

August 1998

## Alaskan Caver, Volume 18, No. 4, August 1998

Dalene T. Perrigo

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# The Alaskan Caver

Volume 18 Number 4

August 1998



# The Alaskan Caver

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Dalene T. Perrigo - Editor

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Cover Photo : This drawing by Carlene Allred is based on a photo by Kevin Allred.

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- Anchorage Meetings: Call Bob Hicks for details. (907)248-2830.
- Ketchikan Meetings: 7 p.m. the first Monday of the month at the Alaska Public Health Service Building, 3054 Fifth Ave., Ketchikan.
- Fairbanks Meetings:

**President:** Alan Murray  
57 Main Street, Suite 209  
Ketchikan, AK 99901  
hm: 225-7453 fax: 225-2508

### Vice Presidents:

**Northern:** Steve Lewis  
212 Observatory St.  
Sitka, AK 99835  
hm/wk: 747-7471

**Southcentral:** Jay Rockwell  
2944 Emory Street  
Anchorage, AK 99508  
hm: 277-7150

**Southeast:** David Valentine  
11976 N Tongass Hwy  
Ketchikan, AK 99901  
hm: 225-2289

**Sec./Treas:** Connie LaPerriere  
P.O. Box 9062  
Ketchikan, AK 99901  
hm: 225-4094 wk: 225-9601  
e-mail: kavesp@hotmail.com

**Conservation:** Steve Lewis  
212 Observatory St.  
Sitka, AK 99835  
hm/wk: 747-7471

**Cave Rescue:** Gary Sonnenberg.  
1377 Pond Reef Road  
Ketchikan, AK 99901  
hm: 247-1559 wk: 228-6323

**The Alaskan Caver:** Dalene T. Perrigo  
1921 Congress Circle, Apt. B  
Anchorage, AK 99507  
hm: 344-3290 wk: 522-1096  
e-mail: dtperrigo@aol.com

### Tongass Cave Projects:

Pete Smith  
PO Box WWP  
Ketchikan, AK 99950-0280  
hm: 846-5223 wk: 846-5223

Kevin Allred  
P.O. Box 376  
Haines, AK 99827

Steve Lewis  
212 Observatory St.  
Sitka, AK 99835  
hm/wk: 747-7471  
e-mail: ftswl@aurora.alaska.edu

Alaska prefix is 907





The pen and ink drawing was created by Carlene Allred.

## CALENDAR

**Nov 20-23, 1998.....**The 14th Annual Ennis Cave Speleo-Holiday, Mt. View, Arkansas. Randy Rose 253/839-2908 or e-mail him at RROSE77777@aol.com.

**July 12-16, 1999.....**NSS Convention. Twin Falls County Fairgrounds, Filer, Idaho. David Kesner, PO Box 1334, Boise, ID 83701 208/939-0979, drdave@micron.net

**Ketchikan Area Grotto** meetings are the first Monday, at 7 pm at Ketchikan Public Health Center 3050 Fifth Ave. 907/247-1559 or e-mail kavesp@hotmail.com

**Alaska Cave Rescue.....**meets each Tuesday at 7 pm, at Kave Sports, Ketchikan. Frequent rope practice sessions. Sonnenberg 247-1559

**Southcentral Area** meetings: Call Jay Rockwell at 277-7150.

## THE GREATEST UNDERGROUND ADVENTURE OF ALL TIME

by Marcel LaPerriere

*(The following story is just that, a STORY. All the cavers in the story are real people, but the story is total BS. No attempt was made to change or alter names, and no harm was meant by using real names. The author is totally responsible for the story and in no way is the Glacier Grotto, the NSS, or members or officers responsible for the content. The intent of the story is to have some fun through total fantasy. Marcel)*

"You're a lunatic" I heard Erin tell Kris, "but the idea of an adventure of the magnitude you're proposing sounds intriguing."

"I'll agree with that," Pete seconded.

"What's going on guys?" I asked as I walked into the El Capitan Work Camp trailer.

"You're not going to believe what Kris is proposing," Steve said.

"I'm all ears, what's up Kris?" I said as the rest of the 1998 caving crew entered.

"Why don't all of you get yourselves coffee or whatever and I'll tell you," Kris said. While Rob was making some of his famous coffee that would make one's hair stand on end, Kris started telling his story.

"As most of you already know, last summer when we were over on Heceta Island I poured a bunch of fluorescein dye into a small opening up in Unit 9. About two days later that dye showed up in Arabic Cave and about two

days after that a very small bit of it showed up in the resurgence stream." Kris cleared his throat. "I was a bit baffled that so little of the dye showed up in the resurgence, so I dumped a slug of the dye into the Arabic stream. The weird thing was two days later even less dye showed up in the resurgence. I kept checking the dye for the next several days but I never got an increased reading on the spectrofluorophotometer.

"What's this have to do with us and this years expedition?" Rob asked as he spit

*Continued on page 2*

## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

by Alan Murray

A recent caving trip with Dave Valentine brought home one of the basic rules of cave exploration.

I heard this rule from Pete Smith when I first started caving and I've never forgotten it. Dave and I were doing a surface survey of a large

*Continued on page 2*

out his snooze into an old soup can.

"Here's the part that you're not going to believe, and you'll have to let me give you some background information," Kris answered.

"Give it a shot," Rob said as he gulped down a slug of his coffee.

Kris walked around the room and pulled out a notebook from one of his extra large duffel bags.

"Like every expedition, the time was over way too fast. I left Alaska with more questions than answers. I took about a month off and worked for my father before school started. Then I started my studies back at the U of Florida in Gainesville." Kris cleared his throat again. "The first week into my graduate studies one of the other grad students, James, asked me to give him a hand checking flows of water and dye tracing in some north central Florida springs. Both of us had just finished our Full Cave Diving certification with the NSS/CDS so we were eager to have an excuse to go diving. I helped him set up his instruments way back in two caves one

called Little River Cave, and the other Peacock Cave." Kris went on, "For years people have been trying to figure out where all the water comes from, that exits the Florida caves. For a couple of weeks prior to setting up the instruments James had been pouring Rhodamine dye into insurgence caves in Georgia. You see the flow equals several times the rain fall."

Several of the cavers in the room were only half listening to Kris as they carried on conversations among themselves.

Pete did something he almost never does, he raised his voice, "Hey! Guys, shut up and listen to what Kris has to say."

Kris continued, "For several days we kept checking the instruments in Peacock and Little River, but no dye appeared. About two weeks later we started seeing traces of fluorescein dye, not Rhodamine. And it wasn't just any old fluorescein dye, but it was identical to what we had been using on Heceta. James and I started checking around to see if anybody else was doing dye testing, and as far as we could tell no

Continued on page 5

Continued from Prez Corner page 1

number of sinks in Carroll Inlet when we stopped at the front door of a bear den. We were standing with our backs to the bear den and looking down the 20' vertical side of a sink when.... a bear charged from the den and ate Dave! Actually, no bear is that desperate.

What really happened is I decided to go into the bottom of the sink to get a good depth measurement and to look at a dark area behind a large boulder of marble that Dave and I both noticed. Every sink we had checked so far (approx. 20 ) had been the same story.... a possible entrance next to exposed rock turns out to be a mud choked depression. This spot didn't look any different. When I got there I found 3

large boulders with a space behind them large enough for me to get into. After squeezing in, I saw a low opening against the wall of the sink that continued back about 5'. I moved enough rock to peer inside and see an additional 5' of crawling passage. It appeared to choke at that point, but I wormed forward anyway.

Looking under a large block I saw another 10' of loose rock leading down to a wall of solid rock that had a large void in front of it. I got within 6' of the lip and kicked a large rock over the edge. The rock returned four loud, booming echos during its 4 second drop. We knew we had something substantial, but it wasn't safe to continue without rope and other gear, plus we had a lot of rock to clear from the

slope leading to the lip. In a few days we will return with equipment and support to see where this new discovery leads us.

So just what was this rule that Pete managed to burn into my memory? He said that you don't know if a passage continues until you stick your head in there and cannot physically continue forward. I would say, if asked, that you need to learn to stick your head into everything while remembering never to stick your neck out! Either way, just relying on the appearance of something can cause you to miss a lot.

Get covered with dirt and mud. Get wet and cold. Get your body into every opening you see. Just make sure you know the difference between a cave and a bear den!



## EXCHANGES

THE CIG NEWSLETTER 41(11), November 1997, p.173. The Southeastern Cave Conservancy, Inc. (SCCI) recently purchased 332 acres with seven caves on Fox Mountain near Rising Fawn, GA. With this purchase, SCCI owns a total of 622 acres and 18 caves including several of the longest and deepest caves in Georgia. The Sustaining Contribution Program makes it possible to finance the necessary payments but the organization has developed several fund raising programs for Fox Mountain. The first of these is the "Buy an Acre of Fox". For additional information about the SCCI or about the Fox Mountain Cave Preserve, contact SCCI Chairman Bill Putnam at Putnam@scci.org or (770)822-0003.

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Birmingham Grotto Newsletter, November 1997, p116. A huge bonfire, and a fireworks show highlighted the 20th anniversary celebration of the Birmingham Grotto. What started on a chilly October night in 1977 continues yearly as the annual Cave-In. This celebration is the second largest caver gathering in the nation.

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THE EXPLORER, August 1997, p113. Members of the Southern California Grotto removed 14 bags of trash from Clear Springs Cave. Considered a party cave for many years, the cave had the resulting graffiti and passages stuffed with broken bottles, aluminum cans and assorted trash. One of the biggest challenges for the cavers was getting the heavy-duty cinch sacks through the tight passages and the opening without abrading the sacks. The Southern California Grotto has also created a bi-yearly publication to foster communication between the Park Cave Management Program and the caving community. The focus is on cavers active as volunteers within the parks and will include updates on cave management projects, initiatives, and events.

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York Grotto News 37(4) Winter 1997, p35. Reprinted from Ozark Hollow Gazette, June 23, 1997 and Carbide Dump Vol 32 (7), July-August 1997. "We Won One!" by Chuck Hempel Since 1992 cavers in the Loyalhanna and Pittsburgh grottos, and over 4,000 local citizens in the town of Hillside in western Pennsylvania, have waged a fight to prevent the mining of the largest cave area in western Pennsylvania. To date, cavers and the Chestnut Ridge Conservancy have spent \$250,000 opposing the permit. At the Pittsburgh Board of Governors meeting, the NSS donated \$1,000 to the

fight. On Friday, June 20 this investment paid off! A decision was rendered in one of three legal actions being waged against the quarry permit. The judge ruled that the quarry could not use or take property owned by Maggie Rosborough (an adjacent landowner) to construct a haul road through the town of Hillside. This effectively stops the permit from mining the cave area

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THE HOLLOW EARTH NEWS 4(10) December 1997, p6. "Safer Rappel Device Needed!" by Gary Phelps The recent tragic fatality at Surprise Pit (Alabama) resulting from an out-of-control rappel is something that ought not to be happening in this day and age. Unlike the relatively safe methods used for ascending a rope, rappelling continues to be a risky undertaking regardless of how much vertical experience one has acquired. Training, practice, knowledge and alertness can reduce the risk to a somewhat reasonable limit, but the fact is, even those who have successfully used descenders countless times have made serious mistakes with them. And unfortunately it only takes one.

Something better is needed. No, I'm not talking about installing an airbag on your seat. But all of the rappelling devices commonly used today are based on designs that could have been invented centuries ago. You can't tell me that noone living in this age of near technological miracles can come up with something that makes it safer to descend on a rope.....

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DC Speleograph 54(01) January 1998, p8. Reprinted from Northern Indiana Grotto's Michiana Caver. Eating and drinking are directly related to fatigue, safety, and mental acuteness. John Gumbs recommends eating a balanced meal before caving and supplement it with high energy products and enough liquids to replenish that lost through perspiration. A rule of thumb for a caver when underground, is to stop every 30 minutes for a snack and a drink. Beware of sugars. A food high in sugars (and calories) will cause a "rush" of energy followed by a "crash". A mind that does not have the energy level it needs to function correctly may cause the caver to do something STUPID.

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NITTANY GROTTO NEWS 44(2) November 1997, p56. The Grotto provided a computer disk in a plastic pocket of this issue. The disk has an Index to Cave Names in the Nittany Grotto News October 1952 to May 1997.

NITTANY GROTTO NEWS 45(1) May 1998 p 13-14. "Camps Gulf Cave" Tennessee by Rachel Bosch. "At about 6 p.m. we reached the entrance to Camps Gulf Cave....About a 30-foot high entrance, and two to three times as wide at the base of a hundred-plus foot high limestone cliff. In the entrance passage, you encounter anastomoses, but these are not the type of 6-inch relief anastomoses I'm used to in the ceiling. Take those and multiply them up to have 15-foot relief. I felt like a cave beetle walking in among them. Camps Gulf is essentially a series of three giant rooms, with very little actual passage between them, but huge breakdown piles to climb up and over....The third room of Camps Gulf Cave is the largest of the three at about seven acres, the largest cave room east of the Mississippi. To enter this room,takes about 10 minutes of climbing the breakdown pile and another 10 minutes sitting at the top of the pile to adjust your eyes to see the walls. And even at this highest point in the room, it is still about 90 feet to the ceiling. We stayed awhile, in awe of the magnitude."

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DC SPELEOGRAPH 54(4) April 1998. p 12. VPI Student Grotto Chairman Sandra Knapp organized the first "Young Timer's Reunion," an event that attracted 66 cavers in the student grottos from Virginia, West Virginia, Maryland and Pennsylvania. For details contact DC Speologist Chairman Duane Thompson, 703/834-1465 9 or e-mail caveboy@cyberdude.com

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Birmingham Grotto Newsletter June 1998, p. 65. The Birmingham Grotto celebrated its 40th anniversary April 7, 1998, with cake and recollections. After Jay Clark's short history of the grotto, Laurence Breeland, Greg McGill, and M. McEachern told of past explorations and adventures, some into caves no longer open to the public.

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The CIG NEWSLETTER 41(10) p 193. "Heuristic Notes on Cave Rescue": One of the most important things to remember in any cave rescue is to avoid becoming the second rescue. Anmar Mirza has the following suggestions: •Do not move the injured until the spine is properly immobilized, unless conditions are life threatening. •Check vital signs. •Check for pain. •Check of medical history. •Check overall appearance •Check head, spine, chest, abdomen, pelvis and upper and lower extremities •Treat for shock and hypothermia •Use your call out list. Try to contact cavers directly. Call the local sheriff as the last resort. •Give good information

on location, conditions in cave, condition of patient. Using ham radios can make a big difference in keeping everyone up to date.

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Muddy Litter Letter Issue 41, May/June 1998. p 3 "Call for Help from Up North" by Marcel LaPerriere The members of Alaska Cave Rescue are interested in building underground radios for potential use during a cave rescue. Not wanting to reinvent the wheel we are looking for any information that other cave rescue folks might be willing to share with us. One of the things we are most interested in is the licensing for the use of low frequency radio transmitters. Information should be forwarded to Gene Wyman at al7kh@ptialaska.net.

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DC SPELEOGRAPH 54(5) May 1998. p 5. William Halliday says that visitors are extremely popular in Egypt at this time and most of the country is very protective of them. Now is the time to go exploring for caves. Although the underground atlas dismisses the karst of Egypt as too minor to be of interest to speleologists, "Huge underground limestone quarries supplied rock for the medieval citadel of Cairo... and today deep, dry, stream-cut gorges in limestone are as impressive from the air as those of cave country of northwestern Arizona and Nevada.... In badlands topography, several sinkholes aligned with large gullies are sizeable enough to be visible from 10,000 meters." It's a good time to go to Egypt.

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Birmingham Grotto Newsletter May 1998. p 47 "Playing in the Pall Mall Quad" by Mudpuppy. The long drive up the Sequatchie Valley gave many a pleasing vista, mountains rising abruptly, sheer rock bluffs, and quiet, sleepy communities. I geared up (for the second of the caves scheduled for the weekend) in the landowner's driveway and hurried across a field to find the old road that led us to the first cairn. After ridge walking for about 20 minutes I found the large sink entrance.... I rigged where I thought I could get a free drop... As I descended the pit it immediately belled out big time! It was a huge room, anywhere in it could easily have been 100 feet across if not more. All those (cavers) up top were standing on the roof of this enormous chamber and didn't know it. The strata of large blocks was forced into wedges creating a fantastic mosaic, some of it down right spooky looking, over 100 feet above my head. I didn't stay long to explore since I was the only one doing the pit."



one was. James got on the phone and started calling all the manufactures of fluorescein dye to see where they had been shipping dye." Now Kris had everyone's attention.

"When I called the manufacturer of the dye we had used on Heceta, I was told the only shipments of fluorescein dye they had shipped in the last six months were to Europe, Russia, China, and Alaska."

Now you could have heard a pin drop. Kris paused then went on.

"I knew it would be impossible for the dye to get all the way from Alaska to Florida, so I knew there had to be a logical explanation. I called the manufacturer of the fluorescein dye that I had used. This time when I called I asked for the head chemist. I was soon talking to this guy named Dr. Elmo Washington. He was very interested in what I had to say and he asked if I would meet with him in person? I told him "sure" but there was no way I could afford to fly up to Minneapolis where his office is. Dr. Washington immediately said that wouldn't be a problem and that he would arrange to fly down to Florida to meet with me."

"A couple of days later I got a phone call from Dr. Washington saying he was on his way to Florida. And, we arranged to meet at a local Gainesville restaurant. Since I had told Dr. Washington how to recognize me I made sure I was at the appointed place a full half hour early. I sat near the door and exactly on the hour a tall gray-haired black gentlemen came walking in carrying a large briefcase. It was Dr. Elmo Washington."

Kris had been standing for some time so he walked over to the couch and sat on the arm rest.

"Dr. Washington introduced himself, then he reached into his briefcase and pulled out a very tattered leather bound photo album."

Kris stood up then went on, "He showed me a very old picture of a middle aged white man and a young black man standing side by side. He said this picture was taken in the late 1850s. He then went on to ask me if I knew who the white man in the picture was."

Kris sat down again. "I told him I hadn't the foggiest idea. Dr. Washington then went on to tell me the picture was of his great grandfather on his

mother's side and he was standing next the Jules Verne."

All of us were spellbound by what Kris was saying. "Dr. Washington asked me if I had ever read *A Journey to the Center of the Earth*. And, when I told him I had, he told me the book was fiction but it had been based on a real life experience that Jules Verne and his great-grandfather, whose name was Coulanta, had experienced together."

"Come on Kris," said Zach, "What type of stuff have you been smoking that you think we are going to believe this story?"

Kris then stood up, and pulled out several photocopied pages from his notebook. "I know it sound crazy," Kris went on, "but Dr. Washington was dead serious. Here are copies of Jules Verne's diary. You will note they are written in French but pay particular attention to the dates and the location."

Kris passed around the photocopies.

"I could clearly read the neatly handwritten date was 30, 7, 1858 and I could read the word Georgia."

"Man Kris," I said "You mean to tell me Jules Verne did some caving in Georgia?"

"Yes, but it gets better," Kris continued. "You see Dr. Washington had these notes translated into English. In a nutshell here is what they say." Kris cleared his throat, "They tell how a young black slave stumbled onto a big cave system. That black slave was Dr. Washington's great-grandfather, Coulanta."

While all of us were looking at the photocopies Kris cleared his throat then continued.

"I guess I better backup a bit. You see Jules Verne had done some caving in France, but he was looking for virgin caves, just like us. Even in the 1850s most of Europe's caves had already been discovered and explored. So, when Jules Verne heard that some big caves were being found in America he decided to come to the States to see if he could do some scooping. The long and the short is that some how Jules Verne found out that Washington's great-grandfather had found this cave in a heavily forested area of Georgia."

Kris then told us how Jules Verne talked the landowner into letting him use the services of the young black that had found the cave. Verne and Coulanta spent days exploring miles of underground passage.

Continued on page 12



## BAD LIGHT CAVE

Heceta Island, AK • Preliminary Report #311

Cave #10-5-4-282

Tongass Cave Project • National Speleological Society

by Steve Lewis and Nick Olmsted

February 28, 1998

### DESCRIPTION:

Bad Light Cave was discovered by Simon Dillon and Steve Murphy. These two began initial survey on June 21, 1996, returning for 3 of 4 succeeding days. Two teams composed of Simon and Dan Monteith, and Tim Harrison and Doug (Digger) Feakes returned on July 3 to continue the survey. A number of difficult and muddy leads remain. Total survey so far is 277.32 meters (909.8 feet) and depth at the sump is 113.6 meters (372.7 feet).

The initial section consists of a series of clean vertical pitches. The first requires a 30 meter (100 feet) rope, the second a 40 meter (131 foot) rope, and another 30 meter (100 foot) rope is needed for the third drop. A bolt was placed at Druid's Way about 40 meters (131 feet) deep in the cave and another was placed at the Scud of Damocles at about 45 meters (148 feet) deep. Loose rock in these passages was a safety concern throughout exploration. A tiny stream enters the passage at about the Scud of Damocles.

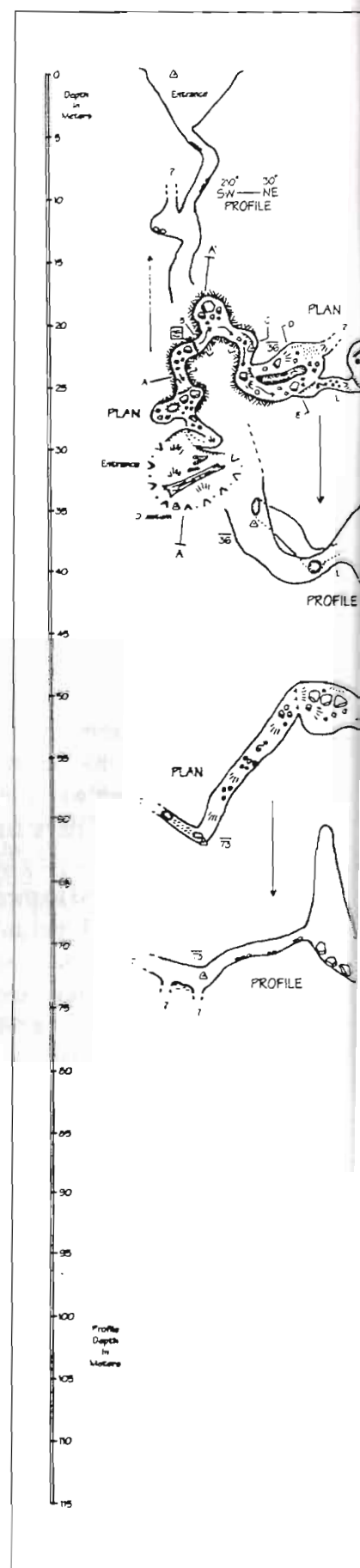
At about 70 meters (229.7 feet) of depth the pit series intersects a more horizontal passage and the cave becomes a muddy quagmire. Upstream passage continues tight and muddy with several unexplored leads beckoning but not terribly hard. Downstream the cave continues to be muddy with some steep and even vertical sections requiring more rope. The disgusting nature of these passages is easily imagined from the names given to particularly lovely sections such as "Madonna's Back Passage" and "Anal Intruder". Just below "Anal Intruder" the mud did provide interesting jug-like formations with the "jugs" filled with water. A vertical pitch here led to the current terminal sump at -113.6 meters (-372.7 FEET). The cave appears to back up much further during wetter periods, probably to above the mud line at -70 meters (229.7 feet).

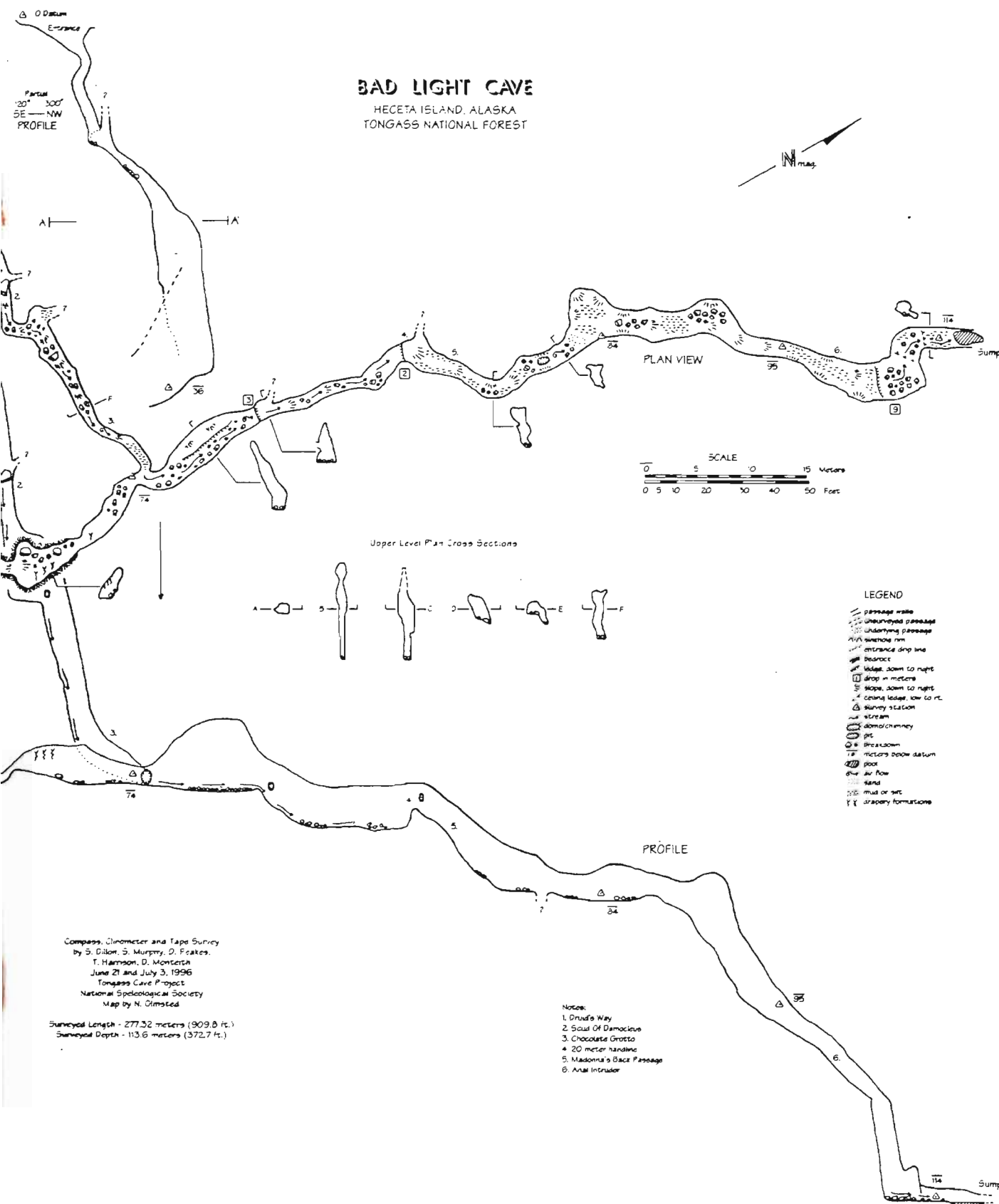
Some small soda straws, draperies, and a small stalagmite were noted in the cave. No animal remains were noted.

### MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS:

This cave poses great challenge to experienced cavers. It would be valuable to push leads and check the sump during very dry weather. The steep, muddy nature of much of the cave and loose rock make this a serious undertaking, especially if the sump is to be pushed.

This cave is part of the highly significant Arabica hydrologic system and as such should be totally protected from timber harvest, road building, or other potentially damaging management activities. Dye tracing from this cave would provide more information about the nature of this hydrologic system. It seems certain that the flow will emerge in the main resurgences which drain into Warm Chuck Inlet.







## BUNYAN'S BELLOW CAVE

Heceta Island, AK • Preliminary Report #302

Cave #10-5-4-289

Tongass Cave Project • N.S.S.

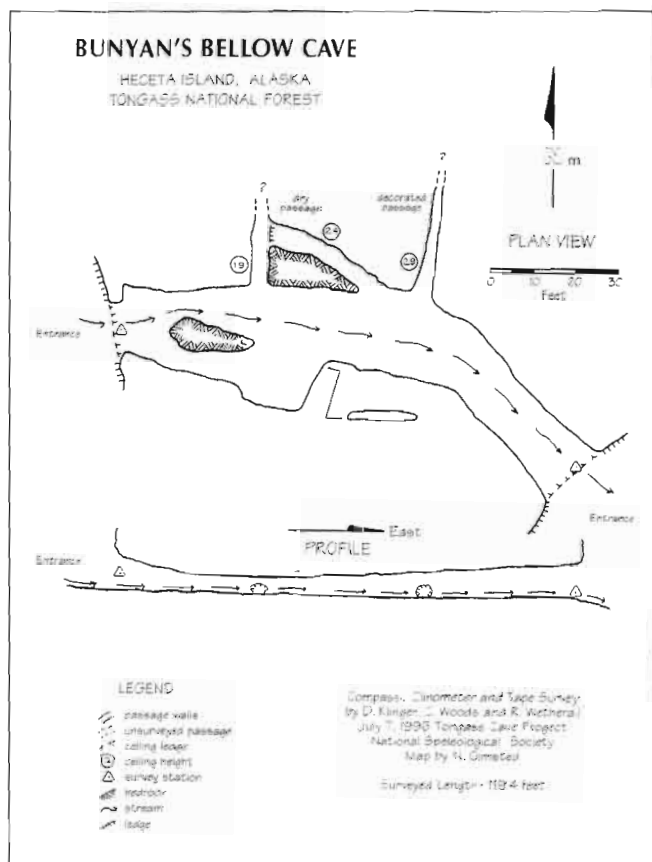
by Steve Lewis and Nick Olmsted  
February 28, 1998

### DESCRIPTION:

Bunyan's Bellow Cave is named for the tag at the upper entrance which proclaimed this to be Bunyan's Bellow. The original discoverer or at least tag writer is still unknown.

Bunyan's Bellow is a 119.4 foot (36.4 meter) horizontal cave that passes completely through a small limestone ridge. The cave is mostly wide stoopway but the downstream end is a beautiful entrance out of which a substantial stream flows. This stream enters the upper end of the cave, flowing off non-carbonate terrain, through the ridge, and back out into mostly non-carbonate terrain. Several small side passages branch from the main stream course. One of these is highly decorated and was not entered or surveyed due to the potential for damage. The cave is beautiful, easy, and sage for the

**Continued on this page bottom of Column 2**



## BIG JUMP AND FALCON CAVES

Heceta Island, AK • Preliminary Report #307

Cave #s 10-5-4-290 and 10-5-4-291

Tongass Cave Project • N.S.S.

by Steve Lewis and Nick Olmsted  
February 28, 1998

### DESCRIPTION:

These two caves were surveyed by Sergey Levashev and Alexander /Osintzev of the Arabica Caving Club on June 17, 1996. The entrances to these two distinct caves lie just 6 meters (119.7) feet apart.

Falcon or, to transliterate (Sokol) Cave, has a steeply sloping breakdown floor with large pits opening to the surface. The cave forks near the bottom where ice forms the floor with the deepest point surveyed to 33 meters (108.3 feet).

Total surveyed length for Falcon Cave is 120 meters (393.7 feet).

Big Jump (Bolshoy Preezhok) Cave is mostly vertical and contained much ice in the lower sections. This cave's surveyed length is 168.4 meters (552.5 feet) and it is 97 meters (318.2 feet) deep. One should remember though, that there are multiple parallel drops in the lower sections.

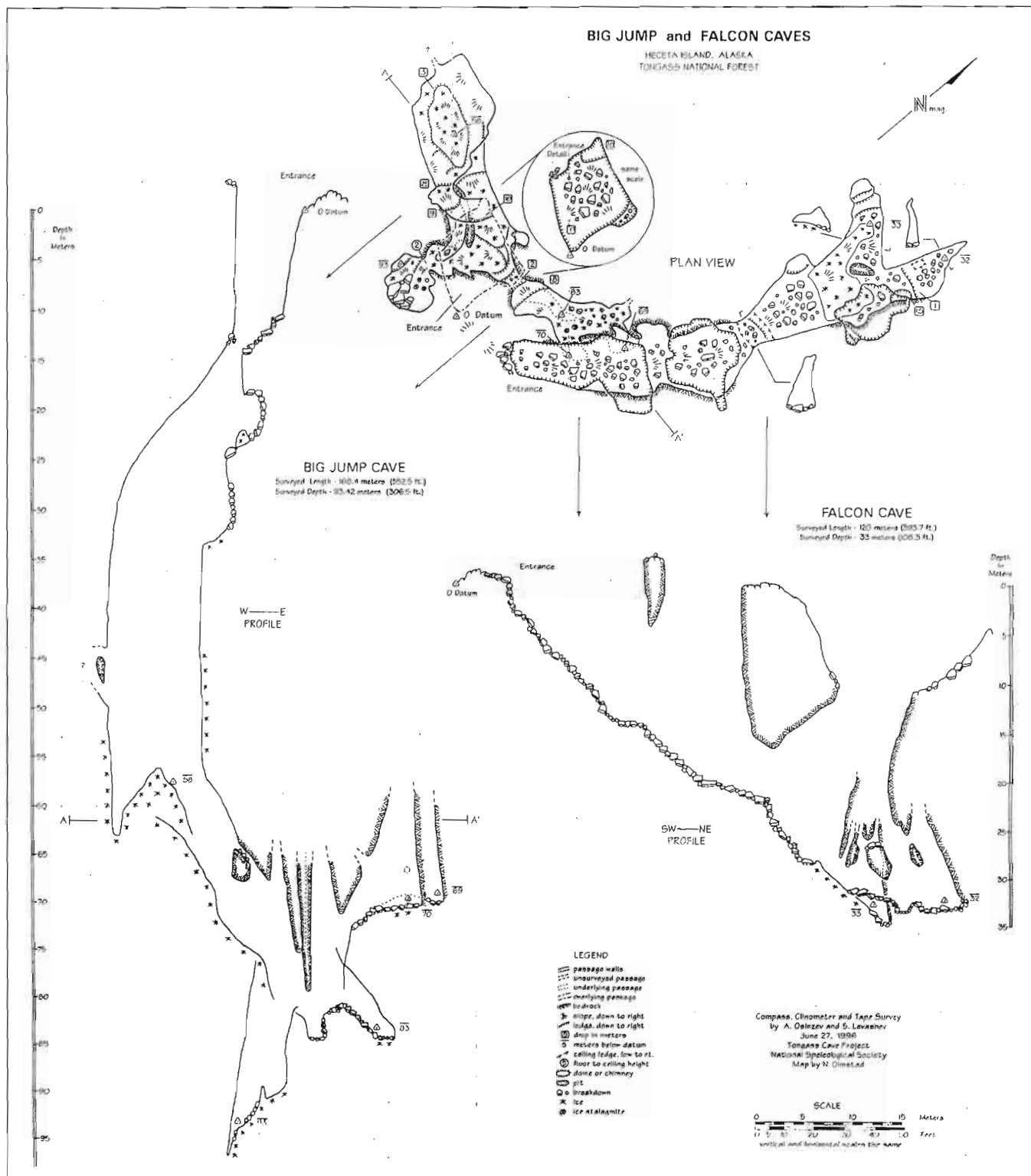
### MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS:

The cave presents challenges for the highly experience vertical caver with adequate clothing for the cold conditions. This cave and all the alpine caves on Bald Mountain should be protected from development. Such protection should include the potential drains for these caves in the forested areas on the lower slopes of the mountains. Dye tracing may provide some intriguing clues about where the waters of Bald Mountain drain.

inexperienced caver but its fragile nature precludes any directed access.

### Management Recommendations:

This cave is relatively easy to reach from roads, is safe, and beautiful. The aesthetics would be seriously marred if any of the surroundings were harvested. Luckily, most of the area is very low volume and thus unlikely to be harvested. Because of the fragile highly decorated passage, the location of this cave should not be made generally available to the public.





# NONCOMMERCIAL CAVE

Heceta Island, Alaska • Preliminary Report #281

Cave #10-5-4-300

Tongass Cave Project • National Speleological Society

by Steve Lewis  
February 28, 1998

**DESCRIPTION:** Noncommercial Cave was discovered by Simon Dillon and Eron Gissberg on June 22, 1996. The cave is located in an area dense with other caves and sinks and is not far below some massive clear-cut. It is relatively close to the main Warm Chuck Resurgence in a large gully fed by numerous smaller streams.

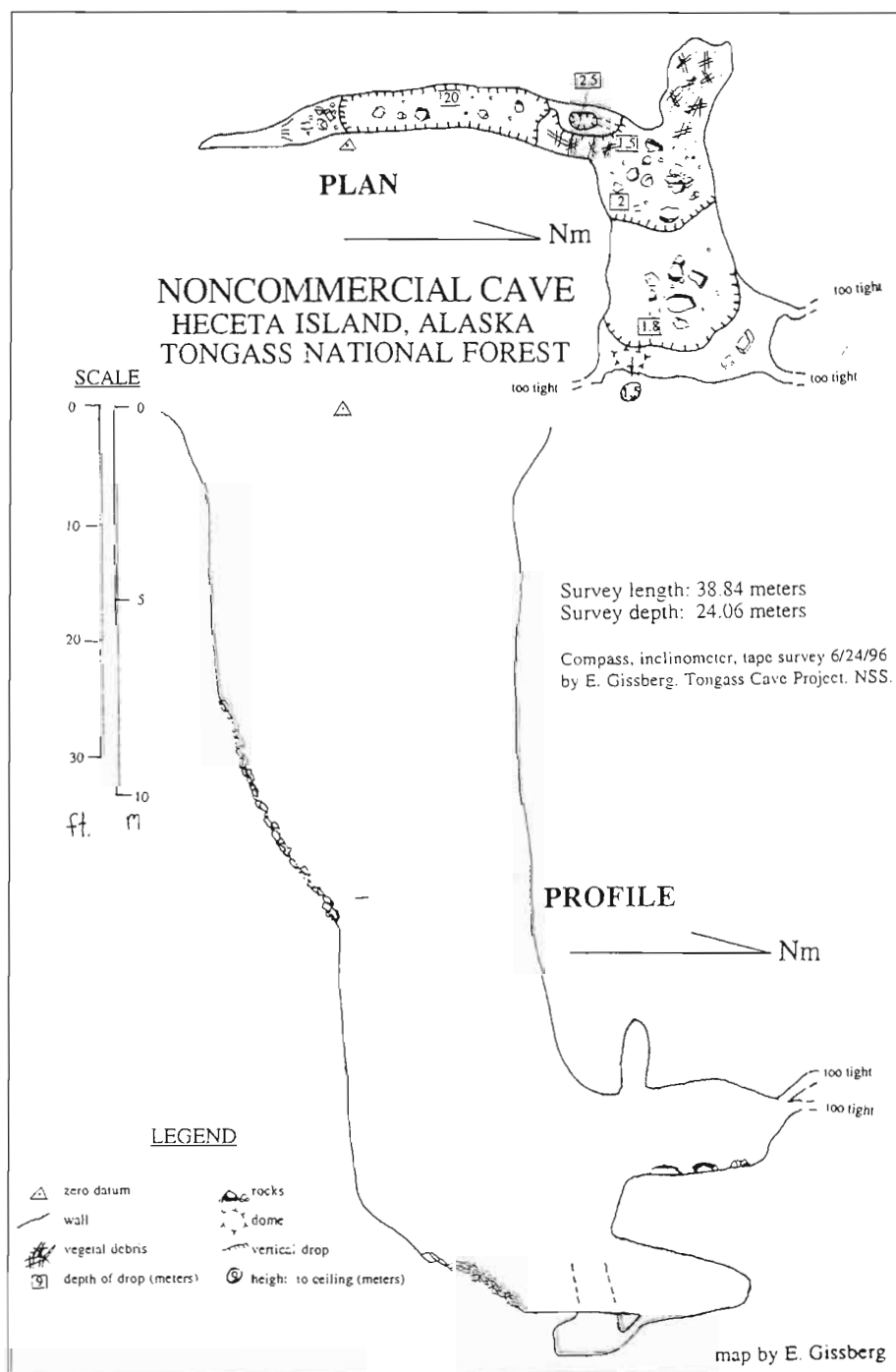
A 30-meter rope was rigged to a tree at the top of the drop for exploration and survey work. The cave is 38.84 meters (127.4 feet) long and 24.06 meters (78.9 feet) deep. A 20 meter (65.6 feet) drop down a slot leads to several clast floored chambers with three too-tight leads. Beetles and organic debris were noted at the bottom of the drop.

**BIOLOGY:** No special biological survey was made.

**MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS:** This cave is safe for the beginning vertical cavers. It is in an area of intense karst development and is just above the Warm Chuck Resurgence, main drain for the huge block of karst which also contains Sinuous System, Arabica, and Icy Fate caves, as well as many of the caves and karst on Timber Knob and Bald Mountain. It is virtually a certainty that any water entering Non-commercial Cave also drains to Warm Chuck.

No further timber harvest or other disruptive management activities should occur within this block of highly developed and highly vulnerable karst. Research into the drainage patterns of this

system and the disruptions caused by past and current management should be continued. Further exploration will yield many more caves.



# RUSSIAN SKI JUMP CAVE

Heceta Island, AK • Preliminary Report #306

Cave #10-5-4-309

Tongass Cave Project • N.S.S.

by Steve Lewis and Nick Olmsted

## Description:

Russian Ski Jump Cave (Peshera Roosky Trampleen) is a deep and narrow cave surveyed on July 6, 1996, by Russian caver Sergey Levashev and Missouri cavers Doug (Digger) Feakes and Tim Harrison. It is highly vertical, with a surveyed length of 128.94 meters (423.02 feet) and a depth of 98.79 meters (324.11 feet). Several large breakdown blocks are lodged in the narrow first pitch. The second pitch leads to an ice slope going in two directions. One way leads to a small pit which chokes at -46 meters (150.9 feet). The other continues down the main fissure. The final drop is approximately 45 meters (147.6 feet) with 2 rebelay enroute. The shaft widens with depth. Some water drains into the too tight lead at the bottom of the cave. This young and active cave had very little speleothem development.

## Management Recommendations:

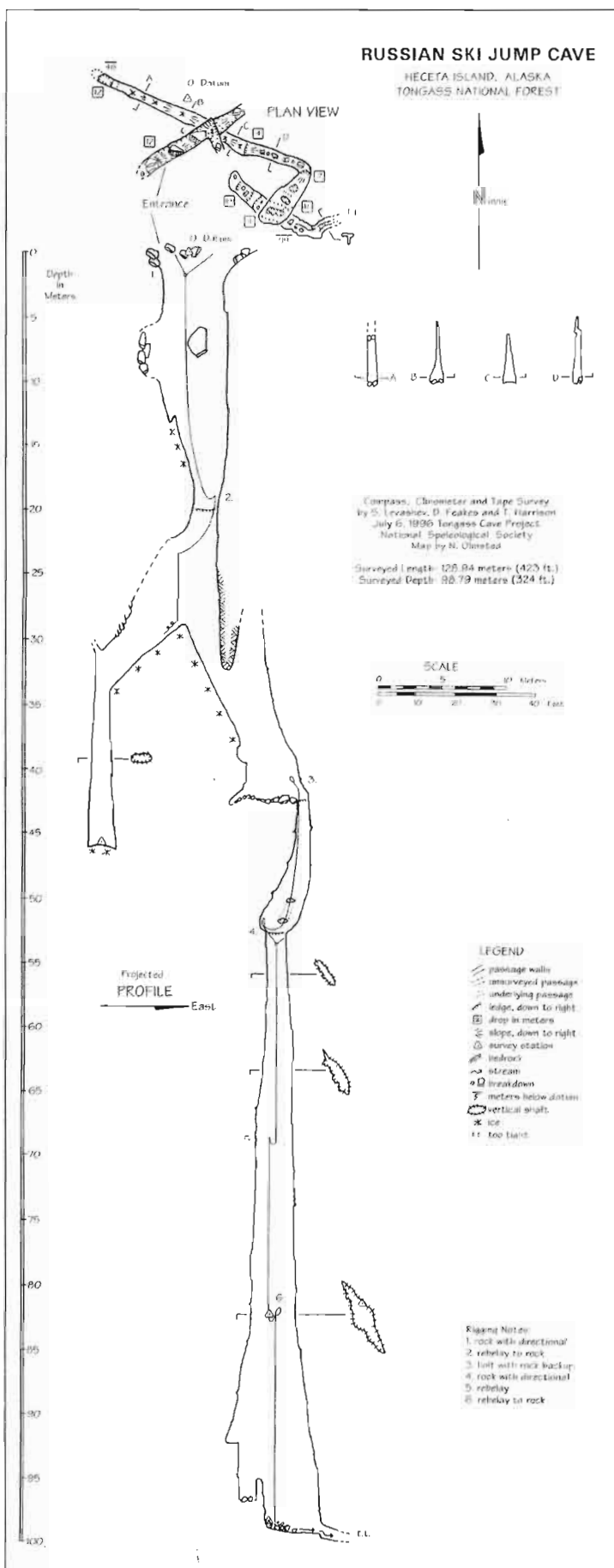
The cave presents challenges for the highly experienced vertical caver with adequate clothing for the cold conditions. This cave and all the alpine caves on Bald Mountain should be protected from development. Such protection should include the potential drains for these caves in the forested areas on the lower slopes of the mountains. Dye tracing may provide some intriguing clues about where the waters of Bald Mountain drain.

## QUOTES

It takes 20 years to build a reputation and five minutes to ruin it. Warren Buffet

There are two ways to slide easily through life: to believe everything or to doubt everything. Both ways save us from thinking.

Alfred Korzybski





One day a very deep pit was discovered that blocked the main passage. A large wooden plank was brought into the cave so the explorers could keep going. When that lead died, they turned their attention to the pit. A trip was made to Atlanta in order to purchase a block and tackle from a ship's chandlery. A tripod was built over the pit and the tackle was rigged. Washington's great-grandfather was lowered about 100 feet down, but the rope was too short. A longer rope was ordered and again the black slave was lowered this time the bottom was found at a depth of almost 200 feet. The young black man was surprised to find a small stream running in big booming passage. After an hour of exploration he came back to the pit and yelled that he was ready to come up. When Coulanta told Jules Verne what he had found, plans were made to do a major exploration of the lower leads.

Kris continued to relay the story to us. More rope was purchased along with a couple more blocks and tackles and supplies for a two-week expedition. The landowner again sent Coulanta with Jules Verne along with two other slaves. The four of them lowered themselves and all their supplies down into the pit and adventure of a life time began.

The journal told how they spent the first day following the stream passage in gigantic walking passage until they encountered another pit. Again a tackle was rigged and the expedition lowered themselves down another 100 feet. They continued to follow the stream passage in smaller passage often getting down on their knees, or swimming in the stream. They followed that passage for another full day until they came to a large room with a collapsed ceiling. In that room the stream disappeared into a pile of breakdown rubble. The group set up camp there for the night with the intent of seeing if they could find a way through the breakdown.

The next day Coulanta, being the smallest of the four, with a whale oil lantern in hand pushed his way through a small lead. After a couple hundred feet he was surprised to see a glow of light ahead. At first he thought he had done a circle and he was seeing the light of the others, but then Coulanta found himself looking over a cliff onto a very large lake with lush vegetation all around the shores. There was a reddish glow to the room and the strong

smell of sulfur, which they had all been smelling for the last day.

"Verne's journal went on, telling how Coulanta had returned to the breakdown room almost too excited to talk. Of course, at first none of the others believed Coulanta's story. However, they soon found themselves following him back through the maze until they too looked down onto the lake. The four explorers worked their way out onto a ledge that was about 500 feet above the water. A waterfall exited the rocks just below them cascading into the lake from the disappearing stream that they had been following. There was numerous other waterfalls both to their right and left and vegetation as far as they could see. When they looked up they could not see anything but blackness. All the light seemed to be coming from the floor and possibly from the walls of the enormous cavern. At first, it looked like their adventure was over because they could not see any way down and they certainly didn't have a rope long enough.

"Just as Jules Verne was about to tell the others it was time to turn around Coulanta again surprised everybody, Coulanta carefully edged his way along the ledge until he came to a large crack, actually more of what we would call a chimney today. He could climb down with little risk. Before Jules Verne could call Coulanta back he had started to down-climb and within a half hour the others could see he was walking along the edge of the lake.

"After another half hour Coulanta climbed back up the crack to the anxiously waiting trio. Since Verne's pocket watch showed it was now nearing 10 p.m. it was decided that the group would spend the night back in the breakdown room and in the morning they would all try to climb down the crack taking two days of supplies."

Kris continued to tell the story .."As you can well imagine none of the group slept well and by 4 a.m. everyone was back on the ledge."

Kris paused for a second and one of the cavers in the room said, "Kris this is a fascinating story, but what does it have to do with our expedition?" Kris answered, "As I said in the beginning you would never believe this, but I'm nearly convinced that some of the water that resurges from the Florida caves comes from the Alaska karst."

To be continued

# Speleo Digest

Now available

The recently published 1996 and 1997 Speleo Digests had a limited printing of 500 copies and unlike their seventies predecessors, they are both destined to become collectors items by year's end. The September 15th inventory was 155 and 238 copies of the 1996 and 1997 Digest respectively. Did you know that the 1995 Digest was sold out during the recent Tennessee convention?

What?? You don't know what a Speleo Digest is? Is that possible? Well then, just pop over to <http://www.caves.org/pub/SpeleoDigest/> in order to find out. You can check out the promo material, table of contents, author index, cave index, and article title index. It is all there for you to review.

The 1996 Speleo Digest contains over 300 articles by over 200 authors and descriptions and maps of 299 caves, most of them new discoveries in the United States. Imagine exploring caves such as Milliede, Groundhog Carcass, Cockroach and Dead Goat. There are also exploring adventures of speleologists in Baby Head Voodoo Cave and Cave of the Not So Very Distant Shoes. You will find them all in the 1996 Speleo Digest.

There is also cave art and cartoons as well as chapters on archaeology, biology, conservation, caving equipment, geology, history, hydrology, safety, lighting, locating caves, photography, surveying and vertical caving. Fictions fans can also find adventure that originated in the mind of the creative caver.

The cost? Heck, only \$19.00 plus \$4.50 shipping. What a bargain for over 500 pages of classic Spelean articles, maps, artwork, poetry, songs, fiction, and much more! Once you hold one, you will be amazed at what it contains and will have trouble putting it down. From Alaska to Florida and even Arizona (shhhh, they don't know), over 200 caves maps abound. Check it out!

For those without Internet access, you may contact the NSS Office at 256-852-1300. The e-mail address is [nss@caves.org](mailto:nss@caves.org) (Information from Scott Fee)

*After the very successful NSS Convention in Sewanee, Tennessee, the NSS Office has a very limited supply of certain Speleo Digests. As of September 15th, the inventory was as follows:*

05-0005	1973	SPELEODIGEST	64
05-0011	1979	SPELEODIGEST	25
05-0022	1984	SPELEODIGEST	251
05-0020	1987	SPELEODIGEST	23
05-0023	1993	SPELEODIGEST	562
05-0024	1996	SPELEODIGEST	130
05-0025	1997	SPELEODIGEST	191

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## ODE OF THE TROGLODYTE

by Lydia Neubuck

appeared in the July 1948 N.S.S. News and the July 1998 N.S.S. News

Don't start debunking  
The sport of Spelunking  
Till you know what it's all about.  
'Cause if you should savor  
The like of a caver,  
You'd see the world inside out.  
And if you should wonder  
'Bout things down in under-  
And how the cave men did thrive -  
Just join us in crawling  
And creeping and falling  
And praying you'll come out alive.

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## WEB SPACE AVAILABLE

For \$12/year the NSS website ([www.caves.org](http://www.caves.org)) is available for use by all Internal Organizations. This pays for 3-5 megabytes. E-mail Joshua Abdulla to set up an account at [joshua@caves.org](mailto:joshua@caves.org)



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## SAFETY STUFF

by Curt Harler

Published in the CLEVE-O GROTTO NEWS (44)3 March 1998

### Never walk away from your pack.

One of the biggest causes of (usually minor) trouble is walking away "just for a moment" from one's pack. This is true whether underground or above ground.

I can recall vividly once pushing a lead in a muddy cave in central Pennsylvania. I was using a carbide lamp. I had left my pack with my buddy and was slogging on through when I put my head down a bit too far and got mud in the lamp orifice. If I'd been using electric, I could just as well have broken the bulb. The fact was that my tip reamer was in my pack (usually I keep it around my neck on a string, but I'd taken it off only moments before because it had choked me). Although I was only about 40 feet from the group, it was a dark 40 feet. All ended well, but I ended up backing up 40 feet, clearing the lamp and then crawling the 40 feet twice more that day - once more in and once more out.

More serious is the problem in the oft-related story from Lechugilla Cave involving Steve Davis. He left his pack behind and scooted off to side passage to explore a bit in a honeycomb section, figuring he would only go a few feet and loop back to the start. He thought he was back at his starting point....only to realize that his companions were gone and he was alone. No spares, no food, nothing. He began to explore the other holes, eventually returning, after five hours, to his starting point - but 30 feet above the floor.

Some climbers I know from Pennsylvania lost limbs on Mt. Washington when they left their packs behind while they made the short dash for the top. In those few minutes, the weather socked them in and they were lost in a whiteout for days. All of their extra warm gear, etc. was in those packs. They never did find the packs.

That pack contains your life underground; water, light, food, map.

**Do not leave your pack.** It's just asking for trouble.

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### YOU MIGHT BE CONSIDERED A BAD CAVER IF.....

- You know how cave crickets taste
- Your skin has become transparent and your eyes have atrophied from non-use
- You have floated through a near-sump on your back with your nose in a ceiling crack
- You have been shot out of an entrance by flood waters
- You don't bathe after a cave trip

from the Birmingham Grotto Newsletter, May 1998

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### CAVE VANDALISM COMMISSION

NSS needs people to serve on the Cave Vandalism Deterrence Reward Commission. This group serves under the Dept. of the Adm. Vice President.

The NSS pays a reward of at least \$250 and up to \$1,000 for information that leads to the conviction of a person(s) for i) cave vandalism, ii) violation of the cave protection laws, iii) violation of the Federal Cave Resources Protection Act, iv) harming fauna around caves that are federally protected v) destroying or damaging cave gates or other barriers designed to protect caves.

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