



CASCADE Caver

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Cascade Caver

CASCADE GROTTO

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MEETINGS

Regular grotto meetings are held monthly at 7:00 pm on the third Friday at the Shoreline Community Center, Hamlin room. 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 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. Enter the building on the southwest corner and find the Hamlin Room.



COVER

Dave McElmurry prepares to dig in X-Rated Cave.
Photo by Michael McCormack

Back Cover

Denny Mountain before the hike.
Photo by Michael McCormack

Upcoming Events:

- **San Juan Islands Caves**
January 23, 2010
Michael McCormack
- **University of Scouting**
January 23, 2010
Ron Zuber
- **Ramses Cave Survey & Beginner Trip**
February 7, 2010 - Jacob Earl

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San Juan Island Caves

April 20, 2009

Photos and Article By Jacob Earl

Last summer, in June of 2008, Melissa Wayland and I (Jacob Earl) went to the San Juan Islands for our annual trip. This time we were interested in seeing some of the lowest altitude limestone caves in Washington. I did some research and contacted a few people, including Beverly Franklet who lives on Orcas Island. I got a



Fenced off pit in Orcas Island Cave.



Entrance to Orcas Island Cave.

hold of her and set up a meeting time and place. She showed us the cave on Orcas Island in Moran State Park.

It was a short hike to the cave and a quick off trail walk to the entrance. There was a nice sized entrance with sizeable passage throughout the whole cave. We walked directly to the end of the cave. On the return trip, about half-way back to the entrance, a side passage goes for a little ways with a little tight spot to go through before it opens up again. Just after your get through the tight spot, there is a fenced off area to the left and what appears to be a pit. The cave goes a little bit further and curves to the left, ending in a choke.

I did a quick sketch and paced out the passageway. It came out to be about +/- 300 feet long. In some places in the cave, there where



Dead moth (left) and solution deposits (right) in Orcas Island Cave.

moths on the walls that had died and are now covered in mildew. There were no formations in the cave but a few places with a kind of mineralization on the ceiling. The cave does not have a name to my knowledge, but we just call it "Orcas Island Cave."

On our trip, we also went to San Juan Island for the day and visited a cave on the north end of the Island by the name of English Camp Cave, which is in the English Camp. We went to the park, looked around, and asked one of the workers there if they knew where the cave was. The worker said "no," we just know there is one here. So the adventure started here

with my map, caves of Washington book, and compass!

Off to the woods on a journey to find a cave within a square mile. I had a rough elevation and the GPS to help in assisting us in our journey. After about a half hour of bushwhacking, I hear Melissa yell, "I think I found it!" I run over to where she is and, sure enough, there was the cave. The entrance was fairly small but unique. We grabbed out head-

lamps and crawled in. It was all crawling and very small. The cave had a few skylights. For the most part, it was a neat little solution cave, with very little to no formations.

Those were the only two caves we were able to look for on this trip to the Islands, but next time we will look for some of the other caves that are supposed to be here.



Skylight in English Camp Cave



Entrance to English Camp Cave

Rappelling Twin Falls

July 14, 2008

By Tom Evans

I have always maintained that the difference between fun people and boring people is the doing of the insane things you come up with over a beer. This trip was an insane idea Dave McElmurry had and we decided to run with it. He suggested that we find a way to rappel Twin Falls, a waterfall off Exit 32 on I-90. I had never been there, but it sounded fun, mostly because the words cliff and rappel were included in the description.

I was completely naïve...

Dave, Hubert, and I met one Monday at the Twin Falls trailhead. After making sure we had the gear we needed, we proceeded up the trail. It is a delightful trail, with little elevation gain, that runs through the state park next to a river. At one point, the trail crosses a small ridgeline from which you can observe the falls, and it was from this vantage point that I realized what I was getting myself into: insanity. It looked cool.

With renewed vigor we headed over to the falls and spent some time photographing from the observation platform and from the bridge over the falls. We discussed where to rig, then headed over to the rig point

and got down to business. Since it was a sunny beautiful day we rapidly assembled a crowd of onlookers as we put on our gear, rigged the rope, and Dave went down to the lip to secure a rope pad. We decided that, since it was Dave's idea, he should go first.

Dave disappeared over the edge after informing us that he would be a while since he wanted to photograph the falls. Hubert and I patiently waited for what seemed like an eternity, both enjoying the scenery and waving at the people on the observation platform. Finally, we saw the rope moving a bit, then a little more, and eventually Dave's head came over the edge with a huge grin on his face. He was clearly having fun. Hubert and I had already agreed he would be next, so when Dave was up and off the rope, Hubert clipped in and disappeared over the edge. Again, it seemed like forever, especially since I was now listening to Dave's glowing report of how cool the rappel was, and I wanted to get down there! We passed the time chatting and enjoying the sunshine and finally Hubert came back into view. He had originally started climbing with a ropewalker, but changed his system when he realized the chest box was doing nothing but making the climb much more diffi-

cult.

The moment had finally arrived that I could drop over the edge, so I clipped in and sailed off into the void. Actually, the rappel really has three parts. There is a first short section against a rock face, a second long sloping section next to the waterfall itself, and a final free hanging rappel over a plunge pool. I too spent a considerable time rappelling, and then I switched over and started to climb. I climbed slowly so I could take pictures and to avoid looking weak in front of the many onlookers we had accumulated that afternoon.

The climb and rappel are simply intoxicating, running right next to the falls and, if you want, through parts of them as well. The scenery is gorgeous, and not often observed from that perspective. When I finally reached the top, I was thoroughly high on adrenaline, which I burned off coiling rope and hiking out. All three of us had fun with our first big trip to Twin Falls, proving that it was more than possible to rappel it safely and efficiently, and demonstrating how worth it the trip was. I encourage everyone to spend some time out at Twin Falls on rope since it is really a worthwhile trip. There will likely be more trips in the future, so head on out and have some fun!

Trout Lake, August 2007

August 4 2007 to August 5 2007

By Tom Evans

When I first joined the Grotto, I kept hearing about "Trout Lake" and all the cool caves they have 'down there'. I was intrigued since each caving tale I heard was more fanciful than the next. Stories of new caves

found every weekend, and decaying deer in caves, as well as rappelling through lava tubes. I had to go.

My chance came soon enough when a big trip was organized to head down there and cave with some of the Oregon cavers. I headed down Friday evening and made camp at

the site Hester had saved (thanks Hester!). That evening was low key with me going to bed early since I was tired, and I knew Saturday was going to be an interesting day...

Dynamited Cave, August 4 2007

In the morning we organized our-

selves into caving parties, and mine included Kari, Aaron, Hubert, Tom (me!), and Ben (I think this was his name... He was an Oregon Caver...). We piled in to cars and drove out to the Dynamited 'parking lot'. As usual, we cavers indulged in the epic pre caving group strip and change, then started bush whacking through the woods. As is typical of Aaron he kept telling me he would get lost and didn't know where it was. Yet, we got there, easily in fact... At the entrance there was a good deal of gear adjustment and chatter then we all dove down through the hole in the boulder pile.

For those of you who have not been in Dynamited, you really should go. It is simply divine. Past the entrance talus pile the cave opens up in to large walking passage. As lava tubes go it has a good deal of variability in addition to some stellar geologic scenery. We walked briskly, both acclimating to the light, and discussing our attack plan for some of the drops, when we reached the first drop. Aaron, being the intrepid teacher he is, looked at me, tossed a rope at me and told me I was rigging. Yeah, that was interesting... I proceeded to look around, scared, confused, and basically helpless. I decided on rigging a chalkstone under a hole. The drawback to the rigging is it would fall a couple of centimeters when unloaded. Our Oregon caver commenced to inform me that it was a bad idea, in fact a colossally stupid one. Aaron, being a nice person, suggested I rig it anyway and see what happens. So I did. Upon testing the rope, the system held, and when I put slack in the system, the chalkstone broke in half. Yes, our Oregon caver was absolutely right, I was completely wrong. Sigh.

So went my first cave rigging experience (*fortunately for us, Tom has improved immensely—ed.*). Ultimate-

ly I decided on a wrap one webbing anchor around a huge chunk of rock, clipped a carabineer to it with a figure 8 on the rope. It worked great, and really was a much better solution. There are certainly times when you just have to learn by doing... After the party had moved past the small drop we continued to walk through large passage until we reached the next. To continue my humiliation Aaron had me attempt to rig that drop a well. It is a charming lava falls with a few bolts in the floor. I managed to forget how to tie a double figure 8, so our Oregon caver had to bail me out again... Yes, I was doing so well... However, with the rope rigged we all descended down the fantastic face to continue down the cave. That is one of my favorite drops, being a simply marvelous geologic feature from top to bottom.

Again our small party moved through the cave till we reached the dreaded 'blind pit'. It is a unique cave obstacle, at least in my meager experience. The passage is truncated by a large pit, past which there is a second drop. To get past it Aaron and Hubert rigged three nuts in cracks in the floor and secured them with a multipoint anchor out of 8 mm chord tied off with a figure 8 connected to the rope with a carabineer and another figure 8. Then our Oregon caver friend, who kept bailing us out, free climbed (*traversed—ed.*) across the pit as Hubert provided a belay. After rappelling down the second drop he provided a bottom belay for everyone else. Each one of us would clip in to the rope, climb across the void, and rappel the opposite side. Kari expressed a significant degree of apprehension when approaching the climb since she had taken a fall there on her previous trip to Dynamited Cave. This time she made it nearly entirely across the pit before taking

another fall. Interestingly when she was over the second drop and speaking to her belayer, he did not realize that she had fallen. He could not feel any change in the tension on the rope as he held it. This is both interesting and frightening, but it does show how strong friction is over much of that basalt. (*This demonstrates why we usually tie the traverse off on the other side.—ed.*)

We continued down cave till we reached a long drop down which you can see three lava tubes. I wanted to rappel it badly, however we had not brought rope with us to do the drop. So I amused myself with climbing around to get the best view of the spectacular lava tubes. Going back to rappel this drop is certainly on my life list of things to do! I was practically drooling over it! After wetting our appetites on the final obstacle we could not cross, we turned around and headed back. The trip back was relatively uneventful except that a few of us dropped down the blind pit. When you go to Dynamited, you need to drop this pit. It is simply stunning down there. Words cannot describe the decoration on the walls, and pictures can hardly do it justice. All I will say is if you are there, you need to go down the blind pit!

As people were climbing up the first short pitch Ben and I had the insane notion that we should run to the sandcastle room toward the back of the cave. There is a side passage we could run down if people gave us enough time to do it. Since neither of us had seen the sandcastles we decided to go for it. We pleaded for a few minutes of tolerance from the group and then ran down the side passage. Yes, we ran, and let me tell you, we were moving! We sprinted to the sandcastles, and photographed them as fast as we could, then sprinted back. We made it over

and back in about twelve minutes, far under the twenty minutes everyone said they would give us. In hind sight I think we should have jogged rather than run. I was sweating quite heavily.... We exited the cave tired, but happy we had visited. Not to mention that we got pictures of Aaron with his Spiderman boxers on above the blind pit. That alone was worth the trip. ;-)

We reached camp in the late afternoon, early evening, and found that most groups were back, and making fun of a young man hanging out of a tree... His name is Joe Temus, and he was supposed to have come with us caving that day, but he did not reach the camp until after we had all left for the day. So he amused himself with trying to learn SRT. We all shouted bad advice at him for a while, before we decided to stop for dinner. Food was excellent, though I felt sorry for Joe since he had made the drive for nothing. He had to leave early the next day, so he would not get a chance to get underground. Then it occurred to me, why not cave at night? It isn't like the experience is different.

So, I proposed the idea with most cavers thinking it was novel, but kind of weird. However, given that enough people had been drinking a little, I was able to convince four people to go. We picked a close cave, entirely horizontal, and easy to find, then headed off...

Deadhorse Cave at night August 4 2007 – August 5 2007

Deadhorse Cave is one of the more beautiful caves in the area, so I am told. We parked, and took a few minutes to find the entrance in the dark. Generally because of the dark and alcohol buzz people were experiencing (*Note that Tom is clearly taking license since he doesn't actually*

drink -ed.), we were essentially bumblng around like idiots looking for the cave.

Our small caving party included myself, Hester, Marla, Dave McElmurry, and Joe Temus. Eventually we found the cave and all piled in. This cave is not small, but most of it does require one to crab walk or crawl. It is worth every bit of the crawl since the walls have a shiny iridescence that is simply magical. We crawled around having little to no idea where we were until we finally found standing passage that had a small waterfall. Dave was convinced we were close to the second entrance out which we were going to make our exit (through trip). However, we managed not to find it, though we really just decided to turn around and head toward an exit we knew about. Again we crawled through the cave, enjoying it as best we could, then piled in to the cars, and headed back to camp. I learned a great lesson that evening: Cavers can be convinced to do anything stupid if you give them a beer. I would usually never suggest combining caving and alcohol, but this was a relatively short cave with few possibilities for injury, and those who had been drinking really hadn't had that much (*It should be noted that Deadhorse cave is one of the longest caves in Washington and is the second longest lava tubes in the continental United States, after Gypsum in Idaho. It is 2.5 miles long (Scott Linn 1996), and has several tricky climbs, and squeeze bits. -ed.*) .

Wicked Cave, August 5 2007

The next day I wanted to get underground again since I had made a long drive and did not want to waste my time down there! Dave is of a similar mind, always desiring to maximize his in cave time per effort expended. So we rounded up a small crew of myself, Dave, Diane Pierce, and Aa-

ron and headed over to Wicked Cave, which is a small cave Claude Koch told us about the previous day.

This was a new cave that was supposedly cool, but was a bit hard to find. So we got directions and headed out. We parked near where we had been the previous night then walked around aimlessly where the entrance was supposed to be. Finally we found it, donned our gear, and slid in the entrance. This cave is small, and has only crawling and flopping room, but it is still delightful. We were asked to explore only part of the cave and to leave one portion of the cave alone since it was actively being mapped and explored. As such we left it alone since it is always the best policy to give the explorers their due in finding and mapping new passage. All too often cavers scoop each other, which is a behavior we should all discourage!

The main passage was delightful, though it ended shortly in a sand plug. Crawling back to the entrance we decided to attempt to crawl through a constriction in the wall... For those of you who know all the people in the group, Aaron is a big guy, I am not small myself, Dave is rational and Diane is small. I made an attempt to get through the hole and was soundly rejected. Aaron continued to mock me and told me that he could get through it. So he did. Yes, Aaron, a man who looks bigger than me made it through with much fussing and complaining, but he did. I, of course, could not let him succeed and I fail, so I tried until I finally squeezed through. That was my first squeeze where I had to exhale. It was interesting, and the rock geometry was not helpful either...

Diane, of course, had no problem sliding through. The passage is beautiful, being a small lava tube that is more than a little abrasive. We

crawled around a while to satisfy our interest, before turning around and heading for the squeeze. Aaron made me go first, and it took more than a little exhaling, internally cursing my weight, and patience to get through it again. However, once out I was able to take some delightful photographs of Aaron attempting to get out. He had some trouble too, but not nearly as much as I had...

Sigh...

Similarly I attempted to get embarrassing pictures of Diane however she slid through with complete ease. Yes, she is built like a caver, and apparently I am not... Rats... We headed to the car, changed out of our caving gear, piled in to cars and headed home. I learned a great deal that weekend and will definitely go

back down there next chance I have. The caving was great, the people were marvelous, and the variety was refreshing. I also learned that night caving is really fun, so everyone should consider it when on caving trips! All in all we had fun, explored some great caves, I got cave rigging practice, and had more than a little entertainment at the expense of others. It was a great weekend!

Twin Falls Rappelling Date

September 7, 2007

By Tom Evans

When seeking out a mate people search for different characteristics. Some prefer emotional connections, monetary value, physical endowments, and some even search for intelligence. Myself, I seek someone who can tolerate me. For those who know me well, you know this is a tall order. Often I am a pain (all the time), I am incredibly opinionated, egotistical, and I have the weirdest hobbies. I have learned that if the young lady of my choice cannot tolerate my skull collection or flesh eating beetles, then the relationship is doomed to end. In fact, a milestone in each of my relationships is when the young lady embraces such insanity by giving me a gift of something dead. (Yes, this has happened three times now. Truly charming...)

As I have become progressively enchanted with caving and SRT, I have found I wish to find a woman who is similarly inclined. Consequently I have started making SRT part of my dating life. I highly recommend it. ;-) Friday, September 7th, 2007 was such a date. Courtney Lyons and I drove out to the Twin Falls trail head in the early afternoon. The day was mildly cloudy but mostly full of sunshine and warmth. The hike in was relaxing and we stopped to take in

the sights often, primarily since I was out of shape and wheezing my way up the trail. She had never been there so we spent some time documenting the falls from the observation platform and the bridge, which is delightful near sundown.

Being impatient to play on rope I hurried over to the rig point on the east side of the falls and proceeded to rig a wrap three pull two anchor. To this I attached a 220 foot rope with a figure eight on a bight with a locking carabineer. Since there were two of us I chose to rig a second 150 foot rope in a like manner off of a separate anchor so we could rappel together. Both ropes were tied with a knot at their ends and sent over the side of the drop. After donning our harnesses and checking each other I rappelled down to the lip and secured a large rope pad, at which point I joined Courtney at the top of the pitch where she was inflating pack rafts. Yes, Twin Falls is best done by rappelling with rafts. Each of us had a raft, and when they were inflated I showed her how to clip it in to her harness for a smoother rappel. We both got on rope and proceeded. It is cool to rappel side by side with someone, particularly when you are both dealing with rafts. It is particularly entertaining when you are attempting to provide

a bottom belay for your partner. Courtney is in no way in need of a bottom belay, but she felt better knowing I was there to provide such a service.

We enjoyed a delightful rappel until the end of my rope, at which time I informed her that she would have to go the rest of the way by herself. She expressed some concern that she did not know what to do with the raft when she got to the water, however I informed her it was like falling off a log: simple. I was right. She completed the rappel, easily slid in to the raft and blissfully paddled off to get some pictures of me finishing the rappel. She was clearly enjoying herself. I switched ropes to the longer 220 foot and finished the rappel. By this time it was near the end of dusk which is an enchanting time to be on the water. The roar of the falls was tranquil as were the bats that darted over head picking off the insects just above the water. Courtney and I enjoyed our time paddling around the plunge pool below the falls, with me introducing her to the joy of surfing the current off of the falls. If you have never done this, you need to do it before you die. It is even better in the dark! Like most of our adventure dates this one was ended by Courtney's internal temperature dropping below her comfort point.

As prearranged I climbed first by rigging for a climb and clipping in to my raft as soon as I was just off the water. After I had reached the second rope I switched ropes and she followed me. She paddled over to the rope, rigged for ascending, and started her climb after clipping in to her raft. I waited for her to catch up, then we finished the climb together; both complaining that rafts are great in the water, but annoying to ascend

with. The climb was uneventful, as was the de-rigging and hike out.

All in all it was a delightful evening. Once again Twin Falls was descended with great fun had by all. I would like to point out that our Grotto has a fantastic relationship with the State Park such that we can descend the falls whenever we would like, as long as we let them know what we are doing. This relationship took some time to build, but now that it is

there, we should utilize it often. For those of you who have not played at Twin Falls, it is a fantastic place, and it is even better on rope. The experience is unforgettable, and one few will ever have. So go out there and have some fun! Do it for yourself, and if not for yourself, try to impress someone of your choosing, since it is certainly an impressive date! If they can't pull it off, are they really who you want?!?

X-Rated Cave Project Synopsis (2007-2009) and Trip Report

August 16, 2009

By Dave McElmurry

Photos By Michael McCormack

In 2007, at Michael McCormack's suggestion, Tom Evans and I decided to undertake a dig on Cave Ridge. The dig had begun during 2007 in an area rich with karst features. The target was a diagonal slit running through solid rock, and within the slit, cold blowing air and more karst features. (This was dubbed X-Rated cave because of a large X erosion in the karst above the cave —ed.)

We first explored the karst field behind the dig, trying to find an alternate access point to the cool mini chamber behind the slit. Finding none, Tom and I broke out the hammers and chisels and spent a day breaking rock. In 2007 we had access into the slit, and had pulled out loose breakdown to get a better look at the potential cave. Around this point it became apparent that the original assumed lead didn't go, and the dig direction changed to straight down, into the karst. Rock breaking turning into dig-



Dave digs in X-Rated, shortly before discovering it doesn't deserve a name.

ging, and the project span moved from days to months to years, with various people lending a hand along the way.

2008 was a light year, but around that timeframe we found a small hole at floor level. Shining a light into the hole revealed blackness extending for about 25 feet, in an enlarging passageway.

Jump ahead to 2009 and we had dug and broken rock 1-2 feet deeper, to where we could access that lead easily. On August 15, Ian Grinter, Aaron Stavens, Michael McCormack and myself headed up the 'Ridge' with high expectations for a history making day. On this day we completed the digging and popped inside the new lead. It was evident, however, before popping in that there was light inside that was not visible on



Dave hangs out with the Ice in Huckleberry Cave



Even in Late August, the ice formations are striking.

previous trips. It turns out that it's not a true cave (seasonal 'cave' at best). Snow in the karst field had prohibited light from entering the

shelter on previous trips, but a dim glow was present on this day, as the snow had melted enough to allow light to sneak in from the back,

where access appears to also be possible. We'll be retargeting new areas for research/digging and as always... anyone will be welcome.

After the dig, we headed over to Ice Cave (aka Huckleberry). The ice formations are in VERY good form right now. More photos from Michael can be found [here bit.ly/6185Vf](http://bit.ly/6185Vf). The most exciting part of this cave was when Aaron, in the lower ice room, used a rock on the wall for a foothold, and the rock broke off and fell to the floor. Luckily, nobody was hurt and Aaron didn't even fall. And by the way, the rock was about 1-2 feet in diameter, and 2-3 feet long! Do be careful in that cave however, and there is a lot of loose rock.

We then went over to Exhalation, which none of us had been in. Exhalation is small/crawly. The rock tends to be sharp, but there is also a little climbing in places and overall we found it to be a sporting and enjoyable cave. Towards the back was a tight squeeze around a flake that was VERY awkward. Only Ian managed the gymnastics required to squeeze past and see

the end of the cave. (Nice job Ian!) Lots of fun to be had up there on the Ridge. Stay tuned for more trips!

Cave Dating, Jackman Creek Cave

April 20, 2009

By Tom Evans

I am a firm believer that people should cave safely, which includes caving with three or more people, having a call out, and carrying three sources of light with extra batteries. This trip deviated somewhat from this set of rules, which I do not wish to encourage.

The day in question was a delightfully warm and partially sunny April day, one which saw Courtney Lyons down in Seattle, rather in her native haunts of Anchorage, Alaska. We had limited time to do something fun, and had failed in the past at reaching Jackman Creek Cave on our previous attempt (too much snow on the road). Being unable to find a third person for our little underground adventure, we chose to be quite cautious. We called up the chair of the local search and rescue unit, her brother, and informed him of the location of the cave, and the call out time. We reasoned that

there would be no faster response than if search and rescue was our call out contact. With this assurance, and using her two parents as our other two call out individuals, we headed out to the cave from Burlington, where her parents live.

For those of you who have not been to Jackman Creek Cave, it is a delightful hole in the ground comprised mostly of crawling passage that forks near the back of the cave. Along the right wall as one crawls in there is a hole that, when traversed, leads to a tall chamber, or aven. Once we had sated ourselves by crawling to the back of the two main tunnels of the cave we came back to explore the aven in more detail. I looked longingly at the pitons on the wall, knowing they probably are not worthy of holding weight anymore, but tantalizing nonetheless. I stemmed up the shaft a bit over half the way up, until I became uncomfortable. The view was beautiful will much sharp sculpted

limestone surrounding me, and the potential of one solid anchor at the top. I wished I had rope there, and other vertical cavers to support my insane wish to climb in that chamber, but it was to no avail. I climbed down and encouraged Courtney to try her hand at stemming. She took a crack at it and found she was not as keen on going very high, which is to be expected on your first try. We exited the cave without incident and proceeded to strip off all the wet muddy cloths as Courtney made three phone calls to prevent us from being in big trouble.

All in all the trip was quite short, but fun. Since we were both in Burlington already it made sense to take a quick trip up to a cave, just to get underground and get our cave fix. We then had to drive Courtney to the airport to fly back to Alaska that afternoon. While not the best ending to that particular date, it was definitely a good way to start out the day.

Date Cave

March 15, 2007

By Tom Evans

Have you ever had one of those days when you just have to get underground? On those days I find it immensely useful to have a nearby local cave. Since I did not know of any near Bellevue (where I live) I had to find one of my own. I recommend this practice, that way you can have your own little project cave to feed, water, love, clean up, and find solace in.

Such was the case on Thursday, March 15th. I wanted to get underground, and a friend of mine, Liz Hoyer, was interested in trying out the new sport of caving. I picked her up at 4:35 in Kirkland and drove out to Iron Horse State Park, hitting the trail around 5:30. We reached Rattlesnake Ledge after a charming gentle two mile

hike prior to sundown and we geared up to get in the cave.

It was cold, so we put on most of our gear once at the bottom of the large crack in which one finds the entrance to the cave. We crawled around the short cave, exploring nearly every lead. I was surprised to find a bat in the lowermost chamber, since there had not been a bat there previously (Lord knows that bats never move – ed.), as well as a large Neotoma (pack rat) nest. Periodically the little rodent made appearances, charming me and scaring Liz.

After a few hours of clamoring around in the dark we exited the cave and started packing up our gear. I found that our packrat friend had decided to chew holes all over my backpack. This was not particularly appreciated, but

then again, I am sure he didn't appreciate us invading his home. So I determined that we were even. After a quick snack we hiked back to the car under the cover of darkness.

I learned a great deal from this particular trip. First, you can learn a lot about a cave by repeatedly going back to it in one year. Each time I go to Date Cave I find it has changed, the amount of trash has increased, and the life forms inhabiting it are different. Secondly, it is obvious that it is possible to go on an evening caving trip if you just recharge your batteries the day before. And lastly I learned that no matter how much you prepare, you camera batteries will always die just in time for you to miss the best shot of the entire trip. Too bad my spares were dead too...

A Packing List

January 1, 2010

By Thomas Evans and Courtney Lyons

I cleaned out the grit... then my buddies handed me:

- Non-cotton undies
- And a Lost Creek kevlar cave pack

I packed it away and my buddies handed me:

- A pee bottle
- Non-cotton undies;
- And a Lost Creek kevlar cave pack

I packed it away and my buddies handed me:

- Four Prussic loops
- A pee bottle
- Non-cotton undies
- And a Lost Creek kevlar cave pack

I packed them away and my buddies handed me:

- A first aid kit
- Four Prussic loops
- A pee bottle
- Non-cotton undies
- And a Lost Creek kevlar cave pack

I packed it away and my buddies handed me:

- Three locking 'biners
- A first aid kit
- Four Prussic loops
- A pee bottle
- Non-cotton undies
- And a Lost Creek kevlar cave pack

I packed them away and my buddies handed me:

- A head lamp and two spares
- Three locking 'biners
- A first aid kit
- Four Prussic loops
- A pee bottle
- Non-cotton undies
- And a Lost Creek kevlar cave pack

I packed them away and my buddies handed me:

- Knee and elbow pads
- A head lamp and two spares
- Three locking 'biners
- A first aid kit
- Four Prussic loops
- A pee bottle
- Non-cotton undies
- And a Lost Creek kevlar cave pack

I packed them away and my buddies handed me:

- One bright red helmet
- Knee and elbow pads
- A head lamp and two spares
- Three locking 'biners
- A first aid kit
- Four Prussic loops
- A pee bottle
- Non-cotton undies
- And a Lost Creek kevlar cave pack

I packed it away and my buddies handed me:

- Rope with two pulleys
- One bright red helmet
- Knee and elbow pads
- A head lamp and two spares
- Three locking 'biners
- A first aid kit
- Four Prussic loops
- A pee bottle
- Non-cotton undies
- And a Lost Creek kevlar cave pack

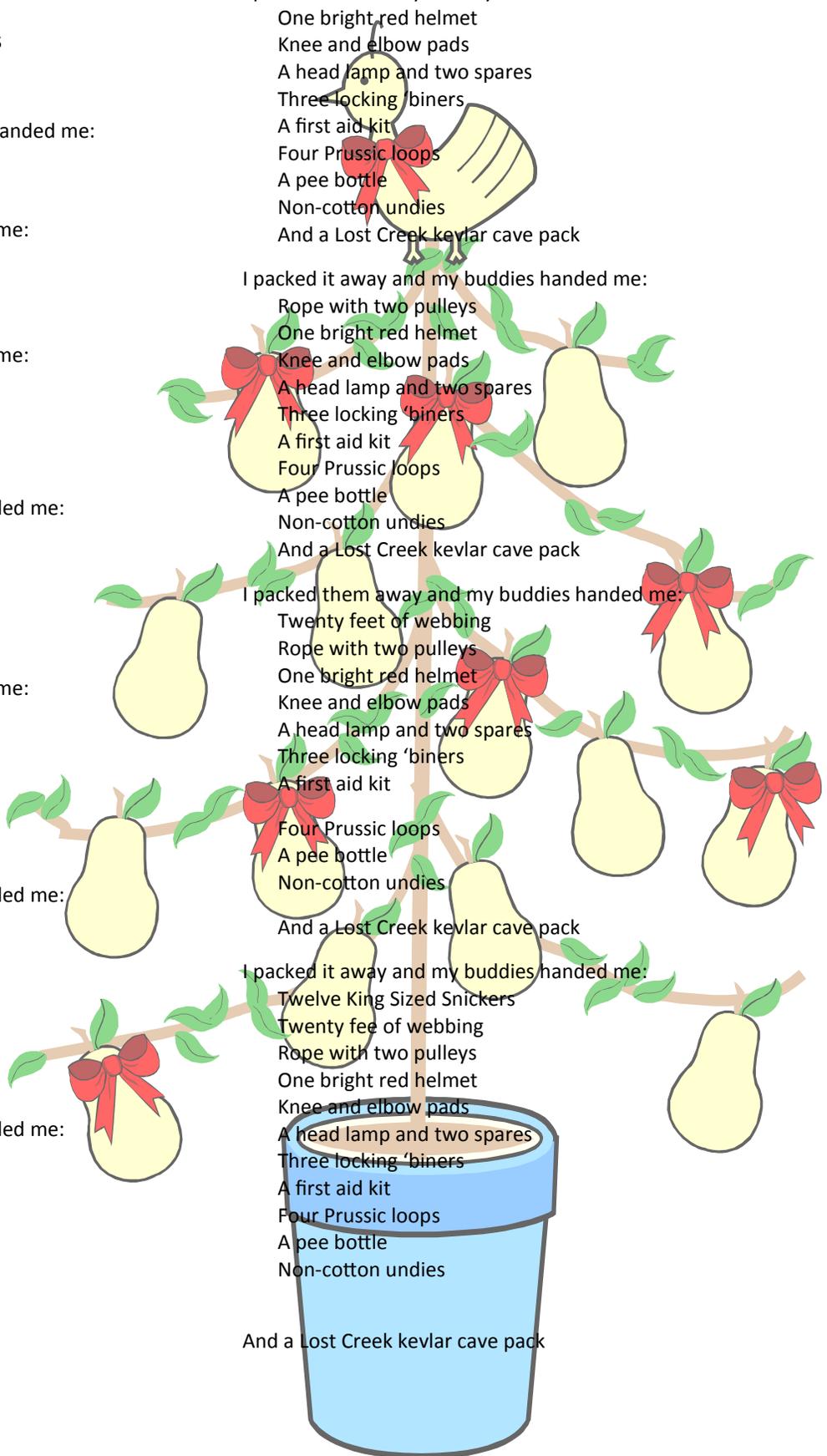
I packed them away and my buddies handed me:

- Twenty feet of webbing
- Rope with two pulleys
- One bright red helmet
- Knee and elbow pads
- A head lamp and two spares
- Three locking 'biners
- A first aid kit
- Four Prussic loops
- A pee bottle
- Non-cotton undies
- And a Lost Creek kevlar cave pack

I packed it away and my buddies handed me:

- Twelve King Sized Snickers
- Twenty feet of webbing
- Rope with two pulleys
- One bright red helmet
- Knee and elbow pads
- A head lamp and two spares
- Three locking 'biners
- A first aid kit
- Four Prussic loops
- A pee bottle
- Non-cotton undies

And a Lost Creek kevlar cave pack



Songwriter's Note: The above list is not entirely complete. Below are the two lists of what each caver should be carrying with them for a caving trip and a vertical caving trip respectively, as endorsed by the NSS. The items with an asterisk are items that I personally include in my kits since I think they are worth the weight consequently these lists are what I carry on each cave trip.

Horizontal Caving:

- Two or more caving partners with at least one person who knows where you are going, has directions, and knows when you are to be back.
- Helmet
- Three sources of light and extra batteries (I carry five sources of light*)
- Knee and elbow pads
- Gloves and Appropriate clothing (anything from wetsuits to shorts, it depends on the cave)
- Food (whatever is appropriate for the cave you are going to)
- Water
- First aid kit
- Duct Tape*
- Hypothermia kit*
(Two big trash bags, a small candle, matches/lighter, balaclava, light top with a hood if possible)
- Pee bottle
- Extra clothing (I carry a balaclava, light fleece gloves, a light fleece top*)

Cave Pack

As a caver I find it particularly onerous to carry both caving partners at the same time. The size of the bag is prohibitive for Washington Caves. – ed.

Vertical Caving (carried in addition to the above list):

- 3 Prussic loops (I carry four: two short, one medium, and one long prussic loops*)
- Two pulleys (rescue rated if possible)
- Two extra carabineers (can substitute mallions) (I carry three extra carabineers and two mallions*)
- 20 feet of webbing (I carry two twenty foot lengths*)

This issue was compiled in 2010 and is backdated for the rest of the articles. - ed.

Currently the grotto raises money to support ongoing operations 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 and a Cascade Grotto Patch.





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