

SAGRAG

Newsletter of the Shasta Area Grotto
National Speleological Society

September-October 1996

Volume 15 Number 6



The SAG RAG is published by the Shasta Area Grotto of the National Speleological Society, Grotto meetings are held at different locations the fourth Friday of each month at 7:30 p.m. Meeting locations are announced in the SAG RAG, Membership dues are \$6 dollars per year and include newsletter subscription. Original material not otherwise noted is copyright to the SAG RAG. Such material may be copied with credit given to the author and the SAG RAG. For use outside of the caving community, please seek the permission of the author or editor first. Send material for publication any time to Bighorn Broeckel, 2916 Deer Meadows Road, Yreka, CA 96097. Material intended for the next newsletter is due by the 10th of the even month.

EDITORIAL: Just an innocuous drop in the bureaucratic bucket. A meaningless formality of paperwork. Perhaps true. So just why are Cave Management Plans (CMPs) important anyway? And why does each cave-containing Park, Monument, Forest, and BLM area need to have them?

I can think of a few reasons, and I'm sure there are others as well. Our land managers get so busy with everything else, caves are in constant danger of being forgotten all together, or neglected. CMPs can serve as reminders. CMPs push caves into the mix.

The Federal Cave Resource Protection Act (FCRPA) is in danger of being an ignored law. CMPs provide a mechanism for the implementation of the FCRPA. The cave nomination process is a bridge between the FCRPA and the CMP. The CMP then becomes a destination we are moving toward, and a tool for working out the intent of the FCRPA.

CMPs can give cavers a small leverage point within the inner workings of the various offices and agencies. Federal agencies undergo a continuous ebb and flow of personnel turnover. CMPs can provide some continuity in thinking about caves, in spite of changes in jobs, budgets, and politics. The presence of a CMP imparts a teaspoon of stability into the recipe.

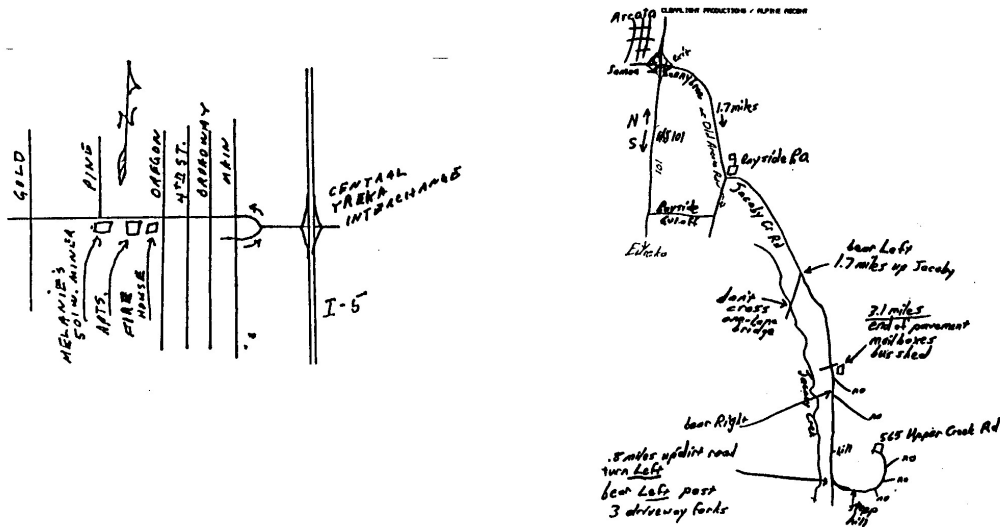
Most importantly, CMPs create some dignity and standing for the caves, in a world much too fast and busy to really care about some old spaces hidden below the surface. Now what are some other reasons that you can think of?

BB

CALENDAR

- Oct. 11, 1996 SAG meeting at Melanie Jackson's, Yreka, 7:30 p.m.
- Oct. 11-14?, 1996 KMCTF Columbus Day Speleocamp, weather permitting.
- Nov. 16, 1996 SAG meeting at Mark Fritzke's, Arcata. Call Linda to coordinate what food items to bring. (707) 822-8566.

MAPS:



COVER: Robert Nixon in the Big Room of Scorpion Cave.

Shasta Area Grotto Meeting – August 16, 1996

8:01-9:56 pm

Present at Wolff's house in McCloud were Neils Smith, Jim & Liz Wolff, Don Gibson, Bill Broeckel, Steve Dagitz, Melanie Jackson, and Dave Nicholson. Minutes were corrected.

Treasurer's report: June balance = \$519.26, with \$32.64 owed to SAG RAG.

Correspondence: Jim Wolff received the T-shirt advertising the Western Regional. The shirt was given to Neils as chairman, and it was his size. The Interior Dept. sent forms for NCRC training classes #1 and #2. Jim & Liz, as members of the American Cave Conservation Association (ACCA), received information regarding materials and designs for gating caves. Broeckel has a copy of the final management plan for Lava Beds Nat'l Monument. They made the changes that were requested by cavers!

Old Business: Neils thanked Bill Broeckel for the letter to the Forest Service regarding the Chippy Spur Timber Sale. SAG members met with the Forest Service in regard to the gating of Bat Cave. Jim Wolff gave details on the planning process currently in progress, and the implications of this project on recreational patterns, public education, monitoring of the cave and the bats, and the cave register program.

New Business: The NSS is drafting an official response to the Forest Service requesting that cave locations be kept out of computer data bases and off of maps in general.

Trip Reports: Steve Dagitz and Dave Nicholson completed the level 1 NCRC cave rescue training course in Arkansas. The caves were hot, humid, wet, and muddy, but you could drive up to the entrance! There was a lot of information, a lot to think about, and a short time to do it in. No time left for fun caving. The rescue work became much more difficult underground. They were impressed with the communications. The course was tough, but they learned much, and came away wanting to take level 2 next time. Dave is the head of Siskiyou County SAR. Steve and Dave are now the only NCRC trained rescuers on the county SAR team. Dave has lots of resources and equipment at his fingertips in the event of a cave rescue. He has been in some contact with Bonnie Crystal regarding cave rescue in the Marble Mtns.

Steve Dagitz and Bill Broeckel went back to Lost Swallet Cave and mapped 280 ft. 250 more feet were added by cavers from Portland over the Fourth of July Speleocamp, with only one 30 foot passage and some digs remaining to be done. Steve also helped Bill Kenney with a dig on Monkey Tail. Very tiring!

Jim Wolff visited Groaning Cave, the largest cave in Colorado (see article for details).

Meetings: 9-13-96 at Wolff's in McCloud; 10-11-96 at Melanie Jackson's in Yreka.

Respectfully submitted, Melanie Jackson

MJ

Shasta Area Grotto Meeting – September 13, 1996

8:00-9:30 pm

Present at Wolff's house in McCloud were Al & Phylis Henderson, Jim & Bea Kottinger, Liz & Jim Wolff, Robert Nixon, Bill & Becky Broeckel, Melanie Jackson, Bill Kenney, and Bob Hammond. The minutes were corrected. The Treasurer reported a balance of \$525.26, SAG RAG payment pending.

Correspondence: 9/11/96 Shasta Herald published an article entitled "Forest Service Proposes Protection for 'Bat Cave,'" by Mark Cardinal. Steve Knutson had a 2 page cave article with color pictures in the 7/4/96 Oregonian. One grotto survey, from the May-June SAG RAG, has been returned. If you keep your old RAGs, please go back, fill out the survey, and submit it to Liz Wolff.

Old Business: District Ranger Bob Hammond spoke regarding the gating of Bat Cave. Plans are to place a gate this fall about 300' from the roadside entrance. Estimated cost is about \$10-12K, and funding looks available. A cost effective monitoring plan was discussed, as well as the skylight entrance. The gate will be locked for the first year or two. A motion was passed to impose a voluntary caver moratorium on Bat Cave trips for 2 years, except for those involved with the monitoring plan. Implications for Roadside Complex and Jot Dean were also considered.

New Business: Bob Hammond further reports that the Modoc Volcanic Scenic Byway has been approved, and the route will start in McCloud. NCRC levels 1 and 2 are being offered 9/23 to 10/6 near Sequoia. John Bair is in charge of Marble Mtn cave registers, but can't continue right now. Bill Kenney's name was suggested. The register books in Bigfoot were recently removed due to moisture.

Trip Reports: On the first survey trip to Gossard's Clayworm Cave, Kenney, Broeckel, and Nixon mapped 450' of passage. In September, Broeckel and Nixon returned with Melanie and Ernie Coffman. A dig was completed that added 120 feet and a dome complex, and the cave still goes.

Bill Kenney reported on the Windy Cave trip (see last issue of SAG RAG).

Patrick Smith, Jim Wolff, and Bill Broeckel surveyed 400 more feet in Liquid Plumber during Labor Day Speleocamp. Liquid Plumber is now measured at over 1,000 feet of passage and also still goes. Robert Nixon helped push Bigfoot and the basement of Upstairs-Downstairs Cave with Cynthia Ream. Bill Kenney also worked in Bigfoot, including a long trip out to the Little Toe area. Horse packers were observed directing clients into caves, Skunk Hollow Cave in particular.

Jim Kottinger, George Reel, Liz Wolff, and Melanie Jackson went to Three-way, Octopus, Bobcat, Pallet, and Deep Ice Caves. They covered a new entrance into Pallet Cave. 3-4 inches of water were noted over the ice. 6-8 feet of water was noted in Deep Ice, extending to the back ice wall. The cave appeared "flushed" from the look of the algae and dried mud outside the entrance.

Icebox Cave now connects to Oregon Caves. Cynthia Ream broke through directly over the tour route.

Meetings: 10/11/96 at Melanie Jackson's in Yreka; 11/16/96 at Mark Fritzke's in Arcata.

Trips: 9/14/96 near Shasta Lake. Jim Wolff has the key to Discovery 3. Jim Nieland has been invited to look into some cattle grazing in the Red Butte Wilderness with possible impact on caves. He may not visit until next spring.

Respectfully submitted, Melanie Jackson

MJ

GROANING CAVE – A POST-CONVENTION TRIP By Jim Wolff

After the NSS convention at Salida (pronounced Sa-Lie-Dah), Colorado, I had an opportunity to go on a trip with the fellow in charge of mapping the cave and who has spent the most time in the cave. Groaning Cave is an alpine cave, situated at 10,000 feet elevation. Needless to say, I suffered from the rarified air. I had only been at that elevation for about ten and a half hours, having arrived at camp at midnight, and the trip was at 10 in the morning.

The cave seemed warmer to me than our much wetter caves at 7,000 feet in the Marbles. I wore fewer layers than up in the Marbles. All the trip leader, Allen Williams, had on was cotton coveralls and two shirts of unknown material underneath. Anyway, the cave is a big one, with 9 miles mapped, and at least 4 miles unsurveyed.

Allen led us through a route that is described in the 1996 NSS Convention Guidebook as a 6 to 9 hour round trip through the cave, taking in the sights along the way. This trip was just like described in the text, but the beauty and the big feel of the cave cannot be adequately conveyed to the reader – one has to experience the cave the way I did. Few cavers have ever seen the remote areas of the cave, with many miles of maze between you and daylight – only one entrance and a moderate amount of crawls and chimneys to see it all. The cave had its pretty segments too, stuff that isn't seen in our (far) western caves. Actually, there was very little of the cave that didn't have at least flowstone over it. Stuff in the Rockies is outstanding!

To me, the cave was very challenging. There were only five cavers, including the leader, on the trip – David Anderson, his son Eric and Eric's friend Phillip. Phillip (and the rest) were very helpful in passing my pack through the more difficult parts of the cave. Parts were very reminiscent of the caves in the Marbles – like chimneying up into cracks that have a bunch of exposure below with JUST sub-human dimensions, that if you were to drop any gear, it would be lost forever. I saw lots of gear, way down in some of those climbs.

Travel through the cave was not boring by any means! I had to go through "The Jaws," which is called "The Windows" from the other side. Jaws was an uphill battle, where you had to chimney in a shoulder wide portion of a tall crack that had constricted segments spaced at rather fiendish intervals. Here, one had to go from a cramped, hunched over, but still upright mode of travel and stuff yourself through body-sized openings. You were essentially crawling along horizontally and chimneying up at the same time! VERY strenuous!

Well, I had a great time, caved with very fine cavers, AND saw a big beautiful cave in wonderful country. You ought to go and see the caves there, and the people are great too!

TOURISTING Submitted by Jim and Liz Wolff

There aren't a lot of tourist cave trips taken by SAG members. So these two, taken to introduce some children to caving, were a welcome break from the usual survey trips. They happened when Neils Smith brought two of his granddaughters over to visit and go caving. The first was seven year old Cayla Kiriemo. Cayla had been in Subway Cave before, but never one out in the wilds.

Ben Rust, Liz Wolff, Neils, and Cayla went out to Adams Homestead Cave outside of McCloud. The whole trip was fascinating to her. We saw a white millipede and fungi in the cave. The climb down and up again near the entrance was intimidating, but with help above and below, she did fine.

A few weeks later the second granddaughter, Brandi Teel, 11, was avid to go. She'd never been in a cave and couldn't wait. On that trip, Brandi, Neils, Melanie Jackson, and Jim & Liz Wolff visited two caves. The first was aMazing Pits near Double Hole Crater. This steeply sloping lava tube had some obstacles she negotiated easily once she was shown how: pits in the floor to chimney over, and tight crawls. She wasn't too keen on the

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TOURISTING (Continued from previous page)

tight spots, but came through like a champ, and even wanted to climb the final pit. She crawled through the maze part several times while waiting for the party to regroup. The water droplet covered slime on the Walls and ceiling intrigued her and she wanted to collect some for her rock collection, calling it gold. A cave conservation lesson followed.

The second cave (actually the third) was Bobcat, near Powder Hill. The second was 3-way Cave near Bobcat, which contains a circular loop passage between two of the three entrances. She did the loop solo, with Liz waiting at the second entrance. In Bobcat, we couldn't go fast enough for her. She was a veteran now and didn't want to take the time to look around her. This cave has mostly break-down free walking passage, with a climb out exit. Passage shapes intrigued her.

She was shaking a bit when she completed the climb out, spotted from above and below, but was ready for more. Fortunately, it was getting late and the rest of us were getting hungry; hunger prevailed over youth and enthusiasm.

CAVE NEWS By B. Broeckel

SHASTA VALLEY: Dave Nicholson is thinking about some joint SAG/SAR activities, maybe beginning with a clean-up of Dance Hall and Teeter Rock Caves, which contain residual trash from an evicted hobo and an aborted marijuana growing operation.

HAT CREEK: Jim Barnhart, with Lassen national Forest, called to say that he is applying for some cave money for the Oct. 96 to Oct. 97 season, and needs an "articulate relationship" with the grotto. This translates into 2-3 weekends, 6 people, 8 hours per day = 200-300 hours of volunteer time, just for application purposes. He won't hold us to it, but this is a good opportunity to promote cave management in this district.

SENIOR PROJECT: We have a high school senior project student again this year. His name is Jacob Wilson, and he has some previous cave experience. He hopes to pursue a special interest in cave mapping. The proposal is in the approval phase. I see a possible match here with the Hat Creek item above.

BAT CAVE: SAG is requesting that all cavers honor a 2 year voluntary closure on Bat Cave, a lava tube of the Medicine Lake Highlands. This will support plans with the National Forest to manage this cave for bat habitat. For more information, contact Shasta Area Grotto.

RABIES: The FDA is likely to approve a new rabies vaccine from chick embryo cells for pre- and post-exposure prophylaxis. It is both effective and well-tolerated, and will be less expensive than the currently available human diploid cell vaccine.

NEWSLETTER REVIEW – May to September 1996 By Dick LaForge

You must think your newsletter reviewer no longer is! Yes, I have been getting the newsletters but have not written any reviews for a while. Sorry! My feeble excuse is that Kathy and I went to Colorado for a month this summer, so I didn't have time to write just before leaving, and ditto during the trip. Then, two weeks after returning, I took a nose dive off my bicycle (edge of the road moved in front of me) and broke my right collarbone. Owie! Not only did that slow me up in general, but it has kept me out of the Marbles so far this Fall. I will be back to full strength in another 4 weeks or so. Now, I can do things normally, but not with full strength.

We left Humboldt County in mid-July, and took a week of driving and hiking to get to Colorado. Then there was relative visiting, mountain hiking, etc. for a few weeks, then I went to the NSS convention, arriving Saturday, so will tell you about that. First of all, Salida was an extremely nice place to have a convention (as the places chosen usually are). It is (as usual) a small town in a rural, geologically interesting area, not built up for tourists. In fact, the town of Glenwood Springs was considered first, but that is built-up-for-tourists and seemed less than totally interested in having us. Anyway, the Salida folks were very friendly and helpful and the weather was usually excellent. Rain storms regularly passed by to the West, seemingly avoiding our camping area. That has to be a first!

We were greeted by a giant **NSS** on the hill above town; the last S being original. At the camp, I volunteered to help with registration – a great way to refamiliarize myself with the names and faces of people I have met before!, but not for quite a few years (1990). Melanie Jackson soon appeared, and Jim & Liz Wolff arrived the next day, after a vacation drive across the Southwest. Camp was in a mowed alfalfa field whose most interesting geographic feature (besides the occasional cow pie) was an irregular maze of irrigation ditches, some empty and some with fast running cold water, hidden in grass and too wide to easily jump over. After getting off registration duty at midnight Saturday (registration ran 24 hours a day from Sat a.m. to the Monday p.m. Howdy Party) it took me over 1/2 hour to find my way to my tent (no light).

Working for registration gave me more appreciation than ever for the immense amount of volunteer work that a convention requires. Many people literally cannot attend the convention that is in their back yard because they are so busy running it. This convention was very well run and the staff was very responsive to the problems, changes, etc. that constantly come up.

Anyway, the convention was the usual Zoo, one where we know all the animals and can't walk 20 feet without getting into an interesting conversation. I was very busy with my own duties for the first few days: teaching cave photography and giving my 3-D slide show. This proved quite popular, so I had to repeat it twice more on Friday, (5 times total), and once at Wed. noon for the Salida Kiwanis Club, in town.

Just a sketch of one day will give you an idea of the mind-bending variety of contrasting experiences that were to be had. Thursday morning was a terrifically interesting geology session on the Guadalupe Mts and its caves. Afternoon was more of that, plus a slide show, by Henry Pohs, of literally hundreds of brands/models of carbide lamps. Henry has written an immensely exhaustive book on Underground Lighting. Then (for me) an exhaustive (in a different way) shot at the 120 Meter rope climb. (This year, Frog systems have their own category, because the Vertical Section wants to encourage them, and because they are slower than everything else except knots.) Evening was the Photo Salon, with all its delicious slides, and seemingly arbitrary winner, and also the announcing of the other awards for maps, newsletter covers, t-shirts, etc. The winner of Best Caving Video was Bernhard Kliebhan, a German T.V. producer, for an extremely interesting and well-done video on the life and adventures of Norbert Casteret (now available to borrow from the NSS library!) I had met him and his wife and a friend at the Howdy Party, so we were acquainted. I had won a minor ribbon in Prints, so he invited me to their motel room to celebrate with some beer and bubbly. Dr. and Mrs. Halliday were there too, and we had a

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NEWSLETTER REVIEW (continued from previous page)

great time. I got to thank Bill H. for writing those books (eg. Depths of the Earth, 1966) that got me, and many others of my generation and later, interested in caves and caving. One other person there (German, I think) said he had gotten into it the same way. I hope Bill wasn't embarrassed, because his influence is a historical fact.

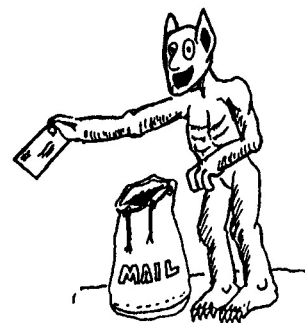
Somewhat later, Bernhard dropped me off at the campground entrance. There was a Salida policeman on duty checking passes, and a pulsing roaring noise coming from the camp. I asked. "They are having Ramen Noodle Wrestling", he said. "Someone came up to take my place so I could go watch, but I said I liked it better up here." Well, I was curiouser than that, so boogied on down, and got there just in time to volunteer Mark Rosbrook and Vivian Loftin as contestants. It goes like this (you might prefer not to know about this, but here goes): a gross (that's 144) packages of ramen noodles are cooked up and dumped into a small back-yard plastic swimming pool. I don't know if they add the Flavor Packets. The wrestling pair gets in and goes at it, formal wrestling style, as much as they know of it. They continue as long as either has any part of his/her body still inside the pool, which sits on a large plastic tarp. When they both are out, they start over. A pin is a win, but this is very difficult under such slippery conditions. Food fights occur. Anyway, Vivian finally beat Mark by simply pushing him over, then they got hosed off and we went down to the hot tubs. There are two now, both wood-powered, one hot and one hotter. So, hot and naked until 1-2 a.m., discussing the Dale Green vs. Carol Hill theories on the origin of Folia, and other interesting matters.

Now, that was some day!

After the convention, Melanie headed for home. Wolffs went caving in Groaning (I think that's the one) and I went to CO Springs for a photo trip in Breezeway, the new one with the hundreds of square feet of beaded helictites. More on Breezeway in the next Review.

Not much space left for introducing this issue's thefts from other newsletters, so I'll just let Bighorn choose the ones he wants to print and let them stand on their own. I generally only embarrass myself by introducing them anyway. If he prints John Irminger's trip report on Neff's Canyon Cave from the Devil's Advocate, July 1996, it is because Neff's Canyon was the depth record holder at -1165 ft before Bigfoot achieved -1204. Neff's held the record for approx. 20+ years. I thought you might like to read what it is like.

Cavingly, Dick



hodag w/mailbag

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Devil's Advocate July 1996 Pages 50-51

Trip Reports**Neff's Canyon Cave**
By John Irminger

Two groups of Diablo Grotto cavers visited Neff's Canyon Cave on Friday, May 31 and Saturday, June 1, 1996. The Friday group was to rig the cave, and the Saturday group would de-rig. Some rigging would be left in the cave for a rescue seminar to be held the next weekend. Both groups were led by local cavers. Contact with the local cavers was established by Jef Levin.

The cave is developed in steeply dipping Cambrian period limestone, sandwiched between shale layers. The (roughly) 45 degree dip controls the trend of the cave, which drops 1165 feet in 4122 feet of passage. A small stream trickles through much of the main passage. When the first Diablo group (Jef Levin, Kirk Hastings, James Wilson, Midori Sundquist, led by Steve Allphin and Mike Gomm) arrived at the entrance, they found a stream flowing in through the entrance gate. This was unexpected. Heading upstream, it was discovered that a dam that diverts the stream around the cave entrance had been partially dismantled. The dam was rebuilt, and the flow into the cave began to diminish. However, because of the in-flowing stream, the cave was wetter than expected. The Friday group turned around about two thirds of the way down, because they were cold and wet.

By the time the Saturday group (Jim Hildebrand, Charlie Hotz, John Inninger, led by Rodney Mulder, Duane McCully, Shay Lelegren, and Rob Cranney) arrived at the entrance, the stream flow had completely stopped. A check of the dam showed that the stream was well below the top. After hearing of the cold and wet conditions encountered by the Friday group, the Saturday group donned extra polypro layers, and prepared for the

unpleasant conditions. But, because the water flow was significantly less, the Saturday cavers were comfortable throughout the cave. Entering the cave, the passage drops rapidly. There is a lot of climbing down through boulders lodged in the passage. There are a few tight chimneys to negotiate. Most of the rigged pitches are inclined between 45 and 70 degrees, with an occasional free drop. A stream trickles down some of the inclines. The leaders of the Saturday trip felt that some of the pitches were not rigged at the optimal sites, so some time was spent re-rigging.

It took the Saturday group three hours to reach the bottom of the cave. After signing the register, the four hour journey out began. To prevent bunching up at the drops, the way out was mostly a solitary affair. All said, the ascent was a hell of a lot of climbing and bouldering. My arms and shoulders were sore, and I felt well "caved" by the time I emerged into the Utah late afternoon sunshine.

The hospitality and generosity of the Utah cavers was absolutely first class. The Diablo Grotto hopes to reciprocate sometime soon.

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THE EXPLORER, September 1996, page 113.

REMINISCES OF A SPELEOJOURNALIST

Cave Passages: Roaming the Underground Wilderness by Michael Ray Taylor
Book Review by Scott Schmitz

At the NSS Convention in Salida, Colorado, the Speleobooks booth advertised an autograph session with Michael Ray Taylor for his first published book. I remembered the author's article about Great Expectations Cave that appeared in the May 2, 1988 issue of Sports Illustrated. It was an informative study in claustrophobia and hypothermia that, having read early in my caving career, left a lasting impression on me and introduced me to the perils and pitfalls of solo caving and scooping booty. On the strength of that article plus the fact I could get the author himself to autograph his book, I bought myself a copy and descended into its depths with glee.

Michael Ray Taylor has included "Cold Fear, Great Expectations" in his new book alongside several other caving essays that the author has published over the years. The story has lost none of its power to grip the mind and chill the soul, and that power spills over into the other stories, each illuminating some aspect of the caving community. The book begins with the death of Sheck Exley, the famous American cave diver who developed many of the safety practices used by today's cave divers. Taylor was at Zacaton to witness Exley's attempt at the world open-circuit-depth record, 1000 ft. on mixed gases. How a man as experienced and safety conscious as Sheck could have died the way he did remains a mystery, but Taylor reveals a fact I didn't know before, that on the day before the fatal dive Sheck made one last world record dive to 422 ft. on compressed air alone.

But Exley's death is only incidental to what the author has to say about the man. Exley's accomplishments in life went far beyond what he did for cave diving, and Taylor's moving obituary should be required reading for anyone who wants to know more about the enigma that was Sheck Exley. Just as moving is a piece on the simple lifestyles of Herb and Jan Conn, accidental cavers who ended up mapping 60 of Jewel Cave's more than one-hundred miles of passages. And he has an Ernie Garza story! Ernie for a long time was a member of the Southern California Grotto, and I have heard several Ernie Garza stories from many grotto members (they ought to be collected). But I've have missed hearing about Ernie ever since he moved to Texas a couple years ago. Suddenly here's a new one, right here in this book. It's one of the better ones, too, and I wonder why I haven't heard this one before.

"Cave Passages" is also about a book about coincidences, how they determine the direction of our lives, dictate who becomes our friends, and pushes us forward into adventure. A friend Taylor knew for years suddenly reveals he saw Sheck's brother Edward die in an earlier caving accident which helped determine the path of Exley's life. The author reads a fictional book which eerily parallels the author's real life and sets him onto the path of a writer. And Taylor suddenly finds himself living out the plot of another fictional book while on a caving trip to Jamaica that blurs the very distinction between truth and fiction. And speaking of coincidences, Michael Ray Taylor tells a different side of trips that Southern California Grotto members have been on. He has surveyed in Lechuguilla with Carol Vesley and was one of two runners who rushed out of the cave to notify authorities that Emily Davis Mobley had been injured. He has stories about the wild times at Old Timer's Reunion vaguely reported upon in this newsletter's "Recent Trips". And all those slides we've seen at grotto meetings on the explorations various grotto members have taken to China suddenly have new meaning, for the author quotes Don Coons as saying "Everything that's been done in speleology up to now was preparation for China. This is where the real stuff is. The rest of the word was practice."

No one in this grotto has revealed the magnitude of the potential for caves in the karst of China the way the author presents it here in his book.

I have not been as excited or as moved by a caving book since "The Longest Cave" by Roger Brucker and Richard Watson. This is a very special book. What more can be said of a book that takes a look at junk and makes a case for its place in stimulating certain ecosystems, something cave conservationists should become aware of. Buy this book if you have wonder and adventure in your soul. You will not be disappointed.

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Volume 39, Number 5 (May 1996) **San Francisco Bay Chapter Newsletter** pages 3-4

Project Caving in California, Part III

Why I like PROJECT CAVING at Lilburn –

By Richard Fellows

Lilburn is a pleasant place to hike, to camp, and to cave. The hike in through the redwoods is one I always seem to enjoy. We usually walk in on Friday and I've really gotten to enjoy the night sounds and smells as we meander down the trail. At night when the air is still, the scents from the different trees and plants stand out more from the background forest. I especially like seeing the warm glow from the cabin windows when we get in to camp.

The cabin site is a pretty good place to camp. The temperature is usually relatively warm and there are plenty of flat spots to pitch my tent. The cabin amenities of the water system, the electric lighting, the wood stove and fireplace make the stay always enjoyable. It's very comfortable to just plop down in a chair by the fire at night and enjoy the warmth of fire and friends. A lot of people come down just to cave from the surface.

Of course this is project caving so there is always lots to do. All those comfortable amenities require some upkeep, but with lots of people to help out none is generally too onerous. I like to look around each time I'm down there and find something that needs to be brought down on the next trip sometimes gas or TP or parts for one of the many projects.

There are a number of interesting projects going on both underground and on the surface. John Tinsley is keeping track of sediment movement within the cave. His circuit trip through the cave to visit all the important sites is a good way to see the extent of the cave. Bill Frantz has been working on cleaning some of the formations. These trips focus on just a few areas and are more leisurely (except for carrying the water bladders). Bill has also been working of doing some photo-monitoring of the cave. Surface surveys periodically find and map new sinkholes into the surface map. The hydrology group, led by Jack Hess maintains the experiment at the spring and the stream monitoring equipment

in the cave. The in-cave phone line is being replaced to allow faster rescue response and to be the conduit for in-cave dataloggers. Bill Farr has been carrying on some dives in the cave to try to find a way through the resurgence into the northern part of the system. With this much science going on, the conversation around the campfire can be really interesting and I enjoy that.

The usual big draw for people and my personal favorite is the mapping project. Lilburn is big enough and complicated enough to be really challenging and interesting. There are lots and lots of places to go. Few people, except perhaps Peter Bosted, are really comfortable with most parts of the cave. I habitually get lost in the north end but am relatively comfortable with the middle section of the cave. Some people seem to specialize in just the south end. There's lots of cave to explore. I enjoy finding new passages and particularly like finding new leads off of main routes.

Lilburn is just one of those caves you can settle into exploring for a long time. Its fun for me to be part of a really big project that spans so many years, so much passage, and so many really good friends.

Editor's note: Lilburn is a Cave Research Foundation (CRF) project cave. The National Park Service allows CRF West to conduct surveying and other activities that NPS deems worthwhile in this "underground laboratory." Trips to Lilburn are currently restricted to CRF projects. Although the project continually accepts new applicants, interested persons must contact trip leaders or John Tinsley, CRF West coordinator, in order to participate in trips. For more information, contact John Tinsley, jtinsley@isd.mnl.wr.usgs.gov, 415-329-4928.

[This is the third in a series of articles on various caving projects in California. I am STILL seeking a write up on the Marble Mountains project, so please don't be shy! – ed]

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A Caution on Rappelling
By Bruce Hagen, AMRW

A recent article in a rescue magazine detailed yet another incident of someone rappelling off the end of the rope. About a year ago I ran across a story of someone who had done just that. It seems difficult to believe that could happen, but it does, to climbers, rescuers, and cavers.

I did some checking to find out how trained and qualified individuals find themselves in such a predicament. The primary cause seems to be obvious, a rope which is too short, and no figure eight in the end of the rope. In many cases, it seems that the length of the drop was known, and the length of the rope was assumed. The scenario then was they knew they had a 150' drop, and thought they had a 200' rope. No one checked or was able to determine the rope had reached the bottom, and so began their rappel assuming the rope was longer than necessary. In these cases the rope was not as long as was believed. Other cases seem to result from haste, fatigue or hypothermia and failure to take the common sense steps associated with any rappel. In a few humorous incidents on long drops into pits, the caver actually touched the bottom of the cave with the rope end a few feet from the ground only to watch the end of the rope leap up out of reach once the weight was off the rope. In one interesting

incident, the rope was in a rope bag, the end had been secured through the grommet hole with a figure 8 knot, and the rope bag was marked for a 200' rope. She began her rappel with the rope bag clipped to her harness, feeding out the rope as she rappelled. At approximately 100' down the pit, she rappelled off the end of her rope and fell 70' to the bottom of the pit into a small pool of water. She survived the fall but sustained numerous injuries. A check of the rope bag still clipped to her harness revealed a separate 100' rope, with its end secured through the hole in the rope bag. Apparently the first rope was placed in the bag and secured, and someone else later placed the second rope in the bag. The message here is clear:

- 1) A figure eight knot should be tied in the end of all rappel ropes, even if you are using a 100' rope for a 10' drop.
- 2) The length of any rope should be clearly marked on both ends of the rope.
- 3) Only one rope should be placed in a rope bag. If for some reason circumstances require the placement of a second rope in the bag, (and this should be a rare occurrence) the bag and ropes should be marked accordingly, and the two ropes should be tied together with the appropriate knot.
- 4) Check and double check any rope you are about to rappel on. Do not make any assumptions about length.
- 5) Have an ascending system handy, and know how to do a changeover on rope.

SAGRAG

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