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December 1998

### Alaskan Caver Alaska Caver

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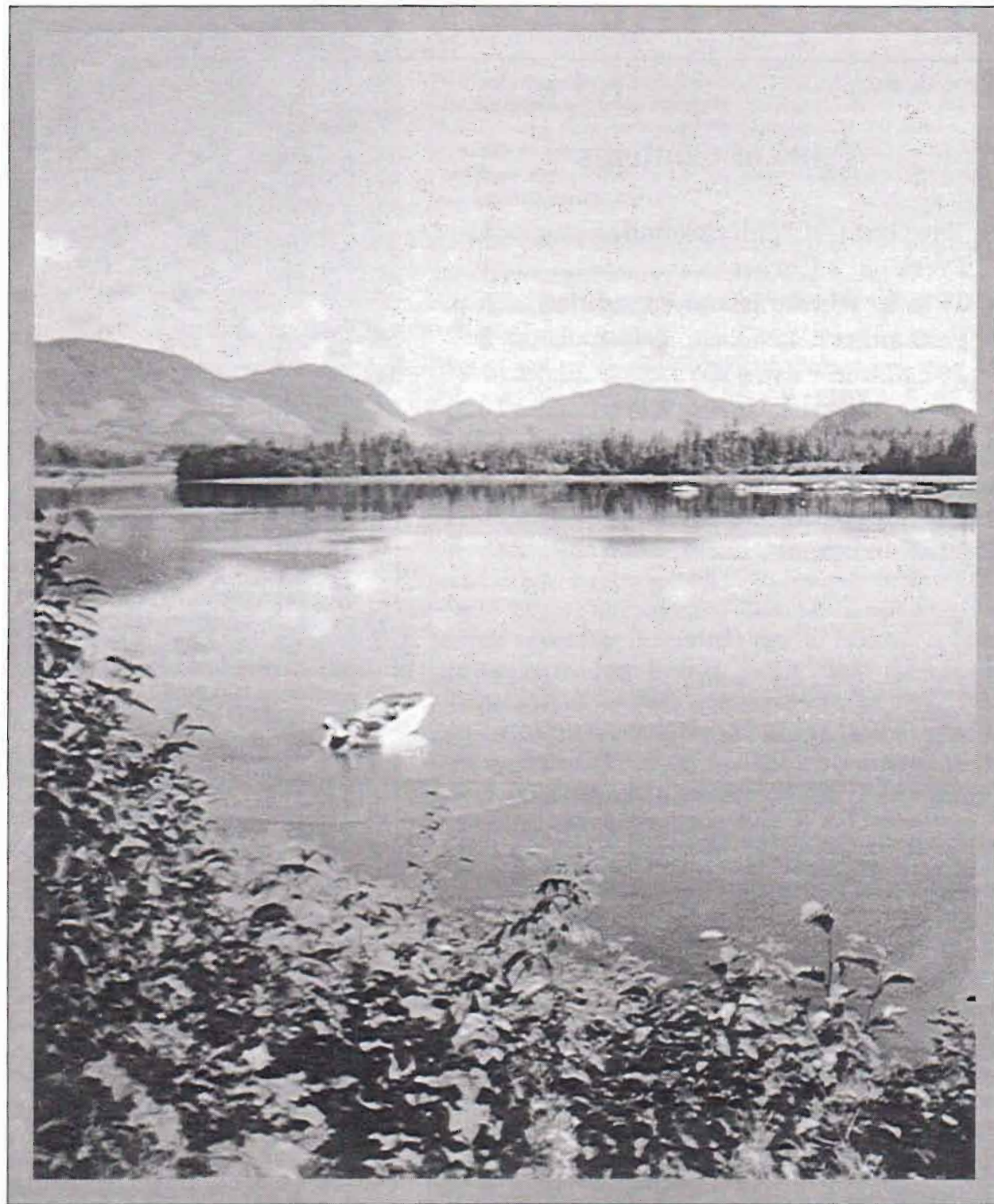
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# The Alaskan Caver

Volume 18 Number 6

December 1998



# The Alaskan Caver

published by the  
Glacier Grotto©

1921 Congress Circle, Apt. B, Anchorage AK 99507

Dalene T. Perrigo - Editor

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## Table of Contents

<b>The Greatest Underground .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>President's Corner .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1998 Kosciusko Island Expedition ....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Exchanges .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>El Capitan Cave #326 .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Wrangell Area Marble Karst .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Renee Cave #S7 .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Hole 52 #S8 .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Glacier Grotto Membership List .....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Miscellaneous .....</b>	<b>18</b>

Cover Photo : A clear sky, lone boat and lack of people present a picture of calmness on Prince of Wales Island, Alaska. Photo: Perrigo

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Annual dues are \$15 for a single and \$20 for a family membership. The Alaskan Caver is included in the membership fee. For an additional \$8, six Cavers will be sent by airmail to overseas addresses. Institutional subscriptions are \$20 per volume. Send dues to Glacier Grotto Treasurer.

- Anchorage Meetings: Call Jay Rockwell, 277-7150 or e-mail Harvey Bowers at agate@alaska.net
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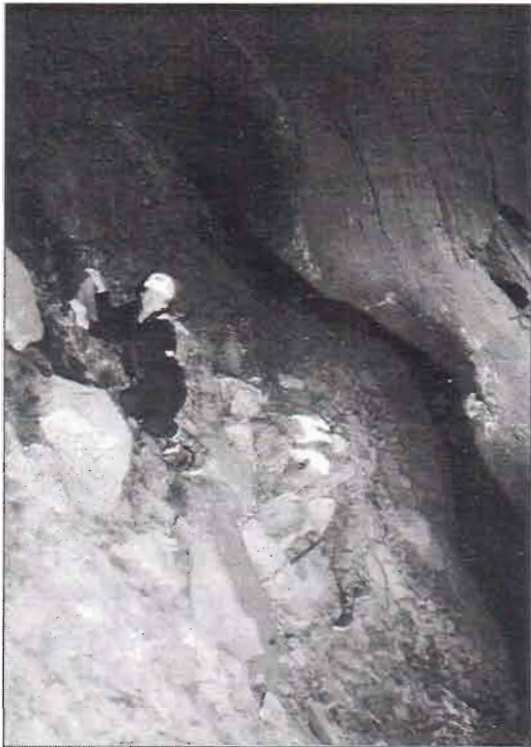
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"Pseudocaving" Bruce White and Dan Monteith look like they are climbing when actually they are lying on the ground. Murray

## CALENDAR

**April 10-14.....**Seventh Multidisciplinary Conference on Sinkholes & the Engineering and Environmental Impacts of Karst. (423)483-7483 <http://www.uakron.edu/geology/karstwaters/7th.html>

**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](mailto: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 [kavesp@hotmail.com](mailto: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 or e-mail Harvey Bowers at [agate@alaska.net](mailto:agate@alaska.net).

## THE GREATEST UNDERGROUND ADVENTURE OF ALL TIME

by Marcel LaPerriere

Installment III

*(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)*

"Do you realize Kris?" I heard Dan say. "You've been telling us this most fantastic story now for most of the day. I say we should make plans to get back to Heceta as soon as we can."

Everyone in the room said they agreed with that, then Kris said, "Here is what I had in mind." Kris walked over to a calendar that hung on the wall. "We are already committed to the Forest Service till August the 15th, then after that a lot of you guys said you could stick around for a few more days. I'm thinking if we could get a few of the die hard cavers together for about a week we should be able to see if there are any leads that look like they go deep. Rob has already said he'd take guys over to Heceta in the Karta Bay."

Steve interrupted, "That sound more dangerous than caving."

We all laughed, including Rob. "Heck, Guys, I've got a few buckets for bailing and

even a few survival suits for you timid souls."

Over the next few hours each person was assigned a task to accomplish by the 16th of August. It was decided that all the gear would be gathered at the dock in Naukati late on the evening of the 16th and that at first light on the 17th, the Karta Bay would depart for Camp Island. I was assigned the task of locating at least two ATVs that the expedition could use on the Island.

Late in the evening we heard the predicted rain start

*Continued on page 2*

## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

by Alan Murray

Since this will be my last President's Corner, I thought I would comment on something that I have noticed happening over the past few years.

The nearly constant plea for help in publishing our newsletter has almost become

*Continued on page 10*

falling on the roof of the trailer. The cavers were excited to be facing a month of caving on the mostly unexplored Kosciusko Island. But, everyone was even more excited thinking about the possibilities that could be found on Heceta Island during what was not being called, "Voyage to the Center of Heceta Island Expedition."

The month long USFS cost share caving expedition on Kosciusko Island flew by quickly for the cavers. As always several new caves were found and to everyone's surprise the horizontal caves for the first time outnumbered the vertical caves. To my disappointment I had returned to Ketchikan, back to the grind of work. However, during the month I was able to locate an ATV and an old pickup truck that the cavers could use on Heceta. Alan had reminded me that there was a group of guys from Ketchikan who each August had a pickup truck barged to the Island for the opening of deer hunting season. After a quick call to one of them we had an agreement. If we paid for the return trip on the barge we could keep the truck for a month.

Without letting the cat out of the bag, Alan, Connie and I spent the month borrowing every inch of rope we could find. By the 14th of August we had filled Alan's garage to the breaking point. Rope, carbide, food, tents, and you name it was spilling out of his garage into his already overfilled den and into his living room. That's when Alan's wife, Sue, finally put her foot down and we started filling Alan's truck with all the equipment we had gathered.

"I hope you have the extra heavy duty springs on that truck," I said to Alan as Connie jammed in another 300-foot length of well used rope. "It's a good thing we have Connie here to help us load," I went on. "Nobody can cram more stuff into a small place than she can."

"That's because she's so ugly," Alan said. "Even a muddy caving rope would run and hide from her."

"At least it only hides from me." Connie shot back. "If it looked at you it would disintegrate."

"Man, this should be enough equipment to keep even the most diehard cavers busy for a month." I said as I sighed with envy. "You lucky dog," I said to Alan. "I wish I was going with you tonight."

That night Alan drove his truck on the late night Prince of Wales ferry. I think he knew then that he was on his way to the adventure of his life.

On the 16th Alan met Steve, Kris, Pete, Erin, Amy, and the newcomer Bruce at the Naukati dock. Just as the cavers were piling the last of the caving gear onto the dock, Rob along with Dan pulled up in the Karta Bay. As Rob turned the port side of his beloved boat's wooden hull into the dock an enormous crack was heard, and a bellowing black cloud of smoke poured from the exhaust. All the cavers were so excited they didn't even notice.

The rest of the evening was spent loading gear onto the Karta Bay to the point that a half a foot of freeboard was lost. All the cavers were so excited they missed this point too.

As is always the case Alan was the first to rise, even before the sun was up. He, being the obnoxious person he is, he immediately started waking everyone up before he had even collapsed his tent. Of course, everyone except Rob moaned and groaned about getting out of their sleeping bags at 0 dark 30. Just the same everyone had drank at least one cup of coffee and the Karta Bay's engine was warming up by 4:30 am.

Dan and Rob threw off the lines as Rob eased the throttle lever forward and the Karta Bay eased away from the dock. Again a large black cloud of smoke waffed from the exhaust showering all the caving gear that was on deck with millions of black soot balls.

For the next hour Rob navigated the Karta Bay down Tuxekan Passage, through Karkeen Passage and into Sea Otter Sound. Most of the cavers had fallen back to sleep as the Karta Bay rocked to the gentle swell of the inland waters. However, as the Karta Bay left the lee of Tuxekan Island an unusually strong Northerly wind hit them full force and everyone became wide awake. If you have spent any time in the company of cavers you will know that it takes a lot to get their adrenaline flowing. This soon turned into one of those rare times when you could have seen not only one caver enjoying a full on adrenaline rush, but a full boat load of cavers hyperventilating. I'm not sure if the adrenaline was brought on when the engine coughed to a halt and the Karta Bay instantly turned broadside into the trough. Or, if it was a minute later when the port

garboard plant popped loose letting hundreds of gallons of green water flow into the boat.

"Damn, I knew I should have sold this boat," Rob yelled over the howl of the wind.

I think the cavers would have laughed at Rob's remark if it wasn't for the fact that if they didn't act quickly they were all going to be treading water. Fortunately, cavers are used to thinking under pressure and they are also used to expending lots of energy quickly. It's also fortunate that the only thing more effective than a large bilge pump is a boat full of people with buckets in their hands. Especially if those people aren't in the mood to swim in the icy water of Alaska. Fortunately, Rob really had brought lots of buckets.

The bucket brigade was almost keeping up with the incoming water but it was clear they were in big trouble if help didn't come along quickly. Or they didn't fix the problem.

Of course, Rob got on the radio, "Mayday, mayday, mayday this is the Karta Bay." Then his voice got urgent, "Mayday, mayday mayday this is the Karta Bay. We are in a world of hurt."

No one answered. Unknown to the cavers this was because the antenna had blown off only minutes before the engine died. (Wood screws just don't hold worth a damn in rotten wood.)

It was a good thing that within a minute of Rob realizing he wasn't going to get an answer on the VHF radio to his "Mayday" that he assumed the command that all skippers never want. That's the command of saving a sinking ship!

"Alan and Pete get your diving gear on," Rob yelled. (Since this story might be read by children the author has elected to clean up the foul language that was really flying through the air on that chilly Alaskan morning.) Unknown to Rob, Alan already was about half suited up and Pete had been helping him.

"Amy, get the blue tarp that's on the deck." Rob was directing his crew as good as any skipper ever had. "The rest of you keep bailing."

I've never heard of Alan being apprehensive about any dive, but he later confessed jumping off the deck of the Karta Bay into the turmoil that faced that day was one of the hardest things he had ever done. Alan timed his entry, and as the Karta Bay rolled to it's lowest point he jumped. Even though he held

tightly to his mask and regulator, both were torn from his face as he hit the water. He quickly shoved the regulator back into his mouth, holding it extra tight in his teeth, and spitting out a mouth full of salt water. Luckily, he had put his mask strap under his hood just as he had been taught during his NSS CDS cave diving certification classes, or he would have totally lost the mask. As it was, he only had to reposition his mask as he quickly submerged into the melee.

The Karta Bay seemed to roll more violently with each wave, possibly because the wind was increasing in velocity. As Alan fought his way from the stern down the length of the hull he felt as if he was wrestling a wild bull. Fortunately, he soon found the problem. Unfortunately, it didn't look good. The forward end of the plank was nearly an inch from where it should have been. But, even worse with each wave he could see the plank getting looser and looser. It didn't take a rocket scientist or even a marine architect to figure out that if that plank came all the way out the Karta Bay was going to sink. And sink damn fast.

Alan quickly surfaced near the bow, as he yelled for Rob he saw that Rob, Bruce and Amy were fighting their way forward with a large blue tarp tucked under their arms.

"Here grab this," Rob yelled handing Alan the end of a rope that was tightly tied in several places to the tarp. "Pete's going to help you."

As Alan grabbed the end of one of the ropes that was tied to the tarp Pete jumped into the water. As anyone who knows Alan will tell you, he likes to share adventures, especially if they are loaded with misery. Alan was soon beaming, because Pete was sharing Alan's adventure to the fullest. In fact, the adventure was getting more intense with each minute.

I'm not sure any two other people alive could have wrestled that large tarp under any boat in the conditions Alan and Pete found themselves. Most anyone would agree it took nearly superhuman antics for the two of them to pull off the task at hand. But, somehow they did. They worked the tarp from stem to stern creating a barrier that slowed the incoming water to a manageable flow. The manual bilge pump and one person bailing with a bucket was now able to keep up, to every one's relief.

Continued from page 3

The group also got lucky in the fact that the wind had now moderated and the seas started to slacken. The impending emergency was over thanks to the team work of all the cavers. Rob, then set himself to the task of figuring out what was wrong with the engine.

Again, their luck was changing for the better. First the water level within the boat had never been deep enough to flood the engine. Second, Rob's hunch of a clogged fuel filter proved to be the culprit that had shut the engine down. And, third Rob did have a spare fuel filter aboard. An hour after Alan's and Pete's incredible fete the Karta Bay was once again underway for Heceta Island.

As the Karta Bay pulled into the Camp Island dock, blue tarp and all, it was obvious the cavers were too bushed to do anything but sleep. It was also obvious that the Karta Bay would still need lots of attention, or she would still sink.

A plan was quickly established. Rob decided he would beach the Karta Bay. Luckily it was low tide

so Rob could scope out a good location to careen his beloved ship.

"Okay, here's the plan," Rob spoke with a calm voice for the first time in several hours. "We are all bushed, so why don't all of you get a couple hour nap. One of you will have to stay awake to keep pumping," Rob said this as Dan traded off pumping duties with Steve.

"I'm going to find a place to beach this tub." Rob said "tub" as if he meant it, but of course he didn't. "An hour before high tide we will quickly unload all our gear, then I'll put the Karta Bay on the beach."

At exactly 4 PM. the Karta Bay's deck and hold was emptied of all the gear. Rob Alan, Steve, and Dan motored the Karta Bay to the head of the bay. Rob gently throttled his boat right up onto the sandy beach at five minutes before the high tide. By luck it was nearly the highest tide of the year. Two hours later, the Karta Bay laid gently on her starboard side, and for the first time, all the cavers got to see the affliction in the Karta Bay's hull that had nearly cost them their lives.

To be continued

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Continued from President's Corner page 1

a scream! I know that a lot of us take pictures on our caving trips, both above and below ground, but they seem to be ending up in the same place as all those missing socks.

The "Alaskan Caver" has always been seen as one of the great gems of the Glacier Grotto. It is one of the best ways to keep our interest and enthusiasm going, to let the world know what we are up against and what we are trying to do about it, and to voice our opinions about what is happening to our caves. But without input from all members, and even many who are not, we would simply be just another liner at the bottom of some cage. It really doesn't take a degree in English to write an article about a topic that interests you or a question that haunts you.

Take Marcel for example. He is writing a multi-part story and he has no imagination at all, can't even spell his own name, and yet I'll bet that there is probably somebody out there who is actually reading his story!

One type of story that is very effective and easy

to write is a personally experienced "sad but true" tale. These are the ones that teach us valuable lessons by exposing the horrible misfortunes of others. For example, one winter day my wife and I were snowshoeing with Connie and Marcel and another couple. Marcel and the other guy had fallen so far behind that I was forced to listen to all the "girl talk" as we made our way through the hills. The topic of pregnancy was being discussed, and Connie said that when she became pregnant she ended up being sick, non-stop, for three whole days. I stopped, turned around, and said to Connie, "What happened? Did you find out Marcel was the father?".

Now that little story has a very sad element, a strong lesson to be learned, and cavers! What more could you want?

One last point to make before I'm out of here. It is that time of year to renew your dues again. I have already renewed mine so more of those "sad but true" stories are sure to appear during the coming year. You may miss some valuable lessons if you don't renew soon. Or worse, you could be the subject!

## EXCHANGES

Science News Vol. 153 January 24, 1998. pp56-58. Caves were an intricate part of the classic era of Maya Civilization. A team of speleologists explored Dos Pilas in Guatemala where they discovered at least 22 caves with underground passage extending about seven miles. Current understanding indicates that people of the area used cave openings for religious ceremonies but the spiritual leaders and assistants traversed the inner recesses of the caves.

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Birmingham Grotto Newsletter September 1998. pp94-95. Cathedral Caverns, Bright Future Envisioned for a Dark Place by Ted Bryant. The caves used by people living and/or traveling in the area at least 6,000 years ago will again open to the public. For several years, it was a featured attraction on the Fall Color Tour of Alabama, but later closed for lack of funds. The caves could open again as early as this spring under the state Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. With allocation from the state budget money was spent to build a concrete walkway through the cave, a bridge over Mystery River, new lighting, and nine talking stations.

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DC Speleograph Vol 54(8-9) August-September 1998. p 4. DC area cavers are working on a project to assemble maps and descriptions of the caves of Pendleton County, West Virginia in preparation for the publication of a book about the County's caves. Bob Hoke (301)725-5877 has details.

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DC Speleograph Vol 54(8-9) August-September 1998. p 11. Submitted by Tomm Reinbold. *The following story aired on scola-one satellite television in the Farsi language of Iran, and was transcribed for me by DoD linguists, Lisa Trovillion and Marzi Zang. The words in (( )) were added for clarity.*

An ancient cave from the stone age has been discovered in ((near)) the town of Qain ((Iran)). The fossilized cave is located 40 kilometers north of Qain, in the foothills of the Anjir Mountains; and given the excellent climate ((living conditions)), ((the region)) probably was the location of a human, cave-dwelling settlement 500,000 years ago.

The cave is 12 meters long and 7 meters high. Pottery shards from the latter part of the neolithic ((period)) are scattered around, which has great importance for archeological studies. Similarly, in four areas of the cave, hu-

man bones have been observed strewn about, which indicate that these areas were probably burial sites.

Setting the record of the establishment and settlement of humans inside the cave requires archeological excavations. Fossils and artifacts of the ((from the)) neolithic ((period)) to the era of recorded history have been observed in this cave, but there is a ((1000-year)) gap in the artifacts ((record)) from the Islamic ((era: c. 620 a.d.)) to the Safavi era ((c. 1600 a.d.)), which indicates the Qain fossilized cave was used as a shelter out of necessity during certain periods of time.

*Transcribers Notes:*

*Qain ((pronounced Gha-Yen)) is located in the Khorasan Province of north eastern Iran, 175 miles south of the city of Mashad, near the Afghan border. The archeological gap may be related to the pre-Islamic, religious practices of the endemic people ((the Zoroastrians -- followers of Zoroaster)), who buried their dead on above-ground platforms.*

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NITTANY GROTTTO NEWS Vol 45(2) August 1998. p 22. Keith Christenson. The 90-foot Elimsport Cave was opened by a quarry operation which ceased operation years ago. A series of digs extended it to its current length, and cavers that cannot squeeze through a 9-inch pinch shouldn't even give it a try. Most of the cave is a belly crawl, but the terminal room allows sitting up and contains the few formations in the cave.

With about 200 feet of passage, Shadle Cave is definitely the longer of the two caves, but definitely the more miserable. An awkward, tight squeeze at the entrance (also about 9-inches) allows access to the flowing stream passage. Once in the stream, the cave continues as a belly crawl in water with several areas of very low air-space until a small room is reached near the terminal sump. A full wetsuit is strongly recommended. On my first trip to the cave, a brown water snake was encountered nearly 150 feet in. This caused more than a bit of commotion given the low air-space crawl it had to pass us during its hasty exit.

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Muddy Litter Letter Issue 39 January/February 1998 p 3. Gary Novak suggests that cavers who could be called to cave rescues should: 1. When the call comes, spread the word ASAP and assemble and inventory your gear. 2. Pack your gear ahead of time and after a cave trip, clean and repack your gear ASAP. This way you can depart at a moments notice when the call comes.



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## CONGRATULATIONS TO NEW NSS FELLOWS

Three Glacier Grotto members were designated as "Fellows of the National Speleological Society" at the 1998 National Convention held 7 August 1998 in Sewanee, Tennessee. Those honored were: Jim Baichtal, Steve Lewis and Dave Klinger.

The designation of Fellow of the NSS is outlined in the September 1998 issue of the NSS News is as follows:

**FELLOWS OF THE SOCIETY.** Recipients are members who, over a number of years, have exemplified by their actions their dedication to the goals of the Society or to the Society itself. Recipients must have been members in good standing of the Society for at least two years immediately prior to their names being submitted as candidates.

James Baichtal, (NSS #33277RE, FE)

Jim Baichtal began caving in the Pacific Northwest and grew up to become a geologist working for the U.S. Forest Service. Soon after his 1990 assignment to the Ketchikan Area he realized that a major karst ecosystem was located in Southeast Alaska. He joined Glacier Grotto and the NSS and became the spark plug for cave and karst ecosystem conservation within the U.S. Forest Service in Alaska. He developed a karst vulnerability assessment system to better evaluate the karsted areas and to identify those areas most susceptible to damage from logging and other human activities. He organized and chaired a Karst Symposium in Ketchikan, Alaska in 1993 which resulted in a blue ribbon panel coming to Alaska to conduct a special study for the U.S. Forest Service. He has presented numerous technical papers as well as many public slide shows depicting the value and need for protection of the cave and karst of Southeast Alaska. He remains one of the leading experts on caves and karst in Southeast Alaska.



David M. Klinger, (NSS #10583 RL, FE)

Dave Klinger began caving in the Virginia/West Virginia area in 1967. He joined D.C. Grotto the same year and in January, 1968 joined the NSS. He maintained his membership with D.C. Grotto for many years as he moved around the world. He caved in Germany and Belgium before returning to Kansas in 1973 where he caved in various areas of Missouri. In Alaska he was one of the Charter members of Glacier Grotto and remains a member to this day. In 1979 he moved to Washington State and became an associate member of Cascade Grotto where he continued his caving activities. He has participated in many of the POWIE/Tongass Cave Project Expeditions in Southeast Alaska since POWIE II in 1988. He held numerous positions in the Northwest Caving Association and was its chairman for five years. He has contributed to numerous Cave Management Symposia and to various NSS Conventions.



Steve Lewis, (NSS #30022 RE, FE)

Steve Lewis began caving when 5-years-old by accompanying his father into caves in his home state of Missouri. He continued caving with his father until he went to college. In the summer of 1988, while doing wildlife studies on Coronation Island in Southeast Alaska Steve explored many of the island's caves. The following summer he joined the Prince of Wales Island Expedition (POWIE III), now know as the Tongass Cave Project and became a member of NSS and Glacier Grotto in 1989. Currently he chairs the Grotto's Conservation and Safety & Rescue committees. In 1993 he assumed leadership of the Tongass Cave Project's Dall Island Expedition which was sponsored in part by the U.S. Forest Service. He took over responsibility for the entire Tongass Cave Project's 1995 summer expedition, conducting exploration and mapping of caves on Prince of Wales Island, Dall Island and Heceta Island. He has also been active on the international caving scene. In 1992 he took part in an expedition to Guatemala. He was a member of an expedition in Russia in the fall of 1994. He is the author of a number of articles which have appeared in the Alaskan Caver and the NSS News.



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## EL CAPITAN CAVE

### Prince of Wales Island, Alaska • Preliminary Report #326 Addendum to Report #6, 23, 75, 90, and 131 Tongass Cave Project • National Speleological Society

by Kevin Allred  
October 25, 1998

#### RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

It has been five years since the last report on El Capitan Cave.

Each summer, the Forest Service has conducted summer tours into the cave. A seasonal employee stays at the nearby work camp and takes small groups into the cave, usually to the large pool in the main passage about two thirds the way to Hatfield's Pit. For most of this time, a spare key has been kept by TCP Director, Pete Smith. There has been no breaching of the gate until this summer, when unknown parties destroyed the lock.

Some misinformation has been passed on by various cave guides, but this is inevitable, given that most had no caving experience prior to their guiding job. Initially, visitation was heavier than recent years, and although figures are not available to us, according to guides, weeks vary from no tours, to some tens.

The Steam Room has been closed to all recreational caving.

Pete Smith has occasionally lead dig trips into the sand crawl, and over the years that belly crawl has been extended perhaps 40 feet. It heads down an approximately 30° slope, and the ceiling is broad, indicating a large, nearly filled passage which appears to be a continuation of the main passage between Hatfield's Pit and the entrance to the cave. On the last dig, this summer, the sandy floor has changed to pea gravel and small cobbles. Air flow was negligible and sporadic.

Pete Smith and family also bolted across a wall some 60 feet above the Alaska Room floor to three leads. On July 18, August 1, 1998, Pete Smith and Kevin Allred surveyed and explored in this new area. The easternmost of these was an uptrending fissure with a flowstone and rubble floor. After 50 feet it became plugged with a non carbonate boulder fill. The second lead was a chimney requiring two bolts for protection. It ended in non carbonate boulders about 40 feet up.

The furthest lead to the northeast is a horizontal stream passage with a cobble floor. It lies at the same level as a "look out" 60 feet to the northeast. The "look out" was the beginning of Pete's traverse to these leads. In the cobbles of the fossil streamway are scattered bones,

some of which have been identified as caribou by Dr. Timothy Heaton (personal communication). Their age is unknown at this time. Other bones have not been identified, as yet. Also in this area are many mouse skeletons. It appears that this streamway was bisected by the collapse of the Alaska Room. The passage heads westward paralleling El Camino Real, some 80 feet below. About 50 feet in, we used bolts to climb a chimney which became too tight in 30 feet. Nearby is a very tight, unexplored lead heading downwards to the north. By continuing, one must climb up over a short pitch and then drop back to the same level. Here are some impressive speleothems. Farther, past a very tight side passage, a "T" junction is encountered with both branches ending in too-delicate-to-enter crawls in less than 100 feet. At the "T" junction, bolts were necessary to climb some 100 feet to a too-tight boulder choke with air issuing from it.

Incidentally, all the high, choked climbs we have done above the Alaska Room had incoming drafts, but they have, so far, been choked or too tight. Total new survey in this area was 624.4 feet, making the total length of the cave 12,512.2 feet. No depth was added.

#### FURTHER WORK:

Several areas in the cave need exploration and survey. These are:

- First and most obvious, is an upper area at the entrance of the cave which had been overlooked in the original survey in 1987. Pete Smith reports that it connects with a high lead in the vicinity of the entrance side of the gate. At least one conulite exists in this passage.
- Second, are several leads in Divers Den.
- Third, is at least one huge chimney rocketing high above the newest survey of the Alaska Room.
- Fourth, is a tight lead in the newest survey.
- Fifth, the lower levels of the cave should be inventoried for changes in sediment from increased flooding brought on by clear-cutting of some of the cave recharge area.

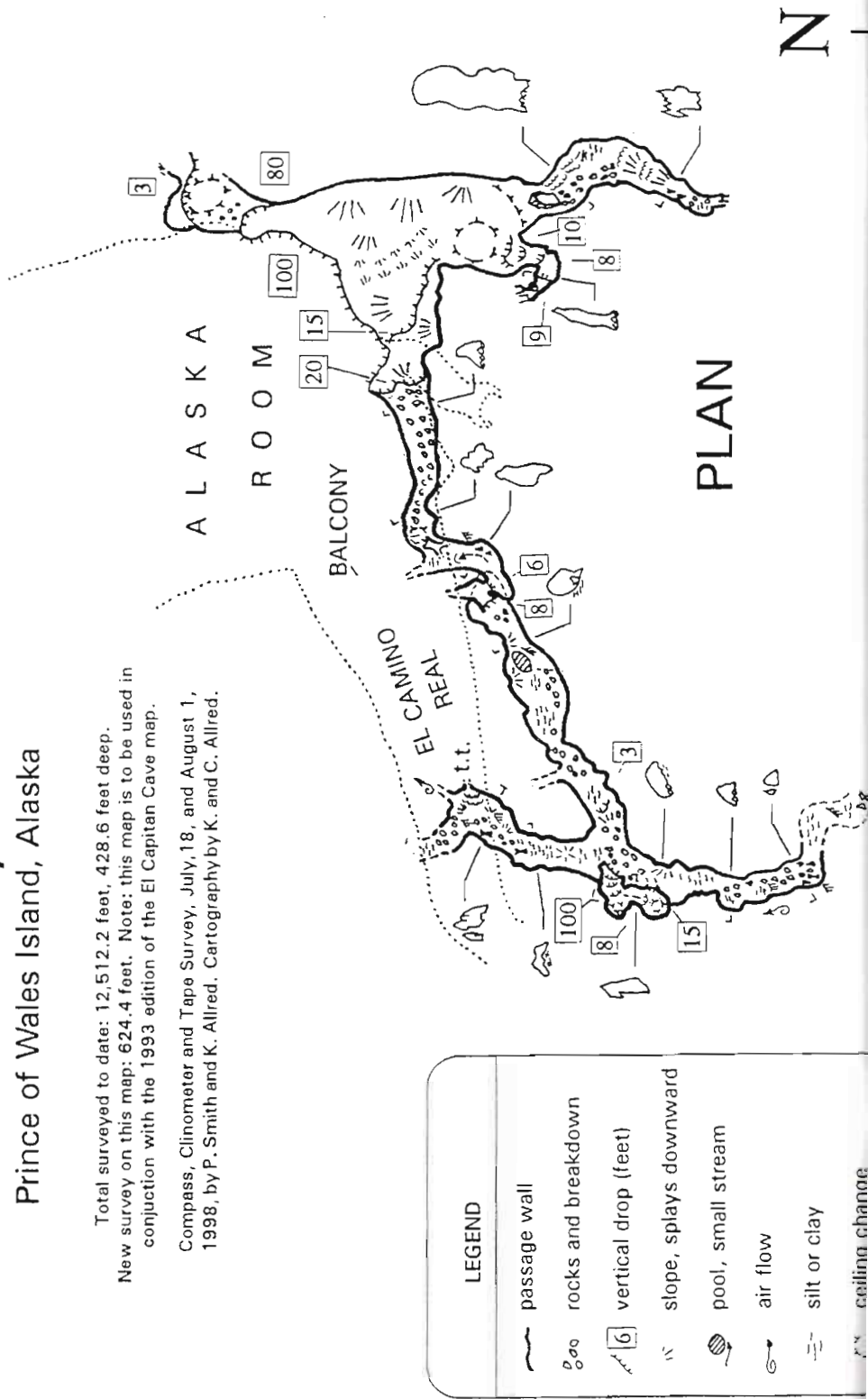
# EL CAPITAN CAVE

## 1998 survey

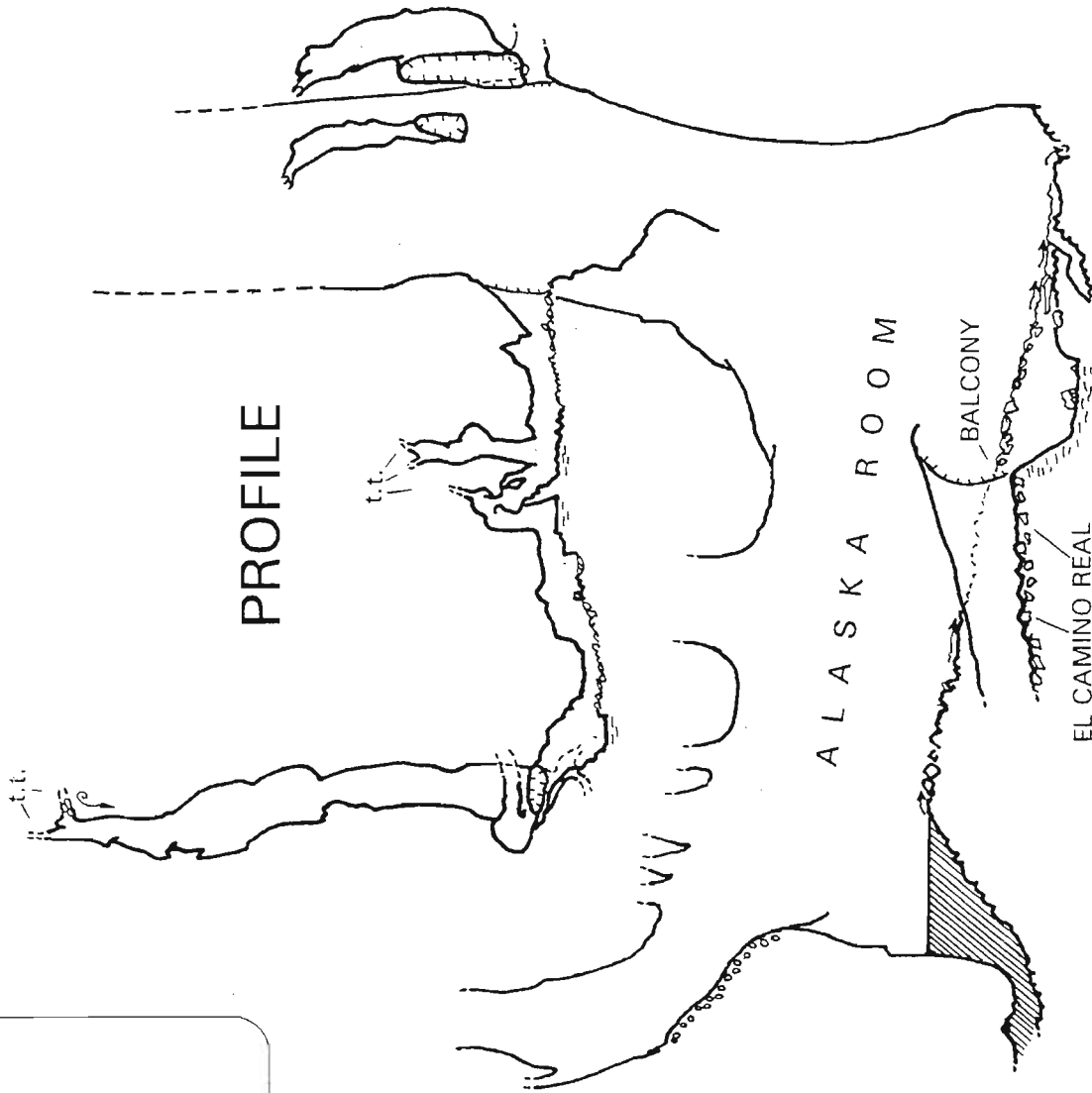
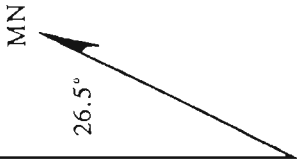
### Prince of Wales Island, Alaska

Total surveyed to date: 12,512.2 feet, 428.6 feet deep.  
 New survey on this map: 624.4 feet. Note: this map is to be used in conjunction with the 1993 edition of the El Capitan Cave map.

Compass, Clinometer and Tape Survey, July, 18, and August 1, 1998, by P. Smith and K. Allred. Cartography by K. and C. Allred.



LEGEND	
	passage wall
	rocks and breakdown
	vertical drop (feet)
	slope, splay downward
	pool, small stream
	air flow
	silt or clay
	ceiling change



PROFILE

A L A S K A R O O M

BALCONY

EL CAMINO REAL

- flowstone
- t.t. too tight
- stalactites
- I column
- || stalagmites

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## WRANGELL AREA MARBLE KARST

by Kevin Allred

On October 8th, Tongass Cave Project (TCP) participants Pete Smith and Kevin Allred were picked up at Whale Pass by a Forest Service chartered float plane. Already inside were Dan Montieth (TCP) of Ketchikan and Jim Baichtal, Forest Service geologist from Thorne Bay. Our objective was to investigate some cave entrances located by Forest Service crews on marble terrain near Wrangell. Jim had been contacted for consultation by Jackie de Montigny, of the Forest Service Wrangell District office. Jim then invited Pete, Kevin and Dan to join in checking the area.

After boarding the plane, we enjoyed a smooth ride in beautiful clear skies. The ocean was flat calm. We landed at the beach where Jackie and Everett Kissinger waited with a boat. A medium stream of at least 12-2 gallons/second poured onto the beach about 200 feet to the east of us. Jackie reported that this originated as a resurgence some way up the slope, and there were two sinkholes further uphill which we needed to check. All of the karst features of interest are located in a band of marble running north by northwest.

In geologic map of SE Alaska, Open File Report 84-405, the marble is designated as Paleocene and (or) Upper Cretaceous with some marble masses several hundred meters thick. This is only about one fourth as old as the Silurian carbonates to the west. Jackie stated that some logging units have been drawn up and would be located on both sides of a steep gully which bisects the marble band. The planned units are to be less than 10 acres, and helicopter logged.

After the preliminary greetings, we sorted the needed gear, and climbed up the wooded slopes to a vertical walled, marble chute. In spite of a week of heavy rains, the creek bed, consisting of large clean rocks and cobbles, was dry. It showed signs of sporadic, heavy flooding and the area certainly looked like there was terrific cave potential. After following the channel up several hundred feet, we stopped at an obvious cave opening about 10 feet above the gully bottom, and on the west side. Kevin checked

it quickly with a penlight and found it went in horizontally to a steeply sloping passage dropping from the right to the left. He climbed down the tubular left side, and found it completely filled with sediment and rock after only about 20 feet. Scallops approximately one and one half inches across covered the walls of this passage and indicated fairly fast flows at one time. Uphill, the way soon became barred by a few large rocks that could be pushed aside easily. The cave continues beyond. Jackie had previously flagged this entrance, calling it Crane Cave. We left the cave unmapped, as Jackie's first priority was to explore and survey a larger cave up the way. The channel became steeper, and soon divided.

We took the right branch and after less than 100 feet arrived at Renee Cave, named after one of the discoverers, who worked for the Forest Service.

A nice stream of water further up this stream bed sinks among the boulders and rocks less than 50 feet away. Many of the rocks were of sculpted beautiful white and blue streaked marble. After a quick change into our caving clothes, we began a survey of the cave.

See Renee Cave, Page 12

We were about out of time, so headed back down the mountain via a new route following the ridge which parallels the western side of the main dry channel. Part way down, Pete checked the base of a cliff and found a phreatic tube entrance that still needs checking. It was becoming apparent that there might be many caves in the general area.

After hiking the rest of the way to the beach, we boated to Wrangell, in mostly calm conditions, where we stayed in a Forest Service trailer overnight. After breakfast the next morning we were ready to check the sinkholes and resurgence Jackie and Everett had located previously. It had rained during the night, but stayed dry during the day. We anchored the boat just east of the resurgence beach outlet and were soon on our way. The two sinkholes are large steepheads capturing small streams. They lie perpendicular to the slope of the hill. The western one

appears to have been plugged and partially filled by avalanche debris some time ago. Pete could find no way down through the mossy logs and boulders some 50 feet below the rim of the steephead.

The other sinkhole about 200 feet east was somewhat smaller, but has an impressive multiple entrance with a jumble of boulders in front. It is called "Hole 52" since it was discovered on Everett's birthday. After suiting up, we soon found that this cave was more extensive than Renee Cave.

See Hole 52 Cave on page 14

#### Potential:

Generally, this karst area, does not display extremely deep or numerous sinkholes and grikes. Local deep features do occur, such as the dry channels, some grikes and sinks, and the two previously mentioned steepheads. In the authors experience, this type of subdued developed epikarst is typical of coarse-grained marble host-rocks. Karst surface features, such as sinkholes, are more prominent on more level benches as is common in karst terrains.

Except for only a few areas near the lower part of the area we traversed, the area is generally well drained with no surface streams, indicating well developed hydrology and cave systems. That we found only one resurgence in the area also is evidence that drainage systems have had time to consolidate into the one emergence.

However, it is possible that another submarine spring exists. The heavy, cool air flowing out of Hole 52 in the summer indicates the potential for a connection with Renee Cave or other caves higher up the mountain. In view of our experience in this country with cave development in marble, we can expect access to a major stream passage.

#### Values:

The area holds exceptional value for recreational caving, but only after the area is completely explored and evaluated for paleontological, archeological, geological, and biological resources. Of special interest are the old bone deposits. They are the first ones discovered in the mainland caves of southeast Alaska. These caves may provide valuable information about when ice covered this part of Alaska, and how far inland in the glacial refugias extended.

The speleothems could be cored for dating and for pollen samples in order to find what the early vegetation was here.

Presently the only logging which has occurred in the area is some very old selective beach hand-logging, which has not significantly impacted the hydrology of the karst. This large marble deposit is unique in Southeast Alaska because of a combination of values:

1. It is a much younger age and type than the more well-known limestone on the Alexander Terrain.
2. The marble is one of the relatively few carbonate deposits which exists at all on the mainland of southeast Alaska.
3. It could be studied as one of the last unlogged primeval karst systems in the Tongass.

#### Recommendations:

We noted that the trees were mostly lower canopy with interspersed larger trees. This indicates that the area is prone to heavy windfall. Thus, any cutting of trees from the forest would open up the surrounding trees to extensive windfall with dire consequences of soil movement into the subterranean karst environment. In addition, much of the area consists of thin soils on smooth marble surfaces. Killing of root systems might result in weakening the holding ability of these thin soils on some slopes thus resulting in landslides. Natural local sloughing and more extensive landslides were noted in the area.

We strongly recommend that no timber harvest occur at any time on, or within a minimum of 1000 feet of this marble deposit or its recharge areas. More exploration and survey should occur in the area we visited and further up and across the mountain towards Virginia Lake. Any other nearby and smaller marble lenses or bands should be mapped and also inventoried. To our knowledge, there has not been an adequate or thorough karst inventory done in this area. In light of the aforementioned finds we stress the importance of further inventory work. Dye tracing should be done to delineate the karst hydrology and recharge areas. The area should also be visited and studied by a paleontologist and carefully examined for underground invertebrates.

The Tongass Cave Project thanks the U.S. Forest Service for the transportation, food, and lodging in support of this reconnaissance.

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# RENEE CAVE

Wrangell Alaska • Preliminary Report #S7  
Tongass Cave Project • National Speleological Society

by Kevin Allred  
October 25, 1998

## DESCRIPTION:

On October 8th, Tongass Cave Project (TCP) participants Pete Smith, Kevin Allred and Dan Montieth joined Forest Service employees Jim Baichtal, Jackie de Montigny, and Everett Kissinger to investigate karst features near Wrangell.

In a geologic map of SE Alaska, Open File Report 84-405, the marble is designated as Paleocene and (or) Upper Cretaceous with some marble masses several hundred meters thick. This is only about one fourth as old as the Silurian carbonates to the west.

The marble bedding dips 83° to the north, and strikes 125°MN.

Renee cave is spacious, drafty, and heads downwards in the southern strike direction of the near vertically oriented marble bands. A prominent stream slot in the floor and other channels are evidence of large volume vadose flows during later formation of the cave.

Finally, many boulders completely clog the passage after only 150 feet or so. At the bottom of this main breakdown passage Dan and Pete noticed air sinking into the boulders which make up the floor. Dan pushed a passage to the west and was almost able to emerge from a tiny entrance hole on the face of a cliff somewhere on the main gully we had climbed. We found another side passage heading east to a 16-foot pit which Pete downclimbed.

Although Renee Cave did not have the access to the cave system that we had hoped, it is probably associated with the local seasonal surface drainage to be found in the general area.

Total cave survey was 199.1 feet.

## BIOLOGICAL:

Jim found a bat roosting in a tiny solution pocket in the ceiling near the entrance. Porcupine droppings littered much of the cave, and these deposits were quite deep in some places.

A porcupine skeleton was found in a silt bank near the debris-sealed bottom and a mandible was collected for Tim Heaton to date.

The cave contains numerous fungus gnats, and a millipede and carabid beetle were noted.

The bones found in Renee and Hole 52 caves are the first discovered in the mainland caves of southeast Alaska.

## RECOMMENDATIONS:

We strongly recommend that no timber harvest occur at any time on, or within a minimum of 1000 feet of this marble deposit or its recharge areas. More exploration and survey should occur in the area we visited and further up and across the mountain towards the lake. Any other nearby and smaller marble lenses or bands should be mapped and also inventoried.

If not already done, a karst karst inventory should be scheduled for this area. In light of the aforementioned finds we cannot stress highly enough the importance of further inventory work. Dye tracing should be done to delineate the karst hydrology and recharge areas. The area should also be visited and studied by a paleontologist and carefully examined for underground invertebrates.

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## PHOTOGRAPHERS

**Please send photos for  
publication in the Caver.**

The picture of Jim Baichtal in this issue of the Caver arrived on e-mail. If the printed quality is satisfactory, this may be an option for those of you with photos to share.

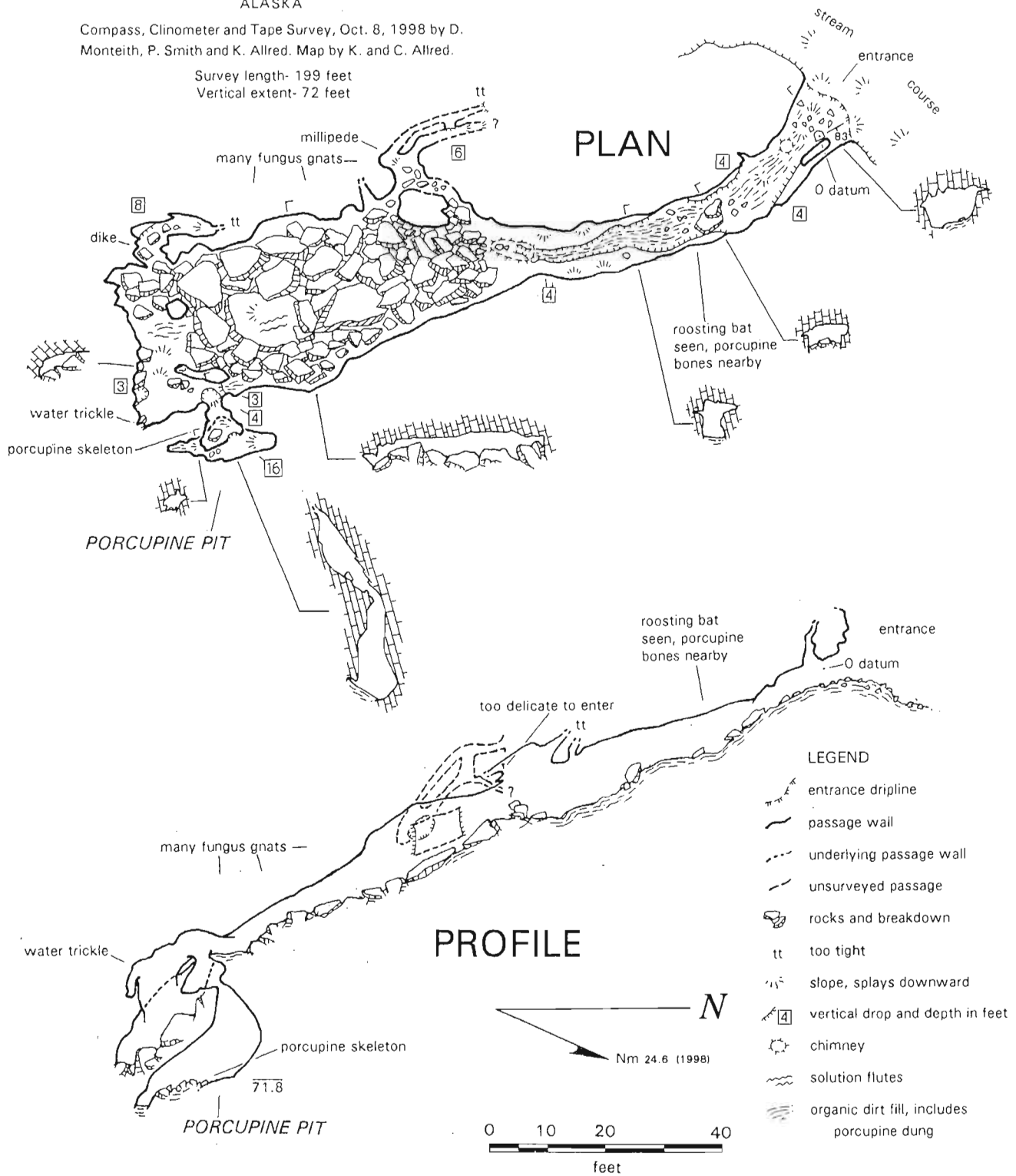
# RENEE CAVE

Cave is formed in upper Cretaceous marble

BLAKE CHANNEL, TONGASS NATIONAL FOREST  
ALASKA

Compass, Clinometer and Tape Survey, Oct. 8, 1998 by D. Monteith, P. Smith and K. Allred. Map by K. and C. Allred.

Survey length- 199 feet  
Vertical extent- 72 feet





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## HOLE 52

Wrangell, Alaska • Preliminary Report #S8  
Tongass Cave Project • National Speleological Society

by Kevin Allred  
October 25, 1998

### DESCRIPTION:

On October 9th, Tongass Cave Project (TCP) participants Pete Smith, Kevin Allred and Dan Montieth joined Forest Service employees Jim Baichtal, Jackie de Montigny, and Everett Kissinger to investigate karst features near Wrangell.

In geologic map of SE Alaska, Open File Report 84-405, the marble is designated as Paleocene and (or) Upper Cretaceous with some marble masses several hundred meters thick. This is only about one fourth as old as the Silurian carbonates to the west.

The marble bedding dips 81° to the south, and strikes 90°MN. Thirty feet inside it opens up with an unexplored upper section and an echoing down-trending fissure requiring a handline. Bird bones and some porcupine? bones were noted in this section. Descending the fissure, we passed a hole in the floor which looked inviting.

However, the spacious fissure-like passage lured us down a steep slope to a cobble floor with a small sinking stream which emerges from an unexplored passage containing delicate speleothems. The ceiling and walls here are spectacular white and blue striped marble. A space in the boulders of the floor issued an inviting draft.

Encouraged by this, Pete and Dan moved some rocks and squeezed down into a tight crack. However, at the entry of the dig, the main passage can be followed down the now dry cobble bed to a chamber with several good leads. We ended the survey here for want of time.

Pete quickly explored the hole in the floor partway down the handline section. He discovered passage (blowing a draft) and bones in a silt bank.

Hole 52 has the potential of being quite extensive. The heavy, cool air flowing out of Hole 52 in the summer indicates the potential for a connection with Renee Cave or other caves higher up the mountain.

In-cave survey was 178.7 feet in the few hours we had to explore.

### BIOLOGY:

As with Renee Cave, there are extensive deposits of porcupine droppings here. Bird bones and some porcupine? bones were noted.

Two bear canines and a small leg bone were collected for Dr. Heaton.

The bones found in Renee and Hole 52 caves are the first discovered in the mainland caves of southeast Alaska.

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

We strongly recommend that no timber harvest occur at any time on, or within a minimum of 1000 feet of this marble deposit or its recharge areas. More exploration and survey should occur in the area we visited and further up and across the mountain towards the lake.

Any other nearby and smaller marble lenses or bands should be mapped and also inventoried. To our knowledge, there has not been a thorough karst inventory done in this area.

In light of the aforementioned finds we cannot stress highly enough the importance of further inventory work. Dye tracing should be done to delineate the karst hydrology and recharge areas. The area should also be visited and studied by a paleontologist and carefully examined for underground invertebrates.

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Editor's Note: The drawing on the cover of the August issue of the Caver featured a cave in Southeast Alaska. drawn by Carlene Allred. This is one in a series of cave drawings, Carlene Allred is completing of Alaska Caves. The one on the cover of The Caver is of a place above Razor Canyon in Blowing in the Wind Cave.

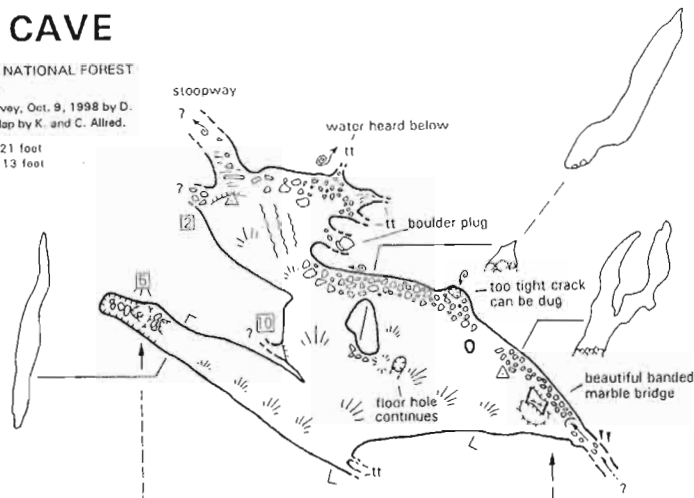
# HOLE 52 CAVE

BLAKE CHANNEL, TONGASS NATIONAL FOREST  
ALASKA

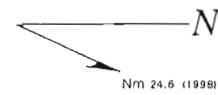
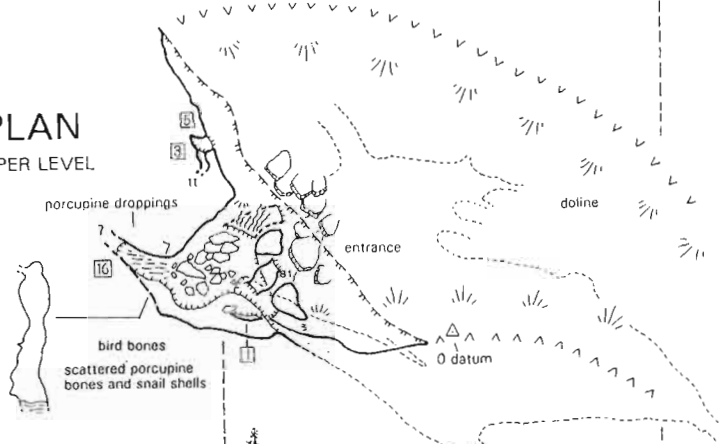
Compass, Clinometer and Tape Survey, Oct. 9, 1998 by D. Menteth, P. Smith and K. Allred. Map by K. and C. Allred.

Survey length- 221 foot  
Vertical extent- 113 foot

## PLAN LOWER LEVEL

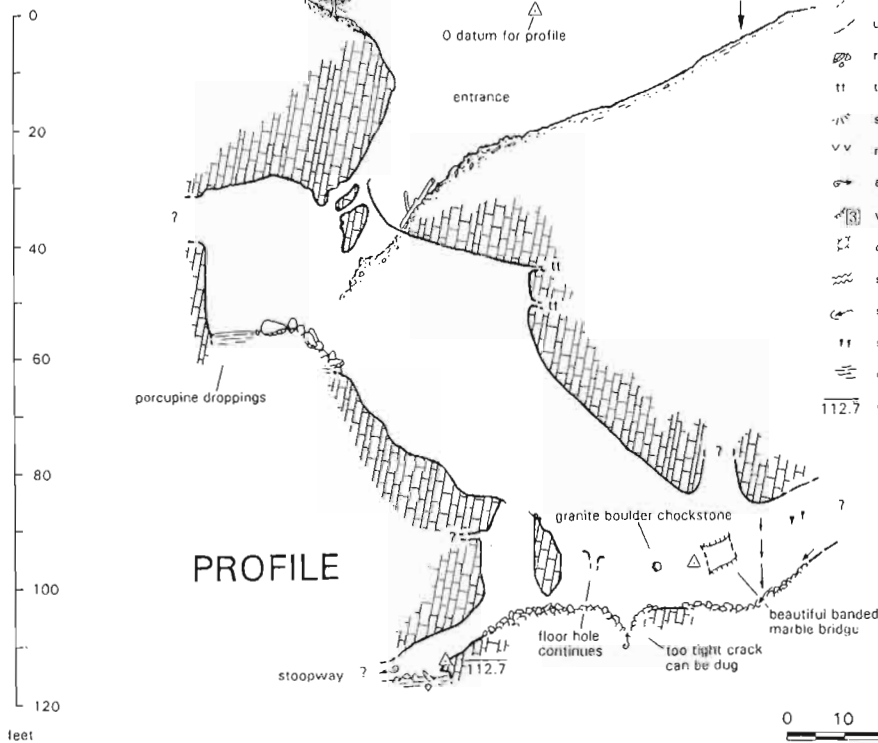


## PLAN UPPER LEVEL



### LEGEND

- entrance drip line
- underlying passage wall
- unsurveyed passage wall
- rocks and breakdown
- too tight
- slope, splay downward
- rim of doline
- air current
- vertical drop and depth in feet
- chimney
- solution furrows
- streamlet and swallet
- stalactites
- organic silt fill
- 112.7 elevation in feet below datum



Cave is formed in upper Cretaceous marble

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Allred, Ella	PO Box 376, Haines AK 99827	98			
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Fifield, Terry	PO Box 1012, Craig, AK 99921	98			
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Hall, James Allen	7040 Gibbs Hill Cir, Anchorage, AK 99504	98	29632FA	(907)333-2090	
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Kralis, Don	PO Box 5392, Ketchikan AK 99901	98			
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Lane, Kelsey M	40 Hidden Brook Ln, Signal Mt. TN 37377-2063	98N	35816	(615)886-6219	

Lane, Micha M	40 Hidden Brook Ln, Signal Mt.TN 37377-2063	98N	32392	(615)886-6219	
Lane, Wm. C "Buddy"	40 Hidden Brook Ln, Signal Mt.TN 37377-2063	98N	12054LF	(615)886-6219	(615)867-2846
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LaPerriere, Zach	PO Box 9062, Ketchikan AK 99901-4062	98		(907)225-4094	
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McCan, Ian	7 Crawford Ave,Mt.Pleasant,Western Australia	98			
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Olmstead, Nick	PO Box 571, Tenakee Springs AK 99841	98			
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Perrigo, Lyle D	1921 Congress Ci r #B, Anchorage AK 99507	98	39514FR	(907)344-3290	(907)522-1096
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Rockwell, Elizabeth A	2944 Emory St, Anchorage AK 99508-4466	98	15232FR	(907)277-7150	(907)277-7150
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Saccomanno, Rudy	PO Box 9367, Ketchikan AK 99901	98			
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Simon, Dillon	14 Bodmin Cresent, Brinnington Stockport, Eng.	98			
Smestad, Randy	PO Box 5855, Ketchikan AK 99901	98			
Smith, Dr. G Warren	251 Maltby Ave, Slippery Rock PA	99	5601RL		
Smith, Pete	PO Box WWP, Ketchikan AK 99950-0280	98	33979RE	(907)846-5223	(907)846-5223
Sonnenberg, Gary	1377 Pond Reef Rd, Ketchikan AK 99901	02	33648RE	(907)247-1559	(907)225-3103
Tierney, Patrick J S	PO Box 19484, Thorne Bay AK 99919	98	33898RE	(907)828-3992	(907)828-3304
Tierney, Ginny L	PO Box 19484, Thorne Bay AK 99919	98	33899FR	(907)828-3992	
USFS John J Kato	PO Box 21628, Juneau AK 99802	98			
Valentine, David	11976 N. Tongass, Ketchikan AK 99901	98			
Van Note, Michael	PO Box 26, Haines AK 99827	98	14174RE		
Vis, William B	Langmore 35 S Main St #2S,Mullica Hill NJ 08062	99N	34340RE	(908)721-1850	
Warren, Aaron	298Limestone, Edna Bay AK 99950	98			
Warren, Christine	298 Limestone, Edna Bay AK 99950	98			
Warren, Ginger	298 Limestone, Edna Bay AK 99950	98			
White, Bruce	PO Box 7531, Ketchikan AK 99901	99			
Wood, Dr. William R	66-10th Avenue #305, Fairbanks AK 99707	98			
Wood, Dorothy Jane	66-10th Avenue #305, Fairbanks AK 99707	98			
Wooley, Chris B	2073 Dimond Drive	98		(907)563-3202	

KEY: Pd = Year through which membership has been paid.

PdN = member owes primary allegiance to another Grotto.)

NSS # = NSS membership number; status with NSS is indicated by letters;  
i.e., no letters means NSS membership has lapsed.

SUMMARY: Total membership = 87; total NSS members = 40; NSS members with primary affiliation to Glacier Grotto = 27 as of December 31, 1998

## MISCELLANEOUS

### NSS Speleo Digest Web Site Revamped

Through the diligent efforts of Scott Parvin, the NSS Speleo Digest Committee has completely revamped its web site. The most obvious change will be the addition of the years 1988 through 1992, which were previously unavailable. While the 1989 Digest button has all available indices and related information; the 1988, 1990, 1991, and 1992 buttons will only indicate when that particular year is expected to be published. In addition, the new web site design allows the user to hop from year to year much more easily when researching information. Future plans include a Search Engine to facilitate identifying articles of interest to the researcher. Naturally, we will also update each year's information as it becomes available. (Please keep in mind that neither the actual Digest nor any of the articles are available on this web site. A Speleo Digest can only be purchased through the NSS Bookstore.)

Along with the 1994 Speleo Digest, the committee anticipates that each of the aforementioned books will be published within the next eight months. The committee is considering a limited print run of 250 copies of some of these older issues if the cost projections are not price exclusive for our membership.

Scott Fee, [scottfee@pipeline.com](mailto:scottfee@pipeline.com)

NSS Speleo Digest Committee Chairman

<http://www.caves.org/pub/speleodigest>

The NSS Speleo Digest Committee publishes an annual book (typically about 600 pages) containing selected material from grotto newsletters of a given year, selected on the basis of entertainment or permanent reference value. This makes the Speleo Digest an invaluable pot-pourri of information on American caves and caving.

### The Alaskan Caver

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## Announcements

**Southcentral cavers.....**All cavers in Southcentral Alaska, plus any ex-Southcentral Alaska cavers, are invited to send their e-mail addresses to Harvy Bowers. Harvey offers this as a way to keep cavers in this area in touch with each other as well as with the Grotto.

Meetings in the past have not been successful in Southcentral Alaska because people are spread thin by distance, travel schedules and a general lack of time. It may be possible to stay together as a group through e-mail and even organize a trip now and then. Harvey's e-mail: [agate@alaska.net](mailto:agate@alaska.net).

**Art Eash has returned.....**After a long stay in the Republic of Georgia (former USSR) Art returns to Alaska. Hopefully he will share some of the Russian caving stories with the Southcentral group and the readers of the Caver. Art's e-mail address: [arteash@hotmail.com](mailto:arteash@hotmail.com).

**Photographers.....**Please send photos for publication in the Caver. The editor needs photos, desperately.

Also, it prevents questions regarding safety, if the photographed cavers are wearing helmets for the underground photos. The Editor has had reminders.

**10th Anniversary Issue of the Caver.....**Does anyone want/need additional copies of the 10th anniversary issue of the Alaskan Caver? Please contact me at [dtperrigo@aol.com](mailto:dtperrigo@aol.com) if you would like to order. The Glacier Grotto paid a fee to keep this caver in computer storage for one year following the date of publication.

**1999 Tongass Cave Expedition.....**The 1999 Kosciusko Island Expedition is scheduled for June 14 to July 9. Cavers will spend the entire month on Kosciusko, continuing to explore and survey the caves discovered last year and searching for new caves. Kris has additional details at (850)402-9775 or e-mail [kae7077@garnet.acns.fsu.edu](mailto:kae7077@garnet.acns.fsu.edu)

