

U.I.S. COMMISSION ON VULCANSPELEOLOGY

FIRST CIRCULAR FOR THE 17TH SYMPOSIUM OF VULCANSPELEOLOGY

FEBRUARY 6 - 12, 2016

Aloha from our mid-Pacific Polynesian island,

The small band of cavers on the Big Island of Hawaii, together with a larger group of regular visitors, welcome you to attend the next Symposium of Vulcanspeleology on Hawaii in 2016.

It will be the 25th anniversary of the last time the symposium was held in Hawaii. In the past 25 years there have been some momentous discoveries here and we hope that many vulcanspeleologists will make the effort to see the world class lava tubes and other volcanic features (active and dormant) on the Big Island. We, the organizers, will do all we can to make your long trip very worthwhile.

This circular will set out the plans that are in place at present so that attendees can make plans for their travel to and from the island. Since the symposium is 10 months away, plans can, and probably will, change. There will be future circulars to cover accommodation, pre and post symposium activities, and cave trips offered during the symposium. We are giving you enough information so you can decide whether to attend and when to arrive and leave. More information will be provided in future circulars and e-mail messages.

If Ocean View is covered in lava, the symposium is off! (small joke)

DATES

The 2016 symposium will run from Saturday February 6 to Friday February 12, with an optional extra field trip on Saturday, February 13.

GETTING HERE

The Big Island's two airports are equally convenient to Ocean View. There are direct flights to both Kailua-Kona and Hilo from many cities on the mainland. If you are flying from other countries, you will likely have to fly through Honolulu and you may have to spend a night in the big city. From Honolulu you can fly to either Hilo or Kailua-Kona. The airport code for Kailua-Kona is KOA and for Hilo it is ITO. Both airports have car rental facilities. We prefer Kailua-Kona as it is on the dry side of the island, it stays open longer and is generally cheaper.

BRIEF SCHEDULE

The symposium will meet at the Ocean View Community Center, in Ocean View, in the district of Ka'u, on the island of Hawai'i (known as The Big Island) in the state of Hawai'i.

The following is a very brief synopsis of the proposed schedule, which could change.

Saturday Feb 6 Registration & welcome party serving pupu's (Hawaiian finger food), beer, wine, soft drinks.

Sunday Feb 7 Talks at the OV Community Center, with lunch provided and dinner at other locations.

Monday Feb 8 - Field trips in Ocean View area. Dinner provided

Tuesday Feb 9- Field trips in Volcano area, dinner in Volcanoes National Park, slide show in the Park

Wednesday Feb 10 - Field trips in Ocean View area. Dinner provided

Thursday Feb 11 - Talks at the OV Community Center, with lunch provided and dinner at other locations.

Friday Feb 12 - Field trips in Ocean View area. Farewell dinner party in evening.

Saturday Feb 13 - Optional extra field trip. Cost of this trip is not included in the symposium fee. It will cover the cost of renting a bus for the group, lunch, and other incidentals.

COST

The cost for the symposium is estimated to be about \$350 at present. Since the symposium is 10 months away, costs can, and probably will, change.

This will cover the costs of

1. Renting the community center for the talks, providing tea, coffee and lunch on the days of the talks (Thursday & Saturday)
2. The "Welcome" party
3. Tuesday evening dinner at the Park
4. Providing 3 dinners at 3 different OV locations on 3 of the 4 nights in the above schedule. On the 4th night attendees can choose where to eat.
5. The "Farewell" party
6. Appropriate incidentals, such as name tags and the cost of publishing the proceedings electronically.

This will NOT cover the costs of

1. Accommodation in or around the OV area. This can range from cheap camping to more deluxe vacation rental. The average cost will be about \$250 per person assuming double occupancy

2. Transportation. You will need a rental car. The cost depends on your deal and how many attendees share the vehicle.
3. Breakfasts. None are included. You can cook at your vacation rental, or eat at a restaurant, or buy something at the markets.
4. One dinner. See #4 above.
5. The \$10 cost of getting a vehicle into the park. This should be shared by the occupants of the car.
6. If you take Harry Schick's tour of Kazumura Cave during the symposium, you should pay him directly for it. That cost is not included.

All other field trips to lava tubes are lead by volunteer cavers who are NOT paid.

We will announce when the web site is ready for registration.

LIMIT

At the Galapagos symposium, when we proposed holding the next symposium in Hawaii, we said that we would have to limit the number of attendees to make the Ocean View venue workable and affordable. After careful consideration, we have set the limit at 80 attendees. As far as we know, no symposium has had more than 80 attendees, so hopefully this will not inconvenience anyone. However, it does mean that if you are planning to attend, you should register soon to avoid disappointment. Since there is a limit, we ask that only those who plan to attend most talks and/or most cave trips should register. If you are traveling with a companion who is not interested in vulcanspeleology, perhaps you should encourage him or her to not register and to pursue other activities.

AIR QUALITY & HEALTH ISSUES

When the prevailing Trade Winds blow, the town of Ocean View is down wind of the island's active caldera called Halema'uma'u, which has been spewing a plume of sulphur dioxide for about the last 6 years. The concentration is low enough that most people are not bothered, BUT people who suffer from bad asthma or other respiratory problems should consider not attending the symposium. The air quality index fluctuates according to the lava activity, wind strength and direction and other factors. It is impossible to predict. This link, and others contained in it, offer more information.
http://health.hawaii.gov/cab/files/2015/02/kilauea_vog_faq-january-2015b.pdf

ORGANIZERS

There are a few cavers living in Ocean View who are willing to put this event together. They are Peter & Ann Bosted, Ric Elhard & Rose Herrera, and John & Mary Wilson. Stephan Kempe, who lives in Germany and has attended most of the symposia, will be heavily involved and he takes responsibility for organizing the papers and proceedings and keeping us all in line. Hilo caver, Steve Smith, Volcano volcanologist, Jack Lockwood and cave biologist Fred Stone of Kurtistown will all be supporting. We are

counting on a huge number of cavers, who regularly cave on the island, to volunteer to lead field trips and help with the running of the symposium.

ACCOMMODATION

Each attendee will be responsible for finding a place to stay and paying for it. We will provide a list of possible places and prices. If you come, you must choose a place that you like and pay for it independently of the symposium organizers.

The exception is camping. The owner of the campground, a caver, Andreas Pflitsch, asked us to manage it, by arranging the bookings and collecting the fees. If you wish to camp in a yurt, please e-mail bosted@earthlink.net to make arrangements.

We are still finalizing a few of the details, so we will send out a circular devoted exclusively to accommodation. Please be patient. When it does arrive, please study your options carefully to make sure you are getting a place that suits your needs and your budget.

After doing a preliminary survey of vacation rental accommodation available in Ocean View, we determined that there are about 100 beds available in about 35 homes, guest cottages, small homes or large houses. A rough calculation shows that a person could spend a week in Ocean View for an average cost of about \$250, assuming double occupancy and a willingness to share large family homes with multiple bedrooms. In addition there are professional Bed and Breakfasts, plus camping in yurts or permanently parked camper vans. Again, we are encouraging attendees to share. It will save money and improve your social life.

TRANSPORTATION

Each attendee must have access to a rental car. We encourage sharing to keep costs down. We advise sharing with attendees who are also sharing your living space. You can rent cars at both the Kailua-Kona and Hilo airports. You cannot rent vehicles in Ocean View.

You will need to drive from the airports to Ocean View. You will need to drive to the field trip meeting spot and back to where you are staying. You will need to drive from your accommodations to dinner locations and back. You will also need to drive to the community center for talks, and back. You will need to drive to Volcano on Tuesday to the field trips, then to the park HQ for dinner, then to the visitor center for the slide show, then back to Ocean View.

We can organize car pooling for much of this, but you will need transportation to and from where the car pools are organized.

You will not need 4-wheel drive, but if you are offered a Jeep for little or no extra charge, take it, and you will be able to go to more places. 4-wheel drive SUV's don't have extra clearance so they are still just street vehicles for all practical purposes.

Please do not consider attending the symposium without access to a car.

PRE AND POST SYMPOSIUM ACTIVITIES

There is lots to see and do on the Big Island. Most visitors leave with a longer "To Do" list than they arrived with.

We strongly suggest that you spend as much time as you can afford exploring the island before and after the symposium. We recommend you consider arriving a week before the symposium begins, and leaving a week after it ends. We are planning to coordinate or suggest activities for all who can do this. The activities will vary according to the needs and numbers of those who will be here. For example, if there are a few cavers who want to survey virgin passage, we can take them caving. However, if about 40 want to do that, we can't. So depending on demand and supply, we COULD arrange or coordinate cave trips, or hikes, or snorkel trips or boat trips or kayak trips or whatever. We can supply a list of very desirable places to go and things to do, or, if there is a demand, we can try to set up a kind of camp in other parts of the island.

February is primo whale watching season, and the winter of 2014/15 was a very good year. If seeing lots and lots of humpback whales about 100m away is on your bucket list, allow time for a boat trip. Deep sea fishing trips for huge bill fish are popular. Other trips to get you into Hawaii's warm waters include swimming with spinner dolphin, night swims with manta rays, kayak to snorkel trips, parasail - all for a fee. Also for a fee, you can be guided through water-filled tunnels while paddling a kayak - not hard to imagine you are in a cave.

Then there are trips up to the observatories on Mauna Kea (guided or self-guided, fee or free) and hiking to the top of Mauna Loa, weather permitting. For a fee you can slide down zip lines, ride horses, attend luaus (Hawaiian feasts), take a submarine cruise, and lots more.

A caver, Harry Schick, who owns an entrance to Kazumura, the longest surveyed lava tube in the world, takes groups of six clients on tours daily except Wednesday and Sunday - one tour in the morning and one in the afternoon. He does this for a living, so please don't expect him to do it for free. He takes clients up and down ladders and shows them some amazing passage. There will be an opportunity for up to 12 people to do the cave as part of the symposium. (The cost is not included - you will need to pay Harry directly). However, if you are able, you should plan on doing the tour either before or after the symposium. You need to contact Harry's booking service (his Mom) and make arrangements with her. She will explain the rules. I am sure Kazumura is on every vulcansepeologist's bucket list, so make sure you don't miss it.

The most popular thing to do on the island is visit Volcanoes National Park. Here you will find lots of hikes (some ranger-led), petroglyphs, craters, and a lava filled caldera that glows at night. The park is a wonderful place to observe birds. 2016 will be the 100th anniversary of the park, so they are sure to be doing special things from time to time.

There is no way to predict what the lava will be doing in 10 months, so we have not scheduled a lava visit during the symposium. If it is flowing and can be viewed, this

would best be done before or after the symposium. We strongly suggest allowing time for this possibility. It can almost always be viewed from helicopters (bit expensive). If access is allowed, one can often hike to it. If it is entering the ocean, a boat trip at twilight is a great way to see it. Its Pele's call. (That's the Hawaiian way of saying "Its in the lap of the Gods").

Finally, being locals and cavers, we can point you in the direction of many uniquely Hawaiian things for which there is no fee - such as caving, hiking, secluded beaches, waterfalls, nice snorkel spots, birding, turtles, shopping, tasting lots of island delights, the zoo and more. And when you are satiated with hedonistic activities, you can volunteer to clean a beach, plant a tree, count whales and other worthwhile efforts.

We will have a future circular dedicated to pre and post symposium trips. Please let us know if you are planning to arrive early and/or leave late, and would like to be included. It really helps to know well in advance what kind of numbers we should plan for.

OCEAN VIEW

Ocean View can be accurately described as "A huge small town" with the motto "Ocean View - where everyone fits in". This is because although the population is only about 5,000, there are over 12,000 lots, each zoned for a full-size family home. The roads are all surfaced and most lots have electricity. Think of rural sprawl. With all this habitable space and relatively few people using it, land is cheap and vacation accommodation here are very affordable by Hawaiian standards. This is a welcome change from other towns where overcrowding is the usual problem.

Ocean view lies on the southern flank of Mauna Loa, the biggest (by volume) mountain on the planet and over 14,000' tall. It covers an area 4 miles wide and 9 miles in length from its lowest point to its highest point. It lies between 650' (200m) above sea level and 4,500' (1,400m) above sea level. This means there is a huge range of average temperatures in the town. Down low it is shorts and T-shirt weather almost all day year-round, with a sweater and long pants at night. Up high, one needs more clothing, blankets and fires or wood stoves to be comfortable. The temperature of the caves in the area also vary considerably.

Even taking into account the huge range of temperatures, Ocean View has a pretty ideal climate - never too hot and mostly not too cold. We usually get lots of sun in the morning, but then the clouds move in. In lower elevations the homes have neither air conditioning nor heating. What humidity we have is slight. What rainfall we get is sporadic, though last year we were blessed with a very decent amount. In 2012 we got 7" (18 cm), in 2013 10" (22 cm) fell, but in 2014 we got 36" (92 cm). Who knows what 2016 will bring?

Ocean View's population is small, but growing. The town center is small, but it has 3 grocery stores, 3 gas (petrol) stations, a gift shop, a business center, a laundromat, a thrift store for used clothing, a hair salon, a post office, a hardware store, an auto parts store, restaurants and other services. The six restaurants include Coffee Grinds for breakfast

and lunch, 2 pizza places, Ka-Lae Thai restaurant and fruit stand, Mehe's sports bar and restaurant, and L&L Hawaiian BBQ. There are lots of churches. On Saturday morning there is a "swap meet" where locals offer fruit and vegetables, plants, and a wide range of clothing and goods (some junk, some treasures) and even pet and farmyard animals. Ocean View does not have any hotels, motels, banks, hospitals, or even a school.

THE CAVES

The Big Island of Hawaii is home to world class lava caves and many of them are in the Ocean View area. These amazing lava caves are the primary reason for holding the symposium in Ocean View. If you go to Bob Gulden's web site, you will see how heavily Hawaiian lava tubes feature in his list of the world's longest. Here is the link <http://www.caverbob.com/lava.htm>

We plan to put out a circular dealing with the caving possibilities and field trips.

FUTURE CIRCULARS

Please feel free to forward this circular to others who may be interested in attending.

If you change your e-mail address, please inform bosted@earthlink.net

Finally, if you are reading this circular because it was forwarded to you by a friend, and you would like to receive future circulars directly, please send an e-mail message to bosted@earthlink.net so that you can be added to the mailing list.