

SAGRAG

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Shasta Area Grotto



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EDITORIAL: It looks like my summer is all booked up with other stuff, and I won't be much use to the grotto for awhile. Look for the next SAG RAG at the end of the summer.

At the May meeting, I listened as close as I could to the watershed analysis presentation. Dusty Miller was open to questions, and genuinely enthusiastic about the watershed analysis process. He leads teams within the forest service looking at ideas for entire watersheds. This is a new scale, and contains features of importance to caves.

Traditionally, commercial logging has been a priority use among the mandated "multiple uses" of federal land. The driving force behind this priority has been the complex financial entanglements between the government, the companies, and the local communities. This was one reason why some environmental groups made the unrealistic call for an end to logging on public land.

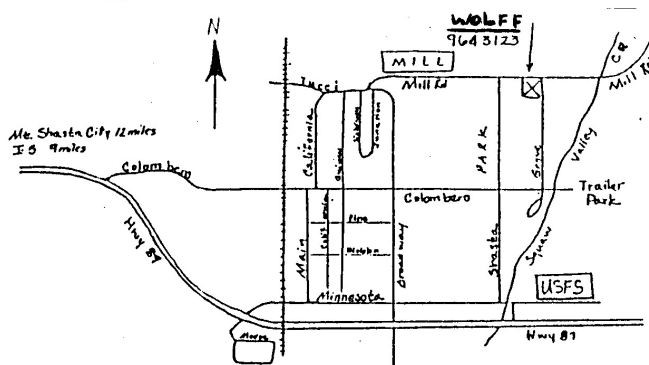
Watershed analysis comes into play here. The process calls upon the expertise within the national forest to evaluate and advise. A wide range of ideas and perspectives are brought into the process. Key issues are identified, and worked into a final recommendation. That is as far as the process goes.

The anticipated result we will look for is to see important issues, such as cave management, incorporated into the level of land use planning and actual timber sales. This would take the form of funded projects added on to the wheeling and dealing of the timber sales. Watershed analysis tries to give caves a small wedge into the business side of forestry. Cave management has been so money poor, I say it's worth a try.

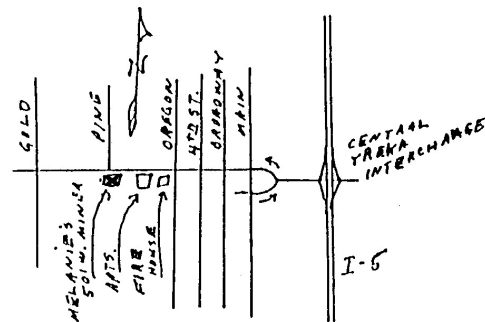
BB

CAVE CALENDAR – 1997 Hint: next-day cave trips often set at meetings.

- July 4-7 Marble Mountains speleocamp with KMCTF.
- July 11- 13 Scorpion Cave. Contact Ron Osborne (541) 855-9635.
- July 11 SAG meets at Wolff's in McCloud at 7:30 pm.
- August 8 SAG meets with Melanie Jackson, Yreka, 7:30 pm.
- October 6-11 Cave Management Symposium, Bellingham, WA.



McCloud



Yreka

SHASTA AREA GROTTO MEETING

MAY 9, 1997, from 8:24 to 10:30 pm, Shasta Area Grotto met at Round Table Pizza in Mt. Shasta. Present were George Reel, Kyle Haines, Cheryl & Bill Kenney, Bea & Jim Kottinger, Liz & Jim Wolff, Ray Miller, Bill Broeckel, Melanie Jackson, and Dusty Miller (guest speaker).

Dusty Miller from the McCloud Ranger District gave a presentation and answered questions regarding the watershed analysis of the lower McCloud River and the McCloud Arm of Lake Shasta. He gave a summary of the six step process of doing a watershed analysis and explained how it was different from an environmental assessment.

Minutes were approved as read. The treasurer reports a balance of \$549.64.

Correspondence: None.

Old Business: Re: Bat Cave: Jim & Liz Wolff took the people from Industrial Welding to the gate site so the measurements could be taken and the logistics of moving the materials to build the gate could be determined. The gating will be happening very soon. Volunteer sherpas are needed. Call Jim Wolff (916) 964-3123 if interested.

New Business: Bill Broeckel finished the Windy Cave nomination and submitted copies to SOG, SAG, Jeff LaLande, and Jim Nieland. LaLande is the wilderness supervisor. Nieland is the regional cave resource specialist and will be coming to see Rogue River National Forest caves this June, including Windy. Trips need to be planned soon for surveying caves in the Double Head Ranger District of Modoc National Forest. Our contact is Jim Villegas. Liz Wolff will be conducting a bat count at an important colony site near Lake Shasta.

The June meeting will be a cave camp at Hat Creek, June 13-15, based at Cave Campground. (Ed: Melanie Jackson, Jim Wolff, and Liz Wolff were present, and did not conduct a formal meeting. The next two meetings were set, interestingly enough, at the homes of Wolff and Jackson. On a survey exploration trip the next day, they found an old carbide can near a cave with a room. In the floor was a hole leading to a lower level passage. It appeared that someone had attempted to conceal the hole. Vertical gear will be needed, and a return trip is contemplated this coming September.) These minutes respectfully submitted by Melanie Jackson.

MJ

HOW THE GRINCH STOLE CHRISTMAS

By Liz Wolff

Murphy's Law sez that you won't locate the cave you set out to find in the beginning. It also sez that you will find an interesting hole while you are hiking back to your car. In retrospect Murphy also sez that you will need vertical gear in an area of horizontal caves. That is what happened to 3 SAG cavers on June 14.

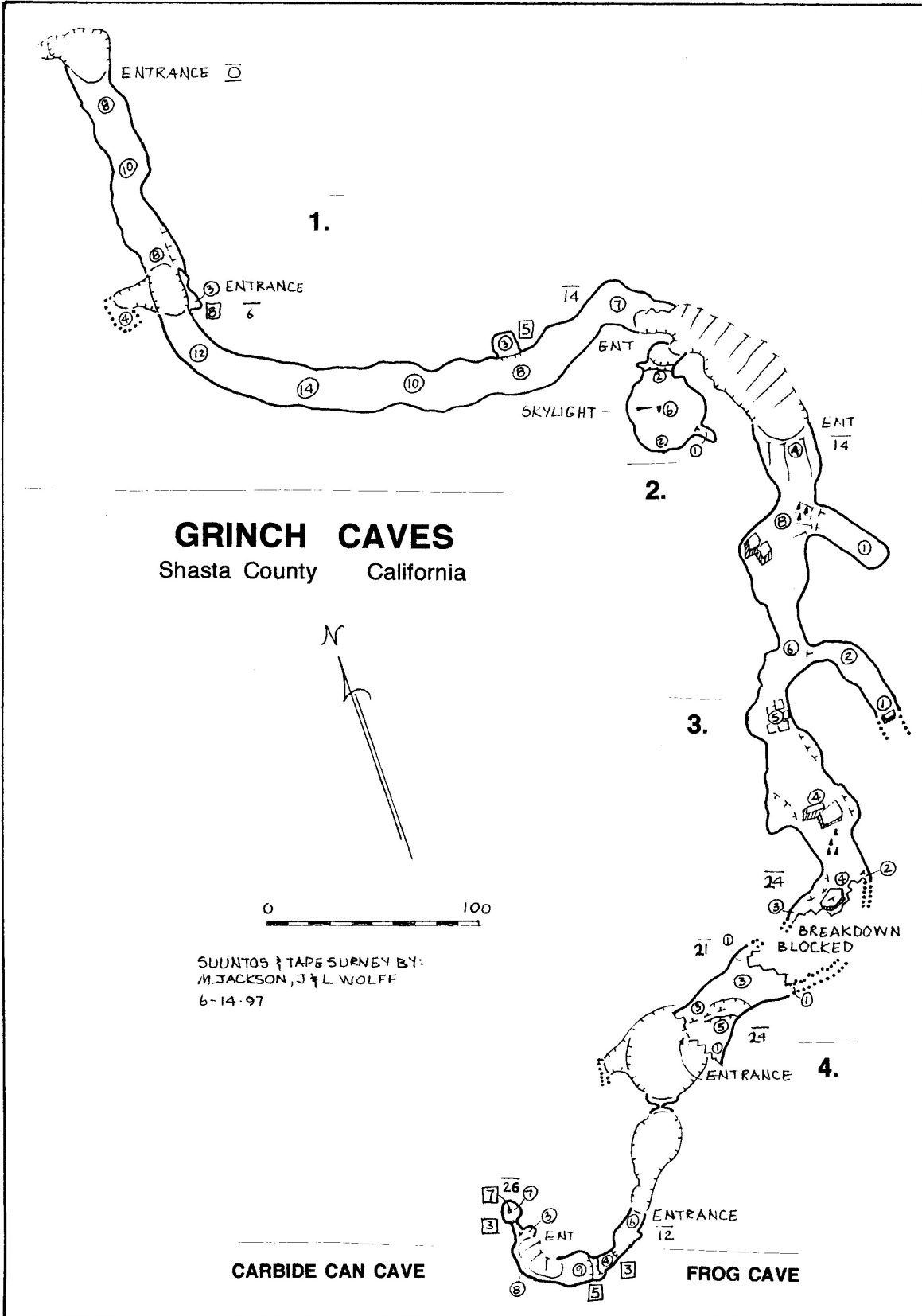
Friday June 13 Melanie Jackson, and Jim & Liz Wolff met at Hat Creek campground for the SAG meeting. We crossed Hat Creek to visit a small lavatube on the side of a cinder cone that was dubbed Pee Can Cave, for the obvious reason. We spent the rest of the day hiking over some lava buttes near there, a good hike but no caves.

Saturday morning we headed for Christmas Tree Cave, which was mapped by geologists in 1962. We were in the right area but didn't find it. The caves we did find were short, horizontal and new to us. So we mapped from a breakdown plug on the south end (Christmas Tree Cave ends in a breakdown plug on the north end) through 3 cave segments to the first entrance we went into. Figuring that Christmas Tree was somewhere to the south of the caves we mapped, we traversed overland to where we presumed a cave should be. We did find a cave, but it wasn't Christmas Tree. It was short and ended in breakdown on the north end. Another sink headed south.

We decided to adjourn to Uncle Runt's for a hamburger to discuss where we went wrong, but it was too early. And there was another entrance. So we set a time to retreat from our seemingly caveless (sorry, fruitless) search. The next cave had frogs on the wall and a shelf to climb over, but it wasn't Christmas Tree either. In the next sink Jim found an old carbide can in the rubble, rusted almost beyond legibility. His alarm watch went off, but we had another cave. Carbide Can Cave had Jim hooting with glee from inside before Melanie and I could get inside. It ended almost before it began in a nearly circular lava-sealed chamber. A great place to end; no loose ends to pick up, no dangling survey, no leads.

Then Murphy stepped back into the picture. Some unnatural-looking, aligned, uniformly-sized lava slabs on the floor, with a deeper darkness seen through cracks beneath them, aroused curiosity; they looked like someone had put them there apurpose. Hmmm Any normally inquisitive caver would move one. Underneath was a small black hole with walking passage extending 2 ways. It was a 7 foot (by tape) drop, free of any walls or way to manufacture a climb back up through the 12"X15" hole. Undoubtedly the carbide can droppers had considerably placed the slabs to protect the wandering public, or more likely, to hide a good lead from whomever might come along. Hiking back to the trucks, we found a skylight entrance with passage extending into the darkness. It possibly connects with the lower passage in Carbide Can Cave and/or another tiny entrance in the last sinkhole.

Although none of them were Christmas Tree Cave (a recurring refrain), it's an interesting and unusual group of caves for Hat Creek: they're aligned and connected. Most of the area's lava caves seem to have no organized pattern to their placement, or even any relationship to each other.



Map: Carbide Can Cave, Frog Cave, Grinch Caves

PSYCRAWLOGY CAVE By B. Broeckel

Psycrawlogy Cave is a small crawlway cave located on U.S. Forest Service land. Shasta Area Grotto found this cave in the early 1980s. Glen Everest, Roger Jones, and the Wolffs checked the entrance area, but did not survey or fully explore the low passage. The cave became an item of grotto memory, and would pop up from time to time at grotto meetings or around the campfire, whenever the area was discussed. "Oh yes, there is this cave in such and such locale, and it was never mapped, but it's there, and we need to go survey it sometime . . ."

A decade or two later, the opportunity arrived. Bill Kenney managed to re-locate the cave. Kyle Haines, Jim Wolff, and Liz Wolff joined up with Kenney to form a survey team. They came back out with 196 feet of passage. Hey, I was there too! Come to think of it, I guess I didn't help much, but I had an excuse. I was keeping a watchful eye on my kids. We followed the survey team into the cave and tried to keep out of the way. I have a great appreciation for Shasta Area Grotto. Long-suffering, patient, kind . . . but back to the cave.

The entrance is a large concavity scooped out of the cliff. The dripline is so high, that it doesn't feel like you have entered a cave yet. My kids easily clambered up the terraced rock. We were not able to reach the high lead to the right. But we entered the lower crawlway passage, where the dark, the smell, and the low ceiling indicated definite cave. The crawlway was relatively comfortable, with sandy floors and variable head room. Some blind domes branched up to the right. Then we reached a small alcove on the left with two sub-human tubes going up. Even my smallest cave probe (kid) couldn't squeeze through these tubes. What a relief!

Meanwhile, in the outside world, Kyle Haines and Darryl Rasmussen completed a short rock climb up to another cave entrance higher on the cliff, and directly over our position. They even had a handline rigged, but this was thankfully taken down before my kids realized the full potential of this convenience. According to Haines and Rasmussen, the small passage of the upper cave reached a dome on the right, and two small tubes went down toward the left. Yes, they were sub-human tubes. And yes, they were the very same tubes that we saw from the small alcove down below.

From the alcove the crawl continued, first to the right, and then through a constriction to the left. This opened up to reach another entrance perched on the cliff. The kids and I were outside again, and ran over to the new entrance with the handline. Down came the end of the survey tape, and eventually we were able to complete a survey loop that went in one entrance and out the other.

But first we attached the end of the handline to the end of the survey tape. Up went the handline. Haines and Rasmussen rigged a double rope pull down, and completed arm rappels out of the perched entrance. The kids were delighted. The others went back through the cave.

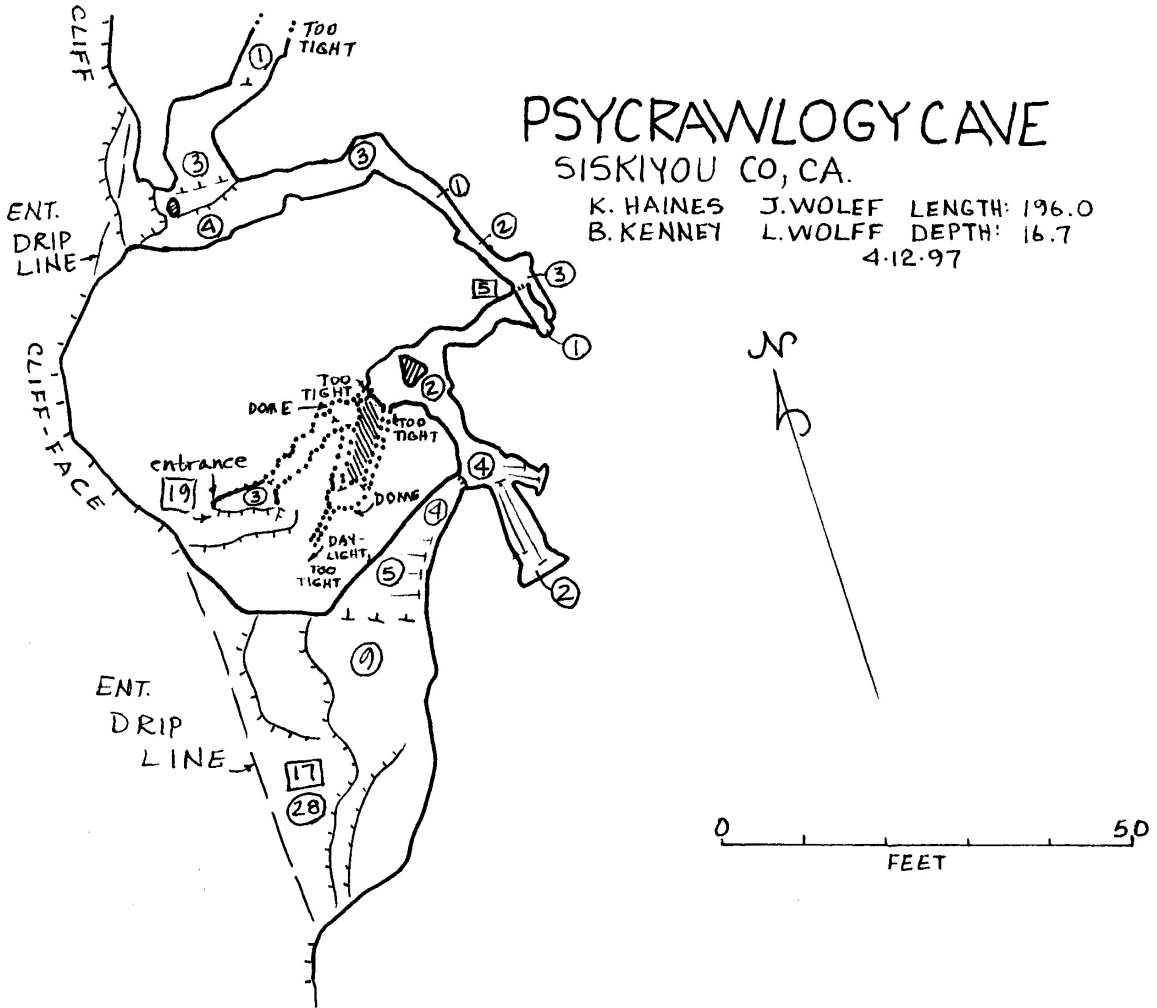
The last side passage in the cave goes further along the cliff toward a surface site where a dig might yield more cave. So much for Psycrawlogy Cave, surveyed at last! We came up with the name at campfire that night. The cartography is by Liz Wolff.



On the hike to Psycrawlogy Cave.



Survey team approaches Psycrawlogy Cave.



Map: Psycrawlogy Cave

Rambling on and on about ... gloves? **TOUGH GLOVE** By Jim Wolff

As I get older, and wiser, I find that I've certainly neglected newer caving friends. There are many things I can share, that my readers can profit, even learn from. So, why not share what I know. Here it is, another one of my strange little ditties, on **gloves!**

Depending on the cave, wet or dry, horizontal or vertical, this article might help you determine your preference for the type of gloves for the kind of caving you do.

I use an all-leather glove, all the time. But, some cavers use neoprene rubber gloves for the wet and cold caves of the Marble Mtns. That's fine, and they usually do have long gauntlets, but repairs should be expected for the varied type and constant abuse they normally get. If you decide to get these, buy a tube of **Aquaseal** (Tm) and glue the outside of the seams, finger tips and palms. (I will mention more about modifications and repairs later). You should also consider packing a fingerless leather glove for the palm of your control hand while you do rappelling, just for your main glove protection. Be sure that the glove fits over the other one.

Anyway, I just use plain ol' leather gloves with a wrist drawstring that helps keep the heat in and the dirt out. I also use ladies kitchen gloves as liners next to my skin. A wool glove might be more than you need, but can be used as a second of three layers while in cold stream crawls, where you are in cold water most of the time.

Some cavers like the feel of rock on their fingers and go without gloves at all or use the fingerless gloves. I feel that using no gloves at all is very foolish, since most caves tend to have all kinds of organisms, fungus, germs, ... you name it! And a scratch would be all it would take to make you mighty sick! In fact, I carry a spare glove now-a-days on vertical trips, where losing a glove would be disaster for me. Those who know me would have to agree. Cotton gloves sometimes gets used, but rarely. I'd rather sweat than get poked in the hand!

You've heard of the old saying "fits like a glove?" Well, that's not accurate at all! Do you recall noticing that gloves are made with most of the fingers all the same length? The human hand is not like that! So, when you are fitting yourself with a pair of gloves, just remember to find the ones that have reasonable proportional finger lengths – which is hard to find. If you failed in that count, take heart that you can alter your new gloves to fit better. Modifications and repairs are easy, with a Handy-Stitcher, wet suit glue, **Canvas Grip** (Tm) and good-ol' **Aquaseal** (Tm). The main thing is get the glove that "fits-like-a-glove" for durability, dexterity and versatility.

Now, I guess there are **Kevlar** (Tm) gloves, for the small chance you might get shot at by dangerous pot farmers, or **Nomex** (Tm) gloves for the times you must tough out those fresh-hot LAVA TUBES. The specialized gloves that sports jocks use, the ones with padded palms, like the roller blade freaks and skateboarders use are good for lava tube caving, where the extra is appreciated. Still, I see you going back to using the good ol' leather gloves ... you'll see!

Of course, what works for one, might not work for another

Reprinted from the CLEVE-O-GROTTO NEWS February, 1995, by John Prisel.

Batteries and You

by John Prisel

Last month I told you about Consumer Report's tests on batteries. I also promised you that I would let you know what they had to say about the so called reusable alkaline batteries and chargers. Well, never one to go back on my word, at least not while its in writing, here's what they had to say.

Battery makers have been warning consumers all along never to try recharging disposable batteries. Hydrogen could build up inside, making the battery leak or burst. But two companies say they've worked around that problem. One offers special alkaline batteries and a charger made for them. The other sells a charger said to be good for any and all alkaline batteries.

Rayovac's reusable alkalines

Rayovac says its *Renewal* alkalines can be recharged 25 times or more in its *Power Station* charger. *Renewal* batteries in AA, C, or D size sell for about \$1.50 to \$3 each. Consumer Reports purchased 25 eight-battery *Power Stations* (\$30) and more than 250 batteries to test Rayovac's claim. (The four-battery charger, \$15, accepts only AA and AAA sizes.)

Unlike rechargeable nickel-cadmium batteries, *Renewals* need no initial charging. Their first time was their finest: In

Consumer Reports "toy" tests, the AA *Renewals* performed about as well as the lowest-scoring conventional alkaline batteries. The *Renewal C* and D batteries lasted only about half as long as conventional alkalines.

Each subsequent recharging shrank the *Renewals'* life. By the 25th use, the batteries were working more like nicads, lasting only a fraction of the time of a fresh alkaline. Several D-size *Renewal* batteries, in fact, died for good after fewer than 25 uses.

When Consumer Reports used the AA *Renewals* in only two-hour spurts, recharging them after each spurt, some samples gave them more than 100 hours total. Others, though, lasted less than 40 hours.

Rayovac promises enough savings during the life of just one pack of *Renewals* to cover the cost of the charger. Maybe so. But the bottom line is this: A regular alkaline provides a longer life per use than a *Renewal*, though it can be used only once. A nicad battery has a shorter life per use than does a *Renewal*, though many more charge cycles. The *Renewals* edge over nicads is that it comes fully charged and loses power more slowly when not in use. Overall, the *Renewal* is a compromise between regular alkalines and nicads.

A charger for all brands

A cable-TV infomercial last year hawked a pricey charger that promised to extend the life of old alkaline batteries "by over 10 times." The *Buddy L Super Charger* is now sold in toy and discount stores. The bigger of the two models, the *8000*, sells for about \$40. It handles up to four batteries – any mix of AAA, AA, C, and D, alkaline or nicad. Colored lights signal when the batteries are ready to use. Charging usually takes overnight.

Consumer Reports tapped *Duracell* and *Energizer* alkalines in both high- and low-demand situations, a workout that didn't exhaust them. (The charger says it can't bring back batteries that are completely dead.) They then charged the batteries overnight and repeated the drain-and-recharge treatment daily until the batteries finally died.

The *Buddy L* didn't multiply battery life 10 times. At best, it stretched the life of *Duracell* AA batteries to 2.5 times normal, and it didn't quite double the *Energizer* AA's life. More typically the *Buddy L* extended battery life by 10 to 50 percent. But then, just letting a battery rest overnight can increase its life up to 10 percent with out charging. Batteries charged in the *Buddy L* never leaked.

All in all, the *Buddy L* performs no feat of battery alchemy. ❖

NEWSLETTER REVIEW Ed: Dick LaForge writes to say that he didn't have time to write, and that he didn't have time to write an explanation about why he didn't have time to write. Did you follow that? Dick will explain this for us later, that is, about why he didn't have time to write. Dick sent along some material for reprinting. From the Oregon Grotto SPELEOGRAPH, March-April, 1997 issue, page 19, we have the darndest things kids have said on their science tests, and a cave related Far Side. Funny stuff. Then from Diablo Grotto's DEVIL'S ADVOCATE, November 1996, we have Jim Hildebrand's article on Guatemala and a gonzo cave trip led by Rich and Midori Sundquist in the spring of 1996. We don't have space for all of the article, but for our local readers I will excerpt highlights.

REPRINTED HIGHLIGHTS from GUATEMALA EXPEDITION, SPRING 1996 by Jim Hildebrand, in the DEVIL'S ADVOCATE, November 1996, page 85-90.

The reports from the first session at Finca Chulac, the collective farm where they had gone, were intriguing: one cave had been surveyed to 999' and several hundred feet depth, and another named Jul Pek Cahk'bom was 2400' in length, about 450' deep and going! There were reports of a large number of bats in the entrance to Jul Pek.

Wednesday, April 3

Rich and I left early that morning, to get in before the bats returned from their night's activity. We were in the cave before 5 a.m.; there were very few bats in the entrance. We took an additional 450' of rope to be sure (we thought) that we could do whatever drops remained and finish the survey. We used a 250' rope and a 30' handline on two drops before the cave began to flatten out into horizontal passage. We surveyed a meandering stream passage for several hundred feet. The pools in the passage began to deepen, and we both thought the cave was about to sump. At that point the cave straightened out, and we ran off consecutive 100' and 90' survey shots, followed by a U-turn and a pit series deeper than our remaining 200' rope! With the rope we had, we did a 45', then a 70' and a 12' drop (ledges on a single pit) and were stopped by another, deeper drop. We had surveyed another 1300' that day, with another 300' depth, and the cave was continuing deeper! This was a real surprise. Since the entrance is less than 500 meters (1650') above sea level, we didn't expect such depth here.

Rich noted a winged bug, about 5" long with 1" pincers, near our low point. What was a bug this big (and ugly) doing this deep in the cave? We exited casually, waiting until 7 p.m. to minimize bat contact. There were no bats at all in the entrance. When we got back to camp, Tom and Scott had reconsidered and were enthused about continuing the survey.

Thursday, April 4

We planned to rotate days off so someone could watch our gear in camp and do camp chores such as getting water. This was Rich's day to stay in camp. Tom, Scott and I returned to Jul Pek early the next morning with a 165' dynamic rope and 150' of 9 mm cord, again thinking this would be enough to bottom the cave. Tom also brought a bolt kit to re-rig some of our earlier lines out of the path of water, should there be a downpour. The cave is at the lowest point in a blind valley, and obviously takes in a lot of water in the wet season. We were beyond range of the field phone system, and after Midori's close call last year, we wanted to minimize our exposure in case of rain.

We tied the 150' cord onto the tail of our last rigged rope, and rappelled another 70', then another 45' to another meandering stream passage. It was clear that this cave really went! We surveyed in stream meanders for several hundred feet, then noticed the dull roar of water in the background. After a moment of stifled panic while wondering about the weather outside and whether the cave was in flood above us, we noticed that the sound

seemed to be coming from below, not above, us. Relieved, we surveyed on to another drop of 40'. While rigging it, Scott was pinched by a bug like the one Rich had seen the day before. Worried the bug could be venomous, we decided to end the trip for the day and go out in case Scott reacted to the bite. Before we did, Tom rappelled the 40' drop and climbed further in to a drop he thought was at least another 100'. We exited the cave, our fourth day surveying in it, and planned one more trip with all our remaining' rope (350') to be sure we could bottom it next time.

Friday, April 5

This was my day off. Tom, Scott and Rich planned to continue with the survey in Jul Pek Cahk'bom. They took the field phone system, planning to check in with me at the end of the phone line to see how the weather was before making the push on. Due to delays in getting the phone gear together, they entered after 5 a.m. and found the entrance full of bats. They decided to delay the trip and instead Rich and Scott hiked out to the Rio Mayagua resurgence, about 15 miles round-trip, to check on this interesting feature where locals reported a cave. Tom and I stayed at camp and purified ~20 gallons of water (we were totally out). Rich and Scott returned with reports of a going cave, with a river flowing out its entrance.

Saturday, April 6

Saturday was Scott's day off. Rich, Tom and I returned to Jul Pek Cahk'bom with our last 350' of rope, determined to bottom the cave. At this point, we had nearly 1350' of rope in the cave. We rigged some of the earlier drops to make more efficient use of the rope already in the cave, and ended up at the bottom of the 40' drop we stopped at last time with

the 165' dynamic rope and a 350' static line. We surveyed down to the last drop Tom saw the previous day, and rigged it with the 165' rope. The drop turned out to be 106'. It left us in a large stream passage with much more water than we had seen up to then. We were sure this was the base level stream. The passage was 30' wide and perhaps 100' high. We surveyed upstream to where the passage ended in an unclimbable waterfall. Continuing downstream, it seemed the large passage would continue a long way; but then, the cave surprised us again. After a few hundred feet, it ended in a terminal sump pool with gross-looking organic rafts and loaded with crawfish. Definitely not swimable by anyone in their right mind. Rich thought about it, but a few descriptions from the book *The Hot Zone* persuaded him to reconsider. We exited and derigged on the way out; between the three of us, we hauled out 1350' of rope. The final cave depth came to 1366', with almost a mile of passage. It required 11 rope drops and two 30' handlines. A very sporting cave, indeed.

For all our fears about flooding, we had clear weather every day in the cave. Then, as we exited for the last time, it began to rain. By the time we reached camp, it was a tropical downpour. Water had been tight, so we were all filthy. It was pouring so hard that we went outside the van, stripped, soaped up and within minutes we were rinsed clean. The rain continued for an hour; rivers of water were running down the road.

REPRINT



Move #1: Kyle Haines free climbs up to the highest entrance of Psycrawlogy Cave.



Move #2: Kyle Haines at the crux of the climb. Claude Smith helped find this cave in the 1980s.

SAG RAG
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STAMP

TO:

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COVER: Cave gear photography. Note leather gloves.