

November 1981

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Richard A. Hall

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THE ALASKAN CAVER

Volume 6 Number 6

November-December 1981



NEWBY CAVE, PORTAGE, ALASKA

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- November 19 Glacier Grotto Meeting. Meetings are held in room 312 Grant Hall, Alaska Pacific University at 7:30 pm.
- December 17 Glacier Grotto Meeting. Meetings are held in room 312 Grant Hall, Alaska Pacific University at 7:30 pm. The program will be an NSS slide show on the C-3 Expedition into Floyd Collins Crystal Cave, Kentucky.
- January 21 Glacier Grotto Meeting. Meetings are held on the third floor of Grant Hall, Alaska Pacific Univ. at 7:30 pm.
- February 18 Glacier Grotto Meeting. Meetings are held on the third floor of Grant Hall, Alaska Pacific University at 7:30 pm. **The program will be an NSS slide show.**
- March 18 Glacier Grotto Meeting. Meetings are held on the third floor of Grant Hall, Alaska Pacific Univ. at 7:30 pm.
- April 15 Glacier Grotto Meeting. Meetings are held on the third floor of Grant Hall, Alaska Pacific University at 7:30 pm. **The program will be an NSS slide show.**
- June 27-July 3 NSS Convention in Bend Oregon. Don't miss the Convention that is and will be the closest one to Alaska in years. Plans are in the making for an expedition to the Chitistone Valley right after the Convention.

The ALASKAN CAVER is a periodic publication of the Glacier Grotto of the National Speleological Society. Subscriptions are free to members. Membership dues are \$3 per annum for regular membership and \$1 for family membership at the same address. Dues can be sent to Elizabeth Rockwell at 2944 Emory St, Anchorage, AK 99504. Copyright 1981 by Glacier Grotto. Material not copyrighted by individuals or other groups may be copied by other NSS publications provided credit is given to the ALASKAN CAVER and a copy of such publication is sent to the editor.

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Richard Hall

Publisher:

David Moll

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V. President	David Street
Secretary	Richard Hall
Acting Treasurer	Liz Rockwell
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Publicity	Barbara Jansen

DUES AND PROPOSED CONSTITUTION AMENDMENTS

Inside this issue are two forms for you to complete and return in the envelope provided. The first is a membership renewal form for 1982 dues. The second is a ballot for making three types of changes to the Constitution and By-Laws of the Glacier Grotto.

1. Change the election cycle to hold elections in January rather than March so that elections can be held the same time that dues are paid and thereby reduce the amount of postage we all spend and the number of items you have to mail in each year. Article V of the Constitution would then read

"The election of officers for the ensuing year shall be held at the January meeting. Officers who are elected shall take office at the first meeting the following February unless otherwise provided by vote of the membership. Rules for the conduct of elections shall be prescribed in the By-Laws."

Article IV, Section 4 of the By-Laws would then read

"A Nominating Committee shall be appointed by the President at the November meeting and the committee shall present its nominations at the December meeting." ... "Elections shall be held at the January meeting each year. Newly elected officers shall be installed at the April meeting. Unless otherwise provided by vote of the membership."

2. Increase the amount of dues to \$5 so that the Grotto can run in the black. Production and distribution of The Alaskan Caver costs more than we are now taking in. Article V of the By-Laws would read "The annual dues for regular members shall be \$5.00 per year. Members who are dependents need only pay \$1.00 in annual dues."

3. Change the wording explaining the distribution of Glacier Grotto property in the event of dissolution. To meet IRS requirements for non-profit status the property must go to another non-profit agency. Article X of the Constitution would read: "Any N.S.S. or Glacier Grotto property shall revert to the N.S.S. in the event of dissolution or in the event that the NSS is no longer in existence, to another organization(s) that fulfil the requirements of section 5018 of the United States Internal Revenue Code."

PEOPLE

The Glacier Grotto was honored to host four expert glacier cavers from the Kwansei Gakuin University, Hyogo, Japan Exploration Club Caving Team at our October meeting. Masatako Izumi, Kazunori, Yoshiharu Nakamura, and Nabuaki Nagai were in Alaska on a University sponsored trip to study glacier caves.

There was a new member at the November meeting; Lee Ann Bower has caved in the past in Mexico with some Corpus Christi, Texas cavers. She works for Exxon who sent her up to Anchorage. Fire! was also at the meeting on his way back to Fairbanks from a year of fishing off Kodiak Island. He reported some hundred foot high seacaves on the western side of Kodiak Island.

GLACIER GROTTO MEMBERS AND FRIENDS

The following list includes full members (those who maintain a current membership with the NSS (designated "+")) as well as the Glacier Grotto (designated "*"), associate members (Glacier Grotto members who are not current NSS members), and friends including ex-members and others who have shown an interest in our activities. Full members who wish their official representation to be with another Grotto are underscored. If you know anyone who would like to become a member or to correct any of the listings please contact Jay Rockwell or Rich Hall.

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**	Street, Ann	9960		
**	Street, Kathryn	13762		
**	Street, Jennifer	15327		
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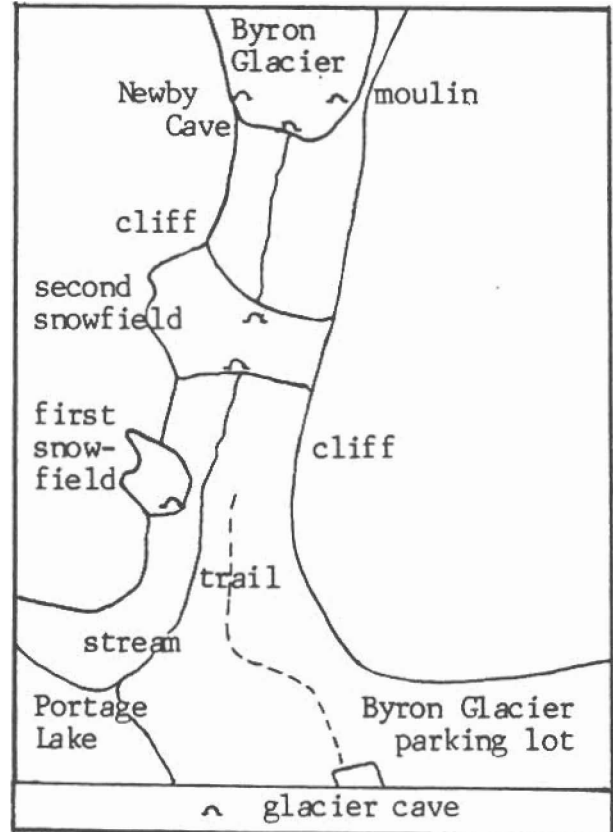
NEWBY CAVE

It was only October, but the Autumn of 1980 had been pretty cold so far and there hadn't been too much snow, so we decided to go down to Byron Glacier on Columbus Day to see if we could get into any of the caves. Rusty Rubeck, Steve Newby, Jay Rockwell, and I headed for Portage at eight in the morning with a beautiful hoarfrost on all the trees in Anchorage. Once past Potter the frost disappeared and it began to snow lightly. As we drove along Turnagain Arm the weather became warmer until the snow turned to sleet. The road to Portage Lake was clear, in fact everything was clear; all the snow which had fallen here had melted and our skis never had to be taken from the car. Other than being a bit icy, the hike in was fine.

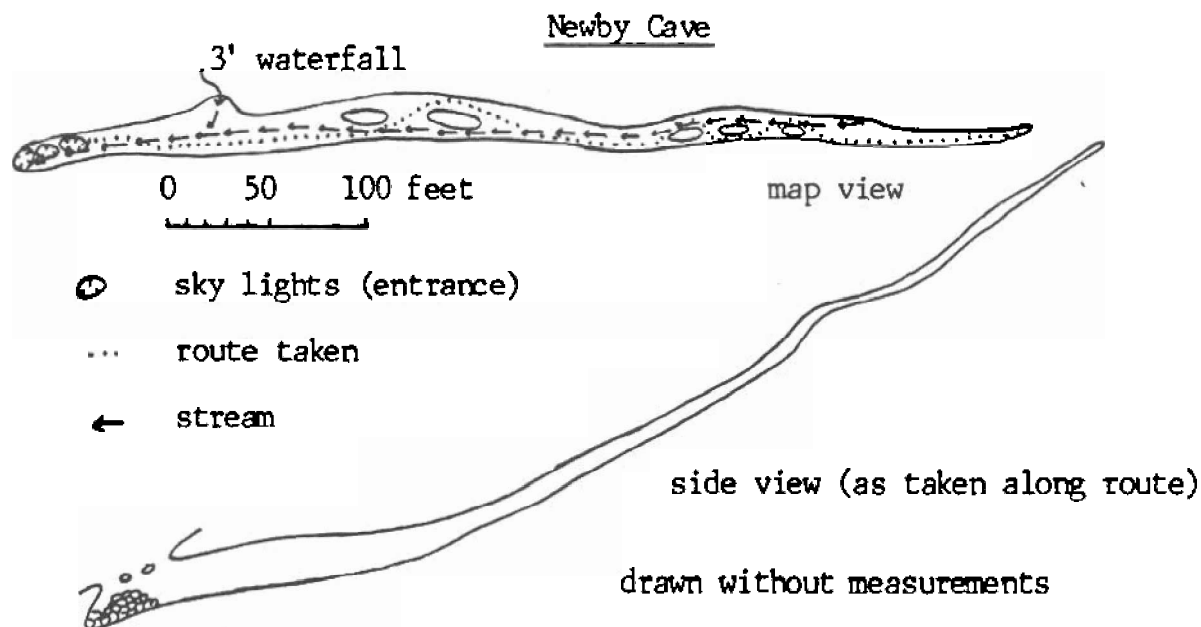
The first snowfield was at least 100 feet longer than I remembered it. Evidently more snow had accumulated than melted in the two since I was last there and the field had grown accordingly. There was an entrance open and we crossed the stream to check it out. Being relatively new snow, however, the cave was barely squatting height as compared to the 20 foot chambers further in. We went in for about 30 feet but since the rocks on the floor were wet we decided to look elsewhere for our adventure.

The second snowfield crosses the entire valley and the stream runs in one side and out the other. The entrance to this cave was blocked by snow except for a foot high by ten foot wide hole where the stream was still running out. We went over the snowfield to the upper end of the cave and found it was also closed except for a very low opening right above the stream.

The final possibility for a glacier cave that day was under Byron Glacier itself. I had never been in that cave because it was covered with avalanche debris and snow whenever I came. Such was the case again; the stream exited through several low, wet openings. Not being allowed in the front entrance we thought we would check for another way in. Steve went up the glacier to the left of the stream and I went up to the right. On the right I found a moulin that was 18 inches wide and went straight down to the bottom. The only problem was that a stream ran into it; a chilling thought for a 30 degree day with light snow and sleet. Steve was luckier; The dark spot on the side of the glacier was indeed a cave entrance and we all hurried to it when he called out to us.



It obviously wasn't an alternate entrance to the main cave but was a separate cave which tended up the mountain face to the left side of the glacier, definately worth checking out and definately drier than it was outside the cave. Steve and Rusty hurried off while Jay and I took a break just inside the entrance. They were soon out of ear shot - it went. When they returned several minutes later they told of a winding uphill passage and we all set out to explore it. I took some notes and made some sketches of the passage as we investigated every potential side lead. Essentially, there weren't any side leads but instead the passage kept splitting and joining again. Usually only one of the choices was big enough for us to navigate but thankfully the small stream running down the cave often took the other direction. After two such splits we came to a wall of glacial debris which we climbed one at a time while the others below hid behind a pillar to avoid being hit by the junk that was set free in climbing. This climb was the least fun part of the cave because the ceiling was only about 18 inches and you shared the passage with the stream. We all gathered at the top of the slope and Jay did the honors for the next slope. Unfortunately after about 20 feet the passage became too small for him to fit through and he returned.



Sliding down the wet slope wasn't quite as bad as going up and we were amazed how quickly we were back at the entrance contemplating our wet and sandy/muddy/gravelly condition. After organizing our gear and taking some pictures we headed out to find that the weather had worsened. The wind was up and the sleet bit into your face when you faced it. We exited the valley quickly realizing that the chance of avalanches had now increased but expecting none only to find that a small one had fallen onto the first snowfield and ended within 30 feet of the entrance to the cave there. It might have been interesting to hear it go overhead if we had stayed in that first cave but I am just as happy to have missed the experience. We quickly covered the last half mile out of the valley to our car, warmed up, ate a bit and headed home to find that the weather had been beautiful there all day. But we had fun.

Rich Hall

KINGS RIVER TRIP

A beautiful sunny day. A beautiful picturesque valley. Five to seven thousand foot mountain peaks. Rock glaciers flowing down several side valleys. Clear, cool mountain streams. A fluffy, two inch thick dusting of snow. A nice trail, sometimes wide enough for a truck and sometimes too narrow for a moose. October 10, 1991; a splendid day for Steve Newby, Harvey Bowers and Rich Hall to look for caves in the Kings River limestone.

No, we didn't find any caves. We didn't even step on any limestone except in the stream beds. But we did get to look at it; some from three miles away, some from 2000 feet below, and some of it from nearby somewhere but we couldn't pick out which rocks were limestone and which weren't.

The road up the Kings River valley begins near mile 72 of the Glenn Highway and ascends the valley about 15 miles (as the crow flies or twice that in driving) to the base of the largest limestone deposit. In between are a lot of curves of varying degree, mudholes of varying depth and size, streams, and at one point a very exposed slanted roadbed.

About halfway in, there is a side road that goes up toward the first limestone deposit. Harvey had been up this road a month ago and we headed up it too. The road is only a half mile cutoff but you can get a closer view of the rocks. We couldn't tell exactly where the limestone was because the trees and shrubs hid the rocks pretty well here. Our minds saw caves in every shadow but instead of walking up the hill to check them out, we decided to apply our available time further up the valley. It would take time to find whatever was there.

Two thirds of the way in, where the Kings River forks, someone has bulldozed a hole in the roadway such that Harvey's four wheel drive pickup could not cross it. He figured a jeep, however, with its shorter wheelbase could, and the road did appear like some vehicles had been using it.

Not being able to drive further, we decided to follow the road on foot which was easy walking except for the fact that the road rose 1500 feet in half a mile to avoid a canyon. Just (2500 feet) above where we parked was a small outcrop of tannish rock which appeared to have a hole in it. Since there wasn't supposed to be any limestone at that location on the geologic map I had, we concluded that either it wasn't limestone or very likely it was just too small an outcrop to show up on my large scale map. The road soon snaked down again and then crossed the river. Not wishing to wet

our feet we found what we thought was a moose trail until we saw that it had recently been brushed and followed it upstream. We headed upstream for the time allotted before we had to turn around - at a place where we figured we were directly below a patch of the limestone which was some 2000 feet above us. Contacts between rock types were very hard to pick out but possibly the rock that we saw along a crest which had numerous boulders may have been it. The rock on the top side of a contact further down the valley appeared to be like the patch above the truck so it may also have been limestone.

The most impressive features in this area are the 4500 and 7000 foot peaks that can be seen from almost anywhere on the trail. One or both of these majestic peaks are made of limestone, probably at least 2000 feet thick; by far the largest deposit. We were still about three miles from this mountain at our furthest extent of travel.

By looking at the rocks in the streambeds Harvey concluded that the limestone was resistant and occasionally dolomitic. Along with the small size of most of the outcrops, that makes three points against there being any significant caves in the area. Another conclusion was that for all but the first outcrop an overnight trip would be necessary to do any extensive searching, especially in the summer when the streams may be higher and the mudholes would be bigger and deeper. However, the fact that it is the closest limestone to Anchorage ensures that we'll go in again to look for caves.

Rich Hall

CANADIAN CAVING

While at the NSS Convention this past summer I picked up a copy of "Cave Exploration in Canada", a special issue of "The Canadian Caver Magazine". It was compiled in 1975 and describes virtually all caves known to organized cavers at that time in Canada. It is only 182 pages long and discusses 140 caves, small compared to "Caves of Virginia" and other volumes covering major cave states, but quite an accomplishment in actuality.

Editor Peter Thompson relates that "most caving clubs in Canada were formed in the 1960's and virtually all started with only a handful of members. In the intervening years the organized caving population has grown to about six hundred people in ten clubs. Are there any chances that in 15 years we in Alaska will have ten clubs, 600 members or 182 documented caves. I doubt that we'll soon have that many clubs or cavers in a long time but I see no reason we can't have that many caves by then.

Rich Hall

MEMBERSHIP DUES ARE DUE : FORM ENCLOSED

BYRON GLACIER TRIP

Imagine my surprise while reading the October 25, 1981 Sunday Anchorage Times to find a half page article complete with two large pictures about glacier caving at Byron Glacier. None of the names mentioned in the article were on our membership list and none sounded familiar to me.

The article read well and covered many aspects of caving that I would have hoped would be in such an article. It mentioned that the safest time to go in is in the fall because of the dangers of falling ice and avalanches. It mentioned telling someone where you are going, not going alone, and to carry an extra light source. It also included a good description of the origin of glacier caves and tips on dressing for this type of trip. However, it didn't have any cave conservation message and didn't mention anyone to contact (e.g. the Glacier Grotto) if you were interested in going glacier caving.

Finally, I decided to call the reporter, Mike Skok, to ask him some questions about his trip. Surprise again - he said that I gave him the idea! It turned out that he was the guy from the Mountaineering Club of Alaska that I had talked to on the trail to Twin Peaks two weeks before that. He knew I was a caver from Mountaineering Club meetings and expressed an interest in glacier caves so we talked a while about them. Small world isn't it?

8

Glacier Grotto
The Alaskan Caver
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NEWS

DATED MATERIAL