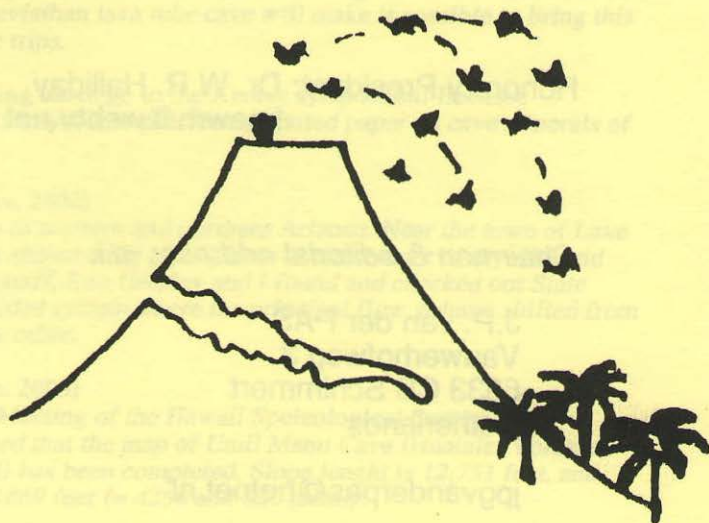


INTERNATIONAL UNION OF SPELEOLOGY  
UNION INTERNATIONALE DE SPÉLÉOLOGIE

## Commission on Volcanic Caves



October 2003

U.I.S. is affiliated with UNESCO

# 39

*Our Newsletter is send free to all  
members of the Commission.  
It is not possible to subscribe - but  
will be send to all interested in lava  
tube caves.  
News and information always  
appreciated!*

Honorary President: Dr. W.R. Halliday  
bnawrh@webtv.net

*Chairman & editorial address: a.i.*

J.P. van der PAS  
Vauwerhofweg 3  
6333 CB Schimmert  
Netherlands

jpgvanderpas@hetnet.nl

In the previous issue (#38) was a request for a volunteer to summarize this newsletter for "Speleological Abstracts".

With pleasure I can announce this will be done by Greg Middleton from Tasmania/Australia. Since he is a noted specialist in lavatube caves, and the Indian Ocean and surroundings, not a better person could be found. Thank you, Greg!

Heard from:

Greg Middleton & Chris Wood,

*... are enjoying visiting the lava tube caves of Cheju Island (Korea) to help us advise on possible World Heritage nomination.*

Yu. B. Slezin (via Bill Halliday),

*... published an article "The mechanism of volcanic eruptions" (a steady state approach) in the 'Journal of volcanology and geothermal research' ' www.elsevier.com/locate/jvolgeores*

Jim Simons,

*... (visited Europe, but we did not manage to meet, only phonecalls)  
... things are going better now in Kenya, and doing better business now. A new road along Leviathan lava tube cave will make it possible to bring this cave into touristic trips.*

Paolo Forti, advising us to go to the Azores symposium! Because

*... I'm asked, and accepted, to present an invited paper on cave minerals of volcanic caves.*

Bill Halliday, (Nov. 2002)

*... had a short trip to western and northern Arizona. Near the town of Lake Havasu City I was shown a big piping cave at the contact of rhyolite and ash. North of Flagstaff, Ron Greeley and I found and checked out Slate Lakes Cave, a braided system where the principal flow volume shifted from one corridor to the other.*

Bill Halliday, (Jan. 2003)

*... At the Annual Meeting of the Hawaii Speleological Survey Doug Medville announced that the map of Umii Manu Cave (Hualalai Volcano, Hawaii Counti, HI) has been completed. Slope lenght is 12,751 feet, and vertical extent is 1869 feet (= 4250 and 620 meter).*

Giuseppe M. Licitra, about the proceedings of the Catania symposium,

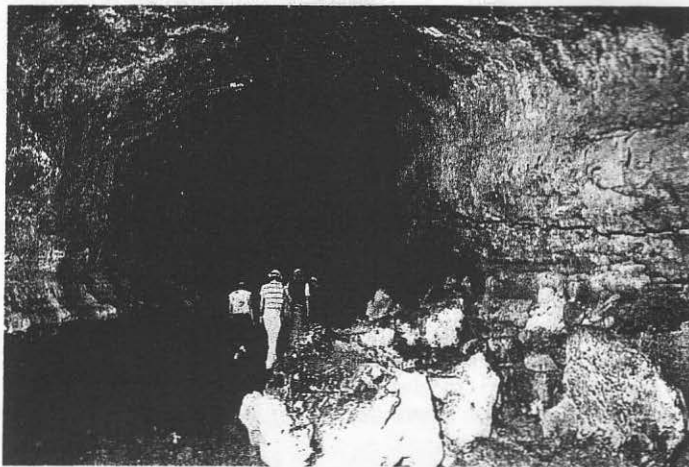
*... we submitted a sketch of the Proceedings to the publisher INVG (National Institute for Geophysics and Volcanology) and if nothing prevents it the Proceedings will be published within next winter (2003/4) in the INGV Geophysics Journal and distributed to all subscribers. (note by J.P. van der Pas: will this be also the participants of the symposium?).*

Bill Halliday, notes from (his) amendments to Hawaii cave law,

*... Hawaii cave act. It was fine, except for an unexplained addition that required advance written permission from "the property owner" for any one to enter any cave in Hawaii.... ... Kazumura Cave has more than 4000 owners, so this is absurd (note by J.P. van der Pas - Kazuma is over 60 km. long).*

**XIth International Symposium on Volcanospeleology  
at Madalena - Pico Island - AZORES  
May 2004**

## **REGISTRATION**



**Pre-Registration - until 30th September 2003  
Final Registration - until 31st January 2004**

### **Registration fee (provisional)**

Participants 150 Euros

Local teachers 50 Euros

Local students 25 Euros

Accompanying persons 100 Euros

Registration after 31<sup>st</sup> January 2004 - penalty of 50% of fee value

The registration fee includes: documentation; local transportation; several meals during the Symposium; special programme for accompanying persons

**Pre and Post Symposium Field trips are not included on the registration fee. More Information will be announced later.**

### **Registration form**

Please download here the [Registration Form](#).



**XIth International Symposium on Volcanospeleology  
at Madalena - Pico Island - AZORES**

**PRELIMINARY PROGRAMME**

- 12 May (Wednesday) - Opening Session and "Pico de Honra" cocktail
- 13 May (Thursday) - Field trip to Faial Island - Capelinhos volcano and Faial caldera
- 14 May (Friday) - Oral presentations
- 15 May (Saturday) - Field trip on Pico Island
- 16 May (Sunday) - Oral presentations
- 17 May (Monday) - Poster Session / meeting of UIS Commission on Volcanic Caves / Closing Session and Final Banquet

**Post Symposium Field Trips**

- 18 May (Tuesday) - Graciosa Island - Furna do Enxofre
- 19 May (Wednesday) - Terceira Island - Algar do Carvão
- 20 May (Thursday) - São Miguel Island - Gruta do Carvão
- 21 May (Friday) - São Miguel Island - Furnas volcano: hot springs, volcanic lake

**CONTACTS**

Information, requests and registration should be submitted to the following address:

Paulino Costa  
Direcção de Serviços da Conservação da Natureza  
Ed. Matos Souto - Piedade  
9930 LAJES DO PICO  
AZORES  
PORTUGAL  
Tel.: +351- 292 666 990  
Fax.: +351- 292 666 998  
E-mail : [speleoazores@mail.telepac.pt](mailto:speleoazores@mail.telepac.pt)

The official web site of the XIth I.S.V., with all relevant and updated information is

[www.multi.pt/speleoazores](http://www.multi.pt/speleoazores)



This message arrived from Michael Laumanns, president of the German Caving Association. Besides mapping lavatube caves, he offers a www-address for more information, and has a question about lenght-measuring of lavatubes.....

His address: < Michael.Laumanns@bmf.bund.de >

RWANDA

just came back from an incredible expedition to the lava caves of Rwanda (Central Africa) - within 2,5 weeks we mapped 10 km's of passages with a team of two! One cave - called Ubuvumo Nyabikuri-Ruri - had 3.348 m of length (unsegmented). Report will be published in the "Berliner Höhlenkundliche Berichte" (see [www.speleo-berlin.de](http://www.speleo-berlin.de)).

We encountered problems with the calculation of the passge length of lava tube caves. They are often segmented, which means that you have to leave one section of the cave, walk on the surface and to re-enter again the genetically same tube some distance further.

We decided to make a strict approach to the length calculation: Even if a segmented lava tube clearly belongs from a speleogenetic point of view to the same tube, we just consider the length of the longest uninterrupted segment as the valid cave length. The term "uninterrupted" INCLUDES roof collapses where you walk under the sunlight but not on the land's surface. As a SECONDARY information for statistical reasons the overall length of all tube segments could be given.

Are there any international standards referring to this problem with the lava tube segments?

Montoriol-Pous explored Ubuvumo bwa Musanze in Ruanda in 1977 and published a length of 4.560 m. However, according to their survey (and my own observations) the cave is definitely segmented and the longest segment is just 1.600 m long. In his article on Ruanda, Montoriol-Pous compared the cave with other lava caves (in Kenya, Iceland and in Spain). In some cases he quotes the length of all segments. In other cases he just referred to single segments. Hence, things are somewhat confused.

Should be grateful if you could give me some advice on this subject. It is not clear, what should be seen as the longest cave of Rwanda now.

cheers

Michael Laumanns

Please note! Very important.

Apparently some e-mail addresses, despite checked and double checked are wrong in the list of some commission members. A list of participants of the Reykjavik Symposium contained several errors.

So please (certainly those trying the Reykjavik list) check the following (as far as I know) proper E-mails:

editor of this publication: NOT jpvanderpas....., but jpgvanderpas

Dr. Ruth Lawrence: < r.lawrence@bendigo.latrobe.edu.au >

Apparently also the 'Azores' was somewhere wrong cited, the uac was misprinted vac. So:

Paulo Barcelos < pbarcelos@notes.angra.uac.pt >

Paulo Borges < pborges@angra.uac.pt >

J.C. Nunes < jcnunes@notes.uac.pt >

F. Pereira < fpereira@notes.angra.uac.pt >

Although apparently not always an answer (due to a long time break-down of the PC of Jim Simons, the proper address was and is:

< fajo@kenyaweb.com >

PLEASE - if you note an error please try to notify this newsletter. I know, not all of you check 'others'. But via our commission newsletter it might be possible to correct the 'missing' or 'wrong' ones.

A book about Saudi Arabian caves,  
by John Pint

The Desert Caves of Saudi Arabia  
published by Stacy International  
ISBN 1 900988 48 8

The only missing item in this book - lava tube caves.

John describes all there is know at this moment about the caves in Saudi Arabia, but limits himself to the limestone caves. Knowing John is now roaming all over Saudi Arabia for lava tubes it will only be waiting till his next book (maybe prepared for the 12th Symposium on Volcanic Caves in Saudi Arabia?) is issued.

Most likely this book will be available from 'cave book dealers', but for more info (price in UK is UK£ 25, in Saudi Arabia SR 145):

< orders@stacy-international.co.uk >

< thepints@saudicaves.com >

Publications - read-about/seen/available

Encyclopedia of Caves and Karst Science

edited by John Gunn

Isbn 1-57958-399-7 price UK£ 95.-

As mentioned in the write-up: an up-to-date reference for undergraduate students to professional hydrogeologists, planners and keen amateur cave scientists it must be indeed a remarkable encyclopedia. However - there is a chapter on Volcanic Caves, by Bill Halliday.

Not seen, and too expensive for me anyhow (clearly I'm a not too keen amateur caver - J.P. van der Pas).

Höhlenkunde - La Palma (price unknown)

This is a 20 page issue by the Tourist Organisazition of La Palma (Canary Islands). I got the German edition, but probably it is also issued in other languages. Simple, but full of good information about lava tube caves.

Some 30 pictures. Origin of the caves, eco-system, local caving club 'Benisahara', some caves on La Palma.

Also has contact addresses on Tenerife, Lanzarote and La Palma.

Ideal for first visits in this area. More info on

< [informacion@lapalmaturismo.com](mailto:informacion@lapalmaturismo.com) >

< [www.lapalmaturismo.com](http://www.lapalmaturismo.com) >

In case you are interested in rock-art, geology, vulcanology and more about the Canaty Islands:

An Austrian institute, 'Institutum Canarium', supplies all kind of data.

However, the language is German. It issues a publication, called IC-Nachrichten, and a yearly publication 'Almogaren'. All info on

< [www.institutum-canarium.org](http://www.institutum-canarium.org) >

or: Institutum Canarium

Hauslaubgasse 31/6

A - 1050 Wien, AUSTRIA

- received the Newsletter of the Commission on Pseudokarst # 10.

Their long delayed symposium will most likely be held in May 2004 in Slovakia.

- a fascinating source about lava tube caves on Hawai'i is always the NSS News.

In some recent issues;

June 2002 - Exploration of Big Red Cave, by Doug Medville. Four pages of fascinating exploration.

Dec. 2002 - Kukaiau Cave, by Spike Werner, Stephan Kempe et al. Seven pages, and wonderful pictures. As all these explores mention: there is more than a lifetime of work to do there.



# 8th International Symposium on Pseudokarst

## 8th International Symposium on Pseudokarst

The 8th International Symposium on Pseudokarst will be held on May 25-29 May 2004 in Teplý Vrch (12 km from Rimavská Sobota) - SLOVAKIA.

In the program will be lectures, and excursions to crevasse-, debris-, exhalation- and consequence caves. Further slide- and video show, commission meeting and banquet.

Registration fee is Euro 20.

Breakfast, lunch and dinner resp. 2, 5 and 4 Euro.

Accommodation hotel or hostel (6 - 20 Euro).

Abstracts for lectures should be in before Jan. 1, 2004.

Further info:

Slovenských jaskýň  
Železničná 31  
SK - 97901 Rimavská Sobota  
SLOVAKIA

E-mail <gaal@ssj.sk>

maybe also <http://www.clubs.privateweb.at/speleoaustralia/pseudokarst.htm>

Organizers: UIS Commission for Pseudokarst  
Slovak Caves Administration  
Slovak Speleological Society

U.I.S. (or I.U.S) - Union Internationale de Spéléologie, International Union of Speleology, is an organization keeping cavers (speleologists) of some 70 countries in contact with each other. Every 4 years a U.I.S. congress is hold, last one in 2001 in Brazil, next one in 2005 in Greece.

There are a number of commissions in UIS, each concerned to a certain, but well defined topic.

These commissions (each functioning in its own way) also organize at times symposia.

Last one of this commision in 2002 in Iceland, next one on the Azores in 2004.

U.I.S. is affiliated with UNESCO.

The President of the U.I.S. asked to forward this mesage to all concerned. Just for your information.



**Union Internationale de Spéléologie**

**President – José Ayrton Labegalini**

Rua Ernesto Gotardelo, 410

37580-000 – Monte Sião/MG - Brasil

Phone 55 35 3465 1451/9961 1937

Fax 55 35 3465 2055

Email [jal@tec3000.com.br](mailto:jal@tec3000.com.br)

What is the UIS?

The acronym UIS stands for the Union Internationale de Spéléologie, in the original French. Whatever form is used to write the name of the organization in other languages, the original acronym is maintained.

2

The UIS is a non-profit, non-governmental organization which promotes interaction between academic and more technical speleologists of a wide range of nationalities to encourage and facilitate the coordination of international speleology and promote its development, whether scientific, technical or cultural.

Speleology only took its first steps towards becoming a recognized science at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In the mid-1900's, the international speleological community, mostly Europeans, had the idea to hold an international speleological congress, and the first was organized in Paris, France, in 1953. Since then, international speleological congresses have been held in Italy (Bari-1958), Austria (Wien-1961), Yugoslavia (Ljubljana-Postojna-1965), Germany (Stuttgart-1969), Czechoslovakia (Olomouc-1973), England (Sheffield-1977), USA (Bowling Green -1981), Spain (Barcelona-1986), Hungary (Budapest-1989), China (Beijing-1993), Switzerland (La Chaux-des-Fonds-1997), and Brazil (Brasilia, 2001).

The initiative of some of the speleologists at the 1965 congress led to the proposal of the creation of an international entity to unite speleologists from all over the world and coordinate their activities. The UIS was then founded on September 16, 1965, during the closing session in the Festival Room of the Postojna Cave during the 4<sup>th</sup> International Congress of Speleology. The first statutes were approved, and the first board of officers elected: Bernard Gezè (France) as President, Gordon T. Warwick (England) as Vice-President, Stjepan Mikulec (Yugoslavia) as second Vice-President, and Albert Anavy (Lebanon) as General Secretary.

At present the UIS is presided over by the following officers: a President, two Vice Presidents, a General Secretary, and several Adjoint Secretaries (their number is defined by the General Assembly); each must be from a different country. These officers are elected at the general assemblies organized at the international congresses. The officers also have the support of an Advisory Council, consisting of the past-presidents and past-officers.

To coordinate the technical and scientific development of international speleology, the UIS created various Departments, each composed of Commissions and Working Groups, and each one with its own individual president and members. All of these organs are independent and organize their own meetings; they also develop projects and interact with other institutions. Their presidents are elected at the international congresses of speleology and they report on their activities at that time. At present, the UIS has the following Departments, Commissions, and Working Groups:

Department of Protection and Management

Commission on Protection and Management of and Tourism in Caves and Karst Regions

Department of Scientific Research

Commission on Physical Chemistry and Hydrogeology of Karst

Commission on Paleokarst and Speleochronology

Commission on Glacial Caves and Karst in Polar Regions

Commission on Volcanic Caves

Commission on Hydrogeology and Speleogenesis

Commission on Mineralogy of Caves

Commission on Pseudokarst

Commission on Archaeology and Paleontology in Caves

Commission on Artificial Cavities  
 Permanent Commission on Speleotherapy  
 Working Group on Hydrothermal Karst  
 Department of Documentation  
   Bibliographic Commission  
   Commission on Large Cavities  
   Commission of the Atlas of Karst Regions  
   Commission on the History of Speleology  
   Commission on Informatics  
   Working Group on Topography  
 Department of Exploration  
   Commission on Cave Rescue  
   Commission on Materials and Techniques  
   Commission on Cave Diving  
 Department of Education and Instruction  
   Commission on Speleological Education

The number of commissions and working groups is not fixed, and new ones can be created or old ones eliminated if necessary. Working groups are created for a specific period of time, whereas the Commissions are permanent as long as they are operating. The creation of a commission or a working group is always to result of the initiative of some scientist or expert of the area. Interested people have only to contact the president and request that their names are included so they can participate in meetings and discussions.

In order to supervise the work of exploration and international expeditions, the UIS instituted a Code of Ethics. This code, although it does not have the force of law, provides ethical guidelines for such activities to promote the development of speleology, increase our knowledge about international speleological heritage, and foster interactions between speleological communities.

To verify the "State of the Art" of world speleology, the UIS promotes the International Congress of Speleology (ICS) every four years. In these congresses, papers on the various facets of speleology are presented, including papers on scientific areas (geology, hydrogeology, mineralogy, biology, climatology, archaeology, paleontology, geography, therapy, etc.), on technical work (topography, photography, education, computer information, legislation, management, tourism, safety, rescue, new techniques, etc.) and cultural themes (religion, art, music, painting, sculpture, and the collection of stamps and coins, etc.). In addition to the formal presentation of papers, these congress schedule meetings of the various commissions and working groups; opportunities are provided for the exchange of ideas and participation in various cultural activities, such as social gatherings, competitions, and excursions before and after the congress to visit the karst and caves of the host country.

The political directions of the UIS depend largely on the officers; official policy is outlined during the annual meetings of the officers, as well as during the general assemblies of the Union during the international congresses. The officers have administrative autonomy, but it is the General Assembly, constituted by all of the delegates of all of the member countries, which decides the direction of the UIS by their votes. It is in the General Assembly that the work of the previous four years is presented and voted on; this is also the space for the creation or extinction of commissions and working groups, and the analysis of the financial situation of the Union. This is also the time when new member countries are admitted, the statutes modified, and documents approved; moreover, new agreements are made and signed. The new officers are also elected for the four-year period at the general assembly, and the host country for the next congress is also chosen.

At present, the UIS has more than 60 member countries, located on all the continents of the world, and it is open to the affiliation of each national association or federation. The majority of the commissions is active and provides a copious scientific production; the UIS also publishes the UIS Bulletin, as well as maintaining a website on the air containing information about speleological contacts around the world. This website provides access to various information, including the Statutes, the Code of Ethics, the list of member countries, the list of the addresses of the officers of all the organs of the UIS, the list of the delegates, and the list of the commissions and working groups, as well as an infinity of links with the websites of all the commissions and national federations and speleological groups around the world. The UIS electronic address is: <http://rubens.its.unimelb.edu.au/~pgm/uis/address.html>. The official scientific journal of UIS is the International Journal of Speleology (presently vol. 29 is being issued) published under the care of the Società Speleologica Italiana.

The present officers, elected at the last General Assembly in July 2001 in Brasília, Brazil, for the 4-year period from 2001-2005 are the following:

**President:**

José Ayrton Labegalini (Brazil) – [jal@tec3000.com.br](mailto:jal@tec3000.com.br)

**Vice presidents**

Andrew James Eavis (England) – [eavis@windcrown.co.uk](mailto:eavis@windcrown.co.uk)

Aleksander Klimchouk (Ukraine) – [klim@klim.carrier.kiev.ua](mailto:klim@klim.carrier.kiev.ua)

**General Secretary**

Pavel Bosák (Czech Republic) – [bosak@gli.cas.cz](mailto:bosak@gli.cas.cz)

**Adjunct Secretaries:**

Roman Hapka (Switzerland) – [roman.hapka@bluewin.ch](mailto:roman.hapka@bluewin.ch)

Andrej Mihevc (Slovenia) – [andrej.mihevc@guest.arnes.si](mailto:andrej.mihevc@guest.arnes.si)

Claude Mouret (France) – [claudio.mouret@wanadoo.fr](mailto:claudio.mouret@wanadoo.fr)

Fadi Nader (Lebanon) – [fadinader@hotmail.com](mailto:fadinader@hotmail.com)

Armstrong Osborne (Australia) – [a.osborne@edfac.usyd.edu.au](mailto:a.osborne@edfac.usyd.edu.au)

Linhua Song (China) – [songlh@igsnrr.ac.cn](mailto:songlh@igsnrr.ac.cn) or [songyivn@public.sti.ac.cn](mailto:songyivn@public.sti.ac.cn)

Abel Vale (Puerto Rico) – [enlacepr@caribe.net](mailto:enlacepr@caribe.net)

George Huppert (USA) (Deceased on last September 2001)

If you are a speleologist, whether a scientist or an expert, or simply someone who likes speleology, enter into contact with the UIS and have your speleological group contact the National Federation or Society of your country. Encourage your group to join the UIS, and encourage your National Association or Federation to become a member of the UIS so it can select a Delegate and vote at the General Assembly. Help the UIS grow and create a truly international speleology, whether developing new techniques, exploring new caves, studying new theories, practicing radical sports in caves, preserving the national heritage, publishing information, or encouraging sustainable development. Enjoy speleology in your own way, but participate. Don't wait to see what the UIS can do for you, but rather see what you can do to help develop speleology. Continue to enjoy speleology the way you always have, but share what you do with the rest of the international community.

Monte Sião/Brazil, February de 2003

José Ayrton Labegalini  
UIS President



Most members of the Commission will receive and see on the web the fascinating stories about caving, and hunting for lavatubes, in Saudi Arabia by John & Susy Pint.

Since the Newsletter is send to some readers without E-mail, handed-out as promoting material for the Commission, and collected by some libraries some of the material is here in printed form.

On < [www.saudicaves.com](http://www.saudicaves.com) > many interesting stories are to be found, as

- Helicopter rescue at Um Quaradi Cave
- Narrow Escape
- Caves of the Lost City
- the Legends of Hibashi Cave
- Cave Rescue in Lebanon
- Saudicaves in Iceland

and so on. To contact John & Susy < [thepints@saudicaves.com](mailto:thepints@saudicaves.com) >

#### THE LEGENDS OF HIBASHI CAVE

>>

"Man Survives Deadly Cave Ordeal for Twenty Days"

>>

The headline was worthy of a supermarket tabloid. A man had wandered into Ghar Al Hibashi, located deep inside Arabia's Al Buqum lava field. He had battled ferocious wolves and hyenas, breathed poisonous fumes and endured the bites of disease-laden bugs, all this while trapped inside the cave for nearly three weeks. During his ordeal, he had eaten grass, drunk "cave water" and stumbled around in the dark until he surfaced through a hole located 17 kms from the cave entrance. Such a cave appeared worthy of investigation, even if it turned out only one tenth as long as the newspaper claimed.

During the first week of January, 2003, we set out on our quest. All we knew about the cave's location was that it lay somewhere between Ranyah and Turubah... that meant a mere 130-km stretch of tire-eating lava to check out. "I think I'll sit this one out," Susy had commented, "until you actually FIND the cave... if it's really a cave at all."

For this trip, we had two Land Cruisers, fitted with nearly worthless Dunlop tires – and a large truck (How do you say 'truck' in Arabic, I asked. 'Lori' they replied) big enough to carry several of the pickups SGS usually assigns us. Ten and a half hours after setting out from Jeddah, we were still nowhere near the cave and the sun was about to set. Since you can't find a black hole in black lava in the dark, we pulled off a nice wide track we had just discovered and began to make camp near the mangled remains of a tanker.

>>

## A ROAR IN THE DARK

As usual, I picked a spot far from the camp to set up my tent, knowing how late the others usually stay up. I found a patch of sand between some lava chunks and thorn bushes and had just finished putting on the rain fly when I heard a very strange sound in the total darkness, somewhere far behind me. It was a long, slow, throaty growl and it made the small hairs on the back of my neck stand straight up. Then I heard it again, this time a lot closer. I couldn't believe my ears as it sounded exactly like a lion, but there haven't been any lions in western Arabia for thousands of years.

The rumbling growl came again, even closer. Could it be a wolf? There are definitely plenty of wolves in these parts. I edged away from the tent and carefully made my way back to the cars. Without a doubt, there was something weird out there!

I told Mahmoud I thought I had heard a lion and he gave me a very peculiar look. Then he asked everyone to shut up and he heard it too. His eyes bulged and he walked over to the truck and picked up a heavy metal pipe. The whole gang of us now tiptoed behind Mahmoud as he very carefully made his way toward my tent. Suddenly, we saw a movement in the beams of our collective flashlights. Mahmoud stopped, turned to me and in a low voice, said, "John, there is your lion," pointing towards a camel, whose head could be seen just above a large bush behind the tent.

>>

## THREE SOMALIS FAR FROM HOME

We spent a very cold night and the next morning at breakfast, I took one of the cave thermometers out of the watertight box it was stored in. The reading was 5 degrees C and I suspect that during the night it must have been just above zero C, which is 32 degrees F.

In the middle of breakfast, a thin, dark-skinned man suddenly appeared from out of nowhere. Of course, we invited him to sit down and join us. Immediately, two other equally forlorn-looking men stepped forth from behind the cars and suddenly our one guest became three. These men could speak enough Arabic to tell us they were Somalis who had walked all the way from Yemen, looking for work. How they had ended up in this desolate spot so far from even a small town, we didn't learn, but they seemed very grateful for the food and drink we gave them.

After breaking camp, we found some local people who gave us a rough idea of how we could find our way to Jebel Hibashi, near which—we assumed—we'd find our cave.

## LOST IN THE LAVA

Noon found us wandering all around Jebel Hibashi, trying unsuccessfully to communicate among our three vehicles using some cheap walkie-talkies we'd bought and hoping one of the tracks in the area would lead to the cave. None did, however, and we finally decided to use our Global Satellite telephone to call people at SGS who might have the GPS location of the cave.

Helas! (French) the person who might have had this vital info was out of town. So, Halas! (Arabic), enough expensive phone calls. After removing rocks stuck between our double set of truck tires, using a metal pipe as if it were a giant toothpick, we rolled on toward whatever our destiny would be.

3

Amazingly, we drove a few meters to the top of a low rise and from there saw, in the distance, several large white tents, neatly arranged all in a row. Bedus!

As usual, a couple of these astoundingly generous people immediately volunteered to lead us to the cave, which they said was nearby.

After a km or so over typically savage lava-field tracks, we were standing on the edge of a hole nearly 30 m across... and freezing. Yes, a lively wind had risen and it was a relief to jump from rock to rock down into the shelter of a room so large we couldn't make out the other end of it.

>>

#### UNDERGROUND HOTEL

Because it had a flat floor, plenty of room and a pleasant temperature, Mahmoud declared that here is where we were going to camp. There were a few looks of surprise at this and a few murmurs about the minor problem of transporting our gear (you can't imagine how much stuff we take on these trips) all the way down from the surface. But soon we were busy forming a human conveyor belt.

There was just one slight problem. As so often happens, somebody had decided this cave was a fine place to throw his dead sheep, and there were three bloated carcasses perfuming the air of our new home. Fortunately, there were sandy spots near the sheep, so I decided to abandon the chain gang and bury the bodies. This turned out to be more of a job than I had figured, but in the end it was well worth it as our new home smelled as lovely... well, as lovely as you could ever expect a cave to smell.

>>

#### WALL TO WALL CARPETING

Which brings me to the subject of the cave floor on which we spread our carpets and tarps. This lava tube, like all the others we've seen in this country has a deep layer of powdery sediment covering the original floor. Now, a dirt floor would not be bad to camp on, but this first room of the cave had obviously been used as an animal corral in the past. Most of us thought goats had lived here, but Abdulrahman, our resident Bedu, declared that the billions of little balls on which we were camping had been produced by sheep, over a long, long period of time, I should guess.

Once we had settled in, the drivers prepared a meal. As usual, chicken kabsa was the only item on the menu, but this time it was lightly spiced with the dust, which rose every time anyone took a step on the sheep dung floor. After a few cups of tea, it was time to go have a look around the cave.

We put on our helmets and picked up a Coleman lamp because the great size of the passage facing us – plus the flat floor – suggested this was going to be an easy-walking cave. We also took along a couple of stout sticks because we had spotted the large imprint of an unknown, five-toed animal's paw on the ground.

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#### DRIBBLES AND DIRT

The passage we were in had a semi-circular arched ceiling and smooth walls 16 m apart. It felt like we were walking in a man-made tunnel. The floor was dusty dirt, which had been blown or washed into the cave during ages. Here and there we saw holes dug presumably by treasure hunters. Obviously the floor was at least a meter thick, but comparing the ceiling arch to the shape of several Icelandic lava tubes where you can see the original floor, I would guess that this Saudi lava tube may hold several meters of dirt, deposited during more than a million years. If pollen is present in this sediment, much could be learned from it about past flora and weather on the Arabian peninsula. What archeological treasures lie buried here is anyone's guess.

On close inspection, the side walls revealed runny lava "dribbles" and small lava stalactites. Here and there were found lumpy lava stalagmites, up to 30 cm high. But the most interesting formation of all was a lava channel on the inclined floor of a side passage, with "banks" alongside the deep groove running down the center of the channel.

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#### BURNT CAVE

A few steps further, the floor suddenly turned to ash. Bones and even rocks lying on this light-grey surface were charred on the bottom but not on top. The burnt area covered a large part of the cave and appears to be a layer of guano that caught fire and smoldered for a long time. Some parts of the ceiling in this area are covered with a shiny, sticky, black "tar" caused by this fire, here and there dotted with tan-colored stalactites of an equally sticky substance. We had seen several small wood fires on the floors of various passages in this cave, perhaps used for lighting purposes and it may have been one of these that set the guano on fire... but how long ago?

An interesting feature of this cave is a very large, well-shaped dome with the usual high heap of large chunks of breakdown beneath it. We placed a hygrometer and mini-max thermometer in this area and got 48 degrees humidity and a pleasant temperature range of 22-24 degrees Celsius.

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#### THE MURDERED MAIDEN

The next day, the three geologists mapped a large part of the cave while I went around taking photos. They got the worst end of this arrangement because three people stir up a lot more dust than one and all of them returned to Jeddah with bad coughs and burning throats. But by being off on my own, I missed the most exciting find of the whole trip. Deep inside the cave, Abdulrahman found a large rock upon which someone had placed two parts of a human skull. Because the cave has had vandalic visitors in recent times (thanks to that wildly exaggerated newspaper article) and because the skull parts were no longer in situ, it was decided to remove them from the cave for handing over to the proper authorities. We have already had enough experience with skulls and artifacts vanishing because we left them where we found them.

Carrying our tons of gear up the long slope to the surface was not exactly fun, but the cave had given us shelter and warmth, a fact we were reminded of the moment we were blasted by the cold wind whistling across the stark stretches of Harat Buqum.

We in the Land Cruisers had only one flat on the way back – a miracle, considering that our tires were paper-thin. The truck fared worse, we learned later. Apparently most of its six tires fell to pieces on the way back after that beating in the lava field and it took the driver days to reach Jeddah. Upon our arrival home, we sent pictures of the skull to various knowledgeable people by email. "It is a human skull," they assured us, "and the teeth indicate it was a young woman 12 to 18 years old... and didn't you notice that the brainpan has been sliced off?" So it seems this skull tells us a story of foul play. Perhaps carbon dating will tell us just when it took place.

We found neither wolves nor biting bugs nor poisonous fumes nor grass nor seventeen-kilometer passages in Hibashi Cave, but we did find enough other things to start a few legends of our own.

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John Pint

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## GHAR AL HIBASHI

Hello!

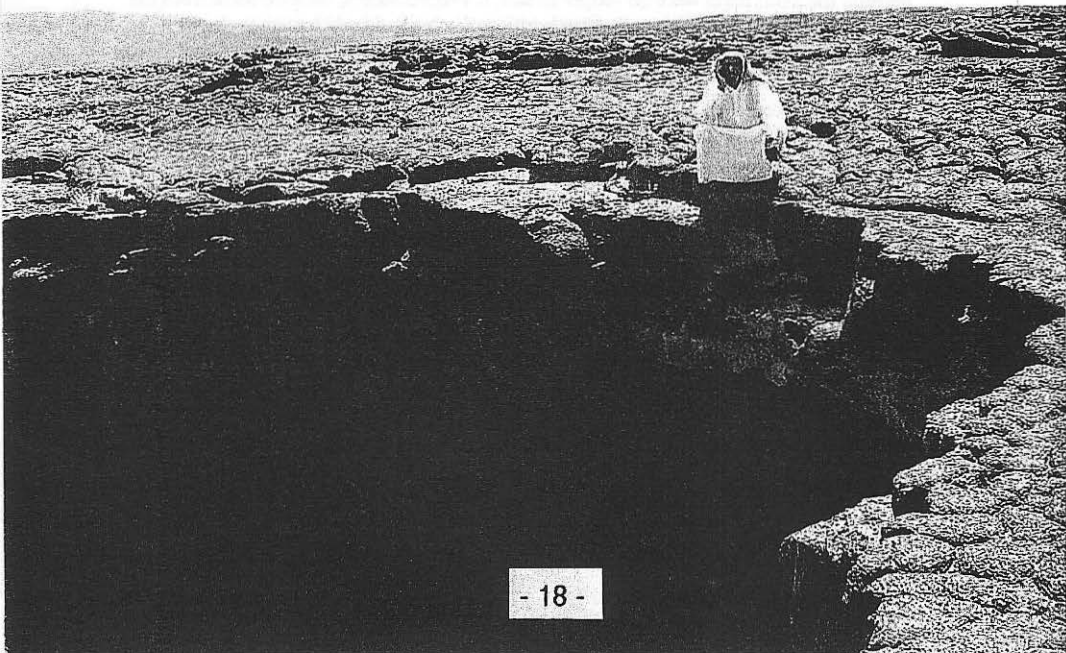
Went off to Hibashi Lava Tube on Saturday and am back again. We brought along a Brit who specializes in "loess" which is very very very fine sand. He suspected what lies on the floors of our caves is loess. We raised great clouds of dust digging holes in the floor and taking samples. Do you know that there is a way to measure how long sand has been out of the sun? Well, it seems that particles of quartz behave weirdly if subjected to darkness for a long time. So, you collect your sample in total darkness by digging a hole and pounding a plastic tube into the dirt. This is then sealed and opened in darkness in a lab where the dirt is blasted by a laser beam. This sends the atoms in the quartz molecules racing back to their "correct" positions, releasing energy in the form of light. This light is measured and the measurement tells you the last time that old dirt was in the sun! Quite amazing, called OSL, optically stimulated luminescence.

The cave we went to was formed over a million years ago (a "young" lava tube!) and we got our sample from 1.5 meters below the surface of the floor, just above the original rock floor of the cave. We also found twigs and "petrified hyena poops" at the very bottom.....which we may be able to date by other means.

This was our first cave trip in August. Things cooled down at night and I ended up inside the sleeping bag instead of on top of it!

Attached are pix of the cave entrance with Driver on cell phone, the pounding of the rod and the motley crew. You can clearly see who dug the hole!

John and Susy





Hello UIS lavacavers!

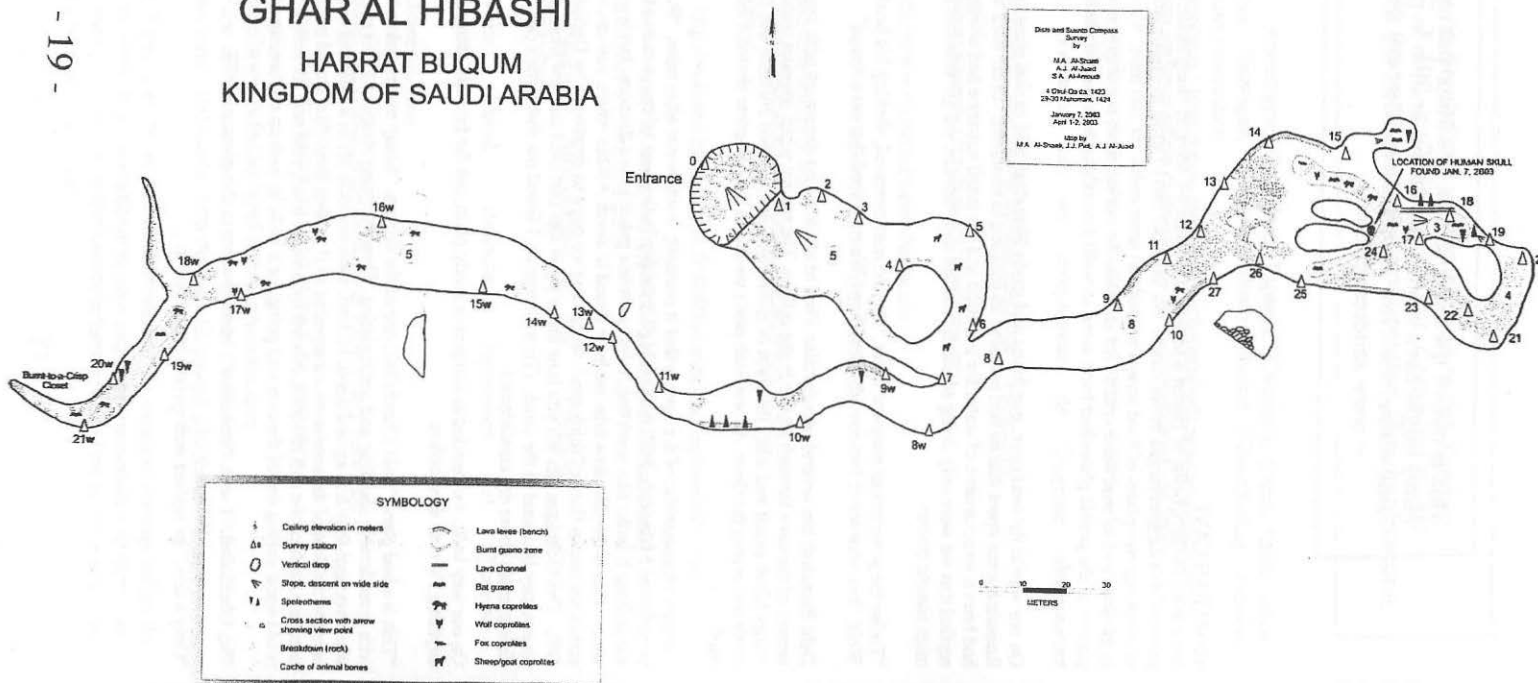
Coprolites are quite plentiful in Saudi Caves and in Hibashi lava tube cave they are practically landmarks. I have tried to use simple symbols of the "donor" animals to designate coprolite areas. Would appreciate your comments... also on symbols for lava levees (benches) and a lava channel.

John Pint

# GHAR AL HIBASHI

## HARRAT BUQUM

### KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA



This is one of the many stories 'the Pints' put on the web.  
Many might have seen it, here another time in printed form.  
Look also at the 'New Photogallery 2003 (by the Pints):  
< [www.saudicaves.com](http://www.saudicaves.com) >

#### ROMAHAH CAVE

Back from the lava fields of Harrat Khaybar. This time we brought along radon detectors to see if there might be traces of this dangerous gas in our caves. We installed two of them in Shuwaymis Cave (510m long) and then went to check out two plates of food scraps we had left deep inside the last time. We had hoped to find small organisms in the food and to send these critters for analysis. To our surprise, not only was every lick of food gone, but a good portion of the plastic plates had been eaten as well! Something tells me we need to install mouse traps first and bug traps second.

On our way to the next cave, our friend and guide Mamdoah told us that some of the old-timers living near Dahl Romahah were upset that he had revealed its location to strangers. As far back as anyone could remember, this cave had been a secret source of water for one tribe and the small entrance had always been kept hidden. Mamdoah replied that we were only doing scientific studies and, besides, the government is supplying tankers of water to the most remote places.

"Today the government supplies water," the old man muttered, shaking his head like Grandfather in Peter and the Wolf, "but what about tomorrow? What then? We may need that cave again!"

Dahl Romahah has several peculiarities. First of all, it's well decorated with gypsum, which has leaked into every cranny of the cave through cracks in the ceiling. The sugary white gypsum stands out in sharp contrast against the vuggy black basalt and takes the form of mini-stalactites, toothed curtains and flowstone that cascades from the walls and across the floor. At one such place we found the complete skeleton of a fox cemented to the floor by this stuff.

Another characteristic of the cave is that it normally holds water after rains. "But it hasn't rained here in two years," complained Mamdoah. Still, there is high humidity in the back of the cave and this results in a "Milky Way" coating the ceiling. It looks like sparkling, silver or white paint from a distance, but is actually formed by tiny droplets of water. This is the first lava tube we have found in Saudi Arabia where you can see water dripping from basalt stalactites onto a floor of thick mud, whose age we hope to determine by Optically Stimulated Luminescence or OSL. This technique can tell you how many years ago that mud last saw daylight. It's also possible that pollen or spores may be found in the muck. (To my surprise, I found out that pollen can be preserved for ages if kept wet, but disintegrates under dry conditions.)

On our way back, we decided to camp on a sandy plain, not far from an escarpment. The sand was redder than anything I'd ever seen before.

"This is a bad place," said Obaidullah, one of the drivers. "Many many snakes here." Much discussion then ensued with considerable shouting and gesticulating. Then everyone returned to his car and I thought we would drive to whatever spot they had agreed upon. Instead, each car took off in a different direction at high speed. Obaidullah raced to the foot of the sandstone escarpment as if getting there first would establish his chosen spot as our campsite. In fact, the soft red rock, eroded by eons of wind, rain and hot sun, were beautifully sculpted and no one could resist getting out of the cars and going for a walk in such an enchanting place. And there's where we camped.

"So, Obaidullah," I said, "there won't be any snakes in this place, right?"

"Only a few," he replied with typical bedu reserve.

This list (probably no lavatubes) was published in the French publication 'LAVE', # 100, p. 26 in Jan. 2003. Compiled by Mr. Alexandre Paul. All these sites contain information about volcanoes. Just in case.....

Deux répertoire de webcams - Antarctique, Cameroun, Espagne (Canaries), Grèce, Italie, Japon, Réunion, Martinique, Mexique, Nicaragua, Nouvelle-Zélande, Russie (Kamtchatka), Panama, Salvador, U.S.A. - à consulter sans modération :

- celui du site de Dominique Decobecq : <http://perso.club-internet.fr/decobed/camerasvolcans.html>

- celui de *Stromboli on Line* : <http://www.educeth.ch/stromboli/livecams/worldwide-en.html>

**Italie** : L'Etna sous deux angles avec des remises à jour toutes les minutes : <http://www.albanetcom.com/EtnaIMG>

L'Etna, le Stromboli et Vulcano, en un complément de l'adresse ci-dessus : <http://www.ct.ingv.it/UfMoni>

Le Vésuve observé par quatre webcams : [http://www.vesuvioinrete.it/e\\_webcam.htm](http://www.vesuvioinrete.it/e_webcam.htm)

**Cameroun** : Lac Nyos : <http://perso.wanadoo.fr/mhalb/nyos/webcam.htm>

**Espagne** : Teide (Canaries) : <http://www.canarias24.com/teidecam>

**Grèce** : Santorin (4 webcams) : <http://www.santorini.net/camera/index.htm>

**Japon** : Fuji : <http://www.sunplus.com/fuji/livec.htm>

Le Mont Fuji, l'Iwate, l'Unzen : <http://hakone.eri.u-tokyo.ac.jp/kasan/VSJ1E.html>

Sakurajima : <http://yumemaru.com/s/>

**Martinique** : Montagne Pelée : <http://volcano.ipgp.jussieu.fr:8080/martinique/capturevideo.htm>

**Mexique** : Popocatepetl : <http://www.cenapred.unam.mx/popo/UltimaImagenVolcan2.html>

Colima : [http://www.ucol.mx/volcan/envivo\\_naranjal.html](http://www.ucol.mx/volcan/envivo_naranjal.html)

**Nicaragua** : Cerro Negro, Momotombo, San Cristobal, Telica : <http://www.ineter.gob.ni/geofisica/webcam>

**Nouvelle Zélande** : White Island, Ruapehu, Ngauruhoe et Taranaki : <http://www.geonet.org.nz/volcanocam.htm>

**Panama** : Baru : <http://www.volcanbaru.com>

**Russie (Kamtchatka)** : Kliuchskoï, Sheveluch : <http://data.emsd.iks.ru/video/video.htm>

**San Salvador** : [http://www.laprensa.com.sv/camara\\_en\\_vivo/camara\\_en\\_vivo.asp](http://www.laprensa.com.sv/camara_en_vivo/camara_en_vivo.asp)

**Etats-Unis** : Mont St Helens : <http://www.fs.fed.us/gpnm/mshnm/volcanocam>

Mont Shasta : <http://www.shastacam.com> ; Mont Redoubt (Alaska) : <http://www.anchorageweathercam.com/> ; Haleakala : <http://banana.ifa.hawaii.edu/crater>

On ne pourra que regretter la disparition ou le non-fonctionnement de caméras comme celles de l'Erebus (temporairement hors service) : <http://www.ees.nmt.edu/Geop/mevo/mevomm/livei.html> ; du Piton de la Fournaise : <http://volcano.ipgp.jussieu.fr:8080/reunion/capturevideo.htm> et des volcans du Kamtchatka : <http://data.emsd.iks.ru/video/video.htm>

Address until 5 July 2003:  
6630 Cornwall Court  
Nashville, TN 37205

Kimberly Evert Bown, Director  
Recreation, Lands and Mineral Resources  
Pacific Northwest Region  
US Forest Service  
PO Box 3623  
Portland, OR 97204

28 May 2003

Dear Ms. Bown:

re: 2880/2350/2670; yr ltr 7-17-02

I have been awaiting the expected followup to your interim letter of July 17, 2002.

Since that letter, several additional events should come to your attention:

1) on Saturday 28 September 2002 I met Mark Perkins at the Toketee Ranger Station, expecting to continue with him to Mowich Cave on the basis of a compromise solution supposedly worked out with the staff of the Umpqua National Forest by Mr. Perkins and by Bat Conservation International. On arrival, after flying from TN to Seattle and driving to OR, Mark had to inform me that the trip was in vain. He was denied the key to the cave gate.

2) I never received a response to my second FOIA request dated 7 May 2002. Therefore, on 18 November 2002 I had my attorney, Mr. Richard P. Blumberg of Seattle, resubmit it with additional requests. I received the response with cover letters of 3 and 21 January and 19 February 2003, and a final installment of 81 pages this month.

3) I now have completed my analysis of this material. A copy is enclosed for your reference, with a short summary and a Table of Contents for ease in review. I hope - and expect - that you will agree that the evidence now is so compelling that Mowich Cave should be reopened - at least for scientific studies - on the same basis as other Pacific Northwest caves containing *Plecotus townsendii*, as recommended by Bat Conservation International, by the USFS's Jim Nieland, by Mark Perkins and by many other experts in bat conservation.

I hope and expect that you will take prompt and effective steps to achieve this. Under the Memorandum of Understanding between the National Speleological Society and the U.S. Forest Service, this unfortunate controversy never should have arisen. Clearly it will be to the benefit of all concerned if the matter can be resolved at the Regional level.

Very sincerely yours,

*W.R. Halliday*

William R. Halliday  
Honorary President  
Commission on Volcanic Caves of the International Union of Speleology

cc: US (van der Pas), USFS (Chief Forester)  
Bat Conservation International (Kennedy), Friends of Oregon Caves  
National Speleological Society Section on Cave Geology and Geography, Oregon grottos

Regular readers of this Newsletter will have seen pages by Bill Halliday concerning entrance (or better, the non-access) to Mowich Cave. Very silly arguments were used to deny access to Mowich Cave, which Bill all could invalidate.

The amount of documents (of all photocopies were sent to the chairman of this commission) is staggering. Most were published.

On 30 May this year Bill sent an album of 55 pages to summarize. This was too much for this publication - some important-ones have been chosen for this pages.

## SUMMARY

Material received through 25 May 2003 in response to my December 2000 FOIA request demonstrates the following: the secret gating was unlawful under NEPA and CFR; maternity colonies of *Plecotus* have declined and have been driven into crevice caves since gating; the gate is dangerously close to the maternity colony; the species is not unique and has been removed from the Region's "Sensitive List"; the Umpqua National Forest staff has relied on undocumented assertions of a minority of scientists; a great deal of disinformation and misinformation should be relegated to obscurity; and the cave should be open to cave science and leave-no-trace recreation between maternity and hibernaculum seasons.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### 1. Location and nature of the cave

Published 1977 map of Mowich Cave

1977 USFS map showing location of Mowich Cave and Toketee Ranger Station

Part of provisional United States Geological Survey map showing cave location

### 2. Specifics of disinformation and misinformation supplied to U.S. Senator Gordon H. Smith by Regional Forester 5 May 2000

Analysis of 5 May 2000 letter

Text of 5 May 2000 letter

Excerpts from Perkins 1990: title page and pages 6 and 10, documenting that gating





the cave would result in adverse environmental effects and fencing was a better alternative (both mandating preparation of an EA or EIS which was not done)

21 August 2002 Mowich Cave Survey Form documenting reduced maternity colony maximum population since gating, and also Plecotus use of crevice caves since gating

Analysis of Draft Decision Memo on Closure of Mowich Cave: documentation that the Umpqua National Forest was on record as knowing that gating the cave would result in adverse environmental effects and fencing was a better alternative, and that an extraordinary geological factor existed at Mowich Cave, thus requiring an EA or EIS

Text of Draft Decision Memo

Analysis of Meeting Summaries of March 5 and 6, 1991. USFS Regional was aware of Perkins 1990 report cited above. Also Perkins supposedly changed his mind at this time and began to support use of a gate

### 3. Plecotus maternity colony populations in Mowich Cave before/after gating

Analysis of counts and estimates of Plecotus 1983-2002 as supplied by the Umpqua National Forest to date: the date and quantity of the base count ("Summer 1983") has been progressively distorted in later citations; despite contrary allegations, the maternity population was increasing before the gating and has decreased subsequently; it has been forced into crevice caves previously believed to be unsatisfactory as habitats; on only one occasion were the bats sufficiently disturbed to fly and they are not as hypersensitive to human disturbance as alleged.

Analysis of "Monitoring from 1983-2000 Documented Year Around Use" memo: annotations to text of memo demonstrate many misstatements in memo used as basis for Mike Hupp's position paper

Text of "Summer 1983" bat count forms documenting actual population and showing usual near-100% birth rate in maternity colonies in this cave. As indicated above, this date and population estimate were subsequently misstated

Text of T. Young memo 7-24-00 documenting use of crevice caves previously believed to be unsuitable habitats for Plecotus

### 4. Considerations of other uses of Mowich Cave between hibernaculum and maternity

Analysis of "Occurrence, Population Trends and Habitat Characteristics of Townsend's Big-Eared Bat Summer Maternity Colonies and Winter Hibernacula in Southwest Oregon": 30-page report allegedly by J. Mark Perkins and Stephen P. Cross, backdated June 1999. Little if any was by Mark Perkins. Obviously he had no control of content which contradicts his longstanding positions on important points, most notably lack of harm from opening the cave between hibernaculum and maternity seasons. Internally self-contradictory. Misuse of scientific method reminiscent of Angus Woodbury's infamous article in Science. Misstatements of important statistics. Seemingly takes credit for field work actually performed by T. Farrell and others. See below.

"Query 1" and other reports documenting performance of observations by T. Farrell and others for which "Perkins and Cross 1999" seemingly asserted were performed by Perkins and Cross.

Analysis of "Effects of Humans on Bats and Bat Caves", Jim Nieland, 2000 (USFS regional cave specialist). Contains obsolete sections but documents safety of opening such caves to controlled access between hibernacula and maternity colonies.

Followup of allegation that Steve Cross has been familiar with Mowich Cave "for the past 20 years". Text of allegation and detailed analysis: it is doubtful that he ever has been to Mowich Cave.

Analysis of requested responses to 18 June 1999 ltr from T. Farrell to C. Barkhurst, seemingly about emergency need to re-close portal in cave gate. There is no documentation that any action resulted, so this letter was mere grandstanding.

Text of 18 June 1999 letter.

Followup on request for text of original sign placed in Mowich Cave in 1992; original text allegedly discarded. Bat Cave International position is that Mowich Cave should be open between maternity and hibernation seasons. Telephone memos about "long and often circuitous conversations" between BCI staff and Umpqua NF staff apparently discarded. C. Barkhurst of Umpqua NF staff apparently prepared an inappropriate letter for the signature of Merlin Tuttle, President of BCI; never signed.

Analysis of two flyers, one now obsolete because it recommended that *Plecotus* be declared "endangered" in western Oregon (now removed even from "Sensitive" list) and one merely reporting that this bat is not found on the Clearwater National Forest in Idaho.

Analysis of "Designation of Significant Caves". Designation specifies existence of documentation for this decision, but this was not supplied despite a specific FOIA request.

Analysis of 11/18/98 ltr of Don Ostby to Oregon High Desert Grotto of the National Speleological Society. Gives details of procedures in unlawful closure of Mowich Cave

Analysis of some missing pages in 1995 "Habitat Conservation Assessment and Conservation Strategy for the Townsend's Big-Eared Bat, Report 1" of the Idaho State Conservation Effort. Included information of preparers but lacks documentation of assertions in portions supplied in response to first FOIA request. This was an Idaho interagency project with some input by Mark Perkins.

Analysis of Pearson, Elizabeth D. 1989. This is a non-scientific inspirational article alleging endangerment of the species; self-contradictory on supposed hypersensitivity to human disturbance.

Analysis of Christy, Robin E. and Stephen D. West, 1993. This article also alleged hypersensitivity to human disturbance without documentation. Also alleged rarity; this subsequently became moot with species' removal from "Sensitive" list

Analysis of Jeff Simon memo 8-2-84 and attachments, placing species on sensitive list. Completely obsolete.

Analysis of North American Bat Conservation Fund Application Procedure. Documents only the application procedure

#### 5. Re cultural resources

Analysis of D. Berner memo 12/19/02 and attachments. Documents that only a surface reconnaissance has been made for artifacts; test pits dug by pot hunters.

6. Re: Responses to "Questions for the Mowich Cave Management Plan June 28-July 31, 2002". 6 completed forms or their equivalent in letter form, etc. Two are double-sided. Two telephone memos in addition. Mark Perkins reiterated that the cave could safely be open between maternity and hibernation seasons. C. Larson pointed out that the cave had been known since the 1920s and had been a recreation site for decades, so an EA or EIS should have been done; further, that closure was done in absence of identification of non-biological resources; the concept of survival of *P. townsendii* through its closure was illogical (Mowich Cave population is about 1% of the total population in western Oregon). Anonymous: many serious questions are unanswered; present gate is not working well; human activity should be permitted when bats not present. T. Farrell submitted a long and complex response which included clear misstatements as analyzed; he urged that only US Government employees be allowed in the cave in the foreseeable future. I urged replacing the gate with the fence recommended in Perkins 1990 and allowing leave-no-trace activities between maternity and hibernation seasons. Jan Paul van der Pas supported my recommendations. Telephone memos included recommendation for a "safe window" in Octobers, and need for determination of such a window based on 6-8 years' experience.

#### 7. Observations of lack of alleged hypersensitivity to human disturbance One page of observations

#### 8. USDA Information Quality guidelines and provisions

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## SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS OF FOIA MATERIAL RECEIVED THROUGH 5-11-03

1) The gating of Mowich Cave was unlawful, both under due process provisions of NEPA and of CFR. The latter specifically required that "interested and affected persons must be informed in an appropriate manner" when Categorical Exclusion was used. This was not done. Further, provisions of 26.2(6) regarding Categorical Exclusions improving habitat were not complied with.

2) An EA or EIS should have been done; the Umpqua National Forest already had been placed on notice by its own consultant that a fence would be better protection for the bats than a gate, and that cave gates commonly cause serious environmental alterations (Perkins, 1990, p. 10). This was known as high as the Regional Office before the cave was gated. CFR specifically required an EA or EIS under these circumstances.

3) Raw bat count data supplied to date show that the Plecotus maternity colony was increasing up to the time of gating, not decreasing as asserted repeatedly. Further, the gating has been followed by reduction of the maternity population (as of 2002), with partial disruption into adjacent crevice caves previously believed not to be suitable habitat. Maternal population figures supplied to date are:

1983 Total 40, approximately 21 females, 19 young

1985 Total 55, approximately 28 females, 27 young

1987 Total 50, approximately 26 females, 24 young

1990 Total 69 (presumably); 35 documented females + presumed 34 young  
(cave gated Spring 1992; inset portal closed during maternity season 1999)

1999 Total 45, approximately 23 females, 22 young

2000 No data supplied

2001 Total 39 (presumably); count actually 18 but incomplete and should have included 20 females + approximately 19 young

2002 Total 27, approximately 14 females, 13 young

(1999 and later counts are for all caves on the Mowich Cave ledge; earlier counts are only for Mowich Cave)

4) On at least two occasions, the maternity colony has been documented as being within reach of long sticks. The gate should be replaced with the fence originally suggested by Mark Perkins (Perkins, 1990, p. 10).

5) In late 2001, this supposedly rare and unique species was removed from the US Forest Service list of sensitive species. By definition, it is no more "unique" than any other species.

6) Together with numerous other recent observations, the bat count sheets document that Plecotus is not hypersensitive to human disturbance, as frequently asserted without documentation.

7) In recent decades, a great deal of misinformation and some disinformation has been promulgated about this species of bat and about Mowich Cave and would be better relegated to obscurity. The overwhelming weight of scientific opinion documents that leave-no-trace activities are safe between maternity seasons and hibernacula in such caves.

8) The Umpqua National Forest has been relying on undocumented statements by a very small local group of biologists whose assertions do not stand up under analysis.



DISINFORMATION AND MISINFORMATION SUPPLIED TO U.S. SENATOR  
GORDON H. SMITH BY REGIONAL FORESTER LETTER 5 MAY 2000

ALLEGATION #1.

"...Biological evaluations and environmental analyses do not exist because they were not necessary actions to take in 1992 for the gating action."

Note 1. This allegation is outright disinformation. Biological evaluations and environmental analyses for actions of this type were required by the due process provisions of the National Environmental Protection Act. The Umpqua National Forest has skirted all queries on this subject, directing attention instead to CFR, from whose provisions it asserts the privilege of Categorical Exclusion of gating this internationally significant cave.

Note 2. This action was ineligible for consideration for Categorical Exclusion. As of 1990, its own consultant had given written notice to the the Umpqua National Forest that gating Mowich Cave was not the preferred alternative for protection of the cave's colony of *Plecotus townsendii*:

"Gating has been noted to result in changes in temperature, humidity, bat access, and number of bats willing to fly through a gate. I prefer a cyclone type fence which restricts humans, but allows bats to fly over."

— page 10 in J. Mark Perkins, 2000. *PLECOTUS TOWNSENDII* Survey for the North Umpqua Ranger District of the Umpqua National Forest. 13 p.

The staff of the national forest has asserted repeatedly that closure of the cave was a routine action which could be considered as a Categorical Exclusion under FSH 1901.15 category 26.1(b), which did not require preparation of an EA or EIS. However, under provisions of FSH immediately preceding category 26.1(b), controversial actions or actions with multiple alternatives were not eligible for such Categorical Exclusions.

Further, under subsection 27, categorically excluded actions were required to provide that "...interested and affected persons must be informed in an appropriate manner" and even this was not done. Nor were the Project File, Scoping, and Decision Memo which were required for Categorical Exclusions for improving habitat under 26.2(6).

Perkins' 1990 report placed the forest staff on record that gating this cave would be controversial rather than routine, and hence ineligible for Categorical Exclusion. A full-scale EA or EIS was required by both NEPA and FSH and should have been performed. It is clear that, instead, staff persons of the Umpqua National Forest simply chose to ignore law and regulations and hoped that their unlawful action could be "stonewalled".

ALLEGATION #2.

"...(The gate) enables *PLECOTUS TOWNSENDII* to occupy the cave without being disturbed by human activities."

Note 1. This was misinformation. It asserted an extremely controversial minority view espoused by two or three southern Oregon biologists whose statistics and assertions do not withstand analysis. The position of Bat Conservation International was and is that there are windows between maternity and hibernation seasons when cave science and ordinary cave recreation may be permitted safely in such bat caves. Jim Nieland's paper Effects of Humans on Bats and Bat Caves published in 2000 by the Wildlife Society of Oregon is one of many authoritative publications documenting this.



Note 2. Bat count data supplied in response to two FOIA requests have shown that the gate has caused disruption of the maternity colony, with the total count from Mowich Cave and two adjoining crevice caves being lower than that for Mowich Cave alone, before the gating. This is new information rather than misinformation.

### ALLEGATION #3.

"Exploration of the cave by Mr. Carlson or anyone else would adversely affect the bat colony."

Note 1. This was misinformation. It asserted an extremely controversial minority view espoused by two or three southern Oregon biologists whose statistics and assertions do not withstand analysis. The overwhelming weight of science was and is that there are windows between maternity and hibernation seasons when cave science and ordinary cave recreation may be permitted safely in such bat caves. Jim Nieland's 2000 paper Effects of Humans on Bats and Bat Caves published by the Wildlife Society of Oregon is one of many authoritative publications documenting this.

Note 2. The Regional Forester attached a position paper by Michael Hupp of the Umpqua National Forest espousing this minority position. At that time, one of the cited biologists was employed by the Umpqua National Forest, and Mr. Hupp included some assertions by her which have been shown to be incorrect by data recently obtained by FOIA request. It appears that this former employee had undue influence on Mr. Hupp and others within the staff of the national forest.

### ALLEGATION #3.

"(Plecotus townsendii) is administratively listed by the Forest Service as a sensitive species because its population is in decline."

Note 1. This was believed by some to be true at the time of this 2000 letter. However, early in 2001 this bat was removed from the Regional Forester's list of sensitive species because it is not nearly as rare as some biologists were asserting, nor in decline.

### ALLEGATION #4.

"Mowich Cave is approximately 150 feet in length".

Note 1. This was disinformation. Recently obtained FOIA data included an archaeologist's note that the cave was "at least 50 meters long", and the published 1977 Umpqua National Forest map of the cave showed a length of about 500 feet. Attempting to minimize its size is an obvious ploy to conceal its recreational and other non-biological values.

### ALLEGATION #5.

"(The gate) was built in partnership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife".

Note 1. This appears to be more disinformation. Information obtained under two FOIA requests would have included documentation of any such partnership if it had existed.

