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Winter has returned! Yay! And the VOC Banquet is tomorrow!! Double yay!!

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UPCOMING TRIPS

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SKIING?

Stuart, Jean-Philippe and Susanne are looking for people who want to ski all this fresh manna from heaven. See their respective posts on the message board.

JOINT ACC-VOC GARIBALDI NEVE TRAVERSE

Weather is cooperating. Sign up sheet is now available on VOC Wiki, under 'Trips'. The trip is currently full but put your name on the waitlist if you're still keen as spots may open up.

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CLUB NEWS

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END OF YEAR BANQUET - TOMORROW!!

The VOC ANNUAL BANQUET is TOMORROW, Wednesday 6th April 7pm at St. James Community Square (3214 W 10th Ave). Tickets are \$10 and on sale in the clubroom NOW. The fine chefs on the exec will be providing entrees, but DESSERT IS POTLUCK. So please bring something tasty and interesting (two-bite brownies dissallowed). Entertainments will include SLIDESHOWS and a special GUEST DJ. There'll be a

slideshow of member photos from the year, so please send your best shots to Matt Brown (matthew@brown.com).

Photos are also needed (see following note from Club Pres Matt Brown):

I'm collecting photos for a slideshow which will be shown at the Banquet next Wednesday.

This will be running in the background during the evening so I'm going to need LOTS. They don't have to be particularly spectacular or amusing, but should be a) from this year, and b) involve someone in the club. Extra points if they are spectacular/amusing of course...

You can send them by email to matthew.alun.brown@gmail.com, or drop off a CD in the clubroom anytime this week. Alternatively, I have an ftp server which you can copy files to. Please let me know (by email) if you plan to do this and I'll send you the info.

#### EXEC ELECTIONS

Congratulations to the successful candidates! Here is the unofficial list of next year's executive:

President - Trish Stathers  
Vice President - Janet Draganov  
Treasurer - Sarah Harrison  
Secretary - Kaja Sadowski  
Membership Chair - Tom Chen  
Quartermaster - Jessie Hannigan  
Quartermaster - Danny Eagen  
Journal Editor - Robin Attas  
Clubs Rep - Sandra Nicol  
Trips Coordinator - Richard So  
Special Projects - Ellen M  
Climbing Wall Coord - Eamon Mauer  
VOCene Editor - Jay Piggot  
Archivist - Jeremy Frimer  
Public Relations - Chris Barrington-Leigh  
Useful Person - Roland Burton

#### POST-ARTS COUNTY FAIR CAMPOUT

From Tom Chen:

Arts county fair ends at 8 pm this Friday, April 8th.

Wreck Beach is open all year long, and probably has a good collection of driftwood and lost "European" swim-related clothing.

Combining the two, wouldn't it be awesome to hit the grocer's after ACF, and then meet at the bottom of the stairs at 9 pm for grub over a bonfire? Yams in coals will never taste better.

Bring elaborate manuals on ritualistic burning, or instruments of mass music.

So, Friday at 9 pm at the bottom of the stairs nearest the Vanier residences. I'll bring the massive tarp if anyone would like to join me in sleeping overnight by drifting sands and waking up to the maternal warmth of the pacific sun. (Bring a sleeping bag if you don't want to deal with the stress of catching a bus late at night)

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TRIP REPORTS  
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SPELUNKING ON VAN ISLAND

By Jenn Arnold

MISSION REPORT: OPERATION SPELUNK

PERSONNEL:

Jordan ☺Cartoon☺ Tam  
Mike ☺Neatfreak☺ Fuller  
Richard ☺Snaphappy☺ So  
Boris ☺The Sneaky F\*\*king Russian☺ Khramstov  
Jen ☺Token Girl☺ Arnold

ORDNANCE:

☺ Vehicle: Honda Civic, flattened suspension  
☺ Caving paraphernalia, to whit, waterproof clothes to trash, climbing gear and headlamps, with batteries.  
☺ Camping paraphernalia  
☺ Spirit of Moonflower soap  
☺ Campbell's Chunky  
☺ Kinder Surprises

MISSION:

To go underground, as far as possible, and emerge in no more than three pieces.

REPORT:

DAY ONE ☺ FRIDAY 25th March 2005

The day did not start well for all members of the party, as one who shall remain nameless had staggered in late the night before, passed out, rearranged books and muttered something about changed shoes. A 4am start was more of a continuation from the previous night than a brand new day, and six hash browns were required to survive the gently rocking motion of the ferry from Horseshoe Bay to Nanaimo.

Once there, it was quite a surprise to find that the local outdoor adventurers were not open at 8:30am on Good Friday, thus depriving the crew of any form of local manual. We would have to rely on previously attained information and our own wits.

Nevertheless, our first stop was discovered relatively simply ☺ Horne Lake Caves, where we found two open access caves to clamber and climb around in. Snaphappy demonstrated his ☺ghetto booty,☺ the Sneaky F\*\*king Russian - his inner Japanese

tourist, and we all learnt the important lesson: caves make you grubby. These had some rather neat little limestone formations most of which had been badly stained by eager fingers and we thought they were pretty cool.. but soon learned that they were nothing that special!

Next stop was Cathedral Grove, where we discovered only old growth forest to scramble through. This wasn't technically underground, but we made the best of the situation by exploring the interior of trees instead. Neatfreak hugged and chimneyed anything he could and Cartoon failed to look normal for a single photo rather amusing, rather pretty, and yet again not quite what we were after.

Pushing on, we paid a visit to Little Qualicum Falls to marvel at brilliantly green and white water hurtling over cliffs. All very spectacular, but regrettably, nothing to climb except the fence.

Calling it a day, we set up camp and as the weather seemed pleasant, built a fire on which to toast marshmallows and make smores. In short, lots of amusement but mission not yet satisfied.

DAY TWO SATURDAY 26th March 2005

Rendezvous with the Central Island Caving Club at 10:00am at the candy store, with high hopes of mission success. Precipitation the night before had dampened spirits (boom tish!) but the crew was heartened to discover that the operation was all go.

Added to the crew were the local guides, Lloyd and Quagger, and their friends Miles, George and Adam. The assistance and generosity of Lloyd and Quagger were invaluable, and they certainly made the weekend thoroughly enjoyable and challenging.

First task was the outfitting the general rule was that the less you cared about the clothes, the more suitable they would be. Waterproofing was preferable, as was a measure of warmth. Wellingtons are ideal, as are full-body PVC suits, and helmets and headlamps essential. To pack - cameras, spare lights and snack food. Once ready, we piled into the waiting 4x4s, abandoning the faithful yet inappropriate Civic for the moment and climbed the uneven trail to the Cave.

Cascade Cave was our destination, a short walk off the road and accessed through a rather tight, tiny metal trapdoor. As it was a 30 foot drop, an abseil was the first challenge. That was the only rope work required throughout the weekend, but the cave did not get any easier with a couple of interesting tight passages and, because of the above mentioned precipitation, some rather noisy waterfalls and creeks to crawl through.

The most challenging was a fissure, about 7 metres long and less than half a metre wide that slanted upwards like a chimney, at about a 45 degree angle from the vertical. The stream was channeled through this, and then poured out at the entrance in a roar. Getting into the chimney involved a very long leg stretch over a two metre drop (it doesn't sound like much, but when it's into a waterfall it is). For the vertically challenged, alternate methods of approach requiring some skill at climbing were needed luckily The Sneaky F\*\*king Russian has no shortage of that (boom tish! Oh god it just gets better, doesn't it!).

From the mouth of the waterfall, you worked your way upwards using your body as a brace and your upper body strength your feet could go into the foot deep raging torrent, dangle helplessly or somehow try to grip to the walls. If you had

gumboots and trusted yourself not to slip, the first option was perhaps OK. If you were strong, the second option may work. Fitting neither category, the Token Girl tried to use her feet to climb and half way up found herself sliding backwards.

The thing with caves and waterfalls is that no one can hear you scream. Unless they are listening for it, like Lloyd was, which thankfully avoided the need for a cave rescue.

The other thing with caves and waterfalls, is that you often need to get back down what you got up. This was no easier, and it is doubtful that any member of the crew gladly and happily traversed that particular section of Cascade. Certainly the pristine, glowing white limestone formations and delicate crystal pools at the top made the climb worthwhile as the photos will attest. And there is nothing like sitting together at the bottom, all quietly shaking, knowing that none of you chickened out or died.

We were underground for about four hours, and when we emerged (climbing a cable ladder), we were COVERED in mud from head to toe. Clothing was all a uniform brown. The Laundromat never knew what hit it when the five of us arrived.

DAY THREE ☺ EASTER SUNDAY 27th March 2005

The Easter Bunny came, of course, in the form of Quagger's wife who gave us free camping ☺ and chocolate eggs to boot. Rendezvous was again at 10:00 am with Quagger and another member of the club, Reyna.

That day we tackled the Trilogy. All nearby, they were all nevertheless different and challenging. The precipitation threw in an extra challenge, as the rising water level kept the crew off the ground and on the rock face, and in one particular instance meant that an already tight squeeze had a liquid base. Highlights included Old Bart Cave, complete with ancient animal bones embedded into the rock, and The Sneaky F\*\*king Russian and Snaphappy's amazing squeeze (there is video footage too!).

To keep it brief, the second day involved:

- ☺ More jagged rocks
- ☺ More tight spaces
- ☺ More squeezes
- ☺ More crawling
- ☺ More bruises (additions to the ones from the day before☺)
- ☺ More pain

Token Girl thoroughly deserved the Chocolate Mocha Explosion she ate for dinner at the pub. Want proof? You should have seen the bruises.

DAY FOUR ☺ Monday, 28th March 2005

What can the author say? How does one make a 2 hour wait for a ferry sound exciting after all that?

Well☺ our final day was redeemed through the purchase of Timmy Ho's famous doughnuts. What is adventure, after all, in comparison to the sweet sweet taste of deep-fried batter covered in sugar?

CONCLUSIONS

Mission was accomplished not just satisfactorily, but exemplarily. Caving is awesome, and should be done at every opportunity. Much fun, much craziness and most totally wicked weekend! thoroughly recommended for all and definitely something the Varsity Outdoor Club should continue.

Many thanks extended to the amazing and dexterous members of the Central Island Caving Club ! they made our weekend brilliant, and we are much indebted to them.

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POINTS OF INTEREST  
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SHARE GAS/DRIVING TO ROCKIES

From Jordan Tam:

Hey, so - I'm supposed to go home to Calgary after exams, but I'm still debating whether to fly, or drive - both cost about the same to me when I count convenience etc... if I drive alone, however if there are people interested in driving back with me I may do that - Just to gauge interest I want to drive back probably on the 26th or 27th - anyone out there want to head that way?

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**Varsity Outdoor Club**