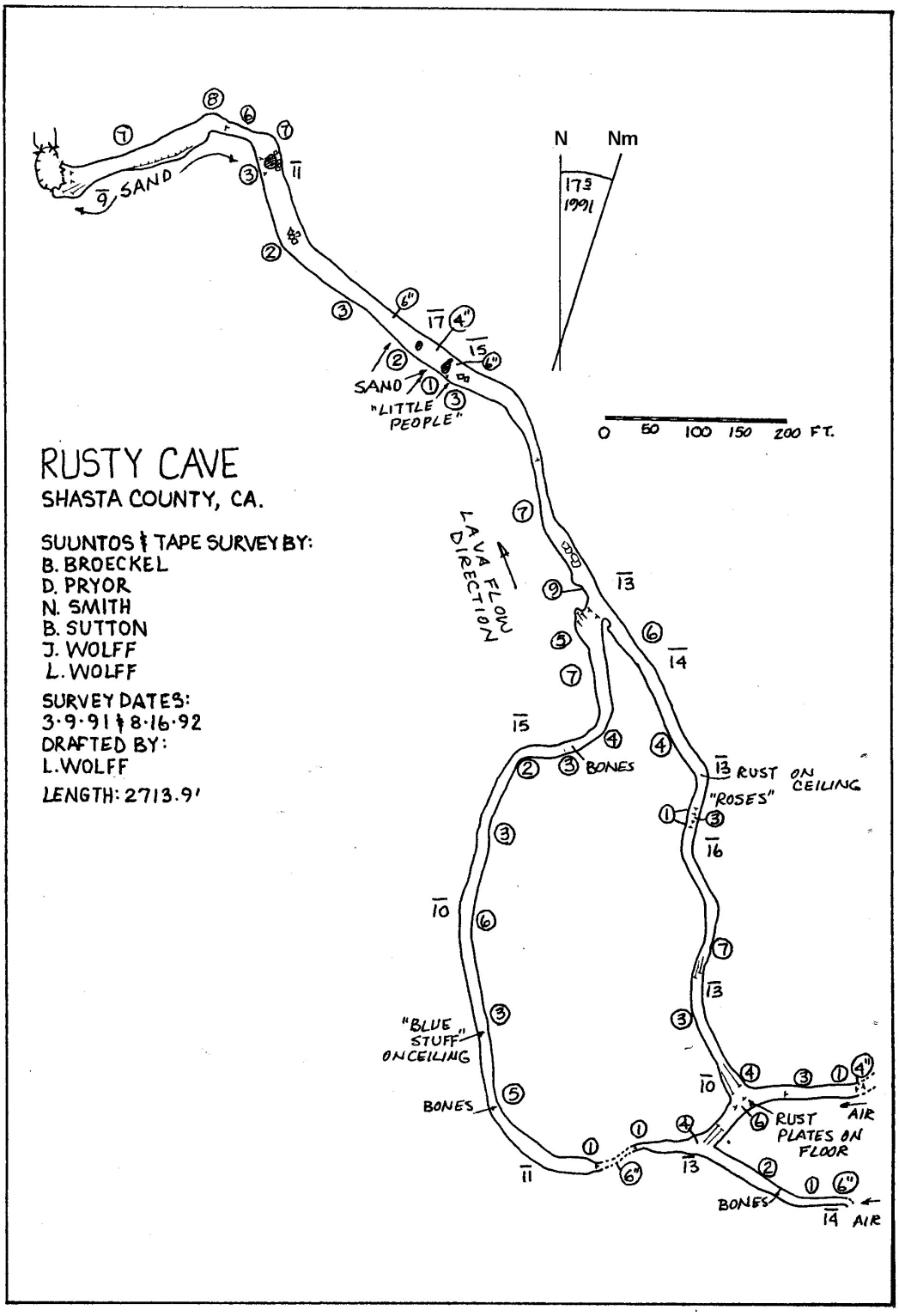
Sag Rag

JULY-AUGUST 1992

VOLUME 11 NUM. 4



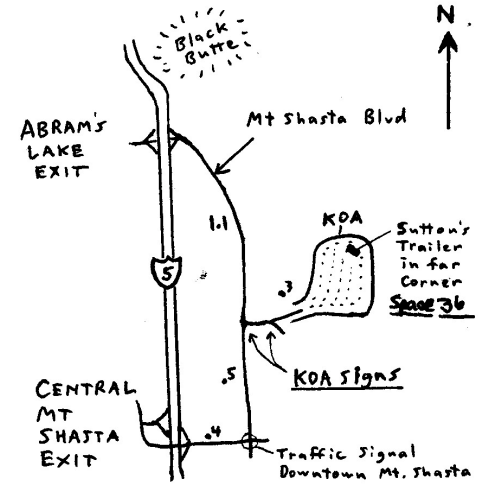
Map: Rusty Cave

The SAG RAG is published bi-monthly by the Shasta Area Grotto of the National Speleological Society. Typist: Judy Broeckel, 524 Annie Street, Yreka, CA 96097-3015. Newsletter Review Editor: Dick LaForge, 450 Redmond Road, Eureka, CA 95501. Printing: Bill Broeckel. Grotto Meetings are held the second Friday of each month at 7:30 pm. Meeting locations are announced in the newsletter. Membership dues (including newsletter) are $6, due January 1, and prorated by quarter. Uncopyrighted material may be copied, with credit given to the author and the SAG RAG.

CALENDAR

Sept. 11	Grotto meeting at Ben Sutton's home at 7:30 PM
Sept. 25-27	Western Regional at Berkeley Tuolumne Camp.
Oct. 9-11	Marble Mountains SpeleoCamp 1992.

MAPS TO THE MEETINGS



Ben Sutton's phone 926-0210.
Bring lawn chairs.

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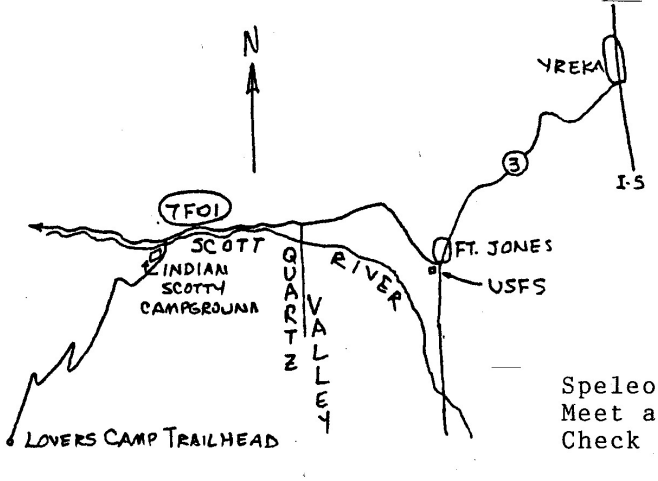
"Yaba-daba-do!
Caver Fred speaking.
Put me through to
the grain shed please."

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *



Speleo Camp No phone. (Sorry Fred)
Meet at the grain shed.
Check out the new first aid kit.

Typist's Notes: Maybe you guessed when you saw the cover but here it is in black and white: I am pleased with the maps! All this real caving going on just seems great to me. It also seems great to be more than half-way through the year's obligation getting the RAG out. It may be time to start thinking about who will be taking on this job for next year. Meanwhile there is Speleocamp, and the Western Regional to think about, trip reports to write . . . (we always want to hear about your caving adventures) and isn't there another cave map just begging to get done? Happy caving!

Judy Broeckel

"There is only one more hanging survey, the one in Jack Jones Cave, the one that George Reel calls the ten mile cave, for the floor is all breakdown, quite large and hard to navigate around. But at least it will be all walking and climbing."

Liz Wolff in Hanging Surveys
August, 1992

LIBRARY NEWS

Library needs help! The SAG library needs to be catalogued. There are many reference materials that are hardly used at all. Many books and technical reports dominate the shelves, but there is even more in boxes or in my files that need to be copied. I envision that this can be accomplished through a data base on title, author, subject cross referencing (maybe) . . ., whatever it would take for a research student or casual reader of any age to search and find what was needed. A winter job for someone.

Library books out!! Life and Death Underground and Canadian Cave Exploration have not yet been returned. The members who have them (you know who you are) please RETURN THEM!!

Jim Wolff

CAVE QUOTE

"Had we rowed crew, or played ice hockey, we might have been Harvard stalwarts. But climbing was as weird then as caving is today."
Dave Roberts in Rites of Passage. Summit: The Mtn. Jnl., Spring 1992.

Typist Note: Wow! That must have been really weird

Liz Wolff meets "Little Person" in Rusty Cave.

July 10, 1992 Shasta Area Grotto Meeting

Present: Neils Smith, Ray Miller, Bill Kenney, George & Dorothy Reel, Jim & Bea Kottinger, Jim & Liz Wolff, Ben Sutton, Bill Broeckel, Al & Phylis Henderson, and visitors JohnTalley, Leo & Paulette Anderson

Chairman Jim Kottinger called the meeting to order at 7:46 PM. Treasurers balance: $459.82.

Old Business: Jim Wolff will not go to Washington DC to work on Federal Cave Resources Protection Act.
– The ink for sink screening the grotto logo on T-shirts is in.
– The live radio show on KPOC featured a two hour interview with Liz Wolff, Bill McGahey, and Jefferson State Grotto's Marc Sorenson.
– Federal Cave Resources Protection Act seminar at NSS convention this summer.

August 14, 1992 Shasta Area Grotto Meeting

Present: George & Dorothy Reel, Jim & Bea Kottinger, Bill Broeckel, Bill & Cheryl Kenney, Ben Sutton, Jim & Liz Wolff, and visitors Dave Pryor and daughter Chavon.

Meeting called to order at 7:57 by Jim Kottinger. Minutes accepted as read. Treasurer's report showed a balance of $477.82.

Old Business: T-shirts silk screening charge will be $3 per shirt with new improved clear image and caption "10th anniversary 1982 – 1992".– Bill K. asked if there is a "Good Sam" law in California. Yes.
– Registers. The USFS is acting on the letter from the grotto, beginning with the Environmental Assessment process. Sag will be charged $30. Jim W. is working on the EA report and may be writing the use permit. SAG needs to determine how long the project will last and the mitigating measures for the removal of the registers. SAG will be supplying the USFS with maps and inventories in the caves containing registers.
– Samwel Cave; the door has been repaired and the locks are rotated monthly to help retain the integrity of the lock and door. Dave Pryor had recommended to the USFS that they install a gate and regular barrel-type lock to make it easier for people using the cave. He reports that most of the paint was removed but some remains in inaccessible parts of the cave breakdown. The flowstone was damaged and bleached by the vinegar formula used to remove the paint.
– Charlie Simpson is still the head of the Siskiyou Co. SAR, located in Dunsmuir Police Dept. He is willing to get together with us and get a list of names and abilities. Dick LaForge is our liaison with them.

New Business: Bat house plans brought by Bill K.
– Sept. 11 meeting at Ben Sutton's trailer in the Mount Shasta KOA, space 36; October 9 meeting in the Marble Mountains.
– Trip reports: Kenneys went to Scorpion Cave. It was very dry and dusty, They found a possibly unknown pod of marble with a large sinkhole. They also saw a very large bat flying out of a pit they found and had been throwing rocks into. Jim W., Bills K.& M., Dave Pryor, and several others went to the Marbles.

Rusty Cave just beyond the main squeeze.

RUSTY CAVE By Bill Broeckel

Rusty Cave is a lava tube located near Hat Creek in Shasta County. Only one known entrance accesses 2713.9 ft of surveyed passage with very little vertical change. Scant breakdown is found in the cave, and many sections are low, but also particularly detailed and delicate.

Rusty Cave is named for the blotches of "rusty" orange-red mineralizations that appear on passage surfaces at intervals throughout the cave.

The cave bifurcates three times. This defines four leads which all lower down to heights of less than one foot, with more low cave extending into the darkness beyond. Two of the leads are shown on the map to approximate, so that in theory a very thin caver could circumnavigate a loop. The other two leads blow air and suggest more cave(s) upflow.

An intriguing bit of history concerns the "Left Hand-Left Hand" passage, marked 4" on the map. A child caver was sent through here on an early exploration trip. He returned safely and much to the relief of his father. The intriguing thing here is that the child came back with an old coat left by a previous but unknown cave explorer.

The entrance to Rusty Cave is found in a relatively small sinkhole immediately surrounded by bushes and not visible from any road. A short duck-under leads to an initial segment of comfortable walking passage. Roots hang from the ceiling over a pock-marked "sand castle" floor. In some areas secondary mineralization has formed on top of the sand. White moth wings scattered about the floor have definitely increased in numbers over the last few years. However, no bats have actually been sighted.

Continuing deeper into the cave, the ceiling gradually lowers to a prolonged crawl-way, while the passage maintains its width. Prolonged crawling culminates in a squeeze around a block of breakdown. The floor here consists of sand which may be wet or dusty, depending on the season. Since Neils Smith went through, it has been easier. This constriction serves to keep casual visitors away from the deeper parts of the cave. All the broken glass in Rusty Cave has been found proximal to the constriction. 10 ½ oz. of broken, brown glass and one used flash bulb were removed from the initial walking passage, leaving Rusty Cave essentially trash free at this time.

Immediately beyond the squeeze, a large group of "little people" (lava stalagmites) are found standing under a ceiling covered by a jungle of thin and twisted botryoidal stalactites. Throughout Rusty, the caver is repeatedly inspired to be diligent in caving softly and protecting the delicate things. Lava roses and thin helictites on stubby bases are seen in the left-hand passage. In this area the cave may be floored with fragile coralloid that crunches under the kneepads.

Walking passage occurs at & near the junctions. These areas seem like large rooms compared to the rest of the cave. The major part of the passages involve crawling on hands and knees. This makes the cave seem to be longer than it really is.

Besides the "rust", other mineral deposits of bright orange, pink, blue, & white can be found in small amounts. Sporadic bones of small animals are also found. A few spiders live deep in Rusty Cave

The cave was surveyed on two SAG trips separated by 18 months. The first survey started at the entrance, went to the first junction room, and then up to the "end" of the right-hand passage. The second survey started up the left-hand passage and included the three remaining leads deeper in the cave. The close approximation of the two leads that form a loop probably represents a check on the accuracy of the two surveys. This cave is capable of altering compass bearings. The map on the cover of this SAG RAG issue is actually a quick survey-controlled sketch produced under deadline pressure (nice work there, Liz Wolff).

Fat stalagmite with "false starts" downflow.

More work could be done on the cave(s) heading downflow from the Rusty Cave entrance sinkhole. This can be entered and is found to be heading roughly north. It too begins as walking passage, going by another entrance filled with vegetation lending a "green room" effect in the afternoon. Next, a large pile of breakdown can be negotiated by keeping close to the east side of the cave. Beyond the breakdown, the passage continues as stoop-way, reaching a skylight and then another entrance before becoming blocked with sand. Leaving the cave, another entrance re-enters beyond the sand. SAG members will tell you that the cave(s) continue in this manner for at least a mile to the north.

More of Rusty Cave might be found by searching into the brush infested lava upflow from the surveyed portion.

REFERENCES

1. Rusty Cave Revisited. Liz Wolff, SAG RAG 10:4, 1991. 1st survey & good cave description
2. Calif. Cave Exploration & Mapping in the 1980s. Peter Bosted. Cal Caver 40:1, Spring 1990. Rusty Cave referenced in a tour de force update on California caves.
3. Results of an early survey, by Liz Wolff. SAG RAG 8:3, 1989.

Caving in aMazing Pits Cave – Again!? By Jim Wolff

After the June meeting at Ray Miller's, it was decided to go back and mop up the survey of aMazing Pits ... Little did we know that time and distance are elements of great distortion in one's fatigued mind ...! I had remembered that the pit at the back of the cave was 12-15' deep, not less than 8' to the floor.

Members included were Bill Kenney, Neils Smith, Sgt. John Talley, Liz & Jim Wolff, Jim Kottinger, and Ben Sutton. We assembled at the cave, fully prepared to finish up the cave this trip. We knew that there were a few leads remaining in the maze area, + the "15 ft. pit" at the known back of the cave. "Known" because the sketch of the cave showed only a little of the cave remaining there. Both leads kept us busy the rest of the afternoon ...

We intended to start by rigging the "pit", descend it, map it, then pick up the remaining leads ("mop up") the rest in the process. Seemed easy enough, eh? So, once reaching the pit, Bill says, after trying to rig to the pillar in the room, "Hey, you can free-climb this drop!", which he did immediately. Now we had one other alternative, and that was, climb it! Although some chose to rappel the thing, it wasn't too bad to do, just that a rope with Jumar slings attached made it sooooo much easier to make it past the hard parts that nearly all used the rope on the way out.

The lower level was walking passage, with a lava seal at one end and breakdown plug at the other end. The breakdown was pushed a little ways following a stiff breeze – it goes!

On the way out of the cave, we stopped at every little passage, testing out if it was connected physically, by voice, or by light. Some improvement of the older survey was accomplished – and our knowledge and respect for the cave grew by the minute as we spent nearly four hours in this little cave.

Speaking only for myself, I had a wonderful time ..., but if you ask someone else from the trip, they would say that the trip was too short, or the cave was too cold (there was ice found in a side passage off the main room), and another would say that it was too tight, and another would say that the cave was too complicated, but all in all WE had a great time!

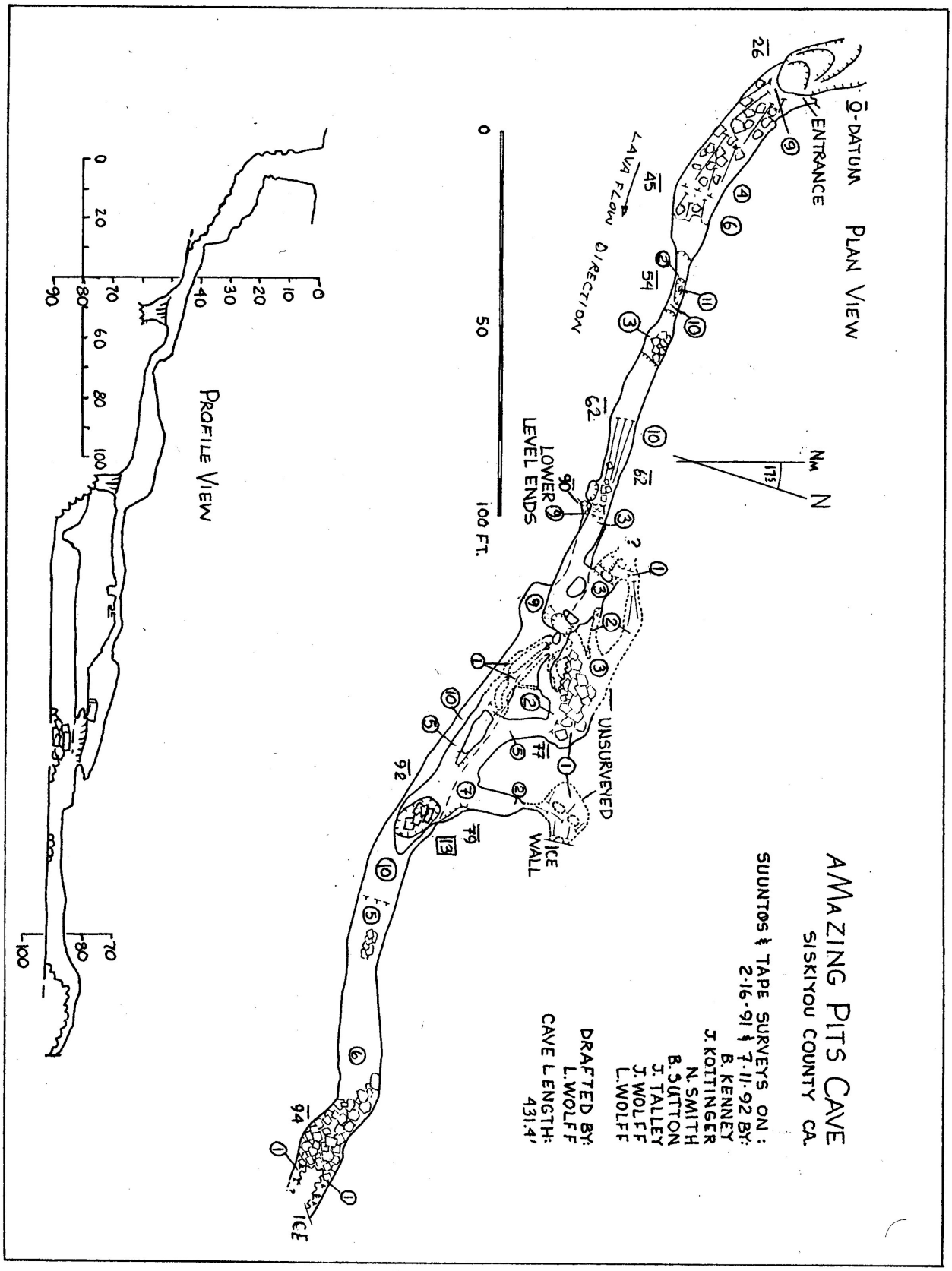
JULY-AUGUST NEWSLETTER REVIEW
By Dick LaForge

How's your summer going? Fast, if like mine. Last time I reported that my house had fallen down in the earthquake, and since then I have spent a lot of time pseudocaving under it, reconstructing all the pipes and wires that got squished. A housemoving contractor lifted the whole thing and built a perimeter cement under it, very educational watching them raise and lower a building, very neat job. They could move it a fraction of an inch any way they needed, to set it exactly on the foundation.

Kathy and I did take time out in July for a honeymoon trip to Hawaii, Big Island, just over two years overdue. To get in the mood we carefully studied the Volcanospeleology Symposium reports by Bruce Rogers that Bill Broeckel printed in the RAG.

We (and Kathy .especially) did not intend to spend the whole time in lava tubes, it being a honeymoon after all, so we did a lot of other things too (many of them underwater). Just to show the advantages of being a caver, all it took were calls to a few local cavers to find out the best way to hike to Pu-u O-O, the currently active crater. The shortest way is from outside the Park, a hike of about 5 miles through muddy fern-ohia rain forest and then about two more across sometimes very rough A-A lava to the edge of the crater. This cone started from nothing in 1982 and was famous for its high (2000') fountains of lava for several years. Then the lava found a way out at a lower elevation several miles away and the center

(Continued on page 9)



Map: aMazing Pits Cave

JULY-AUGUST NEWSLETTER REVIEW (Continued)

of the cone collapsed. When we got to the edge, we could look down several hundred feet into a large lava lake, crusted over with glowing red cracks, and splashing spots like surf around the edges. Awesome! Also awesome were the concentric cracks about the edge of the crater, which kept us at a little distance back from it. A few days later we took a flight over the crater in a biplane replica for an impressive overview. Lava was coming to the surface behind the cone (we had not seen it from the ground), and was flowing in tubes towards the ocean, about 15 miles away. At the cliffs near the ocean it came to the surface and was making its way through old forest, trees crashing and burning, quite a sight. We also flew over a nearby area where there had been hundreds of houses that were overrun by lava from Pu-u O-O in the 1980s. An occasional metal roof can be seen sitting on the lava, and there are some homes left untouched but entirely surrounded by lava. On the southern end of the Island, the Mauna Loa/Kilauea end, about 90% of the land surface is less than 200 years old, so you can't count on any structure lasting very long. We were hoping that the flow would reach the ocean before we had to leave a few days later, but unfortunately it (temporarily at least) stopped soon after we flew over.

As mentioned, some phone calls located local cavers, and also revealed that Bill Halliday was on the Island cave-hunting. All of us old-timers know Bill as the author of many popular books on caving – I myself became interested in caves after reading his books in the late 1950s. He wrote the famous and rare "Caves of California" which you may or may not have heard of. Anyway, he is doing a Hawaii cave survey and likes to get help from whoever he can, including visiting cavers from the mainland. He and I and the local cavers spent 2 days cave-hunting, and had a good time, though the caves we found were short. He had a unique method of cave-hunting. Large portions of the island have in the moderate past been carved up into "subdivisions", meaning that a grid of roads was bulldozed and lots therein put up for sale. Typically, sales have been extremely slow over the years, understandable considering much of the land is fresh lava and there is almost nothing in towns or employment nearby. Well, Bill mentioned to the Real Estate salespeople that he was interested in property with caves (he is), and they told him which plots to look at. We did, and found caves, and in general found caves everywhere. We just cruised in the car looking for holes and collapses. As mentioned, the caves we found were small, but had quite pretty lava formations and crusts of a white mineral, probably gypsum (tests to be done). Some of these crusts were quite delicate with distinct crystals.

On another day I went caving with another local person and we got into some long and going caves with lots of drippy formations and some passage complexity. These were well known locally, but probably have never been mapped or pushed hard. One was slowly being prepared as a tourist cave, an enterprise that may or may not come to completion. There is not a good tourist cave on the Big Island, the closest being Thurston Lava Tube in the Park. It is relatively uninteresting.

From this brief introduction to caving in Hawaii I can say that there are a lot of interesting caves, some very long, many of which have not been "officially" explored. However, many caves contain ancient remains and therefore are Sacred and off limits. This is an important matter. The best approach to caving in Hawaii (as elsewhere) is to go with the local cavers, and write to Bill Halliday to see if he will be there. Before leaving, Bill McGahey sent me names of some Hawaiian cavers who are not in the NSS directory (Thanks, Bill).

Other news: sales of the Fritzke Alpine Box have passed the 50 mark. An interesting observation from Cindy Heazlit who presented them at the recent NSS convention – cavers from the east were skeptical and tended to stand by the Simmons Roller, partly from

JULY-AUGUST NEWSLETTER REVIEW (Continued)

regional loyalty, Ron Simmons being an easterner. Most of Fritzke's sales have been to people in the west who have been exposed to it by Mark. Over time experience and word of mouth will tell which is better for which vertical systems and caving circumstances.

Mark Fritzke himself is just returned from his job cave-hunting for the USFS in SE Alaska. No news yet, but he promises a report. And you can be sure that if you get near him where there is electricity, you will have the opportunity to see some good slides & perhaps video.

The San Francisco Bay Chapter newsletter, June 1992, has 8 letters of remembrance of Bob Richardson, which made me feel sad all over again. Did you know that Bob was a hot surfer, a surfboard maker, and was the photographer for the movie "The Endless Summer"? For you younger know-nothings, that was the first feature full-length surfing movie, it came out in the 1960s. I remember going to see it in Massachusetts, where surfing was only something the Beach Boys sang about. There were surfboards on exhibit in the lobby, as few had actually seen one for real. Good movie!

Since I have used up so much space blathering, I have only one recommendation for reprinting. It is from the before-mentioned SFBC newsletter, August 1992: "Dan-Yr-Ogov", by Glenn Hasbrook. As you can tell by the title, it tells of Glenn's visit to a cave in South Wales. Caving with the locals in a new area, what fun!

Good Caving.
Dick

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From SFBC Newsletter, Vol. 35, No. 8, August 1992, pages 2-3

Dan-Yr-Ogov
by Glenn Hasbrook

Dan-Yr-Ogov cave is one of the classic caves of the Southern Wales region. Located just north of Swansea it is in an area of gently sloping limestone and sports miles of horizontal passage and an active river system. The show cave portion of Dan-Yr-Ogov is limited to several hundred yards of passages and chambers near the entrance of the cave which is about as impressive as those in Moaning Caverns. The outside is suitably embellished with tacky plaster dinosaurs and a glass fronted gift shop and I must admit that Dan-Yr-Ogov is the first cave that I have seen with glass entry doors. It was kind of like Macy's underground.

Upon entrance, the first thing that I noted was the gloomy fact that my headlamp was nowhere near as bright as the Speleo Technics FX2s that everyone else had and I was soon to learn that headlamps adequate for small California caves can be an annoying nuisance in places much larger and wetter.

Our group led by Chris Howes proceeded on to the end of the show cave and crossed the bridge over lake one. The bridge was submerged at that time and as we waded in shoulder deep water through lake number two Chris noticed flecks of foam on the ceiling leading us to the conclusion that the water had been high not too long before and had, at that time completely sumped the passage for quite a distance. By the time, we had gotten to the third lake the water was much deeper and we made our way along a submerged ledge while holding onto limestone plates honed sharp by the water. So, we could hear the thunder of rapids which were exciting for me because I had never been in a river system before.

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From SFBC Newsletter, (continued)

At this point my headlamp started to get dim and with a few choice invectives and a bit of embarrassment I discovered the problem. The battery pack had filled with water, Now, this should not have been a problem because DC circuits are supposed to work fine when wet but there is a certain bit of chemistry that I had forgotten about. It was something about having two different types of metal in contact with each other in the presence of an electric current and excess of oxygen atoms in the form of water, in other words instant corrosion! (Typist Note: A second possibility depends on the amount of mineral salts in the water. Pure water is a poor conductor but add mineral salts and water become a great conductor. Think of the the times when you but a battery to your tongue.) Remedy? Bang the batteries on a rock. It works every time.

Off we went again, up the rapids, through a boulder chamber and into the long crawl. This was more like California caving. It was a fifty meter belly crawl through gravel and water. My knee pads quickly slid down to my ankles where they were of absolutely no use at all and my headlamp started to flicker again. At that point I couldn't reach my knee pads to pull them up but at least my pack was in front of me and I could pull out my handy guaranteed waterproof (not!) Teckna flashlight which I strapped onto my helmet. All this I did rather quickly because of the noise for Chris's steel camera case pushing over the rocks and gravel behind me was enough to wake the dead and it sounded sort like the cave collapsing. It was a great incentive to keep moving.

After descending a chain ladder at the end of the crawl, the full drama of Dan-Yr-Ogov began to unfold. We started with Flabergasm Chasm and then backtracked to the Grand Canyon and on to the Cloud Chamber which is an inverted forest of soda straws. Here we stopped to take quite a few pictures which I hope to see the next time I pop 'round to Wales for a visit. AT this point, I realized just how weak my lamp really was, I could not see the ceiling unless I tricked someone into looking there first.

The next stop was the Green Canal which was a seemingly endless serpentine water passage. Judith volunteered to swim ahead and bring back the floating devices that had been left at the far end of the canal. It took her quite a while , or so, it seemed since we were getting cold waiting for her, but when she finally floated into view, I started to laugh because slipped four or five inner tubes around her waist thus causing her to look just like the Michelin tire man.

We soon made it to the abyss where I was introduced to yet another fascinating cave formation. It was a long vertical tube that was named with a vulgar term used to describe the south end of a north bound elephant, the Sphincter to be more exact. I declined from writing the actual term used, however, to avoid any criticism from those of more delicate senses, It did fit the description though having the texture of elephant skin and being long and tubular, So like slightly used elephant food, we all went down.

After we had all been properly excreted, we went on to the next exotic animal, the camel. It was a hump through a high crack in the wall and it looked like it would be easy to chimney but the manner in which the crevice flared out caused me to feel like a water melon seed about to be spit out. The harder I wedged, the more I was pushed out from the crevice. Meanwhile, Chris, who was already at the top, decided that he wanted a few pictures on my struggle. "Hold it right there. You look great but snarl a little more!"

When I had worked the kinks out of my legs which were stiff from the last pose, we headed down the Thixotropic passage. Judith said that it was named for the mud but I was surprised to find that it did not even cover the toe of my boot, much less try to remove it.

Finally, after a few last photos in some gorgeous phreatic passages and a quick visit to the washing machine which is a pit in the floor filled with incredibly turbulent water, we were on our way out. We made it back through the long crawl and it seemed to be twice as along the second time. I wondered what happens when a group coming out meets a group coming in? It must get pretty cozy. We were lucky enough not to find out that day and made our way with ease back through the rapids and lakes. This time I held my battery pack above my head out of the water and it worked just fine.

Feeling exhausted we faced one more obstacle, the dreaded cavers exit. Since it was after hours, for the show cave, the glass doors had been locked with alarms and video cameras so we needed to take the alternate route. This cavers exit was a one way door in the cave floor about the size of a toaster over and it lead to a twenty foot drop over the stream exit of the cave. The climb down to the stream below did not look bad at first but Chris warned me that it was going to be the most "evil" climb that day. He was right. There were plenty of hand- and foot- holds but none of them were of any use and I ended up going down in a very ungraceful hand over hand method on the belay rope.

It was an exciting but awkward end to a great cave trip. We had spent nine and a half hours underground, used up three rolls of film and countless flashbulbs, and I enjoyed every minute of it even when my headlamp was not working. Now when I look at the map, I realize just how much more cave there is to see and to add to that all the other fine Welsh caves that I have yet to visit. I know that I will have to go back and visit again but next time I'll take a serious headlamp!

FOR FRITZKE'S ALPINE BOX: (707) 822 8566

FOR WESTERN REGIONAL 1992: (209) 576-7556

Next issue of SAG RAG:

Marble Mountains Articles!

Neils Smith emerging from crawlway in Rusty Cave.

SAG RAG
524 Annie Street
Yreka CA 96097

STAMP

TO:

Western Regional
September 25-27

Remove Staple For Inspection

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