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June 2002

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# THE ALASKAN CAVER

A PUBLICATION BY AND FOR THE  
GLACIER GROTTTO OF ALASKA

**JUNE 2002**  
VOLUME 22 NUMBER 2

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# The Alaskan Caver

published by the

## Glacier Grotto

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## President's Corner

BY DAVE LOVE

In February I made a trip homeward to Alaska by way of canyon country in southwestern Utah. My only companions: my faithful canine Anna, and a dog-eared copy of Edward Abbey's book *Desert Solitaire*. The tourist traffic was light along state routes 12 and then 24, a picturesque drive especially enjoyable between Boulder and Teasdale, Utah. For people like me, uncomfortable in crowds, the middle of February in canyon country was a great time to explore those southwestern lands. Many limestone and sandstone outcrops contained sizable caves, worthy of further exploration. Some of them went, but I wouldn't recommend a visit. Don't go there.

In the spring, summer and fall months, I was told the area fairly crawls with tourists. Why is that? In one of the few areas of the southwestern US surrounded by undeveloped land, by wilderness areas, why the attraction? Maybe too much publicity. Media attracts more media. Glossy brochures full of professional photographs, produced by the National Park Service and local guide services to attract visitors. Well-meaning legislation resulting from the pioneering exploration and description of wild lands by the likes of **John Muir**, **Gifford Pinchot** and **Aldo Leopold** and possibly the unintentional consequences of books like *Desert Solitaire*. Respected leaders in their fields, who believed in their cause, and acted on what they passionately believed in. But who can predict how actions taken now will influence the unpredictable future? The resultant consequences take unknown paths, with unknown results. Today, one could argue that many of the national parks, natural treasures really, have been advertised to death. Wilderness for public use not for wilderness sake, tamed by too much pavement, too many trails, too many adventurers and too much publicity. There are all too many examples of vandalism and damage due to overvisitation of caves that have received too much publicity.

Education about caves is necessary to raise public awareness about the truly multifaceted nature of karst landscapes and to garner support for protection of this component of the ecosystem. But what kind of advertising should be encouraged? Arriving in Ketchikan, I saw that the new inter-island ferry was up and running, complete with advertising about the "extensive cave systems of Prince of Wales Island". Articles have appeared during the last year in the *Anchorage Daily News*, *Alaska Southeaster* and *Alaska magazine*, some by authors who have never contacted members of the Alaska caving community.

Alaska researchers have posted websites with all-too detailed information on cave locations. USFS experts providing valuable lessons in karst landscapes, to almost anyone that asks. Cavers overlaying conservation messages in SUV commercials/adventure television. Education is important, but which component of the public are we trying to reach? Could we be advertising too much? Often I have heard that this would never happen in the far, inaccessible reaches of the outer islands and uncomfortable caves of Southeast Alaska. Who are we trying to fool? Is it not just a matter of time?

**President's Corner Continued on Page 3**

## President's Corner continued

More visitors are aware of advertised attractions such as El Capitan Cave and the cave systems of Prince of Wales Island. Mystery and adventure make up a big part of public perception of caves, anywhere. Now, more can learn about these systems on an easily negotiated trail to Beaver Falls. The USFS is even considering a trail across Baker Island dangerously close to an area that some would consider a national or international historic treasure, vulnerable to vandalism. When is too much education about an endangered, fragile, one-of-a-kind landscape destructive? I would wager that most people who learn about karst systems will never enter an undeveloped cave on their own, but a few of the many will.

**"We should consider carefully how we advertise these treasures, for our actions now may lead to unforeseen, unintended consequences later."**

We need to reach those few, and we cavers need to become more involved with what USFS karst resource

development planning exists and be actively recruited by that agency to be included in the process. This particular member of the karst "user-public" (me!), is not happy with the way development has occurred without caver participation. Yet, we are all to blame for this lack of communication. We all need to be more conscientious of HOW we describe karst and caves, their exploration and value. Is there a quantitative way to evaluate how public awareness of the underground karst resources has changed over the years? What impact has this awareness had on caves in our area? As pointed out in an article by John Ganter in the March 2001 NSS News, we cavers need to do more to educate, inform, but as we do we must not let our conservation message be drowned out by our recreation enthusiasm. At least until we have a chance to train people how to "take nothing but pictures and leave few or no footprints." Every time I enter a cave passage or decorated chamber never touched by man's presence I agonize about my impacts and the unknown consequences of my actions in the near or distant future. We need to teach people respect for this resource, but also leave some areas untouched, maybe even unexplored. Like the canyon country of the southwestern U.S., southeastern Alaska is a fascinating, interesting landscape, but how vulnerable is it to too much advertising? Are there lessons learned elsewhere, in the past that can be applied here and now?

Well-placed education is important, but we should consider carefully how we advertise these treasures, for our actions now may lead to unforeseen, unintended consequences later.

*Dave Love is a caver and biologist who lives in Petersburg, Alaska. He is the president of the Glacier Grotto.*

## Kosciusko Island 2002 Caving Expedition

**A caving expedition to Kosciusko Island and Revillagedo Island will take place June 5-June 28, 2002.**

The Forest Service will provide funding and support for the expedition. In return the expedition team will find, survey and map as many new caves as possible during the time we are in the field. Anyone planning on taking part in this expedition should be in Ketchikan, Alaska no later than May 31 or June 1. Cavers needing a place to stay in Ketchikan for a night or two can make arrangements with Bruce White (ph. # 907-247-1979). Information on transportation will be forthcoming. Volunteers for this expedition are welcome and interested cavers should contact **Barbara Morgan at [akpheonix@hotmail.com](mailto:akpheonix@hotmail.com)**



**The Morgan Family of Edna Bay on Kosciusko Island has offered hospitality and hot water to cavers from around the world for many years.**

Photo by Diane Raab

## Baker Island trail could threaten cave resources

"The Forest Service is seeking your involvement regarding a proposal to construct a recreation trail located on Baker Island, Craig Ranger District, Tongass National Forest. In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, the Forest Service will be preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA) of the trail development to analyze various alternatives, and evaluate potential environmental effects of the alternatives.

We are proposing to build a trail from south Port San Antonio to Little Veta Bay on Baker Island. The EA will display a range of alternatives for consideration including, but not limited to, the construction of a trail, recreation cabin and placement of a dock for public use as well as a no-action alternative. The EA will use an interdisciplinary management approach to compare the impacts of each alternative on natural and cultural resources and on the socioeconomics of the area.

This scoping notice is the first formal step of the public participation process for the Baker Island Trail planning efforts. Scoping identifies the potential issues, concerns and opportunities associated with the project. WE NEED YOUR HELP to make sure we analyze all the issues and effects that are of concern to you or your communities.

Please examine the enclosed project description and then send us any comments you have to help us develop a sound EA. You should identify: specific issues to be considered, places within the project area that are important, and suggestions to improve or change the project.

We have provided forms on which to write your comments, or you can use your own format to write, call, FAX, or e-mail us with your comments. Please submit e-mail comments to: [cvanormer@fs.fed.us](mailto:cvanormer@fs.fed.us). Written comments may be submitted at any time during the planning process, but they will be most useful if we receive them by February 23, 2002.

We look forward to your participation with the Baker Island EA process. Your views are important to us as we implement the goals of the Tongass National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan.

**Dale Kanen**  
District Ranger

The Craig Ranger District is proposing to capitalize on the outstanding recreation opportunities offered on Baker Island by constructing a "cross-island" trail. Baker Island is a barrier island whose outer coast is characterized by wave cut cliffs incised by an occasional sandy beach. The inside coast has many protected coves safe for mooring. The proposed recreation trail will connect south Port San Antonio to Little Veta Bay through a 600-foot pass. Several attractive features are located along the proposed trail corridor including an intertidal zone, a waterfall along the creek at Port San Antonio, a subalpine zone situated around several scenic lakes, interesting geologic features including large granite boulders, panoramic views of Veta Bay and Cape Addington, a high energy white sandy beach at Little Veta Bay, and the Dalton Hot Springs.

Baker Island is located within a Land Use Designation (LUD) II where primitive recreation facilities such as recreation cabins, boat docks, moorings and trails are authorized by the Tongass National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan 1997. The Forest Plan states, "Provide access to high quality recreation places with trail systems that will enhance the total experience of the user." Construction of the trail will provide access to a barrier island recreation experience and a nucleus for additional recreation enhancement opportunities to be analyzed in this assessment.

The purpose of the Baker Island Trail project is to fill a gap in recreation opportunities offered on the southern half of the Tongass National Forest by providing water based access to a trail that leads to a barrier island's high energy outside beach. Currently, recreation trails on Prince of Wales Island access lakeshores, fishing streams, karst features and an alpine area. Most of these trails are accessed from the road system and none of them offer the opportunity to experience an outer coast beach. The "cross-island" trail will also provide access to future recreation enhancement opportunities associated with the Dalton Hot Springs and the adjacent ridge systems. Finally, the Baker Island Trail would serve a segment of forest visitors and local residents that access the Tongass National Forest by boat to provide a unique recreation experience.

The need for this project is based on projected increases in recreation and tourism activities on and around Prince of Wales Island following the establishment of an improved road network and the Inter-Island Ferry system. This project is intended to support economic development opportunities throughout Prince of Wales Island. The Baker Island Trail will serve as a destination for marine based recreation, which in turn will provide economic stimulus to a wide range of visitor support services.

The Craig Ranger District proposes to construct a recreation trail that will connect south Port San Antonio to Little Veta Bay on Baker Island, to include: constructing a 1 to 2 mile, rock and/or boardwalk surface, non-motorized recreation trail in the summer of 2003. Connected actions associated with this proposal include constructing an accessible public use recreation cabin at the 600-foot pass between Port San Antonio and Little Veta Bay or at Port San Antonio near saltwater and constructing a public use dock in Port San Antonio.

## GLACIER GROTTA responds to trail proposal

Dale Kanen, District Ranger  
Craig Ranger District  
PO Box 500  
Craig, Alaska 99921

Dear Sir,

We are writing this letter to request information regarding the proposed trail that is being planned for Baker Island.

It is our understanding that this trail is already being engineered. Is this correct? It is also our understanding that AP&T is paying for this trail because of obligations to spend money as part of their licensing agreement for the Black Bear Lake Hydroelectric Facility. If this is correct why is the money being spent in a location where few AP&T rate payers will be able to enjoy it?

Potentially the most disturbing rumor is that we hear that you are promoting this project, with the result that your wife's proposed charter business would directly benefit. If this is the case we want to go on record expressing our feelings that this is a conflict of interest on your behalf.

Again, let us express our interest in receiving any and all public documents regarding this project. Also any dates for public hearings that would be required under NEPA.

We look forward to hearing from you soon. We wish to make further written comments on this project regarding karst, caves, archeological significant caves, and other factors that we hope you are taking into consideration while planning this project.

Sincerely,

David Love, President Glacier Grotto

cc: Klawock Cooperative IRA  
Thomas Puchlerz, Forest Supervisor  
Southeast Alaska Conservation Council

October 19, 2001

Dear Mr. Love,

I appreciate your interest in the Craig Ranger District's recreation planning efforts. Let me address your questions. The project you mention, the Baker Island trail, is in the concept and feasibility stage. We are considering constructing a trail, approximately 1.5 miles in length, which would connect the southwest corner of Port San Antonio on the east coast of Baker Island to Little Veta Bay on the outer west coast. The goal is to provide improved recreation access to a unique and dynamic outer coast recreation experience. Our recreation planner and a trails engineer have walked and flagged a potential route, so that we can develop a descriptive project proposal and map to be used in the public scoping and NEPA process. Public meetings will be held this fall and winter. Several factors, including archaeological and karst concerns have been considered in developing this proposal. No formal survey or trail design work has been undertaken. The Baker Island Trail Project is currently listed on the Schedule of Proposed Activities (SOPA), accessible to the public on the Tongass National Forest website ([www.fs.fed.us/r10/Tongass](http://www.fs.fed.us/r10/Tongass)).

You are correct in your statement that funding for this project would come from AP&T as offsite mitigation relating to the Black Bear Hydroelectric Project. I am convinced at this point in time that an access trail to the outer coast would serve a significant number of Alaskans and visiting recreationists and that the facility would become a valued local resource. I base this on my experience with the popularity of the Forest Service facilities at White Sulphur Hot Springs on Chichagof Island and the Kalinin Bay trail to Sea Lion Cove on Kruzof Island. I also believe the Baker Island trail would compliment our emerging sea kayak trail system. Further consideration of this question will come as we move into the public comment periods.

As to your suggestion that I may have a conflict of interest in this matter, my wife does operate a small charter fishing business out of Craig. However, she does not solicit destination drop-off clients and has no plans to do so. I see no likelihood that my family will in any significant way benefit financially from this project. If you have further concerns of this nature, I would appreciate a phone call (907) 826-32710.

The Glacier Grotto is on our NEPA mailing list. Let me assure you that you will receive notification if and when we decide to move forward with this project.

Sincerely,

Dale J. Kanen  
District Ranger

February 6, 2002

Dear Mr. Kanen,

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to comment on the proposed Baker Island Trail EA.

... I am opposed to this project for the following reasons:

1. Funding sources where AP&T rate payers will pay for the project and not have input into what gets built.
2. The LUD II designation for the area as wilderness.
3. Culturally sensitive caves along the coastline.
4. Alleged "need" because of road-based visitors coming on the ferry.
5. Development of Dalton Hot Springs.

I would like to see this entire project return to a point of public site selection, with community meetings in all communities impacted by this project (all AP&T rate payers), and a serious outreach effort. If the project is doomed to proceed, I would like to see the following:

1. An in-depth archeological assessment of all culturally sensitive sites on the island, and protection of those sites, including gates for the caves. This assessment and protection should involve the Native communities on the island.
2. No trail construction, unless it follows true wilderness construction practices, no gravel or boardwalk.
3. No dock construction. If this site must go forward, a mooring buoy would minimize visual impact in the wilderness area.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,  
Karen Petersen

# YIN YANG PIT

Preliminary Cave Report #315  
Kosciusko Island, Alaska  
E34mm, S43.5mm, Craig D-5 Quadrangle, Elevation 275 feet  
Preliminary Report by Carlene Allred  
Tongass Cave Project, National Speleological Society  
February 12, 2002

Yin Yang Pit, formed in Heceta (Silurian) limestone, is located on State land only 100 feet off a logging road in old growth forest. The cave contains three connected entrance pits, two of these being dry. An old mossy log spans two of the entrances. Two trees were used in rigging the initial 30 meter (118 foot) pit when surveyed by Kris Esterson and Dan Monteith on August 18, 1999.

At the bottom of the drop, a streamlet flows down a rubble floor to a stoopway having a floor of glacial till. Several small drops and some pools are encountered further down the passage which ends in two sumps. A climbable rock septum separates the pools. Foam was discovered about seven meters above the sump indicating back-up flooding during heavy runoff. Yin Yang Pit contains 68.4 meters (224.3) feet of surveyed passage and its vertical extent is 48.3 meters (158.4 feet).

## MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS:

The State of Alaska should protect the forest around Yin Yang Pit from timber harvest and road building disturbances. The pit may be part of the recharge for Two Car Spring nearly 3/4 kilometer (1/2 mile) away at Edna Bay.

# ALIEN INSURGENCE CAVE

Preliminary Cave Report #293  
Kosciusko Island, Alaska  
Tongass National Forest  
E43.5mm, S36.5mm, Elevation 500 feet, Craig D-5 Quadrangle  
By Carlene Allred  
Tongass Cave Project, National Speleological Society  
February 12, 2002

Located just inside the borders of the Tongass National Forest, Alien Insurgence Cave has two entrances, both taking in streamlets. In 2000, the Forest Service was in the planning stages of building a logging road almost directly above the entrances of this cave. It is uncertain what their present plans are for this area.

Alien Insurgence Cave was formed in Heceta (Silurian) limestone. The insurgence stream has greatly modified the steep, meandering cave passage to a vadose canyon. Kris Esterson reports breccia in the canyon walls as "paleokarst", similar to that found in nearby Old School Cave. The breccia dips 49 degrees and is calcite cemented clay with rounded clasts. Several unexplored leads remain virgin. They are complex sinuous canyons requiring difficult bolt climbs across the upper part of the stream canyon.

Rigging is definitely needed for the last 30 meter (100 foot) pit. Part of the way down this drop is an alcove with a dome, "Quang the Conqueror's Side Room". It ends in a mud plug, and contains bacon rind and manganese deposits. The bottom of the cave becomes too tight from rubble fill. There was foam on the ceiling near the extremity. Alien Insurgence Cave was surveyed August 6, 1999 by Kris Esterson and Dan Monteith. Total surveyed passage is 113.7 meters (372.9 feet) and its depth is 66.8 meters (219.1 feet).

## MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS:

Alien Insurgence and its upstream recharge area should be protected from the effects of timber harvest and road building. The area around the cave may be prone to windfall caused by open clearcuts to the south.

# KOSCIUSKO ISLAND 2001

## “We Cave to Save”



**Daniel Monteith strikes a pose**  
Photo by Diane Raab



**Simon Dillon bolting in Axed but Still Goin’**

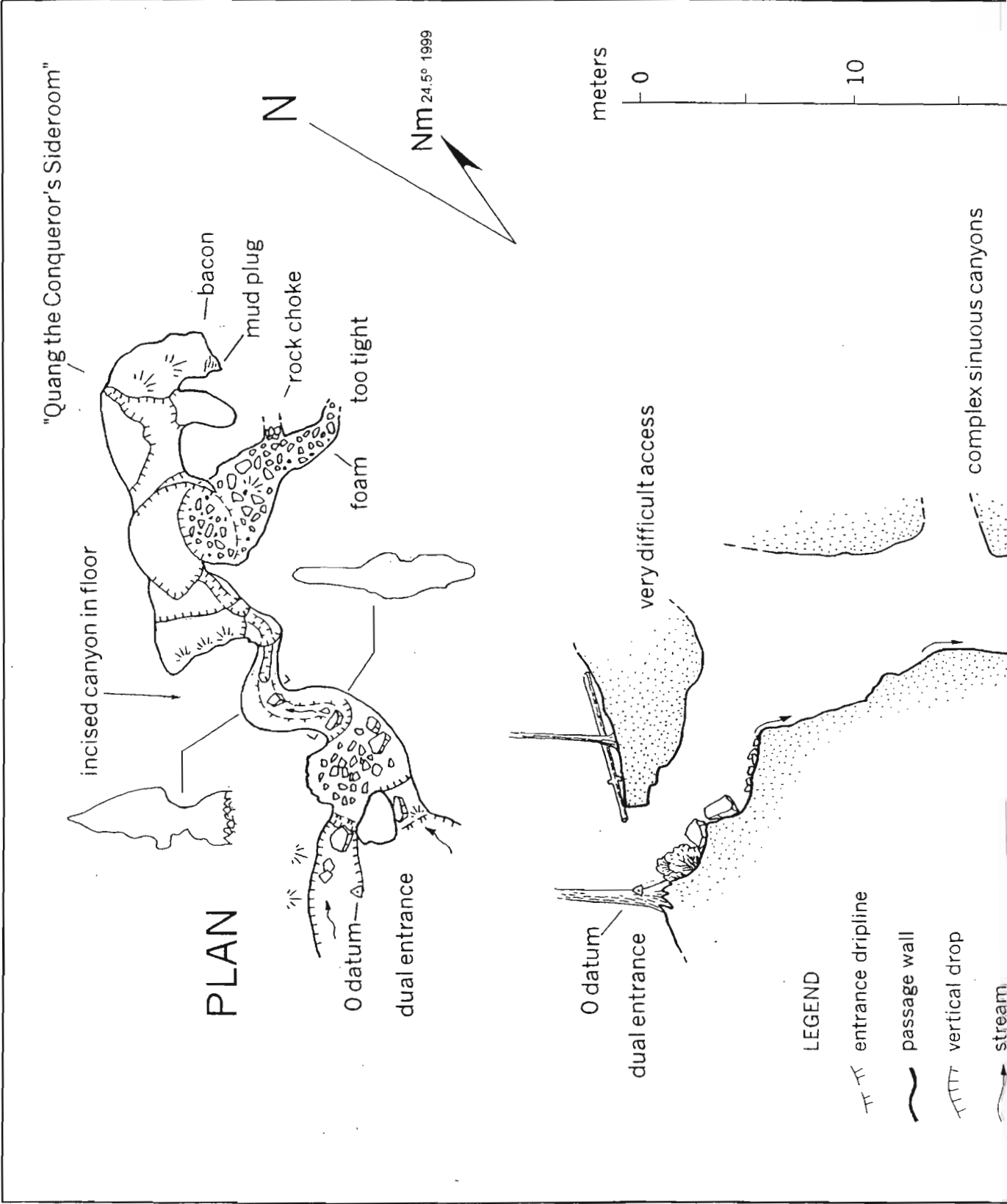
Photo by Barbara Morgan

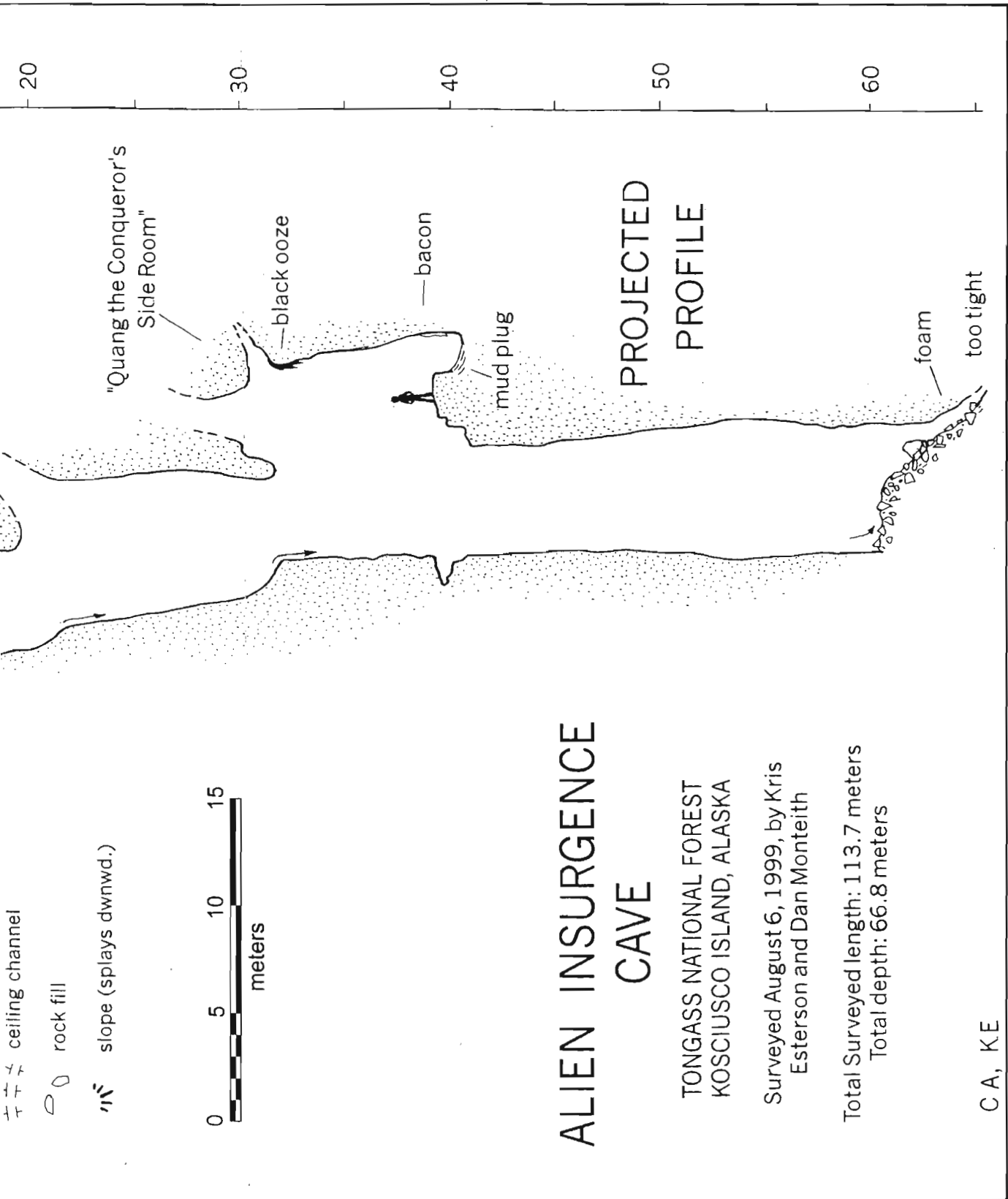


**Diane Raab checks out Aaron’s Totally Tubular**

Photo by Daniel Monteith







ceiling channel

rock fill

slope (splays dwnwd.)



# ALIEN INSURGENCE CAVE

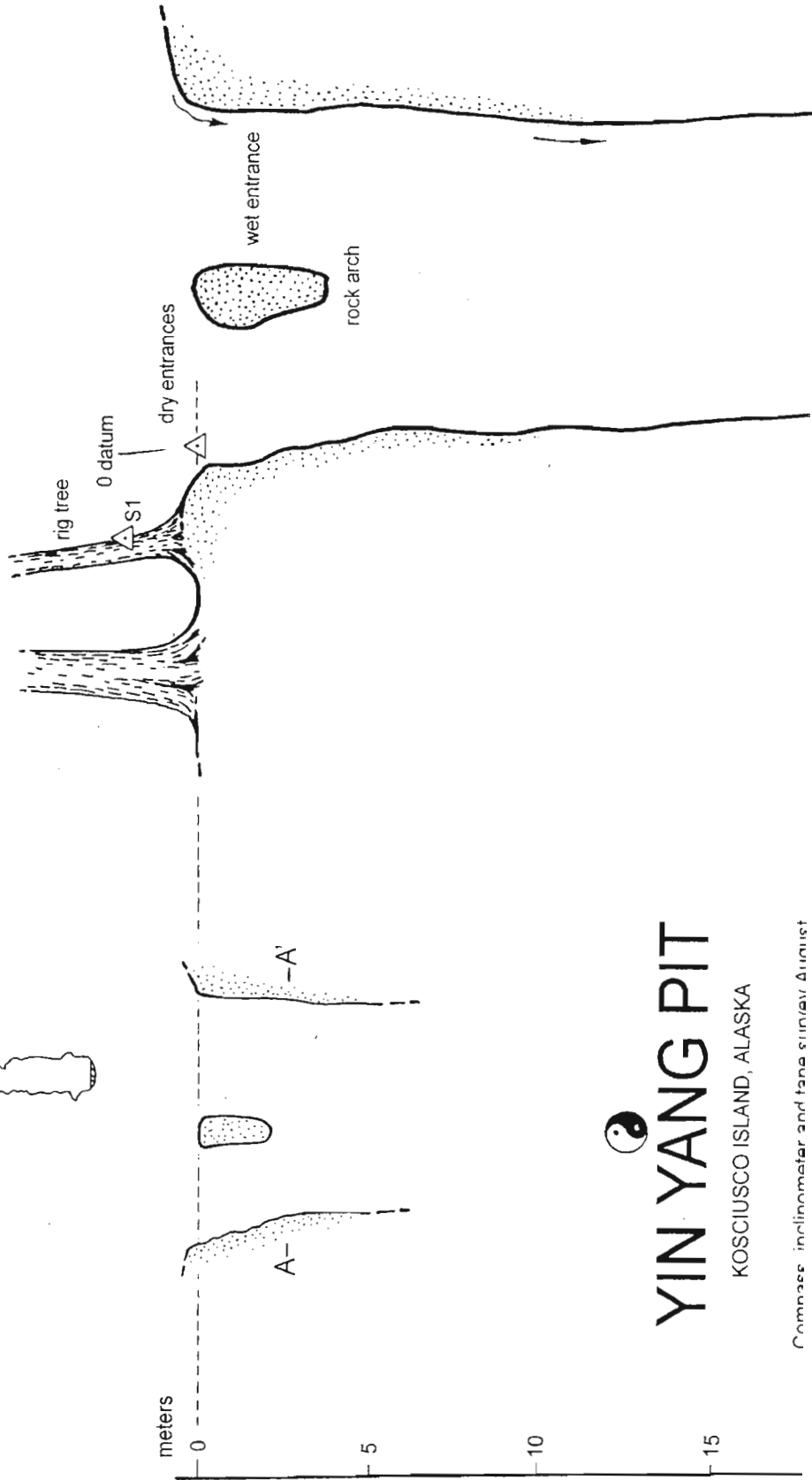
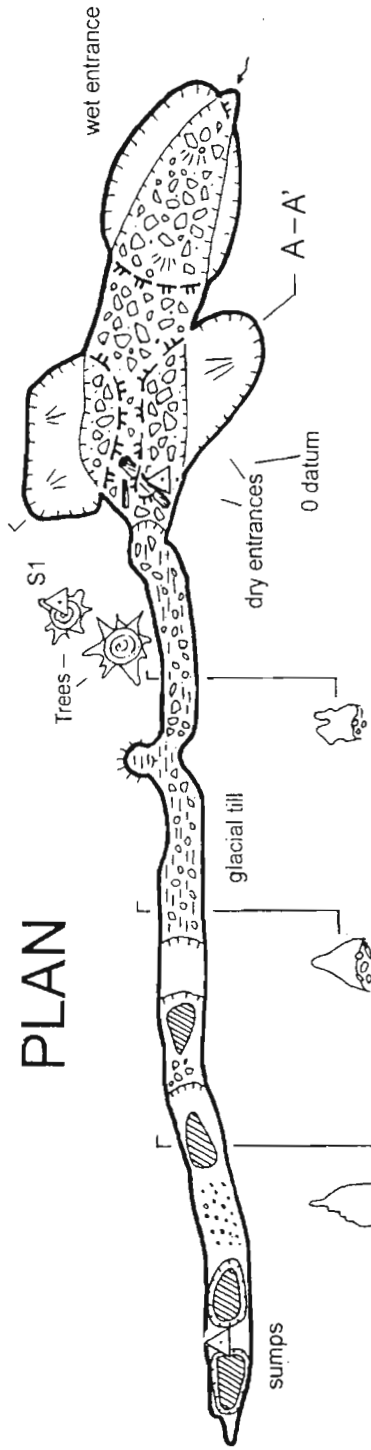
TONGASS NATIONAL FOREST  
KOSCIUSCO ISLAND, ALASKA

Surveyed August 6, 1999, by Kris  
Esterson and Dan Monteith

Total Surveyed length: 113.7 meters  
Total depth: 66.8 meters

C.A., K.E.

# PLAN



  
**YIN YANG PIT**  
 KOSCIUSCO ISLAND, ALASKA



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# Franklin's Tower Trip Report

By Bruce White  
Hoojigger

Franklin's Tower  
(Previously Known as KKK)  
Kosciusko Island, Alaska  
Cave #K-97

Franklin's Tower is one of a series of pirate caves in an intermittent stream bed in the "New Hot Spot" on the southern end of Kosciusko Island. Information was passed to the expedition based on a LIDAR survey, that there were several potential caves in the area. This feature (cave entrance) found in the LIDAR aerial survey was tentatively named KKK. It is the custom for the first underground survey team to name a cave. The cave was named Franklin's Tower by the members of the cave survey team. The racial overtone of KKK was also a reason to justify the renaming of this virgin cave.

The entrance was unassuming, lying tucked to one side of a seasonally dry stream bed. The first section (Grateful Dead Head Room and Lightin' Bolt Chamber) have mixed gravel and sand floors. The roof of these chambers show evidence of accepting water percolating in at several points along with the main entrance. Serious water flow is evidenced by the phreatic tube taking off horizontally 1/3 of the way up the chamber, presumably created when the channel in the floor of the GDH Room plugged.

From -10 M from zero datum to -60 M, the cave is a pair of narrow high ceiling conduits following the strike and dip of the limestone strata. At approximately -75M, the bedrock folds back at right angles (Terrapin Station) forming a perpendicular trough. Debris, light loam muds and a residual organic froth line are all evidence of complete filling with water at this level in the recent past. At this point the water infiltrates up a weak layer of bedded limestone at right angles to the general lay of the cave, dissolving it and creating a narrow tangential lead to the left with accompanied breakdown. This lead follows a series of partially plugged sumps of "Deadman's Reach" terminating into a mud plugged sump at "The Last Song".

The main water flow from "Terrapin Station" angles off to the right and down a poorly developed phreatic tube decaying into a series of cascading drops at "Truckin' Drops" ending in a well carved circular chamber "Busted Pot" and a dry mud filled sump called "The Grateful Dead End".

This cave and the surrounding area require a high degree of conservation. The area shows evidence of contributing significantly to the local aquifer. The cave is particularly vulnerable to run-off soils and detritus from the surrounding hillside. The Recreational value of the cave can only be appreciated by experienced vertical cavers. The cave has some geologically interesting structures showing the orogenic activity the clast has undergone. This cave deserves additional study should the geologic history be further researched. No flora or fauna were noted beyond the first 5 meters of the entrance.

Locally abundant ferns and mosses being the only evidence of life beyond the ghost of Jerry Garcia that permeates the whole system.

*This cave and its features were named on a theme of the rock group "The Grateful Dead" in honor of 2 survey members who belong the Grateful Cavers (an affiliation group within NSS).*

**DESCRIPTION:** This cave was first located using LIDAR. Franklin's Tower was previously known as KKK, short for Kosciusko Kiwi Kave, and was named by the LIDAR team in 2000. The name was changed because when it was surveyed by the 2001 expedition team, the team did not know it had been previously identified. Franklin's Tower was surveyed by Gino Albert, Bruce White and Matthew Covington from June 13-16, 2001. It has a surveyed depth of 98 meters with a total of 168 meters of surveyed passage. It is the deepest cave found thus far on Kosciusko Island. Franklin's Tower has two intertwining vertical passages each with multiple pitches. These two passages terminate by reconnecting to each other in a "T" passage that is at a right angle to the main passages. The "T" passage leads to a sump drop to the left and another series of drops into a domed sump to the right. A third vertical passage branches off from one of the main vertical passages and then reconnects again down passage. There is a trickle of water in the cave and caution should be taking when navigating this cave, as there is no place to get out of the path of the numerous loose rocks and cobbles. Cavers need to be vertically proficient to traverse Franklin's Tower.

**MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATION:** As this is the deepest cave on Kosciusko, it should be protected. There are several other caves in line with this cave, and they may all be hydrologically connected and/or physically connected. Further exploration of these possible links should be conducted. Dye tracing in this and associated caves could provide interesting clues about the cave's hydrology. Water flow in the cave at the time of exploration was only about 2 gal/min. However, an organic detritus scum ring with tree needles about 25 meters above lowest sump indicate greater water flow previously.

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The map of Franklin's Tower produced by Bruce White is not included in this issue of the Alaska Caver as it would not reproduce in this format

# Kosciusko Island 2001 Caving Expedition

By Barbara Morgan  
Expedition Leader

The 2001 caving expedition to Kosciusko Island was a success and an adventure. Expedition participants were able to find and survey many new caves while enjoying the soggy southeast weather. There seems to be a general recollection that it rained everyday. Our campsite was near the community of Edna Bay, so we were able to see some of the local folks. We always appreciated it when someone would stop by to say hello. Bob and Lois Morgan, residents of Edna Bay, opened their house to all the cavers and provided us with conversation and an occasional seafood dinner. They also let us use their sauna every few days. Thank you for your hospitality! This year we also got to host another group of cavers that were on an expedition on the island at the same time, cooking up some wonderful red snapper and a huge potato salad. Thank you for visiting us.

But the real accomplishment was that we found and surveyed a total of 25 caves. Two of these were particularly notable. Franklin's Tower, at about 320 feet deep, is by far the deepest cave found thus far on Kosciusko Island. It is a vertical cave with several pitches. It is composed of two main shafts that twist around each other as they descend before rejoining to tee into a short segment of horizontal passage, which then sumps out on both ends. (See Trip Report on Page 12) The other cave of note is Bittersweet Cave, another of the shallow horizontal caves common on Kosciusko Island but rare on other islands in the area. Bittersweet is well decorated with gobs of speleothems, including soda straws a foot and a half long, intricate draperies and a delicate rimstone dam formed on a cobblestone -- definitely a treasure.

There was a new cave-finding technique at our disposal. LIDAR -- Light Detection and Ranging -- can determine changes in elevation and possible cave entrances. It is best at detecting sinkholes and misses the caves that take off from a cliff face. It was fun and rewarding using Lidar -- it is a powerful tool that can be used to further our search for caves. LIDAR was directly responsible for the discovery of several caves -- including Franklin's Tower and Bittersweet.

Thank you to all of those who came and lent their time and talents last summer. Dan, Simon, Bruce, Gino, Bruce, Diane, Matt, Elizabeth, Connie and Dave. I hope to see all of you again! The rest of you cavers are welcome too! See you out there!



## KOSCIUSKO ISLAND EXPEDITION CREW 2001

Back Row: Bruce White Matt Covington, Elizabeth, Dave Love. Front Row: Bruce Brewer, Barbara Morgan (Leader), Simon Dillon, Gino Albert, Dan Monteith. NOT SHOWN: Diane Raab, Connie LaPerriere, Skippy.

Photo by Barbara Morgan



Barbara Morgan, Expedition Leader, is planning the 2002 Kosciusko Island Caving Expedition, which will include Revillagedo Island.

Photo by Diane Raab

## ON POINT

### Simon Dillon to climb France's Mt. Blanc

ENGLAND -- "I have only just returned from working in France. I was in St Gervais on a training course with the company that I work with. I have just become the product trainer for mountain sports equipment for the UK. I will be going around all the stores training people. I met I guy from the States on my course, the company I work for bought a chain of shops in Boston called MVP, now called Decathlon. I had an invite to go out off him, so may go out for a week next year and play about on that side of the States. My wife is having another baby, due about August time so I will not be coming out this year, but will

be coming out again in the future. That's a promise. A friend and myself are going to climb Mount Blanc in France in June. It's quicker to get home from France if I'm needed.

*SIMON DILLON/14 Bodmin Crescent/Brinnington, Stockport/ENGLAND SK5 8AT*

### Junko Kokubo to cave in Iceland

JAPAN -- I'm doing fine and doing a lot of caving! I'll go to Iceland this autumn for caving. We'll go to a glacier cave so I'll go ice climbing. If you visit Japan, please come to see me! And please send *Alaska Magazine*, and please say hello to everyone!

*JUNKO KOKUBO/ 300-1533 IBARAKI-KEN/FUJISIRO-MACHI/NAKATAKOU 162-2/ JAPAN*

*E-Mail: ccy47140@hkg.odn.ne.jp or jun0fune@docomo.ne.jp*

## ROPECUTTER

### Dear Rope Cutter,

I'm relatively new to this caving business and when I was sitting around the campfire with all these old timers they started telling lots of stories! They said they used to climb up rope both ways into the caves with their bare hands. Is that true? They also said that instead of carrying a lot of weight into the alpine on Dall Island they used to eat just rice and used pile clothing for rain gear! Is that true? They also said in the old days Rob and Dan used to cave with a SRT trained mouse. Did Skippy really help with all those surveys? They also said they used to cave with 16 mm rope and that only wimps used redirectionals or bolts! Is that true? I thought wimps were a choked off sound pigs or other farm animals make. And who is this Kevin guy who got out of his comfort zone?

Signed,

**Trying to get back into my comfort zone,  
V.C. Rookie (V.C. doesn't stand for Viet Cong  
but rather, for Vertically Challenged)**

P.S. Did Skippy really become independently wealthy inventing Air X-Tra Tufts? Where can I get a pair of cushy Tufts?

### Dear Vertically and Mentally Challenged:

The problem with sitting around a fire with old timers is that you need to develop scientific powers of observation and rationale to discern the veracity of these stories. Since there is not a game show host present to ring a buzzer to tell you that you are wrong, you will have to learn how to tell when a story is true on your own. Let me examine the stories you were told:

**Story #1:** Climbing and descending ropes with bare hands. This is easy to verify. Look for scars, the IQ of a moose, large arm muscles, or the flab that remains when the muscles turn to mush. If they have these, then it is true.

**Story #2:** Saving weight on Dall Island? Have you seen pictures of what they looked like after Dall Island? Do they hoard part of their dinner under their shirts? Then of course this would be true.

**Story #3:** Did Dan and Rob cave with an SRT trained mouse? Have you ever coexisted with mice? If you have you would know this is an exaggeration. Skippy the mouse with the mole didn't need a rope to terrorize. Has any mouse needed a rope to get to the top cupboard? Gosh, use some powers of observation to determine the validity of stories.

**Story #4:** Did Skippy help with all the surveys? Ask the cartographer about the survey notes. Look at the names on the maps. This has a high probability of being true.

**Story #5:** Did they cave with 16 mm rope? Strange how pits get deeper, squeezes get tighter and ropes get smaller with time. This story is not likely. Wimp is defined and used in my dictionary as "the impression that he is a colorless, indecisive wimp, and not a leader among men" (James J. Kilpatrick) So your analogy about squealing pigs may not be far off. If the story teller is in a straight jacket, you can never quite believe him. If the story teller can't string two sentences together because he seems to have suffered a bonk on the head or hit his head in a fall, the part about redirectionals may be true.

**Story #6:** This Kevin guy who exceeded his comfort zone should in no way be confused with the renowned caver Kevin Allred. This particular Kevin demonstrated his IQ by refusing to wear a hard hat while repelling in a rock pit, and refusing to dig a new latrine because it exceeded his comfort level. Luckily for hosts of cavers he lost interest in caving and took up mountaineering. (Watch out, Mountaineers!) I hope that my analysis of these stories has given you examples of how to scrutinize stories for truth. As to the last questions in your P.S. about Skippy, I want to quote Carl Sagan, "Extraordinary claims require extraordinary proofs." Many rumors abound about Skippy the ethereal mouse, but if you do find a pair of cushy Tufts, let me know.

Yours,  
Phreada Phreatic

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# Archivists take *The Alaskan Caver* seriously

By Dalene Perrigo  
Former Editor of the *Alaskan Caver*

ANCHORAGE -- Before transferring the editorship of the *Alaskan Caver* to Marcel (LaPerriere), I sent a complete set of the *Alaskan Caver* to the library at the **International Arctic Research Center** of the **University of Alaska Fairbanks** and another set to the library at **Scott Polar Research Institute** in **Cambridge, England**.

Librarian and archivist Julia Triplehorn of UAF called recently to say the *Alaskan Caver* has been indexed through the copies given to her, but she does not have the more recent issues. She sent a subscription for two years of the *Alaskan Caver* some time ago.

One of my goals as editor of the *Alaskan Caver* was to develop a caving journal that would not only highlight the results of caving activities in Alaska but would establish a record of what has been done. As I remember hearing many years ago, the caves in Southeast Alaska are unusual for a number of reasons but primarily because of their location as to latitude. We also realize that some of the data retrieved from the caves has changed our knowledge of the migration routes into North America.

Having the information and data indexed and put in data bases are methods of avoiding the loss of very valuable information and data obtained over a number of years by many cavers. It is an honor to have the *Alaskan Caver* entered into the above-named data bases and I hope that this will continue. Best wishes for a successful caving season.

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# Glacier Grotto members join Ketchikan Ballet

By Connie LaPerriere  
Glacier Grotto

KETCHIKAN -- On February 23, 2002 two members of the Glacier Grotto participated in "An Evening of Dance" with the Ketchikan Theater Ballet.

It was rumored that **Alan Murray** would have his dance debut wearing a three/three, the large equivalent of a tutu. These rumors proved false as he blended into the background in regular black jeans. One could ask how cavers got roped into participating in the ballet? The ballet featured several numbers that had ballerinas being hoisted into the air. As ballerinas usually weigh more than the average unmuscled person, a three to one haul system was required.

Imagine Alan's surprise when he learned that not only was his rope expertise needed, but also his stage persona. Not wanting to be the only caver on stage, he was desperate enough to drag **Connie LaPerriere** to belay.

After grueling practices when the members of the hauling and belay teams all got rope burns, the show was a grand success. This shows that cavers can get public adulation for their sorties on rope or that you never know when your rope rescue techniques will come in handy.





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**MATT COVINGTON, GINO ALBERT AND SIMON DILLON  
KOSCIUSKO ISLAND CAVING EXPEDITION 2001**

Photo by Diane Raab

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## **The Alaskan Caver**

**P.O. Box 9062  
Ketchikan, AK 99901**

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