On March 28th the Western Washington/Seattle I.S.A. Section had an opportunity to tour one of the top rope manufacturers in the world. This was the Samson Rope Company located in Ferndale Washington.

The company, started in 1878, in Shirley, Massachusetts was started by J.P. Tolman a member of the first classes to graduate from MIT. The company's innovations led the way in rope manufacturing. They created the first braided rope, then synthetic double braided rope. They continued producing rope for the NASA space programs in 1962 and on. They continued by making 21" circumference rope for off-shore drilling platform and mooring freighters at docks around the world. Samson rope is used on the space shuttle to operate the shuttle's cargo bay doors.

In 1980 Samson continued to pioneer new technologies by introducing the first High Modulus Polyethylene (HMPE) ropes, with strengths 3 to 4 times that of conventional nylon and polyester fiber. In 1988: Samson moved its headquarters from Shirley, Mass., to Ferndale, Washington. (Hooray!) The tour highlighted all these events and them some. It ends with a 6000 ton hydraulic breaking test on one of the High Modulus Polyethylene (HMPE) ropes. We all watched it snap. Wow!! This tour was absolutely amazing watching all the ropes being made automatically with staff simply observing to ensure plant safety.
We ended the tour with several of us having an early supper at Coconut-Kenney's in Ferndale!!