel a slight breeze on my cheeks and my heartbeat quickened a little. We all know what this means! My hopes didn't last too long though, as the ceiling kept dropping and finally I had to start crawling and then wiggling flat on my stomach, with helmet out in front and pack tied to my feet. At one point, my pack caught on the floor and ceiling and I thought I'd have to leave it behind. I was able to pull it to the side and around the constriction and keep going. Here and there were damp spots in the otherwise dusty floor, each of

them sprouting gypsum crystals around the edges. I was able to avoid these, but I occasionally banged my head on the low overhead and gypsum dust flew. As I moved further in I lost the breeze, but kept going any way. I figured as long as the passage went I'd follow, maybe I could get out at the bottom and not have to climb back up the rope. Rounding a corner, the floor abruptly dropped away from me. It took me a moment to realize what was going on.

As my eyes adjusted to the larger room, I could see that I had intersected another passage! It came in from my left and cut across the passage I was in heading off to the right. This new trunk passage could be none other than the drain for pit one! Well, I knew pit one was blocked by breakdown, so I turned to the right to follow downstream. I dropped five feet to dry streambed and was able to stand up again in a room that was about six or seven feet high and about 15 feet across. The passage went out of sight around a corner, so I pressed on to see where it would take me. I walked about 50 feet before the ceiling started coming down again, and another 30 before I could see I was making my way into more breakdown. This, I was sure, was the source of the breeze. I remembered passing a section of breakdown on the outside of the ridge that had a small streambed issuing forth from beneath the jumbled blocks. The only problem was that stream was only about two feet wide and maybe cut a foot or two into the desert floor. The bed I was in was still about 15 feet across and at least four feet deep. Getting closer to the breakdown, I noticed quite a bit of mud piled up against it, and a channel had begun to form in the streambed. Upon closer inspection I realized the passage I was in terminated in a sump room. The channel opened up into a narrow crack that got wider the closer it got to the breakdown. This was getting pretty intriguing! I stepped down into the channel and followed it to the basin in the

sump room where there were nice mud crack patterns in the floor. It was evident water pooled here from time to time. It was also evident that there was a connection between this room and the small stream I had seen earlier on the outside; it was apparently an overflow channel from this room. By this point the crack had opened up to about a foot-and-a-half wide and was getting deeper. It disappeared under the breakdown so I had no choice but to follow.

I jumped down about three feet and got on my hands and knees to worm my way in as far as I could. The crack stayed about 18 inches wide but kept going down, and I again felt the breeze on my face. I didn't know what to think at this point -- I thought I must be dreaming. Just then a fist-sized rock pegged me square on the helmet and I realized this was no dream. I kept moving in case another rock decided to join it's mate and was surprised to find the crack getting a little wider, not much mind you, just enough to where I could crawl with both shoulders in a normal position instead of one twisted behind me in a somewhat crude impersonation of the Hunch Back of Notre Dame. This went on for a while, maybe 40 or 50 feet and kept going deeper the entire time. I'm not really sure at what point I realized I was no longer in mud but bedrock! This took me completely by surprise and I had to stop for a minute to catch my breath. What was going on here!? The walls were water washed granite; they had been muddy up 'till that point and that's why I hadn't noticed the change. The floor was dusty, but I could tell it was granite underneath. I saw that there was a small crack about a quarter inch wide in the left hand side of the floor. I looked up and saw a similar crack on the right hand side in the ceiling. It was all starting to make sense now; I was in a crack formed by a block fault. Somewhere, some time in the distant past, a large hunk of granite had broken

away from its parent rock and formed this small void that I was in. (Not bad for an amateur geologist huh?) Well, the crack kept going down at about a ten-degree slope. It was about three feet high and two feet wide, just enough for a comfortable crawl. I kept going for about another 100 feet or so, and as I moved along, the left hand side of the passage started opening up. Soon it was a low room two feet high and stretching off into the darkness. I slithered in and followed it to what I perceived to be east (not really sure until we go back to survey!) until I came to another fault line. This one was a monster! It was at least ten feet across to the opposite wall and I couldn't see the bottom. It stretched off to my left and right as far as I could see with my three L.E.D. lamp (which wasn't very far). There was a small ledge leading down at about a 30 degree slope, but it was only a foot or so wide. I debated whether or not to try to go down, since I was by myself and I wasn't expected back for another two days! Looking around for some protection, I noticed a small crack that I could wedge a piton in so I broke out my gear bag, grabbed a Black Diamond wedge and hammered away. I then tied in my 50-foot hand line and put on my vertical gear. After "clipping in" with a Jumar, I started down the ramp.

About ten feet below the lip my lamp went out. I realized I hadn't changed the batteries since two trips ago. Not too shabby, they lasted over 28 hours! I went ahead and switched to my back up light and continued down. At about the 40-foot mark on my hand line I reached the bottom. It was still only ten feet wide, the floor was sandy and there was a noticeable breeze coming from my right. After changing my headlamp batteries I started off in the direction of the breeze. I walked for about 15 minutes before I came to another intersecting passage. This one had a small flowing stream on the far wall. I didn't puzzle long over this one before I

realized it must be the part of Carrizo Creek that sinks into the desert floor and finds its way down another crack similar to the one I had come through. Now with three leads unexplored I was getting anxious, I didn't know which way I should go, so I sat down to think for a bit. I decided to keep heading down stream; it had done me good so far, so I picked up my pack and headed forth. The character of this passage didn't change much as it followed an almost unbelievably straight path due east (or so it seemed). The stream was very clear, about five feet wide and nearly a foot deep. It had some deeper pools where I noticed a crayfish here and there, but I didn't see any fish. As I moved down the passage, the breeze I had noticed was getting stronger, a faint briny smell started to permeate the air and I could hear a distant rumble over the gurgling of the creek next to me. My heart thumped in my chest and I started to move quicker. About 30 feet further on I noticed a bunch of tracks in the sand at my feet. Most of them looked like rat tracks but some were very strange, like lizard tracks. They had splayed out feet with a curvy line down the middle. The only difference was some of these tracks were as big as my hand! Then, just beyond the reach of my light, something moved, and without warning launched towards me like, well, like a bat out of hell! It hit me full in the chest and knocked me over backwards. It started clawing at my helmet as I tried to wrestle it off me, I kept my eyes closed to avoid a popped eyeball and struggled to reach my boot knife. I was finally able to grab the handle and yank it out, but just as I did the thing jumped off me and disappeared in the gloom. I knew it was waiting for me in the shadows so I dashed after it. It bolted out of a hole in the wall to my left and tripped me as I tried to avoid its rush. It turned around and jumped on my back -- the only thing that saved me from a nasty bite was my caving pack! I swung around and smashed the lizard thing against the wall several times. As it finally fell off my back I twisted around and jabbed my knife into its soft underbelly. Its rotten black guts gushed out of

the slit and covered my hand with dark goo. I wiped my hand off then slit the lizard's throat as it lay there squirming in the sand. After I let my heart beat settle down, I took a good look at the thing that tried to kill me. It was about five feet long (not including the tail) and a little over a foot in diameter at its widest. The skin was very bumpy, like a toad, iridescent green on top fading through yellow to nearly white on the belly. Then I noticed the spines down its back. The only thing I could think of was giant iguana! About that time I realized I was hungry, so I took my pack off and broke out my whisper light stove, a small bottle of kerosene and a camp pot. I sliced up some lizard leg and salted it down, got some water from Carrizo Creek and boiled lunch. Mmmm! Tastes like rattlesnake! After a quick nap and a dip in the creek to freshen up, I was on my way. The rumbling I'd heard earlier was getting louder and I noticed a blue glow starting to impinge on my consciousness. I thought I might have been hallucinating from my impromptu lunch. Thirty more feet and I saw that it was real enough, the little Carrizo Creek dropped off a 100-foot cliff into an enormous underground chamber. A quick look around told me I was viewing the largest room I'd ever seen in my life. The blue glow was coming from the ceiling far above. I realized it must be from glowworms similar to the ones in New Zealand and Tasmania, millions of them. Thirty or so yards below I could see that the stream I'd been following emptied into a vast subterranean lake. It must be directly below the Salton Sea -- a parallel world below ground! I didn't have any more rope and it had taken me from eight in the morning until three in the afternoon to get where I was. I decided it was time to turn around, but first I wanted a picture. I broke out my camera and snapped a shot of this unbelievable vista 'cause I knew you guys wouldn't believe me. As I turned around to put the camera away something big caught me in the shoulder and nearly knocked me off the cliff. I just barely grabbed on as I rolled over the edge. About a half second

later I heard a loud splash directly below me. I started to pull myself up and came face to face with another giant lizard! "How many of these things are down here!" I thought. As my light shone in its eyes, a fire red reflection stared back at me. Its long tongue whipped out towards my face and I nearly fell again trying to avoid it. Another lizard showed up right behind the first and I knew I was toast, the only thing I could do was jump. I quickly reached up and grabbed my bag from between the lizard's claws and arced off the cliff in an amazing parallel to a Greg Louganis Olympic dive.

Too bad the landing wasn't so great. I hit just a little off center and it hurt like hell. Luckily I didn't go down very far, who knows how deep it actually was. My bag flew out of my hands when I hit, but was floating nearby when I popped to the surface. I knew there was another lizard somewhere, so I readied a surprise for him (her?). I started kicking for the far shore, as that was the only place I could see that I could get out of the water. Too late I realized I was moving to my right faster than I was moving forward. I also noticed the rumble I had heard earlier wasn't from Carrizo Creek falling into the underground sea. I was caught in a current that was pulling me quickly towards whatever was making that horrible noise. Thirty seconds later I went over another cliff. I have no idea how high it was, I didn't get a chance to look back. I was swept downstream through a series of class five rapid that would rival the Colorado River! I don't know how far I went or even how I survived; eventually I wound up in another lake. This one wasn't nearly as large but something was drastically wrong. I couldn't see any where for the water to go. Too late I realized I was traveling in a slow circle, then more quickly and shortly I could see just where the water was going. As I neared the steep slope of the whirlpool I took a deep breath and held extra tight to my trusty caving

bag. I slipped into the abyss and nearly blacked out from the g-forces created by the swirling water. I was sucked into a narrow tube and less than a minute later was shot out of a large hole into darkness. At least I could breath. Then I hit the ground with a thud, ugh. I'm sure I broke something that time, my shoulder was screaming in pain. Once the hurt subsided enough for me to look around, I noticed many bright white spots on the ceiling. It reminded me of being in Midnight Creek Cave with the lichens on the rock. Suddenly it dawned on me, these were stars! I had been shot clean out of the cave. I wasn't the only one though, just to my right something stirred. Quickly I broke out my little surprise and tossed it in the direction of movement. Into my little pool of light dashed the mammoth lizard that had nearly knocked me off the cliff. It grabbed my little gift, swallowed it whole and then it just sat there with a bewildered look on its face. In the mean time, I broke out the second half of my surprise, a small BIC lighter. The huge iguana started toward me and I readied myself, as it approached and opened its mouth to bite, I lit the plume of acetylene issuing from it's gaping jaws and the lizard went up in the biggest carbide bomb explosion I had ever seen! I was covered in charred iguana meat (dinner), so I washed off in the large body of water I had landed next to then ate. At this point I was totally exhausted, so I changed into dry clothes from my bag and curled up in a ball a little ways from the gushing hole in the ground.

The next morning I woke up very sore. My shoulder didn't hurt nearly as much as it did the night before, so I moved it around a little bit. Big mistake. I could hear grinding noises in there somewhere and it felt like someone had sprinkled ground glass in my joint. I decided to try to find out where I was, so I looked around and to my surprise there was a wall only a 100 feet away from me. A man was standing there

looking at me like I was a giant lizard or something, so I waved at him and said hello. He replied, "Hola". Holy crap!! Realization hit me like lightning; I was at La Bufadora! I knew I'd traveled far underground, but this was insane! And to top it off, the blowhole south of Ensenada wasn't what everybody thought it was. I picked up my bag and made my way over to the guy. He helped me over the wall and showed me where I could catch a bus to Tijuana. Once across the border (I had to hire a coyote to sneak me across, my I.D. was in my truck), I was able to catch a ride out Interstate 8, and then a park ranger picked me up and took me to Canyon Sin Nombre, where I hiked the rest of the way to my truck. It took me a day-and-a-half to get back to the truck and another 12 hours to get home. Luckily I had Monday off too, so I could sleep all day and recover from my adventure. My shoulder was only dislocated, and my only other injury was a gash in my arm from the first attack. The only regret I have is that my camera was knocked out of my hands by the giant lizard at the cliff, so I can't show you my pictures. Who wants to go back with me??

Now did you really need me to tell you that was fiction? - ed



SPELEO-ED 2007

Focusing on Geology, Cartography, Biodiversity, Photography and an Orientation to Cave Rescue

For the first time in history, the Western Region of the NSS is pleased to join forces with the Northwest Caving Association and the National Cave Rescue Commission to present Speleo-Ed 2007 at Lava Beds National Monument! Our traditional educational sessions and workshops will be supplemented by numerous opportunities for cave trips including an intensive two day Orientation to Cave Rescue presented by the NCRC. We hope you can join us!

About the Seminar

This year's Speleo-Ed seminar is an outstanding way to learn more about cave exploration and science while enjoying a fun and social weekend with friends from across the eight western states and southern Canada. Building on last year's popular seminar, we have arranged an even broader collection of interesting topics for 2007. With the gracious assistance of numerous speakers and organizations, we have worked together to design what should be an outstanding spring weekend!

Lava Beds National Monument

The legacy of Northern California's volcanic activity is both hidden and observable in this rugged landscape. Cinder cones, shield volcanoes, stratovolcanoes, spatter cones and nearly 700 lava tubes are all part of this legacy. In fact, several caves and surface features are within walking distance of the campground. Many Speleo-Ed sessions and workshops will be held underground.

Camping and Accommodations

The Western Region has reserved sites 18 through 30 in Loop B of the public campground. We have also rented the nearby group camping area to accommodate all of our participants. The camping areas provide running water and basic toilets but no showers. All campers must be registered participants in the Speleo-Ed Seminar. Day use rates are available but do not include camping, field trips or evening activities. Pets are allowed in the park but *not* in the Research Center. Owners are expected to follow the park's specific leash laws. The nearest hotels are located 40 miles away in Tulelake. Camping fees are included in your registration. Park entrance fees are \$10 per car. If possible, please carpool. Limited RV hookups might be available at a separate location.

Please note: Due to program constraints, there will be no available sleeping accommodations in the Lava Beds Research Center during Speleo-Ed weekend.

Additional Caving Opportunities

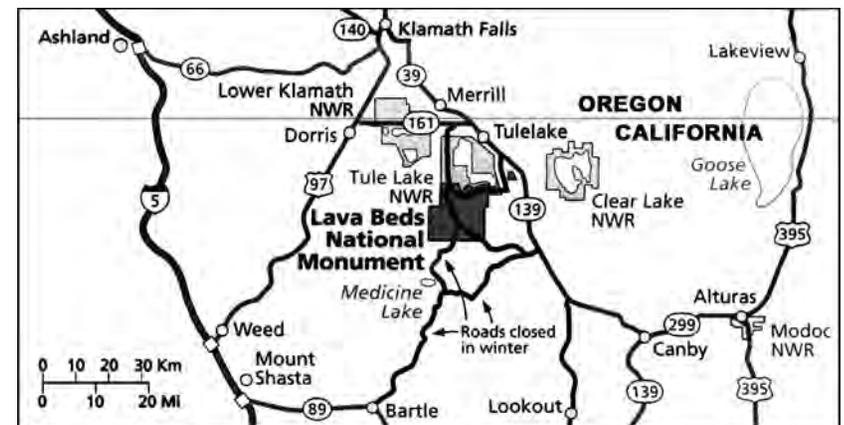
The Cave Research Foundation plans to conduct several study and work projects during the week following Speleo-Ed. If you are interested in staying past the seminar weekend and would like to help out, please contact Bruce Rogers or Pat Helton at BruceAndPat@heltonweb.com.



Lava Beds National Monument

May 18-20, 2007 ~ Tulelake, California

Produced by the Western Region and the Northwest Caving Association of the National Speleological Society



SPELEO-ED 2007

Lava Beds National Monument

May 18-20, 2007 ~ Tulelake, California

For the first time, the Speleo-Ed schedule is offering two distinct tracks of sessions and workshops to match the diverse interests of our members and friends. Track 1 features traditional Speleo-Ed sessions in the natural sciences with additional workshops on cave photography and cartography. Track 2 includes an intensive Orientation to Cave Rescue conducted by the National Cave Rescue Commission. Brief descriptions of each track are included below. Please be aware that EACH track is mutually exclusive. On your registration form you will need to declare which track you will attend. Participants will not be allowed to attend portions of both tracks. We do this because the OCR program is an intensive two day seminar on cave rescue. Participants that successfully complete the OCR will receive a certificate of completion from the National Cave Rescue Commission. At the end of each day, participants from both tracks will join together for evening activities and social events.

Track 1: Speleo-Ed

From paleoclimatology to speleo-history, this track of our 2007 seminar promises to offer something for everyone! Several new presenters will share information from two national parks, the US Geological Survey, the Cave Research Foundation and five different grottos in the Western Region and Northwest Caving Association.

All sessions will be based at the Lava Beds Research Center - just walking distance from the campground and Mushpot Cave.



Afternoon workshops and field trips will be held in several nearby caves, so be sure to bring your gear!

On Sunday, additional field trips will depart for many of the area's lava tubes and geological areas. Trip sign-up sheets will be available at the campground starting Friday evening. Sunday will also include a discussion in the research center on the national karst map project hosted by Dan Doctor of the USGS.

Track 2: Orientation to Cave Rescue

The Orientation to Cave Rescue track will introduce students to cave rescue practices and the caving environment. This introduction class will prepare students for the first of three levels of week-long cave rescue training classes offered by the NCRC. This class gives a brief introduction to the major topical areas that are covered more thoroughly in the week-long classes. This course does not cover vertical rope techniques or surface search and rescue. Saturday's OCR sessions will be held in the Fire Center located near park headquarters.

Each student will need:

1. HELMET. A caving or climbing helmet is preferred. Modified construction type helmets with good chinstraps are acceptable. NO broad brimmed helmets.
2. LIGHTS. Three dependable, independent sources are required. Each must be capable of getting you out of the cave and must provide ample light to see. Each should be rugged and at least one, preferably all three, must be helmet mounted.
3. RUGGED CLOTHING
4. GLOVES. Good leather or at least leather palm work gloves are a must.
5. BOOTS. Sturdy, lug soled, lace-up type boots with good support.
6. FOOD. Quick energy, ready to eat like trail mix, candy bars, small can of beans, fruit, etc.
7. WATER. Good water bottle or an army surplus canteen.
8. SMALL PACK. Items 2,6,7,9 and 10 go into this pack as well as extra batteries, bulbs and a note pad with short wooden pencils in Zip Loc bags.
9. GARBAGE BAGS. At least two 30-33 gallon size.
10. PERSONAL FIRST AID KIT and SUPPLIES including knife and whistle.

Some people will find 20' of tubular one-inch nylon webbing and a couple of locking D carabiners handy, but they are not required. Participants under 18 years of age must contact Roger Mortimer at RMortimer@fresno.ucsf.edu or (559) 442-4156 before registering. All participants must sign a liability waiver.

Evening Social Events

Following the field trips and workshops on Saturday, the Speleo-Ed evening events and optional dinner will bring participants from both tracks together for a fun night of social activities. Business meetings of the Western Region and the Northwest Caving Association will be held after dinner in the Lava Beds Research Center. Dave Bunnell, Editor of the NSS News, will also present his "Virtual Lava Tube" show in Mushpot Cave for those not interested in the business meetings.

Friday

WELCOME!



- 7:00 PM** Registration open - Please come to Loop B in the campground. Speleo-Ed participants may use sites 18 through 30 or the group camping area.
- 8:30 PM** Special Video Screening: Lava Flows and Lava Tubes - What they are and how they form. (Shown at the campground amphitheater)
Rivers of red-hot lava, exploding cinder cones, cascading walls of lava... How do these landscapes form? Why does lava make smooth pahoehoe flows or jagged 'a'a flows? If you've crawled through a lava tube or climbed a big cinder cone and wondered how it formed, this video will answer your questions.

Saturday

TRACK 1: Speleo-Ed

RESEARCH CENTER	9:00 AM	Paleoclimatology Studies in Sierra Nevada Caves - Jessica Oster, UC Davis	WORKSHOP	9AM - 12PM	"Happy Snappers: An Introduction to Cave Photography"	WORKSHOP	10AM - 12PM	"Cave Radio Location Workshop"
	9:30 AM	Bioinventory of Great Basin National Park Caves - Ben Roberts, Great Basin NP		Starts in the research center lab room with an equipment review then continues in Valentine Cave. No experience necessary. Bring your cameras & manuals!	Intro. to techniques used to transfer underground location data to the surface. Workshop starts in research center lab. Field exercises at 1PM			
	10:00 AM	JD Howard: Father of the Lava Beds - Bill Devereaux, CRF		John Woods, SoCal Grotto, NSS	Bart Rowlett, NSS Electronics Section			
	10:30 AM	Macroinvertebrates of Lava Beds Caves - David Larson, Lava Beds Natl. Monument						
	11:00 AM	Hydrologic Measurements in Caves / Natl. Karst Map - Dan Doctor, US Geological Survey						
12:00 PM Lunch Break								
WORKSHOP	1:00 PM to 5:15 PM	Cartography Workshop Liz Wolff, Shasta Area Grotto	FIELD TRIP	1:00 PM to 5:15 PM	The Geology of Lava Beds Natl. Mon. & Lava Tube Genesis Bruce Rogers, CRF, USGS, SFBC	WORKSHOP	1:00 PM - 4:00 PM	"Cave Radio Location Workshop"
	Class session begins at the research center and then moves underground. Cave TBD			Cave Loop & Sentinel Cave. Departs from research center			Field exercises from morning lab. Cave TBD	
5:30 PM Social Hour! Please join us at the Research Center to catch up with old and new friends. Hosted beer & sodas.								
6:30 PM Chef Belan presents Dinner at the Research Center - Proceeds to benefit the Lava Beds Research Center operations.								
7:30 PM Regional Business Meetings Western Region: Research Center, Room 1 Northwest Caving Association: Research Center, Room 2					Mushpot Cave: Slide show and discussion of lava tube features. For those not inclined to join the business meetings, NSS News Editor Dave Bunnell will be showing his "Virtual Lava Tube" presentation in Mushpot Cave starting at 7:45.			
9:00 PM Marianne Russo's Schnapps Tasting & Lemurian Summoning Party! Perhaps the most popular legend of Mount Shasta lore concerns the mystical brotherhood of Lemurians believed to roam through jeweled corridors deep inside the mountain. By the late 19th Century, occult theories had developed that the people of this ancient civilization were highly advanced beings from a lost continent. Join us this evening - who knows what might show up!								

TRACK 2: Orientation to Cave Rescue

ALL SESSIONS ARE IN THE FIRE CENTER	8:00 AM	Intro. to the NCRC and Cave Rescue
	8:20	Caves, Gear, Safety, & Conservation
	8:45	Rescue Operations and Management
	9:15	Logistics
	9:30	Equipment Planning and Packaging
	9:45	Cave First Aid / Medical Equipment
	10:00	Documentation
	10:20	Break
	10:30	Communications
	10:50	Cave Search
	11:05	Initial Response
	11:20	Media Interaction
	11:35	Lunch Provided at the Fire Center
	12:35 PM	Medical Considerations
	1:05	Psychological Considerations
1:20	Hypothermia	
1:40	Difficult Evacuation and Water Problems	
2:00	Litters and Patient Packaging	
2:15	Break	
2:30	Field Practice:	
	Patient Packaging and Litter Handling	
5:15	Briefing for Mock Rescue	

Sunday

TRACK 1: Speleo-Ed Field Trips & Workshops

FIELD TRIPS	9:00 AM - 12:00 PM	Cave Photography Skills Workshop, John Woods, Hopkins Chocolate Cave
	9:30 AM - 12:00 PM	Surface Map & Compass Workshop, Marc Hasbrouck, Mother Lode Grotto
	10:00 AM - 12:00 PM	National Karst Map Discussion, Dan Doctor, USGS (Research Center)
	11:00 AM	Petroglyph Point & Captain Jack's Stronghold (self-guided hike)
	11:00 AM	Mammoth Crater (self-guided hike)

TRACK 2: Orientation to Cave Rescue

MOCK RESCUE	8:00 AM	All OCR students please meet at the Fire Center. Sunday's OCR sessions will likely end by 3:00 PM.



Speleo-Ed Notes

The Western Region is attempting to get lunch donated on Saturday. This has not been confirmed as of press time. If this occurs, a notice will be posted on WR and NCA e-mail lists.

OCR Notes

Students that successfully complete the Orientation to Cave Rescue will receive a certificate of completion from the NCRRC office following the seminar. Students under 18 years of age must contact Roger Mortimer prior to registering. All participants must sign a liability waiver.

All Participants

Pets are allowed in the park, but NOT in the research center, the fire center or any caves. Owners must follow park leash laws.

The OCR track will be open to local search & rescue teams in southern Oregon and northern California. They may join us in the campground. Please don't scare them.

Bruce Rogers and Pat Helton of the Cave Research Foundation will be conducting various research projects in the park during the week following Speleo-Ed. If you wish to join them, please contact:
BruceAndPat@heltonweb.com

If possible, PLEASE CARPOOL!

Contacts

Registration:

Dan Snyder (831) 421-0430
daniel@snyder-haye.com

Event Coordinator:

Matt Bowers (209) 529-9000
mattb@ThirdMedia.com

Orientation to Cave Rescue:

Roger Mortimer (559) 442-4156
RMortimer@fresno.ucsf.edu

Speleo-Ed 2007 Registration

May 18-20, 2007 - Lava Beds National Monument, Tulelake, California

Please type or print legibly - Use one form per person - Detach and mail with registration payment.

Name: _____ National Speleological Society #: _____

Address: _____ Age: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ E-mail: _____

Day phone: _(_____) _____ Evening phone: _(_____) _____ Mobile/pager: _(_____) _____

Grotto/Agency Affiliation: _____ Dietary or health considerations: _____

Emergency contact: _____

Please mail registration form and your check or money order payable to:

Western Region NSS
Attn: Speleo-Ed 2007
213 Elm Street
Santa Cruz, CA 95060
(831) 421-0430

¹ Children 12 & under free with paid adult registration.

² Tracks are mutually exclusive. Participants may not mix & match parts of both tracks.

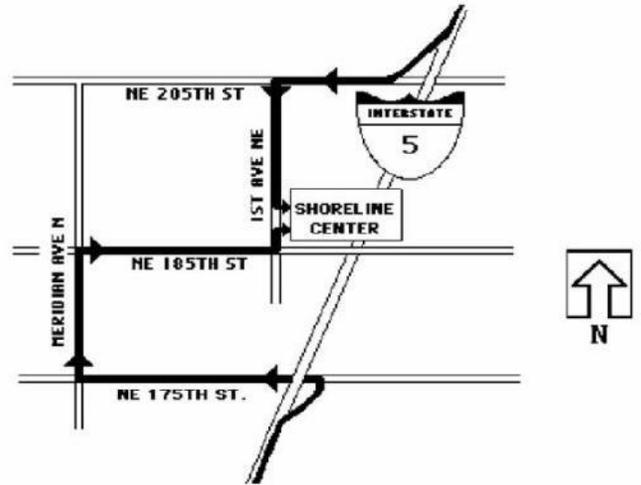
³ Children 5 & under free, 6-12 are half price with paid adult dinner.

⁴ Includes subscription to California Caver. Family rates are available for \$1 if at the same residence as a member.

Basic Registration - Includes camping, sessions and field trips ¹ :	\$36.00	
I plan to attend ² : Speleo-Ed <input type="checkbox"/> Orientation to Cave Rescue <input type="checkbox"/>		
Day-Use Only: No camping, no OCR, 9AM to 10PM Saturday Only:	\$24.00	
Lava Beds Research Center Fund-Raising Dinner ³ :	\$15.00	
Western Region Membership ⁴ (optional):	\$10.00	
Late registration - after May 1st or on-site:	\$8.00	
Speleo-Ed 2007 T-shirts - priced per shirt, list quantity and sizes:	\$12.50	
T-shirt size: sm. <input type="checkbox"/> med. <input type="checkbox"/> lg. <input type="checkbox"/> xl. <input type="checkbox"/> xxl. <input type="checkbox"/>		
Western Region Logo Ballcap:	\$15.00	
Cap: Black <input type="checkbox"/> Charcoal <input type="checkbox"/> Hunter <input type="checkbox"/> Khaki <input type="checkbox"/> Maroon <input type="checkbox"/> Navy <input type="checkbox"/>		
50th Anniversary Western Region Logo Coffee Mug:	\$6.50	
TOTAL ENCLOSED:		

Visit Lava Beds Natl. Monument online at <http://www.nps.gov/labe>

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
P.O. Box 66623
Seattle, WA 98166