

Published bi-monthly beginning in February by the Shasta Area Grotto of the National Speleological Society. Editor is Claude A. Smith, at 131 Oleander Circle, Redding, CA, 96001. Subscription Rate is \$3.00/year. No exchanges.

Shasta Area Grotto meetings are held at 7:30 p.m. on the second Friday of each month. Meeting places are announced in this newsletter.

COMING EVENTS

- February 11 Grotto meeting.
At Jim and Liz Wolff's, 6 Mill Rd, McCloud. Possible cross-country skiing depending on weather. 964-2569.
- Feb. 19-21 Speleoeducational Seminar.
Will be held in Glendale over Washington's Birthday weekend. Subjects include:
Volcanospeleology Mt. Kaijende Expedition to New Guinea
Cave Photography Southern California Sea Cave Survey
In-Cave Medicine Bats of Chiligoe (Australia)
Sea Cave Biology Caver Access to Caves
Mexico Caving Lilburn Cave Cartography Talus Caves
Other attractions are: Entertainment by Hodag Speleo Band, Saturday night Banquet and party, Cartographic Salon, Photographic Salon, multi-media slide shows, auction, awards and door prizes. Program begins at 1 p.m. Saturday and lasts until 5 p.m. Sunday. Contact Ray Hardcastle, 9733 Glasgow Pl. #9, L.A. 90045. (213) 649-0170.
- May 28-30 French creek area.
Caving, mapping, exploration, camping, backpacking, ridge-walking, etc. with Roger Jones in the Trinity Alps

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The following people were nominated for office at the November meeting:

Jim Wolff	-	Chairman
Roger Jones	-	Vice-Chairman
Claude Smith	-	Secretary
Joe Moulter	-	Treasurer

Since there were no other nominations, there was no need to send out ballots with this newsletter.

TOMBSTONE MOUNTAIN Nov. 6, 1982 by Jim Wolff

Early Saturday morning, SAG members Tom Hesseldenz, Claude Smith, myself and friend (and potential caver) Nancy Fuller, met at Castella exit on 1-5. The day's objectives were many. First, and above all, we were to check as much of the northern slopes around 5100 ft. elevation for the cave(s) reported by Joe Moulter in his research on Tombstone Mtn. (See SAG NEWSLETTER Vol. 1 No.5). Secondly, Tom wanted to check farther on down the northeastern ridges extending below the old meadow camp. His earlier solo ridge-walking jaunts had yielded cave formations exposed to open air and associated, but unfortunately, small-sized phreatic passage segments. Nothing led to any going cave. These were mainly off of the north-facing cliff faces of the ridges. And lastly, it was Claude's idea of fun to dig in the same sink we've dug in for the last three years! (I'm sure that most of the cavers that have visited the sink feel the same; that if dug deep enough, it will yield cave – eventually!)

To make a long story short Nancy and I found a small and climbable 10 foot pit that led to a breakdown filled fissure that had some definite air movement, but it would take much work to continue. Also, we mapped Consolation Cave, a small cave I found a year or so ago. A lead remains in the cave, but is difficult to enter. Meanwhile, Tom had found two pit-like leads on a sharp ridge, but because he didn't have a light, he didn't enter them very far. One he chimneyed across and above a pit to toss rocks where "they bounced until I couldn't hear them anymore" recounted Tom after we regrouped at the end of the day. He estimated the pit to be at least 100 feet deep – or deeper! This one will definitely be on the top of our priority list next year!

With that, we joined up with Claude who was still digging in the sink. His progress brought him 10 or 12 feet below the lowest point in the sink, which isn't much farther than last year, but at least the dig isn't filling in between dig attempts! Claude said progress was slow due to the confinement and the fact that his sledge hammer handle and the G.I. shovel he was using broke. He was doing his own dirt hauling too, so it made for slow progress. Oh well, maybe next year.

BATTLE CREEK CAVE #2, Nov. 11, 1982 by Jim Wolff
[Wellhella Cave]

On Veterans' Day Tom Hesseldenz and myself set off to the McCloud Reservoir for Battle Creek Cave #2. Our main objective was to photograph the bones in the Bone Passage and to possibly check out a few leads in the process – basically goofing around.

First, I took Tom over to the dome above the Thanksgiving Pit to show him some of the flowstone and draperies that hang over the drop. Then we rappelled into Frog Pit. Tom was first, and part way down he made a step-across to a muddy bypass that looks like it would come in handy if the pit ever got partly flooded. After reaching the Ante Room, Tom took a rope up to the ledge and tied off the line for me to climb. Soon we were in the Bone Passage, and guess what?! Tom didn't have any batteries in his strobe! All best laid plans "Oh well," I said, "let's try carbide lamp lighting the subject." Tom took many shots of the skull and the upper jaw pieces and other teeth. We hope if they turn out good enough, that Tom will send them off to a paleontologist friend of his for possible identification. Tom seems to think that the skull is from a large cat. And with calcite covering over part of the skull, it certainly attests to its great age! We placed the pieces under a ledge a few feet away, after marking its place on the floor, so they wouldn't be stepped on by mistake! The bones are mud colored and look just like the floor.

All in all, we spent an enjoyable six hours poking around. We came out of the cave under a starry sky

With all things considered, this cave certainly deserves protection. It contains a very nice variety of formations, including a lot of helictites and needles. And let's not forget the unidentified skeleton, the troglodene frogs and plus the hazards of pits, gooey mud-covered footing and loose rock – label this cave OFF LIMITS to the “casual visitor”! This cave is under Randolph Hearst property and the U.S.F.S. as well. Pessimistically, it could be only a matter of time before these values are destroyed or lost forever due to vandalism or cave closure for liability reasons

CAVING IN CARLSBAD NATIONAL PARK by Claude Smith

Our family spent three weeks in December with Mary Belle's relatives at Carlsbad, New Mexico. Naturally I took advantage of the situation to do as much caving as I could.

I started out by taking my customary tour of Carlsbad Caverns. First, a guided tour through the natural entrance down to the lunchroom. The Big Room was still on a self-guided basis. During my stroll around the Big Room, I met two volunteers, Doug Prado and Kent Mitchell, from the Bay Area. They were marking broken formations along the trail, as a part of a program to gain experience for their Parks and Recreations studies at college.

I attended the Southwest Regional in Las Cruces and a local Pecos Valley grotto meeting, which produced an invite to go along on a grotto trip to Spider Cave. This was a Park Service guided trip in which the nine of us split into two groups, each led by a guide. Our group consisted of Carl Belski, Dick and Sandy Gibson, Joli Baton and guide, Sharon Paris. This was an easy four-hour trip with lots of time to take pictures, and lots to take pictures of.

Jerry Trout of Carlsbad, set up a trip into West Slaughter Canyon to survey Diamond Cave which he had found several years ago. The Park wanted him to take someone along, who turned out to be Doug Prado, one of the volunteers I mentioned earlier. Jerry's brother, Bob, was also on the trip. First we visited the Lower Painted Grotto, a large shelter with fantastic Indian pictographs. Diamond Cave consisted of a huge arch entrance and a large flat entrance chamber, with two smaller side passages. One of the side passages contained dogtooth spar as big as your two fists, thus the name Diamond Cave.

Doug Prado and Kent Mitchell, the two volunteers I had met earlier wanted to do some caving, so we got a permit to do Christmas Tree Cave. Finding the cave proved very interesting because it cannot be seen from the canyon floor and the Park Service had it located wrong on the quad map. The cave was well worth the search with nine Christmas tree shaped stalagmites and lots of other goodies.

The last trip was a jaunt into the Left-hand Tunnel and down to the Lake of the Clouds in Carlsbad Caverns. This trip I tagged along with Donald Davis, who was doing research for a paper on certain cave formations. I took some pictures for his paper and, of course, several for my own enjoyment.

REPRINT from SFBC Newsletter, December 1982.

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NORMAN D. CARBIDE PRESENTS**TALES from the CAVE PATROL*****THE CASE OF THE SELENITE SEDUCTRESS***

Thursday, 5 a.m. The first rays of the sun caught the window and poured a golden glow across my littered desk, oozing like honey over styrofoam coffee cups, police reports, dirty parabolic reflectors and a copy of the North Dakota Revised Statutes, Criminal Code. I looked up from my National Speleographic and saw him waiting there, hat in hand. In a glance I took him all in; rumpled jacket, brown flannel pants, a shirt that hadn't seen an iron. He was like all the others, unaccustomed to cavers' hours, wondering why he was here. His eyes were wide from nervousness but vacant from the shock of the hour. Also he had pulled his socks on over his shoes. I motioned to a chair. "Sit down" I said.

My name is Carbide. I'm with the State Cave Patrol. I work the underground. I've heard all the usual complaints; dog down a hole, kid gone overnight. My visitor sat there, chewing the brim of his hat. When he finished his hat, he went to the door, got mine and started chewing it. I knew then that this wasn't the usual case. I asked his problem. "They're gone!" he stammered and broke into tears. Then he broke into a song, into my liquor cabinet, and back into tears again. I'm accustomed to breakdown. "Tell me about it," I said.

His name was Garfinkel. Professor Abbot Garfinkel, City College, Department of Geology. Used to be a mineralogist until he was distracted by sedimentary deposits. Now he was attempting to relate the growth of selenite crystals to the production of mudballs. He showed me a mudball he had in his pocket. "Local mud," he assured me. I nodded and told him to continue. Yesterday he was working in the departmental lab, arranging mud samples by viscosity and natural habitat, when in walked a woman he'd never seen before. She said she was DR. Elaine Frampton of the Minot State University faculty, Department of Agriculture, and that she was interested in sediments. His heart started pounding as she stood there looking coolly professional in her white lab coat and heavy-rimmed glasses, and he found himself babbling about tertiary depositions and exchanging knowing glances over geologic time tables. She asked him if he could help her identify a soil sample, and when he agreed a dump truck backed up to his lab table and unloaded two tons of humus.

The old soil sample trick, I thought to myself. I'd pulled the same stunt on my mining professor in college. Threw me out of class along with Mory Jasper, who later taught me all I know about interdigitation. I turned back to my magazine, but the Professor tugged at my sleeve, tearing a large hole at the elbow. "When I finished analyzing the soil she was gone," he pleaded, "and so were my notes on the selenite locations." I could feel the hairs rise on the back of my arms, much like the time I got my shoelace caught in the electric pencil sharpener. Professor Garfinkel's notes listed six secret caves where selenite crystals could be found. And now they had fallen into the wrong hands. "Can you describe this Elaine Frampton for me?" I asked. "Blonde, I guess," he shrugged, "I really didn't notice. I was only aware of one thing." "What's that?" I replied. Professor Garfinkel looked at me with the hurt eyes of a man who has been betrayed, "She knew the molecular structure of selenite."

Continued on next page

Minot is a tough town. A person doesn't have to go looking very far before he finds trouble. Any headstrong farm boy off of the wheat fields will gladly straighten your spinal curvature for you if he's been nipping the barley too much. I've had to duke it out with many a lad who had bent his elbow in a local bar and then tried to bend a bar on a cave gate. But they were just being a little rowdy. This case smacked of cold calculation. I called Minot State University and waited for the expected answer to my question. It wasn't long in coming; there was no Dr. Elaine Frampton in the Department of Agriculture. I hung up, grabbed my hat, stuffed a seat sling in my coat pocket and headed out into the street. There was a cave vandal out there somewhere and it was my job to find her.

My first stop was Lenny's Cafe. Lenny's was run by Johnny Swensen, whose brother Tony ran Mickey's on the other side of town. Johnny once won a Marvin Hamlich look-alike contest and ever since has asked that customers hum their orders. Everyone in town passes through Lenny's at one time or another. It was required by municipal ordinance or Johnny would send you a bill for a waffle. I hummed a couple eggs and whistled a side of bacon. When Johnny brought them over he could tell I was there on business. "Who you looking for?" he said. "Some babe," I replied.

Johnny said two new women had come in that week. He told me about the first, who didn't sound likely. I asked about the other. Johnny said she was a blonde, very sure of herself, hummed her order to a theme by Vivaldi. She said she was a librarian in town for a bookbinders convention and pointed out that monosodium glutamate was misspelled on the menu. "Funny thing, though," Johnny said, "for a librarian, she had a lot of dirt under her fingernails." I finished my coffee and stood up. Johnny followed me to the door. "Is she in trouble?" he asked. "Could be," I said. "Too bad," Johnny sighed, "she was a real hummer."

Johnny had said that she was staying at the Parkside Hotel under the name of Nora Tompkins. Damn that Johnny, I thought, he could talk a turtle out of its shell. In fact, he once did and spent two years in the slammer when it turned out to be underage. I was at the Parkside by 9:30. And I was in luck. The front desk clerk was Frankie Lesciwicz. He owed me one for keeping his uncle out of that imported matzo ball scam. Also, I had taught Frankie how to pronounce his name. I slipped him a five and said I needed to see a room. He understood.

I knocked on the door to 318 and when there was no answer I let myself in. The scene inside hit me like a blow to the solar plexus. Arrayed on the desk were dozens of selenite crystals, each neatly harvested and cleaned. Fighting back rage, I searched the drawers until I found what I was looking for. It was hardly what I wanted to see. An airline ticket for one Gloria Giovetti out of New York. So she was a pro, a hired hitman. But even more ominous was the sheet of paper beneath. It carried the City College letterhead. It listed six caves. Chapel Cave was crossed out. And Hidden Cave was circled in red with the notation, "Thursday."

Continued on next page

I learned my caving at the knees of my father, Captain Carl Carbide. It wasn't the easy way to learn, lying in the muddy sections while he crawled over me, but it was effective. I learned to respect the caves and I learned to respect the cavers. And when I went to the State Cave Patrol Academy, I knew what they meant when they said I'd never be viewed as a caver again; I'd be Law Enforcement. It wasn't easy when conversations suddenly fell silent at grotto meetings as I approached, or when I woke to find a burning carbide dump on my front lawn. But over time an understanding developed: The Cave Patrol wouldn't interfere in grotto affairs except when the law required, and the grotto would cooperate when necessary. Now was such a time. I picked up the phone.

Hidden Cave was well named. It was entirely underground, making it difficult to locate from the surface. And though its entrance was not small, it was in the only migratory sinkhole known in North America. One severe winter it was finally located just south of Mesa, Arizona. I had been taken to Hidden but once, blindfolded in the trunk of a car. What I could see through the trunk latch was stupendous; huge selenite crystals graced the walls and floors, sparkling with a brilliance unlike anything I'd seen outside a dishwashing liquid commercial. I had to get to Hidden now. Before Gloria Giovetti. The phone rang on the other end, and I heard the voice of Joe Critts, grotto chairman.

I told Joe the trouble and said I needed directions to Hidden Cave. There was an audible gulp on the other end, then Joe said to forget the directions, he'd take me himself. I soon learned why. A grotto trip had left for Hidden two hours before. Accompanied by a blonde claiming to be Professor Garfinkel's assistant.

I met Joe outside the Ben Franklin downtown and suggested we take my jeep. "Won't need it," he said, "We can walk from here." My jaw nearly decapped my knees, bruising my shin slightly instead. He was serious. At Fourth and Irving we climbed into our seat slings, grabbed our cave packs, and headed down the street. We walked in the side door of the Orvis Delicatessen, past the cold cuts, and into the kitchen. There beside a week's worth of three-bean salad was the entrance to Hidden Cave. "We lost track of its northward migration this spring," Joe explained, "And then we got a call asking if bats were Kosher. The rest was easy."

The grotto trip had clearly preceded us; a length of Bluewater II was rigged to a portable dishwasher and backed up on a 20-gallon can of pickles. Also, several cheese cakes were missing. We clipped into the line, fired up our lamps, and descended.

Derigging at the bottom of the 60-foot entrance pit, I couldn't help but think of the test of leadership awaiting Joe. He wasn't elected chairman by much, the grotto finally siding with him because he could say the word "thesaurus" without spitting. And his style had rankled some of the oldtimers. Perhaps he had gone overboard when he required those who missed meetings to sit in cold peanut butter, but attendance was up. Now he would have to calmly take control of the grotto trip while I made the arrest. I hoped he was ready.

Continued on next page

I studied the walls of Hidden Cave. Mississippian limestone of the St. Charles formation. Passages joint-controlled in the grid pattern familiar to other local caves, except that the survey of Hidden was an exact overlay of the street map of Joplin, Missouri, though bus service was not as good. There was nothing to explain the migratory ways of Hidden. Yet the original exploration had turned up a large cache of travel brochures and two tickets to the New York Philharmonic. Finally, there were those towels stamped "Property of the Hotel Savoy."

A glitter in the walls told me we were nearing the formation area. Joe raised a finger for silence. Ahead were the unmistakable sounds of a survey team: figures called, cursing and disputation, new figures called. We listened. All the voices were familiar. "Joe," I whispered. I didn't need to complete the thought. He sensed my alarm. The blonde was not one of them.

This was no time for caution. I plunged ahead at breakneck speed. I'd worry about the bruises later. Now my mind was on one thing: crime. Rounding a corner, I startled the survey team, who had paused for cheese cake. I flashed my badge. "Where's the blonde?" I said. A caver pointed the way down a side passage, "She's measuring some crystals for the Prof." More like for the profit, I thought.

The side passage was a narrow canyon which gave way to a low crawl. The walls were lined with selenite crystals, nearly closing the passage in places. I moved as fast as I could, using the Yugoslavian crawl technique I learned at the Academy, which consisted of putting the body only in places where it fit. The crawl opened into a crystalline grotto where a lone figure stood. A sack of selenite crystals sat on the floor. "Gloria Giovetti," I said, "You're under arrest."

The figure turned and in the full light of my Justrite I saw a vision of caving beauty. She removed her unscratched Joe Brown hard hat and her blonde hair tumbled down to her hips. My eyes traced her outline from her J. Harlan Bretz signature model caving boots to her designer label seat harness to where the stretch fabric of her Calvin Klein coveralls emphasized the firm, rounded curves of the nicest pair of Jumars I'd ever seen. Then they settled on the .44 aimed at my belly. "It's no use, Giovetti," I said, "Even if you get by me, you'll have to answer to the authorities back at the Parkside. Federal offense. Leaving the scene of a wake-up call." She put down the gun. She knew I had her.

The courts moved slow, but in four months Gloria Giovetti was doing time. Professor Garfinkel never testified, having run off with a lady mud wrestler, who thought sediments were something found on greeting cards. The whole thing reminded me of an old friend named Crystal. I gave her a call. She had a molecular structure I could relate to.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page 1	Coming events; Election of officers
Page 2	Tombstone Mountain – by J. Wolff
Page 2	Battle Creek Cave #2 – by J. Wolff
Page 3	Caving in Carlsbad National Park – by C. Smith
Pages 4-7	Reprint: Tales from the Cave Patrol – by W. Hoemann